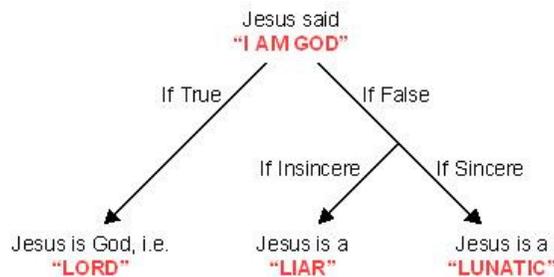


Jesus Lunatic, Liar, Legend or Lord

Unbelievers almost always say he was a good man, not a bad man; that he was a great moral teacher, a sage, a philosopher, a moralist, and a prophet, not a criminal, not a man who deserved to be crucified.

In his famous book *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis makes this statement, “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 a man who says he is a poached egg—or he would be the devil of hell. You must take your choice. Either this was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool 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 claimed to live a sinless life

John 8:46-47 “Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me?”

He claimed to be the only way to God

John 14:6 “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but by me.”

He claimed to have shared the glory of God in Heaven

John 17:5 “And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.”

He claimed to be able to forgive sins

Luke 5:20-21 “When Jesus saw their faith, he said, ‘Friend, your sins are forgiven.’ The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, ‘Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?’”

He claimed to be a Heavenly king

Luke 22:69 “But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God.”

He claimed to be able to give everlasting life

John 6:40 “For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

He claimed that he would die and come back to life

Luke 18:31-33 “Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, ‘We are going up into Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him. On the third day he will rise again.’”

He claimed that he would return again to judge the world

Matthew 25:31-32 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep and the goats.”

Lunatic

Theory: Jesus is just a crazy person that actually believes that He is God in human form but actually is not.

I am not an expert on crazy, despite what my friends say, but what do you think the chances are that a crazy person could live a sinless life? When Jesus asked “Which of you can convict me of Sin?” and no one spoke, I would say that is near impossible for someone who is not in their right mind to pull off. That would be very hard to do indeed; especially when you have people following you around all day observing you.

Speaking of the twelve disciples, do you not think that they would have noticed that this guy is crazy? They would have had to have been a bit nutty themselves to follow him.

They witnessed Jesus making the blind see and the blind guy comes back going “Um...Jesus...it didn't work...” they would have had a clue that Jesus was not all that He said He was.

Liar

Theory: Jesus was a liar. He knew that he was not the Son of God, but he just chose to say it to gain some fame and popularity.

This one is even harder to believe. Again how hard would it be for someone who knew he was not the Son of God and lying about it to live a perfect life? And when it came to the crucifixion, don't you think He would have piped up in there and said "Didn't mean it! It was all a joke!" but He never did, instead He prayed for them.

Would His disciples not have cracked when they were being put to death or before that point?

Peter Kreeft adds:

Jesus has in abundance precisely those qualities that liars and lunatics most conspicuously lack:

1. His practical wisdom, his ability to read human hearts, to understand people and the real, unspoken question behind their words, his ability to heal people's spirits as well as their bodies;
2. His deep and winning love, his passionate compassion, his ability to attract people and make them feel at home and forgiven, his authority, "not as the scribes"; and above all
3. His ability to astonish, his unpredictability, his creativity. Liars and lunatics are all so dull and predictable! No one who knows both the Gospels and human beings can seriously entertain the possibility that Jesus was a liar or a lunatic, a bad man.

Legend

Theory: Jesus was merely a great man and teacher, however, during the years that followed his life the stories grew and he became a god through legend.

The Church and the books of the New Testament began to form within a few years after His death. Not decades or centuries. If anything they said or wrote did not occur then the enemies of Jesus would have boldly stood up and debunked any legendary aspect.

And if it was a hoax perpetrated by His disciples what did they gain from it? Here is what they got: Their friends and families scorned them. Their social standing, possessions, and political privileges were stolen from them by both Jews and Romans. They were persecuted, imprisoned, whipped, tortured, exiled, crucified, eaten by lions, and cut to pieces by gladiators.

Compiled and adapted from Hunter, "Apologetics 101: Lunatic, Liar, Legend, or Lord?" at *Beyond Faith Ministries*; "Who is Jesus...Really?" at *Global Media Outreach*; and Peter Kreeft, "The Divinity of Christ," chapter 8 in *Fundamentals of the Faith*, Ignatius Press, 1988.