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A seemingly arrogant claim

Could Jesus be the only way?

BOOKLET 5

A seemingly arrogant claim

Could Jesus be the only way?

Why Christians believe Christianity to be true

A simple and authentic explanation of things you might not otherwise hear

A Shining Lights Trust (NZ) resource

By Dave Mann © 2023

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www.WhyChristiansBelieve.nz

DAVE MANN, AUTHOR



Do all roads lead to Rome?

As the ancient Roman Empire grew, they built roads from the capital city of Rome to the world. As a result, it was said that ‘all roads lead to Rome’. More recently, this saying has been attached to religion — as if all religions lead to God. Many in Western culture have gone along with it.

The most challenging claim in Christianity is not only Jesus’ claim that he was God visiting Earth, but that he was also the only way to really know God. If true, his claim affects every person and every religion.

Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

— John 14:6

With that in mind, this booklet will first look at Jesus among the other religions. We’ll then look at the three options that exist for how we might choose to view Jesus.



Introducing a uniquely global religion

Ironically, when considering Christianity among the other religions, some readers will think of a Christian as being a person of European descent, just as we might think of a Buddhist or Hindu as being of Asian descent.

The epicentre of Christianity started in the Middle East (Israel), after which it shifted to Northern Africa, and then Europe where it stayed for a long time. That centre is now shifting again, but to multiple places at the same time. Christianity is currently growing the fastest in Asia, South America and in parts of Africa. While critics in the West like to say, 'Christianity is a white man's religion', the face of Christianity is actually uniquely diverse.

For some comparisons, a 2012 study¹ showed that 99% of Hindus really do live in the Asia-Pacific (the study grouped Asia and the Pacific together), and the same percentage of all Buddhists do too. Islam is more global, with 62% in the Asia-Pacific, 20% across the Middle East and North Africa, and 16% in sub-Saharan Africa. Christianity is, however, not only the largest religion, but also remarkably 'global' — with roughly equal numbers in Europe (26%), Latin America (24%) and sub-Saharan Africa (24%), with the remaining quarter almost evenly divided between Asia-Pacific and North America.

So, when we ask, 'Why do Christians believe Christianity to be true?' we're not asking why some Westerners choose Christianity. We're asking why the widest possible variety of people across the globe have seen reason to do so. It's an intriguing observation and dynamic!

Respect, tolerance and freedom

A foundation for this discussion

Showing respect to others is important because there are a wide variety of beliefs and viewpoints on our planet. This makes the way we talk about others important because we will always be surrounded by people who hold to a variety of viewpoints.

In our current time in Western culture, it is sometimes suggested that a person is discriminating if they disagree with certain viewpoints that we're somehow 'all supposed to agree with'. Sometimes a person is labelled 'intolerant' simply because they have disagreed with someone else's viewpoint. The problem is that this way of thinking not only shuts down intelligent conversation; it is itself judgemental and intolerant! Here then is the boundary:

***It's not intolerant to disagree with someone.
Tolerance is about how we treat people —
irrespective of how much we disagree.***

This same principles of respect apply to discussions about religion. In Western culture, globalisation made discussing religion particularly sensitive due to our values of equality and tolerance. As international travel increased, we realised as a culture that we needed to show a greater respect for cultural and religious differences. This has been a healthy journey.

However, to state the boundary again — in the context of religion, this doesn't mean we now have to agree with all religions as if they were all somehow true. Neither does this mean we cannot each have or state our own views. Clearly we will all disagree with many people's beliefs on many things, and we will each have our reasons! *What's important is how we treat and speak about people — even when we disagree with their views.*

With this important foundation established, let's now take a brief look at Christianity among other religions.

PART 1. HOW IS JESUS DIFFERENT TO OTHER MAJOR RELIGIOUS LEADERS?

Even though it's popular these days to believe all religions are essentially the same, that idea doesn't actually make sense. If all religions are true, they are logically all not true — because they really do say opposite things in the most important areas!

A quick study, in fact, reveals that the world's religions are majorly different in the major areas.

To quote the Christian apologist, Gregory Koukl,



"all the religions are essentially the same except for the area of God and salvation and the problem of man and the afterlife and that kind of stuff. It turns out that on the big issues they are very, very different. They can't all be true."²

For example, God can't both exist and not exist! Or consider Jesus' claim to be the 'Man from God'. It's either true or not true. It can't be both.

Also, if someone says they believe all religions are the same, they haven't avoided the problem. They're equally making a truth claim — that all religions are the same. (They are therefore also saying that those who think differently from themselves are wrong.)

The world's religions are majorly different in many ways.

Let's look at some of the distinguishing traits of Jesus and compare them to other leading religious or secular figures.

1) *Jesus is distinct in his claims*

- The Buddha claimed to point the way.
- Muhammad claimed to be a prophet of God.
- Darwin claimed to be an accident of chance.
- Jesus, in contrast, claimed to be God and is the only major religious leader ever to have done so.

Jesus' claim is big and unique.

It's not just a little bit different. It's very different!



2) *Jesus' teaching on how we can be 'saved' is distinct*

- In Islam, salvation comes by belief in Allah, Muhammad his prophet, and good works/religious duties
- In Hinduism, it comes by overcoming karma and incarnations by 'good' works/religious duties
- In Buddhism, it comes by getting rid of all desires through the "Eightfold Path".
- In Christianity, it comes by faith alone in Jesus alone.³

What's often said to be Christianity's greatest distinction? Christianity is God trying to get to us — rather than us trying to get to God.

Some summarise this distinction as, 'do versus done'. God's offer of salvation (forgiveness, restored relationship, eternal life) is based on what God has done for us — not what we need to do for him. We're 'saved' because of God's generosity and love rather than by our good works.

In fact, the sobering reality (according to Christian belief) is that we could never be good enough — no matter how much we try! As Isaiah the prophet explained, "*our righteous acts are like filthy rags*"⁴ Because God's

standard is perfection, we'll never achieve the needed standard. That's the purpose Christians believe Jesus to have been born for — because of love — to provide complete forgiveness to all who are willing to turn their hearts toward God, asking his forgiveness as they decide to live life his way rather than their own.

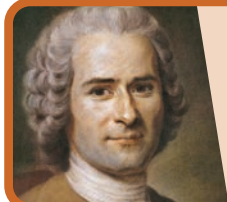
In a word, this defining difference is called *grace* — which means 'undeserved favour'.

GOD'S RICHES AT CHRIST'S EXPENSE

3) *Jesus' teachings on how we should live are distinct*

We can best summarise the uniqueness of Jesus' moral teachings by looking at what people — who did not believe in or follow him — wrote about him.

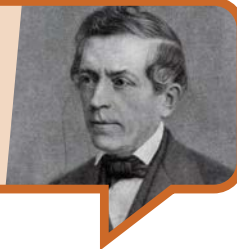
The French sceptic Jean-Jacques Rousseau stated his admiration of Jesus, saying,



"When Plato describes his imaginary righteous man... meriting the highest rewards of virtue, he describes exactly the character of Jesus Christ."⁵

Sceptic David Strauss (who rejected the divinity of Jesus and all the miracles) wrote,

*"This Christ...is historical, not mythical... He remains the highest model of religion within the reach of our thought.."*⁶



William Lecky, a noted Irish historian and dedicated opponent of organised Christianity, wrote,

"It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character which through all the changes of eighteen centuries has inspired the hearts of men with an impassioned love"

He continued saying Christianity has given the world, *"not only the highest pattern of virtue, but the strongest incentive to its practice... The simple record of these three short years of his active life has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhortations of moralists."*⁷



These are very high praises — when we realise that the people who wrote them had no personal faith in Jesus.

Napoleon Bonaparte's view of Jesus

Napoleon Bonaparte, the French military leader, did not believe in God. He was open to the idea a 'God' might exist at a distance (a 'deist') but had no faith in God. He felt religion was beneficial for practical reasons only and would happily change religious views to suit the circumstances. He said,

"It is by making myself Italian that I won minds in Italy. It is by making myself a Moslem that I established myself in Egypt. If I governed a nation of Jews, I should reestablish the Temple of Solomon."

Yet his study of Jesus led him to say these words:

"I know men; and I tell you that Jesus Christ is not a [ordinary] man. Superficial minds see a resemblance between Christ and the founders of empires, and the gods of other religions. That resemblance does not exist. There is between Christianity and whatever other religions the distance of infinity..."

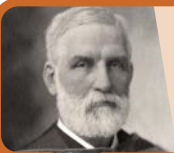
Everything in Christ astonishes me. His spirit overawes me, and His will confounds me. ...He is truly a being by Himself. His ideas and sentiments, the truth which He announces, His manner of convincing ... The nearer I approach, the more carefully I examine, everything is above me...

I search in vain in history to find the similar to Jesus Christ, or anything which can approach the gospel. Neither history, nor humanity, nor the ages, nor nature, offer me anything with which I am able to compare it or explain it. Here everything is extraordinary."⁶

— Napoleon Bonaparte, French military leader (1769-1821).

4) *Jesus' impact upon the world is distinct*

Jesus' life and teachings have had a unique impact for good upon our planet. William C. Robinson, Professor of information science and library science, said,

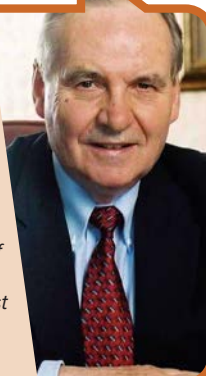


"If one takes a historically objective approach to the question it is found that even secular history affirms that Jesus... changed the course of the world's history."⁹

Apologist and theologian Norman Geisler wrote,

"The influence of the Bible and its teaching in the Western world is clear for all who study history. And the influential role of the West in the course of world events is equally clear. Civilization has been influenced more by the Judeo-Christian Scriptures than by any other book or series of books in the world."¹⁰

Elsewhere Geisler wrote, "Indeed, no great moral or religious work in the world exceeds the depth of morality in the principle of Christian love, and...the biblical view of God. The Bible presents the highest ideals known to men, ideals that have molded civilization."¹¹



Broadcaster D. James Kennedy wrote of Jesus saying,



"...All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man on this earth as much as that one solitary life."¹²

How did New Zealand get it so good?

How did we here in my homeland of New Zealand end up living in one of the most prosperous, free, equality-based and charitable societies in all known

history? The history books tell the story, and Christian influence and charity sit at the very core. This point is difficult for some to see today because the history has not been told. The values have become like the air we breathe. We therefore assume them to be 'general' or 'global'. A study of history, however, quickly shows that they're not.

TOM HOLLAND'S STORY

British-born Tom Holland was a secular historian who loved studying ancient cultures. He's the author of several bestsellers, telling the stories of history. Through his decades of research, he realised that he had very little in common with the various 'heroes' of his own history and culture. For example — to paraphrase his observations, 'Caesar was said to have killed a million Gauls and enslaved a million more at a time when wailing infants could be found on the roadside or on rubbish heaps left to die — though female infants might possibly be rescued to serve as slaves or be sold to brothels.'

He writes, *"It was not just the extremes"* of a lack of care *"that unsettled me, but the complete lack of any sense that the poor or weak might have the slightest intrinsic value. Why did I find this disturbing? Because, in my morals and ethics, I was not a Spartan or a Roman at all."*

His point is that he realised he was actually 'Christian' by values and culture — even though he was not a Christian by faith.¹³

The values that allow us to live with high levels of prosperity, equality, freedom and charity aren't 'common' or 'normal' in this world. They're Christian!



Writer Tom Holland

There are certainly more distinctives than those mentioned in these pages. The nature of Jesus' miracles is distinctive in the literature. The way Jesus fulfilled predictions made centuries earlier is highly unique and meaningful. The extent to which the life and teachings of Jesus can be validated within history is unique. However, sufficient has been said to show the significant nature of the differences that exist between the world's major religions and their leaders.

What about the evils committed in the name of religion?

Evils have been committed in the name of pretty much every belief on earth.

Some reasons this question is more commonly asked in our culture about the Christian faith are, (1) Christianity is the founding religion of our culture's values, and (2) while 'evil' things can be justified under many other religions, they cannot be justified under Christianity (because evil is an objective reality in Christianity). We therefore get particularly upset by evils committed in the name of the Christian faith.

How are we to view the evils committed in the name of Christianity? The answer is very simple. They were wrong! No excuse can be offered — and if the Christian faith is true, those doing these evil things will be judged for their actions!

However, this doesn't end the matter for many people. Here are two further thoughts in case they help.

1. The opposite of bad religion is good religion, not no religion.

In a 2007 interview, Bishop N. T. Wright made a telling comparison. He said, "*Religion has killed its thousands and secularisation its tens of thousands.*"¹⁴

The primary people who speak of religion as a bad thing are secularists. They promote a future based on no particular religious belief — as if it would be better. Wright therefore pointed out the irony. As I understand it, atheism caused more deaths in just the prior century than all religions combined in the past two thousand years. The opposite of bad religion is not therefore no religion, but good religion — and good religion exists!

2. Despite its betrayal by many, Christianity is the most benevolent religion

If ‘Christendom’ is the structures built around this faith and ‘Christianity’ the faith itself, Christendom hasn’t always been faithful to Christianity! Put differently, Christianity has been forever scarred by the perpetrators of evils like the Crusades of the Middle Ages and the witch hunts; the corruption of the structured church through the Middle Ages, and by those who have incorrectly used the Bible to justify their actions. A terrible example would be some who defended the cruel and inhumane trans-Atlantic slave trade of the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries with Bible verses!¹⁵

The balancing truth is that there are thousands of good stories for every bad one — and this point is uniquely valid if we do the comparisons. (For example, Christianity uniquely challenged and stopped that slave trade.)

A second and very significant difference exists between these evils and the ‘evils’ of many other religions. Five minutes spent reading Jesus’ teaching, like in Matthew chapters 5 to 7, quickly demonstrates that the perpetrators of the Crusades, for example, were not actually following Jesus’ teachings. These evils happened because people acted contrary to Christian belief — not because of it! The problem wasn’t Christianity, but the fact that these people weren’t Christian enough (if they were Christian at all)! This cannot be said of the ‘evils’ of many other beliefs.

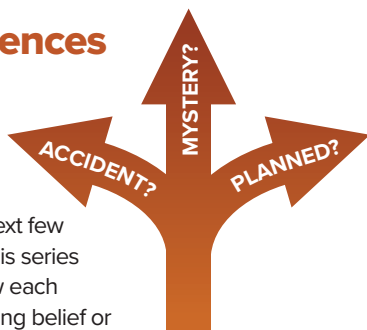
However, the best resolution is to simply recognise that all the evils done in the name of Christianity were wrong — full stop.

Of note, non-Christians ‘pointing the finger’ at Christianity often overlook the fact that Christians are angrier and more offended by these evils than they are, because it’s our faith that the perpetrators of these evils were misrepresenting and undermining.

We must also never forget that Jesus’ harshest words of condemnation were to hypocritical religious leaders for their evil acts.

As per Christian understanding, at the final judgement, no one who has committed evil in this life (you and me included) will get away with it. That is unless we receive God’s forgiveness (in which case the ‘hammer of the law’ for our wrongs fell on Jesus).

In summary of the differences between the religions



Accident, mystery or planned?

The very brief descriptions that follow in the next few pages are probably the most difficult part of this series to understand. What stands out though, is how each religion has its own logic, flowing from its starting belief or assumption (an accident, a mystery or planned).

There are four overarching questions that we all answer, one way or the other.

- » **Origins:** How did we get here?
- » **Morality:** Where do definitions of right and wrong come from?
- » **Meaning:** Why are we here?
- » **Hope:** Is there any greater hope?

All religious belief systems (including atheism) provide a set of answers to these questions.

The world's major religions also broadly sit within three broad categories. There's either a God, or a higher power ('gods' or force) or no God (including no spiritual realm). Put differently, our existence and lives here on earth are either an accident, a mystery or planned. Logically, only one of these can be true — not all.

Different cultures, therefore, really do think differently! A Westerner, unknowingly, thinks very much like a Christian. The meaning of a word like 'good' is, for example, understood in our culture from a Christian way of thinking. Most would be unaware that the word 'good' is understood quite differently in other parts of the world. This makes simple descriptions difficult.

The next three pages will go some way into explaining why many have chosen Christianity, with awareness of the variety of beliefs that exist.

Option 1: Accident?

(If there's no God or spiritual reality, it logically follows that...)

Origins: We're accidents of chance, and human life is not therefore actually special or of particular value. Our consciousness as thinking individuals is an illusion — even though it feels very real.

Morality: Moral truth (right and wrong) doesn't exist. We 'choose' our own morality as individuals or cultures. Nothing is actually wrong. Any idea we have of justice is therefore also cultural — not (objectively) true.

Meaning: There's no greater meaning, so we make the best of the life we have.

Hope: To enjoy our brief existence because this is all there is.



Option 2: Mystery?

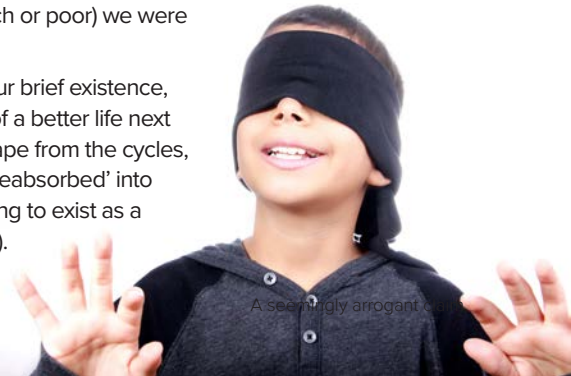
(If there's a higher power, or many 'gods' it logically follows that...)

Origins: Our existence is understood to be a mystery because there's no mind (person) to do the creating. Our existence as conscious thinking individuals is also an anomaly (unexplained) and without ultimate meaning.

Morality: Moral truth (right and wrong) doesn't exist. The 'yin and the yang' illustrate this belief. Morality is therefore defined by individuals or cultures for themselves — while noting that nothing is *actually* right or wrong.

Meaning: Purpose in life is therefore largely defined culturally (by a community), maybe including living to please (not anger) the gods or ancestors, doing 'good' by whatever definitions the culture has created for 'good', or by making the most of the life we have in whatever condition (e.g. rich or poor) we were condemned to live in (fate).

Hope: To make the best of our brief existence, while maybe being hopeful of a better life next time, and of an eventual escape from the cycles, at which point we might be 'reabsorbed' into the universe (therefore ceasing to exist as a conscious thinking individual).



Option 3: Planned?

(If there is a Creator God...)

Origins: We are created with purpose. Every person is loved and known by God.

Morality: Moral truths (actual right and wrong) exist in a (objectively) real way — as defined by a good God, based on what is loving and best for humanity as a whole, and with our full history in view.

Meaning: Despite the clear existence of evil and suffering, we are to live these brief lives in a way that pleases God, showing love and care to others. God's every motive and thought towards us is good. Everything we think and do has meaning because God is with us and watching.

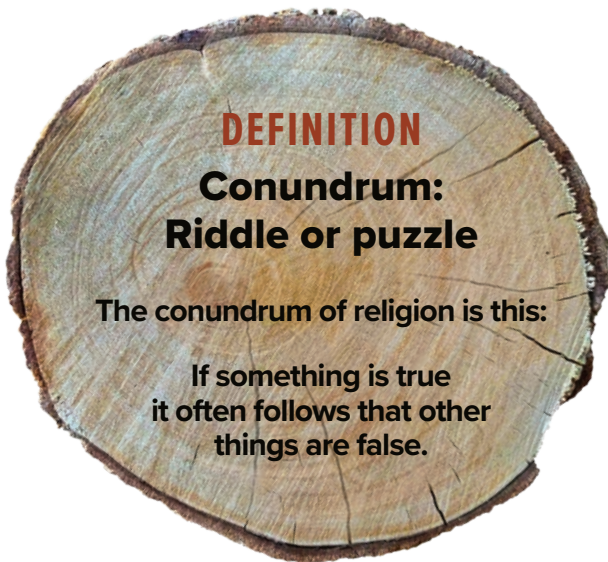
Hope: For those who have turned to receive God's forgiveness and follow his instructions, there's an eternal reward in a perfected new creation. This perspective brings purpose to every thought and action in this life and hope beyond every present circumstance.



These options represent three overarching categories in the world's major religions, which I've explained as simply as I can.

This is helpful for understanding how significant the differences are between the thinking of the world's religions.

What we can't avoid is that the differences are in the big things, not the small things. The differences sit at the core of these beliefs — not at their edges. Stated plainly, these different interpretations of our reality contradict each other — and cannot all be true.



DEFINITION

Conundrum: Riddle or puzzle

The conundrum of religion is this:

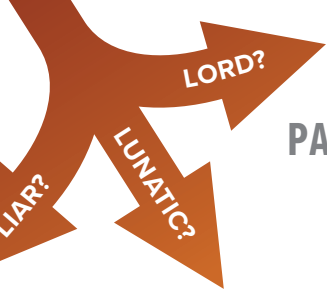
**If something is true
it often follows that other
things are false.**

Many Christians, while aware of the various religions, have chosen this faith because they saw rational merits in its claims, methods and teachings, as well as in reasons for believing those teachings, including its unique impact upon history and in people's lives.

If we accept that there is a God (that is, that our existence was planned), a logical next step is to consider carefully who Jesus is — or isn't.

Remember, Judaism, Christianity and Islam all interpret Jesus differently. To the Jews, Jesus was just a man. To the Christians, he's the Promised One from God. In Islam, he's a prophet.

So we will now look at three other options for how we view Jesus — which author C. S. Lewis eloquently wrote about.



PART 2: IS JESUS A LIAR, LUNATIC OR LORD?

When considering the various religions, many find themselves again looking at Jesus, to consider who he is.

Famous author, C. S. Lewis¹⁶ suggested *three options* for who Jesus was: Either Jesus was a *Liar*, or a *Lunatic*, or was really *Lord!*

(In the modern world, some have suggested Jesus might be just a *Legend* or myth also — but this has been discussed already, all evidence pointing to Jesus as a man of history.)¹⁷

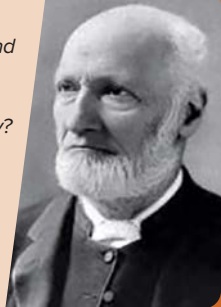
a) Could Jesus have been a liar?

Might Jesus have been intentionally deceiving everyone? Few have ever suggested it.

Historian Philip Schaff said,

"How in the name of logic, common sense, and experience, could an impostor... have invented, and consistently maintained from the beginning to the end, the purest and noblest character known in history with the most perfect air of truth and reality?"

How could he have conceived and successfully carried out a plan of unparalleled [benefit], moral [importance], and [significance], and sacrificed his own life for it, in the face of the strongest prejudices of his people and ages?"¹⁸



Put simply, Jesus' moral teachings and example were so remarkable and unrivalled, that the idea that he could have been a fraud doesn't make sense.

Josh McDowell asks,

*"Could a deceiver... teach such unselfish ethical truths and live such a morally exemplary life as Jesus did? The very notion is incredulous [makes no sense]."*¹⁹



b) Could Jesus have been a lunatic?

Madness is exactly what the Jewish leaders in Jesus' day accused Jesus of (John 10:20) — or of being demon-possessed. They weren't, however, health professionals, and the fact that they felt threatened by him needs noting. The verse after their accusation reads, *"But others said, 'These are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?'"*²⁰

Philosopher William Lane Craig said regarding Jesus' subtle but clear claim to be God, *"So extraordinary is Jesus' assertion, that inevitably the issue of his sanity has to come up."*²¹ After completing an epic study of Jesus, scholar James Dunn said, *"One last question cannot be ignored: Was Jesus mad?"*²²

The question of Jesus' insanity was asked during an interview to the noted psychology professor and author,



Gary Collins. He replied with quite remarkable insight, regarding what he observed of Jesus' emotional and mental state:

*"[Jesus] was loving but didn't let his
compassion immobilize him;*

*he didn't have a bloated ego, even though he
was often surrounded by adoring crowds;*

*he maintained balance despite an often
demanding lifestyle;*

*he always knew what he was doing
and where he was going;*

*he cared deeply about people, including women
and children, who weren't seen as being
important back then;*

*he was able to accept people while not merely
winking at their sin;*

*he responded to individuals based on where they
were at and what they uniquely needed...*

*...All in all, I just don't see signs that Jesus was
suffering from any known mental illness,"*

Then he concluded with a smile,

*"He was much healthier than anyone
else I know — including me!"²³*



The label of insanity does not, therefore, easily stick.

c) **Could Jesus be Lord?**

The word ‘Lord’ refers to one who is in charge or above us. What if Jesus was who he claimed to be?

As we’ve already discussed, if a God exists, miracles are possible. So there is no question God could visit Earth as a human if he wanted to. The question is whether he did.

If we accept that a God of some kind does exist, the question could be framed this way:

Is it possible that God really is loving and humble enough to do what it is believed by some that Jesus did (coming to earth to show us God’s ways, then dying in our place)?

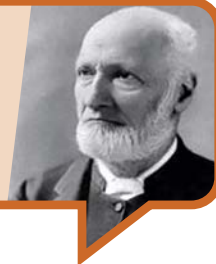
This is a profound question.

In assessing this, the next logical question to ask is whether Jesus’ life matches his claims!

The problem for the sceptic is that, at the very least, we’re looking at the most remarkable and unique person ever to have set foot on our planet — and who has as a result influenced history for good more than any other, which is no small matter.

Consider these words from historian Philip Schaff (1819-1893).

“A character so original, so complete, so uniformly consistent, so perfect, so human and yet so high above all human greatness, can be neither a fraud nor a fiction. The poet...would in this case be greater than the hero. It would take more than a Jesus to invent a Jesus.”²⁴



In other words, Schaff considered Jesus so unique and amazing that no human being could even make this story up.



How do we tell the real from the crazy?

Psychologist Gary R. Collins said (to paraphrase), 'If I claim to be the President of the United States but have none of the trappings... you'd be correct to say I was crazy. But if the real President claimed to be the President — that wouldn't be crazy.' He continued,

"Jesus didn't just claim to be God — he backed it up with amazing feats of healing, with astounding demonstrations of power over nature, with transcendent and unprecedented teaching, with divine insights into people, and ultimately with his own resurrection from the dead, which absolutely nobody else has been able to duplicate. So, when Jesus claimed to be God, it wasn't crazy."²⁵



Collins' point was that, if a God does exist, and if that God really is humble and loving, Jesus actually does 'fit that picture'.

When we study the life of Jesus, so long as we're accepting that a God could exist, Jesus is so exceptional that his claim seems plausible to many. This is why many today reach the same conclusions as the eyewitnesses of Jesus' life 2,000 years ago.

Those disciples couldn't imagine how God could become a human too — or more to the point, that he would. Is God really that humble and loving?



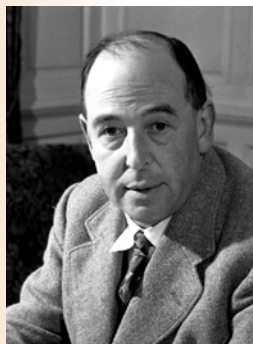
Yet, from knowing Jesus personally, they concluded this is indeed who Jesus is, just as many continue to do today.

In conclusion:

Author C. S. Lewis finished his thoughts about Jesus as either liar, lunatic or Lord with these words.

"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 a level with a 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 mad man 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 patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."²⁶



Summary:

Where will you place your faith?

We all put our faith in something. So, which view of life is most true?

Which makes best sense of the realities of our lives — as well as the vast array of evidence in history, literature, science, archaeology, psychology, miracles, and from the life testimony of people who've tried the various options?

Are we (a) accidents, (b) a mystery or (c) planned — and if our existence might all have been planned, was Jesus a liar, a lunatic or Lord?



There are just two more parts to this series.

Thanks for taking this journey, as we consider why Christians believe Christianity to be true.



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Endnotes

- 1 <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-exec/>
- 2 Gregory Koukl (Founder and President of Stand to Reason) as quoted in an interview, *'The Case for Faith'* by Lee Strobel. See www.leestrobel.com
- 3 Summarised by Dr David Geisler. www.meeeknessandtruth.org
- 4 Isaiah 64:6
- 5 Josh McDowell, *New Evidence That Demands A Verdict* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999) p312 quoting Philip Schaff, *The Person of Christ* (New York: American Tract Society, 1913), p134.
- 6 Ibid, p 312, quoting Wilbur Smith, *Have You Considered Him*, (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1970), p11.
- 7 Ibid, p161, quoting William E.H. Lecky, *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1903), p8.
- 8 Vernon Grounds, *The Reason for Our Hope* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1945), p37 as in McDowell, p161.
- 9 William Childs Robinson, *Our Lord* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1949), p29 as in McDowell, p138.
- 10 Ibid, p15, quoting Norman Geisler, *A General introduction to the Bible*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1968), p196-197.
- 11 Norman Geisler, *A General introduction to the Bible*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1968), p196-197.
- 12 D. James Kennedy, *What if Jesus had never been born?* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1994), p7-8.
- 13 Tom Holland, *Dominion — The Making of the Western Mind* (Little, Brown, 2019). We note that more recent writings and interviews suggest Holland may now be attending a local Anglican church.
- 14 Bishop N.T. Wright, interview on trevinwax.com, 19 November 2007
- 15 For awareness, it is Christianity that stopped the slave trade, and then slavery in our entire culture at that time. Using the Bible to defend slavery as some did is a high offence.
- 16 C.S. Lewis (1898-1963) is most famous for his book, 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe'.
- 17 See prior booklets. In conclusion, it is known that far too little time exists for legendary tendencies to have come into the Gospel accounts.
- 18 Quote simplified for the benefit of readers. 'Benefit' was 'beneficence'; 'importance' was 'magnitude'; 'significance' was 'sublimity'. Philip Schaff, *The Person of Christ* (New York: American Tract Society, 1913), p94-95.
- 19 McDowell, p159.
- 20 John 10:21
- 21 Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ* (Zondervan, 1998), p190.
- 22 Strobel, p190.
- 23 Strobel, p197.
- 24 Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1910), p109 as in McDowell, p160.
- 25 Strobel, p198.
- 26 C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (HarperSanFrancisco, 1980), p52.

It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character which through all the changes of eighteen centuries has inspired the hearts of men with an impassioned love” Christianity has given the world, “not only the highest pattern of virtue, but the strongest incentive to its practice . . . The simple record of these three short years of Jesus’ active life has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhortations of moralists.



— William Lecky, British historian and dedicated opponent of organised Christianity

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