

CHAPTER 4

Who Is Jesus Christ?

Who is Jesus? What Do Men Say? (Matthew 16:13-14)

Men have had many different ideas about who Jesus really is. In the days when Jesus walked this earth, who did people say that He was (Matthew 16:13-14)?

(Note: Some of them thought He was one of the prophets who had come back from the dead.)

Jesus' enemies said some terrible things about Him. In John 10:20 they considered that He was a madman who was possessed by a _____ (John 10:20; "devil" means "demon"). At another time they accused Him of performing His miracles by the power of Satan (Matthew 12:22-26; Mark 3:22). They even called Him a S _____ (John 8:48), which was one of the most insulting things a person could be called because the Jews hated the Samaritans.

Today people also have many ideas about who Jesus really was. Some say that He was a great teacher. Others recognize Him as a great religious leader and the One who founded Christianity. Others believe He was a famous prophet. Others think He was the greatest man who ever lived. Most people today know very little about Jesus Christ, even though they often use His Name when they are angry or when they curse (see Exodus 20:7).

If you were to ask your friends to share with you their ideas of who Jesus was, what do you think they would say? What would your school teachers and other adults say?

Some have said that Jesus was a "Superstar," but we must remember that many people are called superstars. Can you think of any athletes who are considered "superstars"? Any actors? Any musicians? Are there things that are true about Jesus Christ that are not true of any other person? [There are many stars in the sky, but there is only one Sun! The glory and brilliance of the sun is so great that all of the stars disappear when the sun is in the sky. Jesus Christ is the "Sun of righteousness" (Malachi 4:2).]

It is very important to understand who Jesus really is! If I *really* believe Jesus Christ is Almighty God, then I will "bow down before Him, love and adore Him." If I *really* believe He is Lord, then I will serve and obey Him (compare Luke 6:46).

If a person believes Jesus is a liar, will he trust Him and will he believe the things He said? If a person believes Jesus is a madman, will he come to Him and trust Him to be his personal Saviour? If someone makes Jesus his (or her) "Superstar," then soon another human superstar will come along for him (or her) to idolize. If someone thinks He was only a good Teacher, then

he will consider what He says, but he will also read and believe what other good teachers say. If a person believes Christ was only a prophet, then he will be looking for other prophets to show him the way to God. If someone believes Jesus was just a man who died about 2000 years ago, then, in that person's mind, He is still dead with no power to change lives today.

If He Was . . .	Then I Should . . .
The Mighty God and The Lord of All	Worship Him, Love Him, Honor Him, Fear Him, Obey Him, Serve Him
Only a good teacher	Listen to Him, but listen to other good teachers also
Only a prophet	Look for other prophets and see what messages they bring
Only a superstar	Idolize Him until some other superstar comes along
Only a man who once died	Realize that a dead man is powerless to help me today
A liar	Not believe what He says because only a fool would trust the words of a deceiver
A lunatic	Not follow Him, because only a fool would follow a madman

**Who is Jesus?
What Did Jesus Say?
(Mark 14:61-62)**

Jesus in many ways seemed to be like any other man of His day. His physical appearance was not unusual, and He certainly resembled other Jewish men who then lived in Palestine. He did *not* have a glowing light or a halo around His head (as some paintings seem to show), nor did He have long, flowing hair which made Him look different from His disciples and the other men of His day. In age, He appeared to be about thirty years old (compare Luke 3:23 and John 8:57). The Jews did not think of Jesus as someone who had come down from heaven, but rather they thought of Him merely as one who had come from the family of Joseph (John 6:41-42; compare Matthew 13:55-56). **And yet this Man made the most amazing and the most astonishing claims that a man has ever made!** Consider the following:

1) Jesus Claimed to be Over 2000 Years Old.

In John 8:56 Jesus said, "Abraham saw My day and was glad." According to John 8:57, the Jews knew that Jesus was not more than _____ years old. Then they asked Jesus, "Have you seen Abraham?" (verse 57) Abraham lived about 2000 B.C. (about 2000 years before the time when Jesus walked on the earth). How did Jesus answer their question (John 8:58)?

What would you do if someone came up to you and said, "I want to tell you something. I want you to know that I am more than 2000 years old." What would you think of such a statement?

- a. This person must be joking.
- b. This person must be crazy.
- c. This person must be deluded.

Jesus was not joking and He was not crazy! As a man, Jesus was about 30 years old, but as God, He was the eternal Word (see John 1:1-2)! John the Baptist was born six months before Jesus was born, but John understood that Jesus came before him (see John 1:30). As a man, Jesus was younger than John the Baptist, but as God He was older (He was from everlasting--see Micah 5:2 and Psalm 90:2).

Jesus existed even before there was a world (see John 17:5,24)! The eternal God stepped out of eternity and became a man (John 1:14) so that He could die on the cross for us (1 Timothy 1:15)!

2) Jesus Claimed to Do What Only God Can Do.

What did Jesus say to the paralytic man that so astonished the Jews (Mark 2:5)?

_____ Who is the only Person who can forgive sins (Mark 2:7)? _____ The only person who can really forgive us is the person we have offended and sinned against. If I punch you in the nose, I must go to you for forgiveness because you are the one who has been offended and hurt. When we sin, who is the Person we always offend and hurt (Psalm 51:4)? _____ Who then is the only Person who can forgive us? _____ Would it be wrong for someone who is only a man (a mere man) to claim to be able to forgive sins? _____ If Christ could really forgive sins, then who must He be? _____

Sometimes we call something a "**sickness**" when God calls it a sin. For example, the Bible says that it is a sin to get drunk (Ephesians 5:18; 1 Cor. 6:10; etc.). If we tell a drunk person that drunkenness is a sickness and not a sin, then we are not giving him any real hope or help. There is no pill that he can take to make him stop drinking! There is no doctor that can truly help him and solve his root problem. There is no operation that will cure him of his problem. But if we tell this man that his basic problem is **sin**, then this is the best news that he could ever hear! There is a real **Saviour** who can really **save** us from our **sins** (Matthew 1:21; 1 Tim. 1:15). Are there other things that God calls **sin** but people just call **sickness**?

Who is the only One who has the right to judge men and to send some men to hell to be punished forever (compare James 4:12)? _____ Did Jesus say that He had the right to judge men (John 5:22,27; Matthew 25:31-46)? _____ If Jesus were a mere man, would it be wrong for Him to pretend that He was the final judge of all men? _____ If Jesus is really the Judge of all the earth, then who must He be? _____

3) Jesus Claimed to be the Messiah (the Christ), God's Anointed King.

What is another term that is often used in the New Testament that means the very same thing as "Messiah" (John 1:41)? _____ The Jews who knew their Old Testament Scriptures would have understood that the promised Messiah was none other than:

(please MATCH)

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|----|-------|--|----|----------------|
| 1. | _____ | The King whose Name is the MIGHTY GOD. | A. | Isaiah 9:6-7 |
| 2. | _____ | The King or Ruler who is the ETERNAL, EVERLASTING GOD. | B. | Daniel 7:13-14 |
| 3. | _____ | The King whose dominion or reign will not end but be FOREVER AND EVER. | C. | Micah 5:2 |

Thus, when a man claimed to be the Messiah or the Christ, it was like saying, "I want you all to know that I am God's promised King, the One who is the eternal and mighty God, who shall reign forever and ever." What would you think if the President of the United States said something like that?

Did Jesus claim to be the **Messiah**, the **Christ** (John 4:25-26)? _____ Do you believe that He really is?

4) Jesus Claimed to be the Son of God.

Did Jesus ever say, "I am the Son of God!" (see John 10:36 and John 9:35-38)? _____ Did Peter answer correctly in Matthew 16:16? _____ How did Peter know who Christ was? (See Matthew 16:17 and circle the correct answer.)

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|----|--------------------------------|----|---|
| a. | He was a very intelligent man. | b. | He figured it out on his own. |
| c. | The disciple John told him. | d. | The Heavenly Father opened his eyes and revealed it to him. |

When the High Priest asked, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the **Blessed One** (God)?" what answer did Jesus give (Mark 14:61-62)? _____

Some people might say, "It's true that Jesus claimed to be God's Son, but He never claimed to be God. He was not God; He was only the Son of God." But what did the expression "Son of God" really mean back in the days when Christ lived on earth? How did the Jews understand

the expression "Son of God"? What did it mean to them?

If a man said that God was His Father (thus claiming to be the Son of God), he would be making himself E _____ W _____ G _____ (John 5:18). Thus, in the days when Christ walked on earth, the expression "Son of God" had this meaning:

SON OF GOD = GOD

Suppose there was a man named John Smith and his father was Henry Smith. Is it true that John Smith is the "son of Smith"? Is it true that John Smith is a Smith too? John Smith is a son of Smith and he is also a Smith himself! Jesus Christ is the Son of God and He is also God. He is the Son of God and He is also God the Son. Not only was He with God but He is God (John 1:1)! He possesses the divine nature. He is the Son of God, and He is also One with God (John 10:30)! Did Jesus really claim to be God (John 10:33)? _____ Did this claim of Jesus make the Jews angry (John 10:30-33)? _____

Who is Jesus? What Do You Say? (Matthew 16:15)

In Matthew 16:15 the Lord Jesus asked His disciples the most important question of all: "But who say _____ that I am?" Who do **you** think Christ is?

Your **eternal destiny** (where you will be forever and where you will belong forever) depends on how you answer that question! Jesus said in John 8:24, "...if ye believe not that _____, ye shall die in your sins." You **MUST** believe that Jesus is everything He said He is!

Actually there are only three honest answers (and only one true answer) that can be given. Either Jesus was a **LIAR**, a **LUNATIC** (a deluded, crazy man) or He is **LORD**.

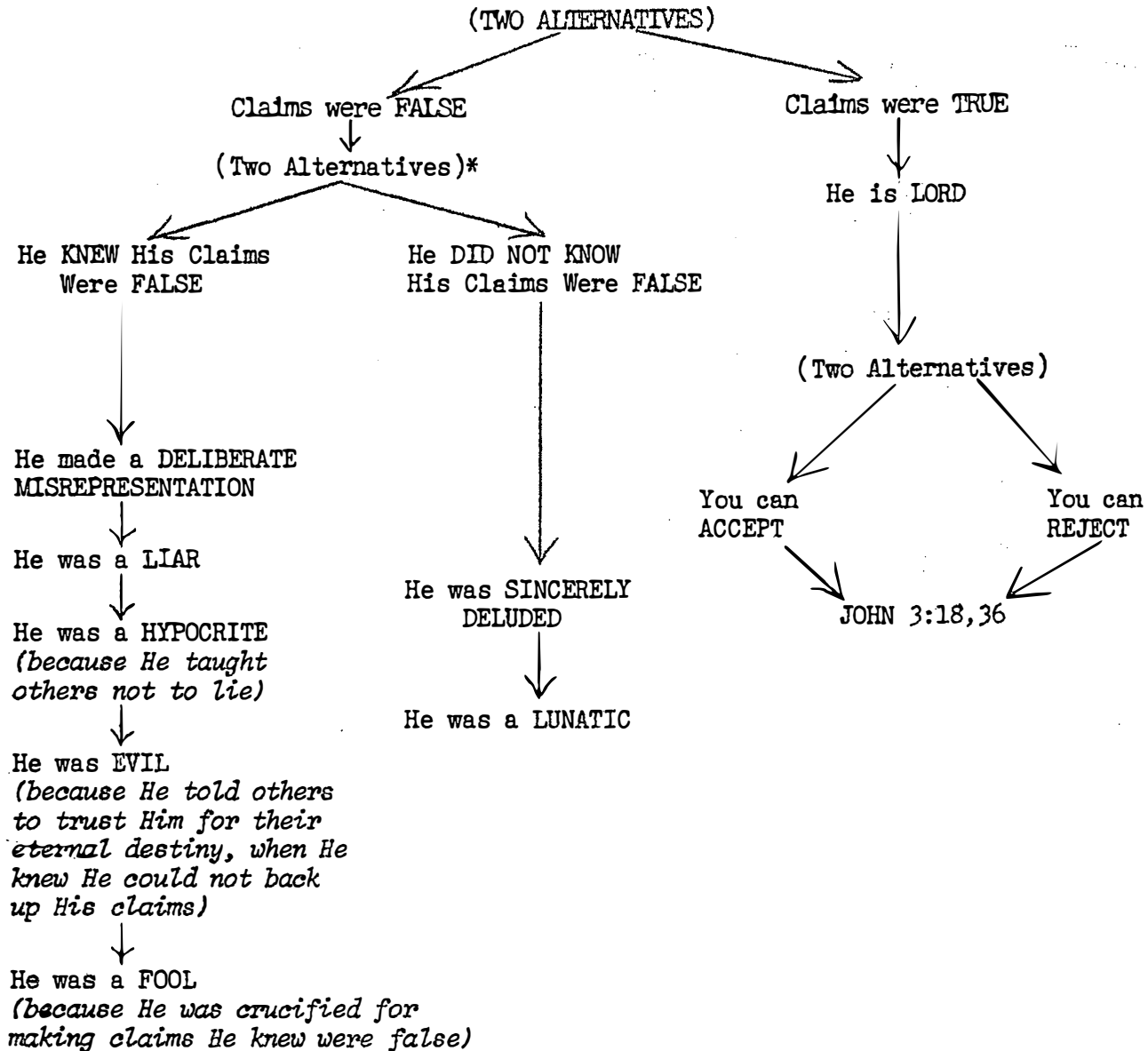
Consider the following:

Jesus Claims To Be God

(See Chart on the Following Page)

Jesus Claims To Be God

[This chart is adapted from *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* by Josh McDowell, p. 108.]



LIAR, LUNATIC or LORD? Which is your conclusion? Who do *you* say that Jesus Christ is? If you say He is LORD, **is He your Lord?** Have you received Him as your personal Saviour? Have you discovered that He is exactly who He claimed to be? Have you bowed your heart before the mighty Son of God? What is your conclusion?

"I BELIEVE JESUS IS

"

Is He your Lord? Is He your Saviour? If not, why not?