

This Jesus

Ponder: A common name for the uncommon Savior

Scripture: “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36, NKJV).

Even in the New Testament there is more than one Jesus. Colossians 4:11 lists one of Paul’s faithful friends, “Jesus, who is called Justus.” Obviously, though, he is not the Jesus whom we confess as Lord.

Undoubtedly many other men in New Testament days had been given the name Jesus. Its Old Testament equivalent is Joshua. The Jews often gave the names of great characters from the Scriptures to their children. Saul of Tarsus had the same name as the first king of Israel. Simon Peter wore the name of Jacob’s second son, Simeon.

Referring to Joshua’s conquest of Canaan, the Hebrews writer says, “For if Joshua had given them rest, then He (God) would not afterward have spoken of another day” (Hebrews 4:8). The KJV, not incorrectly, says “If Jesus had given them rest . . .” Since the New Testament was written in Greek, it uses the Greek name (Jesus) rather than the Hebrew (Joshua).

When Peter preached on Pentecost Day, he made certain that his audience knew exactly which Jesus he had in mind. “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth . . .” (Acts 2:22). “Jesus of Nazareth” is used a dozen times in the Gospels and five more times in Acts.

Jesus hadn’t always been acknowledged as someone noteworthy. The Jews in John 6:42 complained, “Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know . . . ?” But by the time of Acts 2, Jesus’ reputation as a prophet and miracle-worker had spread far and wide. His crucifixion and resurrection had taken place only a few weeks earlier and was, of course, the focus of Peter’s sermon. “This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses” (2:32). “God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ” (2:36). Paul told the philosophers in Athens, “This Jesus, whom I preach to you, is the Christ” (Acts 17:3). Not just some random Jesus, but this Jesus!

Fake christs and counterfeit gospels led people astray even in New Testament days (see 2 Corinthians 11:4). May each of us remain true to “this Jesus”!

Song: “Jesus is All the World to Me”

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we happily confess Your blessed Son, Jesus of Nazareth, as Lord and Christ. We praise You for giving us such a wonderful Savior. We want no other. In His name, Amen.