

## “Who Was Jesus?”

### Was Jesus a great moral teacher like Buddha, Confucius, Muhammad, or Moses?

Was Jesus just a human being like you and me, or was he something more?

Someone once wrote:

Jesus was the greatest teacher of morality who ever lived, and possibly the greatest human being of all time. But all this talk about Jesus being the Son of God and rising to life after being dead for 3 days ruins a beautiful life by attaching to it a fairy-tale ending. Why can't we just follow Jesus' teachings? Why can't we lift up his life as a model for our own living without getting fanatical and saying that Jesus was God?

The statement above sounds logical and seems like a rational middle-of-the-road view of Jesus which avoids fanaticism, while at the same time honoring a truly great man. The problem with this approach is that it ignores completely what Jesus said about himself.

All 4 writers who have their accounts of Jesus' life in the New Testament agree that Jesus claimed to be God. Here are some examples of what Jesus said about himself.

- ▲ When one of his followers said, “Show us God, and that will be enough for us,” Jesus replied, “Don't you know me even after I have been with you for such a long time. Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father [God].” (John 14:9)
- ▲ “I and the Father [God] are one.” (John 10:30)
- ▲ “I am the way, the truth, & the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6)
- ▲ Even Jesus' enemies understood that Jesus was claiming to be God when he said, “Your sins are forgiven.” (Matthew 9:2) It is fine to forgive someone who has done wrong to you, but when you start forgiving people for what they have done to others, you're claiming to do something only God can do. At Jesus' trial, the Jewish religious leaders said, “We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God.” (John 19:7)

What would you think if someone you know began claiming, “I am God!” Would you think he was a great human teacher, or that he needed help from a psychiatrist?

C.S. Lewis, who was an agnostic before he became a Christian, wrote:

A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic – on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg – or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: Or else a madman or something worse.

You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon; or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.

When Jesus, or Jim Jones, or David Koresh, or your next door neighbor claims to be God, there are really only 3 options. Either he is a liar, a lunatic, or Lord. Josh McDowell, in Evidence that Demands a Verdict, makes the options clear in a diagram which I have modified slightly on the back of this page.

# JESUS CLAIMED TO BE GOD!



Claims were False



**(2 Choices)**



Claims were True

**(2 Choices)**

He knew  
his claims  
were False

He was a  
LIAR

He was a  
Fool! He  
died for  
a lie!

He did not know  
his claims were

False

He was sincerely  
DELUDED

He was  
Mentally  
Ill!

He is Lord!

**(2 Choices)**

You can  
accept  
Him as  
your Lord  
and Savior!

You can  
reject  
Him & by  
doing that,  
reject God!