

Title Lunatic, Liar or Lord

Introduction

Clive Staples Lewis was born in 1898 and became a famous literary figure. He was raised in an protestant Irish home, but as a child of 15 embraced atheism. The reason was that he was angry with God for not existing.

Years later while teaching at Oxford, some of his Christian friends challenged him in his atheism. The Lord used this and gave him saving faith.

CS Lewsi describes his conversion in this way:

You must picture me alone in that room in Magdalen, night after night, feeling, whenever my mind lifted even for a second from my work, the steady, unrelenting approach of Him whom I so earnestly desired not to meet. That which I greatly feared had at last come upon me. In the Trinity Term of 1929 I gave in, and admitted that God was God, and knelt and prayed: perhaps, that night, the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England. (Ibid., 228–29)

But as Christian thinker he wrote Narnia, the Screwtape letters and much more. One of the well-known contributions he gave to the field of apologetics was what was termed the trilemma regarding the claims of Christ.

This is what he wrote:

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 patronising nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. . . . Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God. (C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity [London: Collins, 1952], 54–56)

In the gospel of Mark we see the roots of where CS Lewis reasoning possibly came from.

Claiming to be God in Mark 2:5-10, 14:61-62 left His hearers with one of three options.

They could reject Him as insane

They could reject Him as demonic

Or they could submit to Him and obey Him as Lord

Passage Mark 3:20-35

Proposition

Reject Jesus as lunatic or liar or submit to Him as Lord

1. Lunatic
2. Liar
3. Lord

Historical Background

The believers in Rome would have faced personal accusations from their enemies, they were confronted with the demand to worship Caesar as Lord. They would have found comfort from the fact that Jesus Himself experienced such accusations.

They would have also found comfort from the truth that Jesus adopted believers to be a part of His family...those who do His will, those who trust Him as saviour and submit to Him as Lord.

1. Lunatic

20 Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. 21 And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, "He is out of his mind." Mark 3:20–21 (ESV)

20 Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat

Jesus returned to the home of Peter and Andrew in Capernaum.

Once again, we see that the **Crowds gathered together** in such masses that it **resulted in Christ and His disciples** not being able to eat.

When you're in the **thick of ministry**, there often is **no time for leisure**.

31 And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. Mark 6:31 (ESV)

21 And when his family heard it

These were most like **his brothers "James, Joses, Judas and Simon**, Mother and sisters.

3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. Mark 6:3 (ESV)

At this stage His brothers and sister did not yet believe that He was the Messiah.

Jesus had left Nazareth at the age of 30 and entered into public ministry.

Luk 4:16-29 records how Jesus returned to Nazareth and had sharply rebuked His former neighbors, resulting in their desire to kill him.

He left from there to go to Capernaum.

His brothers and sisters had **most likely experienced this event this,** and now news had reached their ears again of **oppressing crowds, affecting Christ** that he could not even take care of Himself and His own needs.

So, they set out on a **rescue mission** to rescue Him from Himself.

they went out to seize him, for they were saying, “He is out of his mind.”

His family actually intended **to seize Him, a term**(meaning strength, to hold or to grasp fast, to have power over, to take control of someone or to take that person into **custody, to arrest the person** or to **apprehend**) person.

It's the term used for **arresting** John the Baptist in Mark 6:17

The reason they planned to do this was because they **firmly believed He was out of His mind.**

The GK term comes from 2 words (out & stand) or to be out of a place or state, to be out **of your mind, to be out of ones normal state** of mind, to be **out of your senses.**

13 For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. 2 Corinthians 5:13 (ESV)

27 I will send my terror before you and will throw into confusion all the people against whom you shall come, and I will make all your enemies turn their backs to you. Exodus 23:27 (ESV)

10 And the LORD threw them into a panic before Israel... Joshua 10:10 (ESV)

The strong drive for Jesus to proclaim **the gospel, the failure to properly eat and sleep led the family** to the conviction that He was not inn a **normal state of mind.** He was **not thinking rationally.**

They came to **rescue Jesus from himself** and **bring Him home.**

But Jesus was not out of His mind.

38 “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39 “This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. 40 “For this is the will of My Father, that everyone

who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.” John 6:38–40 (NASB95)

Application

Family or the people closest to you can at times become a big stumbling block to serve and obey the lord.

They can hinder you from doing the will of God.

They may have good intentions, but good intentions should never replace your obedience to the will of God.

When I joined the mission field, a family member of mine thought I was wasting my life.

Most of my English family did not understand what we were doing.

And then I also found that being with some family members actually hindered in our walk with God.

Those closest to you can at times very significantly affect you even obeying the Lord whole heartedly as you should

This passage reveals how the human heart can in its thinking to protect another person, maybe a family member actually be a hindrance to that person fulfilling the will of God and obeying God.

Jesus did warn us that because of the gospel, it can at times bring about a division in family.

⁵¹ Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. ⁵² For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. ⁵³ They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.” Luke 12:51–53 (ESV)

We should prioritize and love Christ more than even those closest to us.

2. Liar

22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, “He is possessed by Beelzebul,” and “by the prince of demons he casts out the demons.” 23 And he called them to him and said to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan? 24 If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. 26 And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end. 27 But no one can enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house. 28 “Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, 29 but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin”— 30 for they were saying, “He has an unclean spirit.”

Mark 3:22–30 (ESV)

22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem

These Scribes came from Jerusalem, which means a delegation of legal specialist that had been sent from the Sanhedrin.

They were official emissaries possibly from the Great Sanhedrin, coming to examine the miracles of Jesus and to determine whether Capernaum should be declared a seduced city, the prey of an apostate preacher.

They bring 2 separate charges:

were saying, “He is possessed by Beelzebul,” and “by the prince of demons he casts out the demons.”

1. That Jesus is demon possessed
2. That he casts out demons through the power of the prince of Demons referring to Satan.

The grammar indicates that they were **saying this continually** that he was continuously possessed by Beelzebub.

The term Beelzebub is difficult to define because of its various spellings.

- Some **connect it with Beelzebub**= Syrian god of Ekron= Lord of the dwelling or Lord of the Carrion fly, Lord of the dung heap

² And Ahaziah fell through the lattice in his upper chamber which was in Samaria, and became ill. So he sent messengers and said to them, "Go, inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, whether I will recover from this sickness." 2 Kings 1:2 (NASB95)

- However the term "zeboul" occurs **5 times in the OT** and each time refers to an **exalted prince** or ruler or to His dwelling place.

The best meaning = **Baal the prince, the arch ruler of a dynasty** of demons, which is equated with Satan.

So, the Scribes hearing the crowds seriously considering that Jesus may be the Messiah panic and make a **personal attack**.

This attack was designed to **dissuade the crowds from believing** in Jesus.

If He was **to be positioned as a representative** of Satan, it could poison the **multitudes** against Christ

Jesus' power could only come from one of two sources: **God or Satan**

When Jesus claimed to be God, **the leaders called him** a liar, claiming that His powers **belonged to the prince of Darkness**

But though they claimed to be spokesmen for God, in reality they were the ones under Satan's power.

Satan is called **the father of lies**.

All unbelievers **essentially follow the devil** and do the **will of Satan's** desires. (Eph 2:1-2)

John 8:44 ^aYou are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. ^bHe was a murderer from the beginning, and ^cdoes not stand in the truth, because **there is no truth in him.**

•When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

²³ And he called them to him and said to them in parables,

Jesus called the crowds to Himself(He did not want them to be misled) and began to speak to them in parables.

Parables were used to make a specific spiritual point and was use to obscure truth from unbelievers (Mt 13:11-12)

¹⁰ And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?” ¹¹ Jesus answered them, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. ¹² “For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. Matthew 13:10–12 (NASB95)

But on this occasion Jesus uses these analogies to make it clearly understood by all how ludicrous the nature of their accusations is.

He first confronts the 2nd charge that He was casting out demons by the power of Satan

“How can Satan cast out Satan? ²⁴ If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵ And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. ²⁶ And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end.

Point is this

If what they were saying is true, that Jesus was casting out demons by the power of Satan then by implication Satan was destroying His own realm.

If a kingdom is divided against itself, it will fall and a household divided against itself cannot be established

If the accusations are true then Satan is divided in His allegiance and will therefore be destroying His own realm.

Satan's kingdom may be chaotic and disorderly, but Satan does not deploy his agents to fight against each other.

The fact that Jesus spent his earthly ministry exposing, confronting, rebuking and casting out demons provided sufficient proof that He was not doing it by the power of Satan.

Jesus then answers the first charge that He is demon possessed.

27 But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house.

The true explanation for Christ authority over demons is not that he is empowered by Satan but that He has power over Satan.

In the parable the strong Man in the GK is simply the term strong, but which represents Satan.

His property(His goods) consists of the demonic forces and the oppressed human beings under his control.

Only one that is stronger than Him can enter his realm and plunder his goods.

Only one stronger than him could bind him, disperse his agents and liberate his captives from the kingdom of darkness.

This is exactly what Jesus had done and was continuing to do.

If Satan is the Strong one and someone stronger than Him is coming in to restrain his activities, then by implication He is not doing it by the power of Satan, nor by indwelling demons but by God and by the indwelling spirit of God.

28 "Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, 29 but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin"— 30 for they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit."

The Pharisees and Scribes had attributed the power of Jesus to Satan rather than the HS, which was the highest form of blasphemy and placed them in eternal jeopardy.

Jesus stated that any sin was forgivable including irreverent words against God and Jesus with one exception, blaspheming against the HS.

Jesus in His ministry had been perfectly submissive to the Father, totally empowered by the HS. At every point of his ministry the HS was actively at work.

At His birth Luk 1:35, baptism Mark 1:10, His temptation Mark 1:12, His ministry Luk 4:14, His miracles Mt 12:28, His death Heb 9:14, His resurrection Rom 1:4. He operated fully under the control of the HS

So those who saw the over whelming evidence of the Spirits power in Jesus ministry, yet remained utterly unwilling to accept Jesus as the Son of God and chose to attribute the spirits empowering work to Satan were guilty of blasphemy of the HS.

They were stubbornly refusing to believe in Christ and had permanently hardened their hearts against the Messiah.

29 but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin”— 30 for they were saying, “He has an unclean spirit.”

The religious leaders had substituted repentance for hardening, confession for plotting.

“When a man has become hardened so that he has made up his mind not to pay attention to the prompting of the Spirit, not to listen to his pleading and warnings, he has placed himself on the road that leads to hell.

Because it was their final conclusion that the Messiah was demon possessed and that He was doing these miracles by the power of Satan, they were guilty of an eternal sin.

Even after this warning the religious leaders continued to maintain that He was empowered by Satan. (Mt 10:25, Luk 11:15, John 10:20)

Those blaspheming the Holy Spirit intentionally and willfully cut themselves off from God’s saving grace.

In the book of Hebrew, we see a similar warning to those (unbelievers) who knew the truth of Christ, yet deliberately chose to reject Christ and the gospel and return to Judaism.

⁴ For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, ⁵ and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶ and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame. Hebrews 6:4–6 (NASB95)

They thought that they had judged Christ, but instead Christ judged them.

Application

For those in the church this morning, who have been hearing the gospel week after week, and yet you continue to harden your heart.

Even after hearing the proof of the Scriptures, even after seeing the change that the gospel is producing in other believers' lives, even though you know these things we teach are the truth, will you continue to choose reject the gospel.

Let this be a warning passage to you.

Do not harden your heart.

Do not exchange the truth for a lie and become hardened in your thinking against Christ and the gospel.

Repent, acknowledge your sinfulness in your heart to God, trust totally upon Christ for the forgiveness of sins.

I plead with you not to stay on this path of rebellion against God and the gospel.

3.Lord

³¹ And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside

they sent to him and called him. ³² And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you.” ³³ And he answered them, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” ³⁴ And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵ For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.” Mark 3:31–35 (ESV)

Jesus Family had left Nazareth and had finally arrived in Capernaum.

They sent word from outside the house to call Jesus.

Jesus was addressing a crowd sitting around him when he received the message.

Jesus responded in an unusual way.

*And he answered them, “Who are my mother and my brothers?”
³⁴ And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵ For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.”*

Jesus uses the interruption as an occasion to teach.

The rhetorical question: “**Who are my mother and my brothers?**” focusses the attention on the deeper issue, which involves an authentic relationship to him.

Jesus redefines family.

Jesus states that natural family, blood relationships cannot claim privilege.

Those who are with Christ submit to Christ as Lord and do God’s will are His family.

40 “For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.” John 6:40 (NASB95)

The point is that the only relationship that matters to Jesus is not a physical relationship but a spiritual relationship

ESV] John 1:12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,

35 For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.”

Jesus in essence was saying that what characterizes whether you are a child of God, part of His family is whether the **person is doing the will of God**.

This includes 2 aspects

- Trusting in **Christ as savior and Lord**
- **Submitting to Him as Lord** and obeying Him.

True saving faith is **evidenced through obedience to** God. (James 2:14-26)

And **if your saved, then** your part of the family of Christ.

In contrast to the Scribes who blasphemed the HS by rejecting the Son of God, in **essence rejecting the gospel** and **therefore not doing the will of God**, but rather doing the **will of Satan** were **not part of His family**.

- **Jesus’s biological family regarded Jesus as a lunatic.**
- The Scribes regarded Him as in **league with Satan** (the father of lies)
- But **His true followers**, those who belonged to His spiritual family were on that journey **to trust Him as Saviour and Lord** and to **walk in obedience to His moral will**.

Those who truly recognize Jesus as Lord, **respond in eagerness** to obey Him.

True conversion **is marked by obedience to the Word of God** and submission to the authority of Christ.

As John R. W. Stott explains:

In order to follow Christ we have to deny ourselves, to crucify ourselves, to lose ourselves. The full, inexorable demand of Jesus Christ is now laid bare. He does not call us to a sloppy half-heartedness, but to a vigorous, absolute commitment. He calls us to make him our Lord. The astonishing idea is current in some circles today that we can enjoy the benefits of Christ’s

*salvation without accepting the challenge of his **sovereign lordship**. Such an unbalanced notion is not to be found in the New Testament. **“Jesus is Lord”** is the earliest known formulation of the **creed of Christians**. In days when imperial Rome was pressing its citizens to say **“Caesar is Lord,”** these words had a **dangerous flavour**. But Christians did not flinch. They could not give Caesar their first allegiance, because they **had already given it to the Emperor Jesus**. God had **exalted his Son Jesus** far above all **principality and power and invested** him with a rank superior to every rank, that before him **“every knee should bow . . . and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.”** (John R. W. Stott, *Basic Christianity* [London, Inter-Varsity Press, 1971], 112–13)*

Application

Your eternal destiny is **determined by how you view Jesus**.

If you think of Jesus, your lefts only with these three options.

You either reject Him as **a lunatic, or a liar, that is possessed** by Satan or a demon .

Or you submit to Him as **Lord, master of your life, the supreme one in authority**.

Will you even this morning **repent of your sins**, and **entrust yourself totally** to Christ as Savior and Lord.

He **died for you** and paid the penalty for your sins

He **rose from the dead, conquering sin and death**

He **provides forgiveness** of sins for those who repent and believe in Him

MY brother or sister, this is the truth

There is no other option

There is no other way to God

There is no other view of Christ which is true and by which you can be saved

So obey the command to repent and trust Christ

Those who do the will of God by trusting Jesus as Saviour and Lord are promised eternal life.

And if you're a believer obey the demands to obey Christ as Lord out of gratitude.

Believers obey motivated by the gospel

Believers obey motivated by gratitude

Let me illustrate

1. If you lend me your pen to sign my name I am thankful, which is a common courtesy and a low level of gratitude.
2. If you rescue my child from a burning building, there is a significant higher level of gratitude
3. If you realize that Christ has saved you from:
 - From the kingdom of Satan
 - From the power of sin
 - From experiencing an eternity of the infinite unmixed wrath of God being tortured for ever and ever.

Then you find the level of gratitude that should motivate you to submit to Christ as Lord and serve Him as your master.

In conclusion

As you come to Jesus, you're not left with the option that He is some good moral teacher.

So you must either reject Him as a lunatic or a liar possessed by Satan or you believe and submit to Him as Lord and out of gratitude for what he has done seek to obey Him.

