

Grace to You :: *esp Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Liar, Lunatic, or Lord?

Scripture: Matthew 16:13–15

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The world will tell you that Jesus Christ was a good teacher—a noble moral leader, but nothing more. They'll heap flattering laurels and accolades on Him, calling Him a religious revolutionary who changed the world with a philosophy of self-sacrifice and unconditional love. In fact, it seems almost any description of Christ is acceptable, as long as it's not shaped by or based in the actual words of Scripture.

But this idea of Jesus as merely a good teacher is a complete fabrication, one born out of a desire to undercut or discredit the truth of His life and ministry. It's a concoction of platitudes meant to placate Christians so that they will direct their evangelistic efforts elsewhere. In simplest terms, it's a lie.

C.S. Lewis described the inherent foolishness of claiming Christ as nothing more than a good teacher in his book *Mere Christianity*. He wrote:

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: "I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God." That is the one thing we must not say. 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 the 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 with any patronising nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.

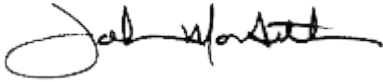
Liar, lunatic, or Lord. Those are the only options to consider when it comes to determining the truth about Christ.

And yet we're on the cusp of another season in which many more theories and perspectives on the Person and work of Christ will be presented. The months between Thanksgiving and Easter often bring new supposed discoveries and revelations about who Jesus really was and what His message means for us today. These theories—whether they appear in best-selling books, popular documentaries, or elsewhere—will shape the public discussion and understanding of the life and work of Jesus Christ.

It's critical, then, that we not sit by and watch as the world further distorts and perverts the truth about Christ. We need to be bold, clear voices for the truth of Scripture, and we need to be able to defend what it says about the life and ministry of our Savior.

With that in mind, we're going to spend the next few weeks looking intently at the life and death of

Christ. For now, though, we want to hear from you. What do you hear about the Person and work of Christ from your unbelieving friends and family? And how do you respond when someone claims Jesus was merely a “good teacher”?

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joel W. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "S".

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