

The Man of the Millennium

by David Guzik

David Guzik explores the unparalleled significance of Jesus Christ as the most influential figure in human history.

Duration: 35:38

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 1:1-5, John 1:14, John 3:16, John 6:47, John 14:6, John 19:30

Topics: "Eternal Life", "Jesus Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the significance of Jesus Christ and why he had such a profound impact on human history. The preacher starts by discussing Pilate's attempt to evoke sympathy for Jesus by presenting him to the crowd, but it ultimately fails. The preacher then highlights that Jesus was an unlikely person to have such an impact, as he did not live a long life. The preacher emphasizes that it is not Jesus' teachings that set him apart, but rather his role in offering eternal life to believers. The sermon concludes with a reminder that death is inevitable for everyone, and it is important to be prepared for it by believing in Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Would you open your Bibles to the Gospel of John, Chapter 19. This morning we're going to take a look at a few different passages through the Gospel of John, and the first one that we'll take a look at is in Chapter 19. I've got a few remarks to sort of frame what we're going to be talking about this morning, and it's sort of a fitting theme that I've chosen, I believe, because it's the last Sunday of 1999, which makes it the last Sunday of the year, the last Sunday of the century, and the last Sunday of the millennium.

Well, not really the millennium or the century, because really the century ends with the year 00, and so does the millennium, but nobody seems to be paying attention to that, so we're just saying that it's the end of the century and the millennium, and I need to preface my remarks this morning by saying you probably will not find a bigger scrooge when it comes to New Years and centuries and millenniums than myself. It means almost nothing to me that it goes from one year to another or one century to another. I think dates and days are pretty arbitrary things, especially considering that we're not talking about some exactly 2,000 years since Jesus was born, because Jesus wasn't born in the year 1 A.D. He was born anywhere from 2 to 4 B.C. We know this from comparing secular historical records and so forth and so on, and so I'd say I'm a big scrooge when it comes to New Years and such.

I found out when I was just a little boy that when the sun came up on January 1st, well, you know, it looked just like it did on December 31st, and nothing really changed, but I don't mean to put down or diminish anybody for whom it's a very meaningful thing. If it is, well, that's wonderful for you, but it is worth noticing that as you mark time, you come to certain milestones, don't you? We know this in our own lives. It's a big thing when you're a kid, when you turn 10 and then 20 and then 30, and maybe just leave it there.

It goes on and on, and as you come to a new year, a new century, a new millennium, people like to look back on the past and sort of mark what's gone on in the past. Time magazine is famous for this. Every year they pick a man or a woman of the year, someone who's had the most influence, the most impact on human lives over the world in that previous year, and it's typically a political or sometimes a religious, but it's usually a political or a military or a scientific leader.

Every once in a while they'll talk about a man of the century, maybe a man of the millennium. I've got something a lot more interesting to talk to you about this morning, who I believe is the greatest and most significant man of all human history. You know, I'm speaking of Jesus Christ.

Now, I don't say that just for myself, because I'm a Christian pastor and believe the Bible. You could go to Time magazine yourself. Not more than a month ago they ran an issue with Jesus on the cover.

By the way, Jesus has made the cover of Time more than 20 times, and I think that's interesting in itself, but listen to this quote from an article from Time magazine not more than a month ago. They write and they say, The single most powerful figure, not merely in these two millenniums, but in all human history, has been Jesus of Nazareth. A serious argument can be made that no one else's life has proved remotely as powerful and enduring as that of Jesus'.

Well, I would agree with that completely, but what's absolutely remarkable about this, what absolutely makes us stand up and take notice, is how astonishing and unlikely it is that Jesus would have impacted society to a far greater degree than any other man has ever walked this earth. I think we need to take a very close look and see what Pilate said to the crowd that was assembled to crucify Jesus in John chapter 19 verse 5. Look at it with me. We read, Then Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe.

You can see that, can't you? He's not the baby in the manger here wrapped in swaddling clothes. Now he's a grown man. He's been beaten and bloodied.

He's been tortured and mocked. And he stands before a Roman government official with an angry, bloodthirsty mob screaming and shouting for his execution behind him. And Pilate, for whatever reason, looked for a way to get Jesus out of this.

And he hoped to invoke the sympathy of the crowd. Maybe if they showed the crowd how much this man had suffered, how he had been mocked. He was wearing a crown, but it was a crown of cruel thorns pressed down upon his head and the blood dripped down his face and probably into his eyes and mouth.

He was dressed, but he was dressed with a robe of purple as a king might wear, but it was all mocking. He held in his hand a reed, which is the stalk of a plant hollowing. This was his mighty scepter that he ruled with.

And as Pilate put this tragic figure on display in front of the mob, look at what he says here in verse 5. And Pilate said to them, Behold the man. He wanted the mob to take a good look at Jesus. He had hoped that

by doing this, it would somehow evoke enough sympathy, enough compassion, maybe just plain old pity to make the crowd say, Oh, he's suffered enough.

Let him go. But it didn't do that. I think we need to do what Pilate told the mob to do.

We need to behold the man. We need to look at Jesus Christ and try to figure out this incredibly significant mystery. Why such an unlikely person should have impacted human history so incredibly? Now, why do I say Jesus was an unlikely person to impact history? Well, if you think about it, first of all, he didn't live a long life, did he? He lived a very short life.

And the time of which he was of note in that life was even shorter. Thirty of his thirty-three years were lived in complete obscurity. He didn't live in a famous place.

He grew up in a rural backwater of the Roman Empire. And if you want to look at the just base accomplishments of his life, well, he died in agony as a convicted criminal, born in a very obscure village, not from notable parents, not from a great pedigree. He worked as a common man, a common laborer, a carpenter.

Then, when he went out, the only area that he made much of an impact on was his immediate area. During his lifetime, the name of Jesus was never once uttered in the halls of power in Rome, in Athens, in Alexandria. If he had any kind of fame, any kind of notoriety, it was purely of a local variety, and just for a few years.

You know, he never wrote a book, never established a political party, never went to college, never ran for public office. He never had a family, never owned a house, never even had a hit record. He didn't do any of the things that usually accompany greatness.

The only kind of credentials he had to offer people was himself. But at the time he lived, even that wasn't enough. Again, when he was thirty-three years old, the tide of public opinion, after riding the crest of this wave of public fame and notoriety, public opinion turned against him.

People rejected him. Political leaders conspired against him, and he was arrested. Now, today, when someone famous or notorious is arrested, there's always some people out there, you know, marching in front of the courthouse, you know, in favor or support of that person.

All of Jesus' friends, all of his supporters abandoned him. He was set on trial and executed by the state along with some convicted thieves. And it was only because a generous friend offered his own cemetery plot, that was the only reason why his body wasn't just flung into a common grave.

Now, all this happened almost two thousand years ago, and yet today, Jesus Christ is the leading figure of the human race. You can think about it, all the armies that have ever marched, all the navies that have ever set sail, all the politicians who have ever had political office, all the kings who have ever reigned on this earth, all of them put together, have never impacted human beings on this earth the way Jesus Christ has. Why? Why is Jesus the most compelling, the most influential, the most powerful, most important person of all of human history? What do we see when we do what Pilate told us to do, and we look and we say, behold the man? First of all, we have to recognize that we see a real man, a man of history.

Now, as I read that Time article that I spoke to you about, I was very refreshed to find that, at least in magazines like Time, they're getting past this thing that they used to talk about decades ago, where they

used to speculate, well, is Jesus really a man of history, or was he just a myth that people made up, as if he was a fairy tale on the line of Hansel and Gretel, or Zeus and Apollos? No, the Time article did a very good job of saying that the New Testament documents that we have, the Gospels of Matthew and Mark and Luke and John, these are valid historical documents, and we learn about the life of Jesus from these documents. Jesus was a real man, a man of history. Why, why, why has he impacted the world so much? Now, most people would say, well, it was because of what he taught.

Jesus was a teacher, and his truth was so sublime, so new, so revolutionary, that it set the world on fire, and now the world subscribes to and agrees with his ideas, and that's why he's such a famous man. Do you think that it's the teaching of Jesus that has made him this leading figure of human history? I don't believe so. First of all, you need to understand that in the basic things that Jesus taught about how people should live, there was nothing new or revolutionary in what he taught.

Jesus taught the message of the Old Testament. He taught the message that other great moral and ethical teachers have taught. When you compare the moral and ethical teachings of all the world's great religions, they're pretty much the same.

Love one another, don't be selfish, be kind, be generous, give. Jesus taught the same things. There was nothing remarkably revolutionary in his teaching.

I mean, it was fantastic teaching, it's true teaching, it's wonderful, but that's not what sets him apart from everybody else. Besides, we can certainly look around and say that the world doesn't follow his teaching today. So I don't think it's Jesus's teaching at all that makes him the most remarkable man of all of human history.

Now you might say, well, it's what he did. He was a man of great accomplishment. Oh yes, like what? Well he healed many people.

The Bible tells us of other great miracle working healers. Well he died on the cross, a sacrificial death. You know, the Bible in all of history tells us of other people who have died noble, sacrificial deaths.

Well he rose from the dead. You know, the Bible even tells us about other people other than Jesus who rose from the dead. It's not what Jesus did in his life that makes him terribly unique.

No, not in and of itself. If you just take the bare events of his life, they're not incredibly remarkable. So what is it that makes Jesus Christ the most compelling figure of all human history? It's not primarily because of what he taught.

It's not basically because of what he did. I'll tell you what it is. It's because of who he is.

He's much more than a man. Jesus Christ is God. God and man.

Maybe we should take a look at it together. Turn in your Bibles to the Gospel of John again, chapter one. We were in chapter 19.

Turn all the way to the beginning of the Gospel of John. You can read it for yourself. I don't need to make a lot of explanation upon these verses.

We can just read it for ourselves and see what the Bible says about who Jesus is. The Gospel of John, chapter one, verse one. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was

God.

He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him and without him nothing was made that was made. In him was life and the life was the light of men.

And the light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not comprehend it. Now go down to verse fourteen, please, where we read, And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. The testimony of the Bible is that the eternal Word of God, God himself living in eternal splendor from all of eternity, came down and took on human flesh.

Now, I don't intend to go into an elaborate theological discourse this morning, but I will give you just a basic understanding of what the Bible tells us what it means that Jesus was God. The Bible tells us that Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, existed from all of eternity. But there came a point of time when he was conceived in Mary's womb, when humanity was added to his deity.

He didn't become less God. Simply, humanity was added to his deity. The incarnation is not subtraction, it's addition.

And you have deity and to it was added humanity. And so we have Jesus Christ, fully God and fully man. Read verse sixteen here in the first chapter of John, And of this fullness we have all received in grace for grace, for the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him. Do you understand what John is saying? He's saying we saw Jesus and when we saw Jesus, we saw God.

A remarkable statement. Now certainly you have to agree that this makes Jesus completely unique among all great leaders through history. There have been the lunatics and the new agers here and there who have insisted that they were gods.

But great men, leading men, influential men, important men, they usually have enough sense of themselves to know that they're not God. But Jesus said he was. Jesus declared it openly and people believed him.

The apostle John right in here, he believed him. He said Jesus Christ is God. When we saw Jesus, we saw God.

And again, I want you to understand this makes Jesus completely unique. The leaders of every other world religion, if you would ask him, they would completely deny being God. They would think it would blaspheme to consider them God.

If you were to interview Muhammad and ask him, well, are you God? No, perish the thought. By the way, he would also say that the important thing about Islam is not Muhammad, it's his teaching. Saying, I'm pointing you to God.

Ask the same question, Confucius, Buddha, Moses himself. They would say, no, don't focus on me. Focus on my teaching.

I'm giving you a road map to God. I'm pointing you to God. Jesus would come right before you and he would say, I am the road map.

I'm not giving you a road map. I am the road map. You need to come through me.

You need to believe upon me. Let me give you an example of this from the page of scripture. Go to the gospel of John chapter 6. We're going to look at verse 47.

If you're unfamiliar with the Bible, you may think that I'm kind of pulling a needle out of a haystack here with this verse, that I found the one verse in the Bible where Jesus says something like this. I want you to know that one of the most difficult things for me in preparing this message today was settling on a specific verse, because Jesus says this kind of idea so many times in the scriptures, particularly in the gospel of John, but I finally settled on expressing it to you through John chapter 6, verse 47. Jesus says, most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in me has everlasting life.

You see what he's saying there? He who believes in me. Now again, this sets Jesus on a far different level than every other great leader or any mere man. He's telling you, believe in me, not just in what I teach, not just in what I did in me as a person.

Might I say that these are either the babblings of an insane man or the words of God himself, because I'll tell you one thing, Jesus meant it. Look at what he says there in verse 47. He begins most assuredly.

You understand what that means? It means I want to emphasize this, not just assuredly, most assuredly. He's saying it for emphasis. And then he goes on again in verse 47, he says, most assuredly, I say to you.

Now why did he have to say, I say to you? Isn't that obvious? He's speaking. Parents, you understand this, right? Those of you who don't have children yet, you might not understand this yet. But when the parent says, I'm telling you, it's a redundancy, right? The child knows that the parent's telling them something, but it's done for the sake of emphasis, isn't it? To get a point across to the child.

And so when Jesus says, most assuredly, I say to you, he's emphasizing it in the strongest terms he can. And notice what he says here in verse 47. He who believes in me has everlasting life.

Not believes in the teaching I provide, not teaching, not believes in the path I can send you on, who believes in me. He's the words of someone who was very, very sadly mistaken under the words of God himself. There's really no neutral ground here.

I'd like you to consider the proposition right here and what it means for us logically that Jesus declared himself to be God and declared himself to be the way of salvation. And let's just apply a little bit of logic to this, right? It's not too hard for us to do. All right, well, either he's right or he's wrong.

Correct? I mean, that's pretty fair to say. And if I were to say the same thing about myself, if I stood before you here this morning and said, I am the King of England, I would either be right or wrong, right? Simple. Now, let's say I'm wrong.

Either I know that I'm wrong or I don't know that I'm wrong. If I know that I'm wrong when I tell you that I'm the King of England, then I'm a liar. I know very well that I'm not the King of England, but I'm trying to pass myself off that way and you're not buying it, of course.

That would make me a liar. Let's say that I'm wrong and I don't know that I'm wrong. That would make me crazy because for some reason I think I'm a king when I'm really not.

Well, apply the same logic to Jesus. Here's Jesus claiming to be the Son of God, claiming to be the way of salvation. Well, either he's right or he's wrong.

If he's wrong, well, maybe he knows he's wrong. Maybe Jesus knows that he's not God, but he's passing himself off as God, presenting himself that way. And maybe Jesus is one of the most significant liars of all of human history because he claimed to be God, and yet he knows very well that he's not.

Well, there's a problem with this. First of all, everything we know about the character and the person of Jesus would tell us that he's not a liar. Secondly, and probably far more significantly, he died for this, if it were to be a lie.

He died for a lie. Can you imagine that? Jesus, standing before Pilate, ready to face not just death, not just some quick merciful execution, but facing one of the most painful and excruciating ways a person could die. And Pilate is looking for a way to get him freed from this.

And Jesus is not God. Jesus knows that he's not God, yet he says, you know what, I'm going to stick with this lie. I've run it long enough, why not stick with it? After all, I don't want to be embarrassed.

I'd rather die an excruciating death on a cross than be embarrassed. Do you think Jesus would have at least just gone up to Pilate and whispered in his ear, I made it all up. I'm really not God.

Maybe you can find a way to get me out of this. But of course he didn't. It just doesn't fit that Jesus would be lying.

Well, maybe Jesus is in the second category. He's wrong about being God, but he doesn't know that he's wrong. Well, again, that would make him crazy.

It would make him a lunatic. Here's a guy going around thinking that he's God when he's not. Again, apart from a few New Age devotees, most people walking around today understand that they're not God.

That's a pretty basic human understanding. But if Jesus went around really thinking he was, that he was God, that he was the Messiah, that he was the chosen one, but he wasn't at all. Well, I think it would show in his character.

It would show he was a very mentally ill person. You know, they have that problem today. They call it the Jerusalem syndrome.

I don't know if any of you have ever heard about it, but it's a problem when tourists go to Israel. A very small percentage, but a handful of people every year fall prey to what's known as Jerusalem syndrome. And when they get to Israel, they suddenly think that they're a biblical character and they're absolutely persuaded of it.

Oh, they've had people who think they're Samson go around, try to lift things and beat people up. They've had people who think they're Jesus or think they're King David or there's all sorts of things. Well, maybe it was just a case like this with Jesus.

Well, let me ask you this. You look at the life of Jesus, this man who brought healing and wholeness and the most beautiful, sublime teaching that this world has ever seen. Are these the words, are these the actions of a crazy man? I don't think so.

That's got to be an even further stretch than to say that Jesus was a liar. So if he's not a liar, if he's not a lunatic, then he must be the Lord God whom he said he was. There's no other option, my friends.

There really isn't. I mean, he meant to confront you with this. The one thing that we must not do is put Jesus in some vague, nice category of being a good moral teacher, a good example, someone everybody should look up to.

Maybe put a poster of him on your wall. Jesus is saying, no, I don't want you to admire me. You must look at verse 47, believe in me for everlasting life.

Put your trust, your reliance upon me. And that's where you're going to find everlasting life. It's very important for us to consider this, that if Jesus is Lord, well then friends, we need to treat him as such.

And we need to expect that he would fulfill this promise. Verse 47, he who believes in me has everlasting life. Now, I think that that idea of everlasting life should suggest two things to us.

First of all, it's life that we can have right now. Everlasting life, as the Bible explains it, is not something that comes to you once you go to the world beyond. It's something that you can receive right now in Jesus Christ.

It's a quality of life. It's not just a long life, a duration of life. It's a quality of life.

It's God's kind of life. It's the life of God. It's the life of Jesus Christ himself flooding into our lives.

You can have that right now. It also reminds us that we need everlasting life in light of the fact that we're all going to die. It's more relevant to me than ever.

Last night, we got a call from a family in our church. Actually, it was from a hospital chaplain calling in regard on behalf of a family in our church. Because this dear family in our church, their grandmother in the family was passing away.

She had been ill for several months, and this grandmother named Ruth used to come with the family every Sunday to church. She used to love seeing Ruth out in the lobby on the way out. She used to love coming to church.

In the last several months, her health prevented her from doing so. But they got a call and they said her death is imminent. So last night, I got up and I went out to the hospital.

As I opened the door into the hospital room, there you see an old woman laboring to breathe with the oxygen mask hooked up and an IV in her arm. Nothing heroic, nothing remarkable being done for her, just keeping her comfortable as she makes this transition from one world to the next. But then you see around her bed, her family, the only family she had, which was her daughter and the daughter's husband and the children, all sitting around the bed, speaking words of comfort, being there together at that holy, sacred moment.

Friends, unless Jesus Christ comes, every one of us is going to end up in a situation like that. Are you going to be ready for it? You're going to have everlasting life. Now, some of us are going into that place of death will be a slow, gradual thing, and you'll have time to prepare for it.

Others of us, it will not be slow and gradual. It'll be sudden and unexpected. That's why you need to be prepared for it right now.

As that family sat around, that dear, elderly woman on her way to eternity, something more sacred than most church services, something beautiful, a saint of God getting ready to go home, because this woman believes on Jesus Christ, and she has this promise fulfilled right here in verse 47 of everlasting life. Well, it's real, people. These are real issues that Jesus speaks to us about.

Now, I just want to conclude with this last verse here, verse 48. But let me start at verse 47 and get kind of a running start with it. Jesus said again, Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in me has everlasting life.

I am the bread of life. And Jesus loved to talk about himself in pictures, and I love the picture that he uses here, the bread of life, because bread is something that every person needs to survive. If you have food, you don't live.

It also tells us something about what it means to believe on Jesus. What does it mean? Well, it means to take him in. If Jesus is the bread of life, then you must eat of that bread.

Faith in Jesus is not compared with just taking a nibble or just admiring, but with eating. We need to dig in. And Jesus is saying that we must have him within us and partake of him.

He's the bread of life. You need to eat the bread, so to speak. Might I remind you that seeing a loaf of bread on a plate will not satisfy your hunger.

Knowing how much the bread costs will not satisfy your hunger. Knowing all the ingredients in the bread will not satisfy your hunger. Taking a picture of the bread will not satisfy your hunger.

Telling other people about the bread will not satisfy your hunger. Selling the bread will not satisfy your hunger. Playing catch with a loaf of bread will not satisfy your hunger.

You get the point, don't you? You've got to eat it. And maybe there's some here this morning, you're experts about who Jesus is. You know all the ingredients, you know all the, because you're all experts about it.

You've never believed on him and taken him in. That's what you need to do with the man of the millennium, the man of all history, Jesus Christ. And if Jesus is the man of all history, then let me propose to you the question of the millennium or the question of all history.

It's what Jesus asked his disciples in Matthew chapter 16, verse 15, when he said, who do you say that I am? Either he was a liar, he was a lunatic, or he's the Lord God almighty. What do you do if you want to believe on him? If you believe he's the Lord? Let me suggest to you three things. First of all, you need to believe what he says about himself.

Believe it. When Jesus says he's God, believe it. When he says he's the bread of life and that you must eat of him, so to speak, in a figurative way, then do it.

You need to believe what Jesus says about himself. Secondly, you need to believe what Jesus says about you. Now, I don't mean that he says it about you and not me.

He says it's all of us. He says that we're sinners, that we're alienated from God. Now for some of us, that's hard to hear because we don't feel like we're alienated from God.

We don't feel that there's this great canyon between us and God that has to be made up. But Jesus says it is. So we need to trust in the work that he did for us on the cross.

We need to believe what he says about us and our need for him spiritually. And then we need to believe thirdly, not just what he says about himself, not just what he says about us. We need to believe what he says about what we have to do.

And that's believe on him and trust our lives to him and follow him. I can't think of a better way to close a year, a century, a millennium, and to have that all set right with Jesus Christ. So I'm going to pray right now and I want you to pray with me in your own heart.

Lord God, we want to be confronted with this glorious man who was much more than a man. There's no other explanation, God. It wasn't in what Jesus taught.

It wasn't in what he did. It's in who he is, the eternal son of God, fully God and completely man. Lord, I pray for anybody here this morning who hasn't believed on Jesus the way that the scriptures say we must.

Lord God, won't you move upon their hearts and persuade them, convince them that now's the time. Today is the day and that in the secret place of their heart, they can make that commitment to Jesus Christ. And Lord God, give every one of us a refreshed, deepened appreciation of the glory of Jesus and a passion to tell of him to others.

Thank you, Lord. We love you. We praise you this morning in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/10/SID10689.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-guzik/the-man-of-the-millennium/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net