Who Was Jesus?

Historical Reliability

- The biblical books can be looked at purely as historical documents
- All writers are biased, we use historical criteria to find out what's certainly true.

Historical Criteria

1. Multiple Attestation - Same thing referenced in independent sources.
2. Embarrassment - Writer won't make up things that are embarrassing to themselves.
3. Historical Coherence - Things that make sense within the historical context.
4. Dissimilarity - Teachings that weren't common either by Jews or early Christians.

Did Jesus Exist?

- All biblical books recognize Jesus exist.
- Legends take two generations to wipe out historical core - not enough time!
- There are many external references to Jesus (Tacitus, Josephus, etc.)

What Did Jesus Do?

- Universally Acknowledged as a Jewish religious teacher (rabbi)

- Evidence that he was a miracle worker:
        - Attested in multiple source.
        - Jesus opponents acknowledged His miracles (Mark 3:22)
        - Even liberal scholars admit he was a miracle worker.

Marcus Borg: "Despite the difficulty which miracles pose for the modern mind, on historical grounds it is virtually indisputable that Jesus was a healer and exorcist."

Who Did Jesus Think He Was?

- Jesus as Prophet (Mark 6:4-6] -> Criteria of Embarrassment

- Jesus as Messiah (Mark 8:29) -> Early Source

- Jesus as Divine

    - Son of Man was His favorite self-designation (more than 20 times). Early Christians did not call Him this though, so this passes the Criteria of Dissimilarity. The Son of Man refers to the divine figure in Daniel 7.

    - Jesus forgives sins, which was recognized as blasphemous because only God can forgive sins.

- The early Christians all believed that Jesus was the Son of God, and many of them died and suffered for that belief

What Happened to Jesus?

- All 4 Gospels report he was crucified.

- Crucifixion was shameful and embarrassing, would have been embarrassing. [Galatians 3:13]

- External sources report on the crucifixion (Apocryphon of John, Acts of Pontius Pilate, Tacitus)