

# 1 IS JESUS CHRIST WHO HE SAID HE IS?

---

## KEY POINTS

1. *If Jesus Christ IS NOT who He (and others) claimed He was, the reality of His claims and teachings is invalid.*
2. *If Jesus Christ IS who He (and others) claimed He was, the reality of His claims and teachings is valid.*

---

## IN THIS LESSON YOU WILL STUDY THESE QUESTIONS:

- Is God's existence possible?
  - What is the starting point to knowing whether Jesus is God?
  - How does Jesus Christ differ from other religious figures in history?
  - What is the significance of your decision about Jesus Christ?
- 

## IS GOD'S EXISTENCE POSSIBLE?

If we gathered religious experts from all over the world from different faiths and different backgrounds and asked them, “Who is God?” we would have many different definitions. Some would say God is personal. Some would say God is impersonal. In the same respect, if we believe that truth is non-contradictory, we would have to conclude that God cannot be both personal and impersonal at the same time. When we examine the questions about God—“Who is He?” and “How can I

know him?”—we encounter the limitations of a finite mind as it attempts to understand the infinite being, person, or God. Because of our finite minds, humankind has developed many different opinions about God.

***Can a person  
with finite  
understanding  
make an absolute  
statement about  
the nature of  
infinity?***

When a person says there is no God, that person violates a basic philosophical principle. That is a person with a finite understanding making an absolute statement about the nature of infinity. It would be like asking how much total knowledge humankind possesses. Commonly attributed to Albert Einstein, the Nobel Prize winner in physics, is the saying that humankind grasps less than one percent of total knowledge. If we comprehend less than one percent of total knowledge, is it not possible for God to exist in the other ninety-nine percent?

Humans' 1% 



TOTAL KNOWLEDGE

You can see that it is impossible for a person with a finite mind to make an absolute statement that there is no God because to do so one would need to possess total knowledge. Therefore, it is very difficult for people to think about what God is really like and be confident that their opinions are correct.

The following conversation at a university between a university professor and a man who said he was an atheist, helps to illustrate this point:

IS JESUS GOD

*Professor*

*Man*

How can you say you are an atheist (absolutely there is no God), when you agree that you have less than one percent of total knowledge?

I guess I need to say I am an agnostic. I don't know if there is a God.

Are you a hard agnostic or a soft agnostic?

What do you mean?

A hard agnostic says, "You can't know if there is a God," and a soft agnostic says, "I don't think there is a God."

I guess you would say I am a hard agnostic.

Can you ever be sure that you can be sure that there is no God? Or do you know for sure that you can't know anything for sure?

No, I can't say for sure that I can be sure there is no God.

So you are really a soft agnostic?

Yes, I guess that is true. I don't know if there is a God.

You sound to me like a man who is saying I have never seen any evidence that there is a God so I don't know if there is.

That's right, I have never been exposed to any evidence about God, life, life after death, or ultimate meaning in life.

We must start with two questions. Is there sufficient evidence for me to conclude that there is a God? And can I have a personal relationship with Him?

## WHAT IS THE STARTING POINT TO KNOWING WHETHER JESUS IS GOD?

Suppose we gather a panel of religious experts. And, suppose someone on this panel of religious experts stood up and said, “I am God Almighty. I am the Creator of the heavens and the earth. I made you and if you are ever to experience true meaning in your life, you must know me in a personal way and have a relationship with me.” If this happened, we would at least have a place to start. We could look at the evidence of his life to determine the truthfulness or falseness of that statement. And that is exactly what we have in the person of Jesus Christ.

## HOW DOES JESUS CHRIST DIFFER FROM OTHER RELIGIOUS FIGURES IN HISTORY?

During His earthly ministry two thousand years ago, Jesus said, “I and the Father are one.”<sup>1</sup> He said that He was the Maker of the heavens and the earth and that only through Him could humankind experience true peace and be given eternal life. He not only issued these dramatic declarations, He had the credentials to back them up. Therefore, Jesus’ claim to be God makes Him very unique.

---

***Jesus  
is the  
unique  
one.***

---

It is important for us to understand that Jesus is unique among worldwide religious figures in His claim to be God. Buddha never claimed to be God. Moses never claimed to be God. Mohammed never claimed to be Allah. Yet Jesus Christ claimed to be the TRUE and LIVING God!<sup>2</sup>

---

***Jesus was  
crucified  
because He  
claimed to be  
God.***

---

The historical record shows that Jesus was not crucified because He raised the dead or because He made the blind to see and the lame to walk. Jesus was crucified because He claimed to be God. That makes the question of His deity of utmost importance. Buddha viewed

himself as a teacher in search of the truth. Jesus said, “I am the Truth.”<sup>3</sup> Confucius never said he was holy.<sup>4</sup> Jesus said, “Who convicts me of sin?”<sup>5</sup> Mohammed is reported to have said that unless God threw his cloak of mercy over him, he had no hope. Jesus said, “If you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins.”<sup>6</sup> Jesus’ statements force the reader to make a choice. What you choose to do with Jesus Christ today is the most important decision you will ever make.

## **WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF YOUR DECISION ABOUT JESUS CHRIST?**

Your decision about Jesus Christ is more important than your ideology. It is more important than your career. And it is more important than the mate you choose. If Jesus is God, then you must decide what to do with that information. If Jesus is not God then we should have nothing to do with Him.

## **WHAT C.S. LEWIS SAYS ABOUT TAKING A POSITION ON JESUS CHRIST**

C. S. Lewis, formerly a professor at Oxford University, was an atheist who later became a Christian. In his writings Lewis emphasized that one cannot be neutral with Jesus Christ. Lewis wrote:

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: “I am 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 is 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 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 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 patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.<sup>7</sup>

I hope that when you have finished reading this book, you will not continue to say that Jesus was just a good man. If you wish to be honest in the interest of intellectual integrity, you cannot assume neutral ground. Jesus is either God, or He is a liar or a lunatic. You may conclude that Jesus is not God and choose to dismiss Him, but as Professor Lewis said, please do not say He was just a good moral leader.

**A QUESTION FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION:**

*“If Jesus Christ is as unique as this lesson indicates, is He qualified for us to believe that He is God?”*