

Jesus Christ Great Teacher or God Incarnate?

by Charles Leiter

Many think that Jesus was a “great teacher,” but they don’t know what He taught!

Jesus Christ said that He was the Messiah the Jews had awaited for over 700 years.

John 4:25-26 The woman said to Him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am He.’ (See also Matthew 16:15-17)

He said that He existed from all eternity.

John 17:5 ‘And now Father, glorify Me with Yourself with the glory which I had with You before the world was.’ John 8:58 Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I AM.’ Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him.

He said that He came down from heaven.

John 6:38 ‘For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.’

He taught that He was the only person in the world with a true knowledge of God.

Luke 10:22 ‘All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.’

He taught that He had the power to give men eternal life.

John 10:27-28 ‘My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish.’ Luke 23:43 And He said to him, ‘Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.’ (See also John 4:13-14; 17:2)

He directed men to Himself as the answer for all their soul’s needs.

John 6:35 ‘I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.’ John 8:12 ‘I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life.’ John 11:25 ‘I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies.’ (See also Matthew 11:28)

He claimed absolute devotion for Himself.

Matthew 10:37 ‘He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.’ (See also Luke 14:26)

He taught that He is the only way to God.

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.’

He taught that He had the power to forgive sins.

Luke 5:20-21 He said, ‘Friend, your sins are forgiven you.’ And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, ‘Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?’

But He also taught that He Himself was sinless and absolutely perfect.

John 8:29 ‘And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.’ John 14:9 ‘He who has seen Me has seen the Father.’

He said that He was God.

John 10:33 The Jews answered Him, ‘For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God.’ John 5:18 For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

He accepted worship from other men.

Matthew 14:33 And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, ‘You are certainly God’s Son!’ John 20:28 Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’

He taught that one day He will raise all the dead people in the world from their graves, just by speaking a word to them!

John 5:28-29 ‘An hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear My voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.’

He said that He would return at the end of the world to determine the eternal destinies of all men who have ever lived.

Matthew 25:31-32 ‘But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.’

In the words of C. S. Lewis:

“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 patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”