

The Compass

a tool for disciplers



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Equipping Believers for Ministry

Lord, Liar, Lunatic

When you're sharing the gospel it's pretty important that you be able to make a compelling case that Jesus is God. C.S. Lewis' "Trilemma" is a brilliant way to do this. It helps to make a simple sketch as you go for this one. It's a very simple, but powerful argument:

Let me show you a real simple way to evaluate the claims Jesus made about Himself. Chiefly, and most preposterously, He claimed to be God. (Write "Jesus is God" at the top of the paper.)

There are really only two logical possibilities about that statement- either it's true or it's not true. (Draw two lines coming from "Jesus is God." At the end of one write "True." At the end of the other write "False.")

Now if it's true, then He really is God, and we ought to worship Him accordingly. He is the Lord of everything. (Draw a line coming down from "True" and write "Lord.") But if it's false, then there two options. Any idea what they are?

[Response.]

If Jesus' claim to be God is false, the two options are that either He knew it or He didn't. (Draw two lines coming out from "False." At the end of one write "He knew it," at the end of the other write, "He didn't know it.")

Look at that first option. If He claimed to be God, but He wasn't, and He knew He wasn't, what does that make Him?

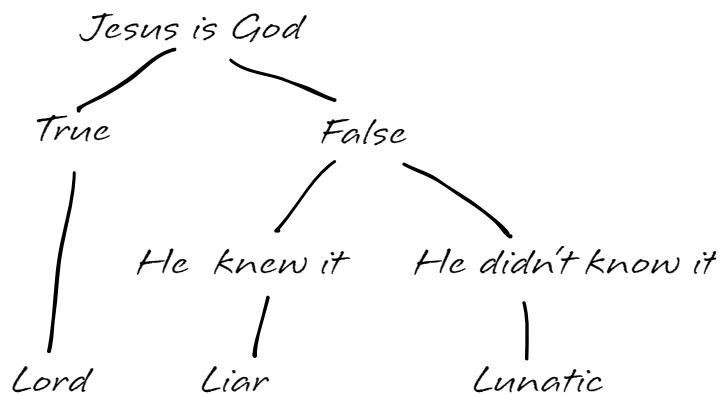
[A liar.]

That's right. He has pulled off the greatest scam the world has ever seen. For thousands of years, millions have lived and died for a charlatan. Christianity is a huge hoax. (Draw a line coming down from "He knew it" and write "Liar.")

Look at the other option. If Jesus claimed to be God, wasn't God, but genuinely thought He was, what does that make Him?

[A lunatic.]

That's right, He's a psycho. Think about it. If your roommate thinks she's smarter than you, she's kind of arrogant. If she thinks she's the smartest person at school, she's really out there. If she thinks she's the greatest mind ever to walk the earth, she's delusional. As her perceptions become more grandiose, and more divorced from reality, the more you're forced to conclude she's insane. And if Jesus really thought He was the God who made heaven and earth, but He was just an ordinary Jewish carpenter, then He was a loon. (Draw a line coming down from "He didn't know it" and write "Lunatic.")





Logically, then there are only three possibilities for Jesus' identity: He was either God, like He said, a liar who has scammed the world, or a raving lunatic.

There's a fourth option that people prefer because it makes Him nice and safe. It's that He was just a good teacher. Just a nice, moral man. But that's not possible. Insane people don't make particularly good teachers, and it would be hard to call the greatest scam artist "moral." You need to evaluate His claims honestly and take Him as He is, not invent some fourth option fantasy because it's more comfortable. Who do you think he was? Lord, Liar, or Lunatic?

End 

The Compass is the discipleship curriculum for Campus Crusade for Christ's Campus Ministry. It was created by Centerfield Productions, the field based division of CruPress. We'd love to hear your feedback on this lesson. Please write us at centerfield@uscm.org

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