



WHO IS JESUS?

BY GREG GILBERT

(CROSSWAY, 2015/138 PAGES)

JOEL BAIN

In Jamaica, almost anyone you meet knows about Jesus. A few years ago, I recall having a lively conversation about Jesus with a young, university-educated Jamaican woman on a flight back home. She grew up in church but was not a Christian. Like many of my countrymen, she was very concerned not to dismiss Jesus and heartily acknowledged him as a great moral teacher. But she misunderstood his identity and overlooked his claims. Greg Gilbert's book, *Who Is Jesus?*, is written to persuade others not to make that same mistake.

Gilbert's apologetic and evangelistic purpose is clear throughout this short book (138 pages), particularly at the beginning and end. But that doesn't mean that you should consign it to the giveaway pile or book table. This gem also has much to offer to mature believers, including those of us who labor to point people to Christ.

While reading this book, I found myself lost in my admiration of a portrait of Jesus that was familiar yet fresh, simple yet substantial, and thinking of others who need to hear his story told in this way. This is a delightfully winsome and worshipful articulation of Christological convictions.

After arguing that the question, "Who is Jesus?" is the most important question you will ever consider (chapter 1), Gilbert sketches a well-crafted picture of Jesus in chapters which each flow naturally into the next. He introduces Jesus through his extraordinary earthly ministry (chapter 2) and presents him as the long-awaited King of Israel and King of kings (chapter 3), fully God (chapter 4) and fully human (chapter 5), the triumphant last Adam (chapter 6), the lamb of God (chapter 7), and the resurrected and reigning Lord (chapter 8).

Gilbert interacts primarily with the gospel narratives while also mining the

riches of the Old Testament for key Biblical-theological insights. The stability and form of systematic theological categories are evident. But rather than compiling a textbook capturing the data, Gilbert has narrated a story that captivates the imagination. I was particularly served by his gradual unfolding of the meaning of Jesus' baptism—an account he returned to several times. "With his baptism and these words from heaven... God declares Jesus to be triply crowned—with the crown of heaven as God's Son, the crown of Israel as the long-awaited King, and the crown of thorns as the Suffering Servant who would save his people by dying for them, in their place" (108).

This title would be a great one for any Christian to read and rejoice in. It will help pastors ensure that our delight in Christ is not dampened by professional familiarity. It will serve those who have grown up in church but have lost or have never quite grasped the significance and magnificence of Jesus. And it is definitely a good book to give to and discuss with someone whom you'd like to introduce to Jesus.

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Who is Jesus? is a 9Marks book and is available in nine languages. It is a fine work that will help you to treasure Christ and to share this treasure with others.

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