

LESSON # 14
KNOW WHY YOU BELIEVE
WHY DO WE SAY CHRISTIANITY IS THE ONLY WAY?

TODAY'S QUESTION:

**There are many other belief systems and people that believe other things about God.
Why do we say Christianity is the ONLY way?**

**(I) ONE OF THE STUDENTS READ THIS PASSAGE IN MATTHEW WHERE
JESUS ASKS HIS DISCIPLES, “WHO DO PEOPLE SAY I AM?” (vss. 13 – 20)**

Matthew 16:13-20

- ¹³ When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"
- ¹⁴ They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."
- ¹⁵ "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"
- ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."
- ¹⁷ Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.
- ¹⁸ And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.
- ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."
- ²⁰ Then he warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

A) WHY DID JESUS TAKE THEM TO CEASAREA PHILLIPI?

- 1) Because this was the ideal place to ask the question. People there worshipped many different “gods” there. Today people worship any different “gods.”
- 2) It was 120 miles from Jerusalem
- 3) It was where Herod had built a “temple” to honor Caesar. The ancient Romans were to worship their leaders.
- 4) It was a center for Baal worship.
 - a) Baal was a “nature god” a “fertility god”
- 5) The Greek god “Pan” had a shrine there

a) “Pan” means “all”

1) A place where “all” the gods were worshipped and honored.

6) People there worshipped many different “gods.” There could be no more appropriate place for Jesus to ask the question “Who do people say I am?”

B) THE QUESTION AND THE ANSWER (vss 13 – 16)

ONE OF THE STUDENTS READ JESUS QUESTION IN VS. 13:

1) Jesus asked them, “Who do people say I am?”

C) THE ANSWER (vs 14)

1) “Some say”

a) The implication was and still is that people say MANY things about Jesus, but only one answer is right. Different people say different things about Jesus.

2) **SOME SAY JOHN THE BAPTIST**

a) A fiery, spiritual- political voice denouncing public, societal and private sins

3) **Some said Elijah**

a) Powerhouse of spiritual power & miracles

4) **Others said Jeremiah**

a) The weeping prophet

5) **Peter: “You’re the Christ**

a) MESSIAH, ANNOINTED ONE, SAVIOUR, LAMB OF GOD, INCARNATION, EMMANUAL: GOD W/US!

b) SON OF THE LIVING GOD!

E) JESUS RESPONSE (vs 17)

HAVE ONE OF THE STUDENTS READ JESUS RESPONSE TO PETER’S ANSWER

1) You’re right and You’re Blessed!

2) Flesh (Opinion polls, good ideas, much learning) didn’t Reveal that but God!!!

F) JESUS AFFIRMS PETER’S CONFESSION

1) Jesus then is agreeing that He is the Christ

2) Throughout scripture Jesus makes similar huge claims about Himself

(II) EIGHT CLAIMS JESUS MADE ABOUT HIMSELF

CLAIM #1 He claimed Authority to Forgive Sin

Matthew 9:2 *Some men brought to him a paralytic, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven."*

CLAIM #2) He claimed that He –not just His teaching- was to be followed.

Matthew 4:19 *"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."*

Griffith Thomas, *"Christianity is the only religion in the world that rests on the person of its founder."*

CLAIM # 3) Took on Himself Old Testament Titles given to God

CREATOR

Job 33:4----Heb. 1:8-12
Isa. 40:48---Col. 1:12-17
Gen 1:1-----Jn. 1:3

FIRST AND LAST

Isa. 48:12-----Rev. 1:17
Isa. 44:6-----Rev. 2:8
Isa. 43:10-----Rev. 22:13

SAVIOR

Ps. 106:21---Jn. 4:42
Ps. 45:21-23-Jn. 4:14
Is. 43:3-----Acts 20:28

ROCK

I Cor. 10:4- Deut. 32:4
II Sam. 22:32-I Pet. 2:

I AM (EGO EIMI)

Exo. 3:13----Jn. 8:24
Isa. 42:10---Jn. 8:58

Deut. 32:39--Jn. 13:19, 18:5

KING

Jer. 10:10---Matt. 2:1-6
Isa. 44:6----Lu. 23:3
Ps. 47:8-----Jn. 19:21

SHEPHERD

Isa. 40:11---Jn. 10:11
Ps. 100-----Heb. 13:20

Ps. 23-----I Pet. 5:4

LIGHT

Isa. 60:20---Jn. 1:9, 8:12

Ps. 27:1-----Lu. 2:32

CLAIM # 4) Considered Himself Worthy of **Honor Due God Alone**

The Bible demands that only God be worshipped, yet throughout the New Testament Jesus is worshipped and receives worship:

Matt. 2:2 ...and asked, 'Where is the One who has been born King of the Jews? We saw His star in the east and have come to **worship Him**'. "

Matt. 14:33 "Then those who were in the boat **worshipped him**, saying, 'Truly You are the Son of God'."

Matt. 28:9 "Suddenly Jesus met them. 'Greetings,' He said. They came to Him, clasped His feet and **worshipped Him**."

Lu. 24:52 "Then they **worshipped Him** and returned to Jerusalem with great joy."

Jn. 5:23 "that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, Who sent Him."

Jn. 9:38 "Then the man said, 'Lord, I believe,' and he **worshipped Him**."

Heb. 1:6 "And again, when God brings His firstborn into the world, he says, 'Let all God's angels **worship Him**'."

CLAIM # 5) He Claimed a **Unique** Father/Son Relationship
called God His Father and Himself the Son of God

CLAIM # 6) Claimed to be the **Judge of the Earth** (Matt 25)

CLAIM # 7) Claimed people's **eternal destiny** rested in His hands

CLAIM # 8) Said He would give us **what only God** could give us

(III) OTHER VIEWS OF JESUS THAT PEOPLE HAVE

A) THEY SAY HE IS THE **IDEAL PERSON**

1) Emphasis on human potential and what we can "become"

- 2) Becomes a picture of the reach for goodness. Being a good person.
- 3) The supreme example of love and sacrifice.
- 4) Death of Christ becomes “inspiring” but a substitute for my sin.

2) THEY SAY HE WAS A GOOD TEACHER

- a) People accepting His heroism, but not His claims
- b) People accepting His values, but not His Person
- c) Applauding His stand on Women, Hypocrisy, Standing up to Authorities, Injustice, but rejecting Him as Messiah

3) PEOPLE ARE STILL CONFUSED ABOUT WHO JESUS IS

- a) Held in high esteem yes, but still confused

(IV) JESUS HOWEVER CLAIMED SOMETHING GREATER THEN THIS: HE CLAIMED HE WAS THE ONLY WAY!

A) John 14:6 “Jesus answered, “I am **the way** and **the truth** and **the life**. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

B) Acts 4:12 **Salvation is found in no one else**, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

C) Jesus is claiming something far greater than anyone else has ever claimed....

D) He not only claimed that He was God, but that he was the ONLY EXCLUSIVE way to God

(V) LET’S LOOK CLOSER AT WHAT JESUS SAID ABOUT HIMSELF:

John 14:6 Jesus answered, “I am **the way** and **the truth** and **the life**. No one comes to the Father except through me.

A) “**THE WAY**”

1) This is not so much the opinion of Christians as it is the position of Jesus Christ Himself

b) It is unfashionable today to say that our religion is right and others are wrong

c) It would seem presumptuous and arrogant to take this position unless of course the One making the statement were God and Jesus Christ was!

d) Jesus IS claiming there is:

1) ONE WAY

e) Truth then is found in a person: Jesus Christ.

f) It is not so much a question as to what should I believe, but whom do I trust?

1) If I can trust Him all the questions will be answered as we follow

g) Since Truth is a Person then we will experience the truth in the same way we KNOW people. Through Experience.

1) The Validity and Evidence of His Word & Works.

(VI) OPTIONS WE DO NOT HAVE:

1) “Jesus was an exemplary man and a great spiritual leader... I cannot however believe He is God....”

2) “All religions teach the same thing, so I just take the best from each.. that’s my belief..” God be faithful...

3) I’ve lived a good life, I never killed anybody... I don’t see how God could turn me away....”

SUMMARY (Material taken from Survival Course © 1998 Probe Ministries)

He was either a **Liar**, a **Lunatic**, a **Legend**, or our **Lord**.

A. Considering the Options.

1. **Liar.** Everything that we know about Jesus discourages us from selecting this option. It is incomprehensible that the One who spoke of truth and righteousness was the greatest deceiver of history. He cannot be a great moral teacher and a liar at the same time.
2. **Lunatic.** Paranoid schizophrenics do not behave as Jesus did. Their behavior is often bizarre, out of control. They generally do not like other people and are mostly self-absorbed. Nor do they handle pressure well. Jesus exhibits none of these characteristics. He is kind and others-centered, and He faces pressure situations, including the events leading to and including His death, with composure and control.

3. **Legend.** The greatest difficulty with this option is the issue of **time**. Legends take time to develop. Yet most of the New Testament, including Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts, and all of Paul's Epistles were written by 68 A.D. An equivalent amount of time today would be the interval between President Kennedy's assassination in 1963 to the present. For people to start saying Kennedy claimed to be God, forgave people's sins, and was raised from the dead would be a difficult task to make credible. There are still too many people around who knew Jack Kennedy . . . and know better.
- 4.
5. **Lord.** In his book, *Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis said, "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."

CONCLUSION: We are called to accept Him as Lord of our lives as there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.

Jesus IS Lord!

