

Counter Culture

"Who Is This Preacher?" - Matthew 7:28-29

Who is Jesus? People have been asking this question since Jesus walked the earth. The Sermon on The Mount answers the question.

I. Jesus' authority as the teacher.

Matthew 7:28-29 - "When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, for he taught with real authority - quite unlike their teachers of religious law."

A. He assumed the right to teach absolute truth.

B. He was different than the scribes.

So certain He was of the truth of His teaching, that He concluded His sermon by saying the only wise people are those who build their lives on what He said. The rest are fools. Why could He teach like this? Where did His authority come from?

II. Jesus' authority as the Christ (Messiah).

He did not think of Himself as another prophet or even the greatest of prophets. Rather, He taught in 5:17 that He was the very fulfillment of the prophets.

III. Jesus' authority as the Lord.

In 7:22, when Jesus speaks of the future when many will call Him "Lord, Lord", it is clear that He would only acknowledge those who called Him Lord and likewise obeyed Him. He was telling them that their eternal welfare was at stake based on whether they obeyed Him.

IV. Jesus' authority as the Savior.

It is plain that Jesus knew the way of salvation and taught it in this sermon. He spoke of who was and was not blessed, who would possess the kingdom of heaven, how to enter the narrow gate to the hard road that would lead to life, and which kind of spiritual house would survive the storm of God's judgment.

If you look closely into His message, we find that He not only taught the way of salvation; He actually bestowed it. It is interesting that the next two chapters of Matthew (8 & 9), testify of the works of Jesus, where He claims the authority to forgive sins and bestows that forgiveness on a paralyzed man, and then likens Himself as the Savior of sinners to a physician who heals the sick.

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.'"

V. Jesus' authority as the Judge.

He claimed that He Himself would be the Judge (7:22-23).

A. First, He would be the Judge, hearing the evidence and passing the sentence ("they will say to me", "I will declare").

B. Secondly, He Himself will be the criterion for the judgment. People will bring forth as evidence their use of His name in their work. But this will be inadmissible in His court. He will say to them "I never knew you."

C. Third, the sentence pronounced by Him will be concerned with Him also. "Depart from Me," for those who were evil. The terribleness of the eternal destruction and the ruin is that it will involve banishment from His presence.

VI. Jesus' authority as the Son of God.

Throughout the Sermon, Jesus refers to God as "your Father" (6:22, 7:11). But then once in 7:21, He refers to God as "My Father." Never did He include Himself with the followers and call God "our Father." God was referred to as "our Father" in the model prayer, but this was not Jesus' prayer, but a lesson on how THEY should pray.

Jesus was deeply conscious that God was His Father in a sense altogether different and unique from us. He later expressed this many times in the later chapters of Matthew (e.g. 11:27). And this leads us to the final point.

VII. Jesus' authority as God.

A. The ninth beatitude. (5:10-12)

B. In 7:22, when He warned them that a person who merely said "Lord, Lord" would not enter the kingdom of heaven, you would expect Him to follow by saying "But he who submits to my Lordship." Instead He says, "but He who does the will of My Father." If Jesus regarded obeying Him as Lord and doing the Father's will as equivalent, then He was putting Himself on a level with God.

C. In the following verses about the day of Judgment (7:22-23), He knew that the people He spoke to knew that God was the Judge, for they were Jews. Yet He taught them that it was to Himself, Jesus, that they would appeal to on the day of Judgment. Jesus would hear the evidence and would render a verdict and give out a sentence. And in doing so, He again is equating Himself with God.

Conclusion:

Who is Jesus? He must be either a tremendously evil liar, a severely deluded lunatic or the Lord of all which He claimed to be. C.S. Lewis put it so well in his book *Mere Christianity*. Liar, lunatic or Lord? Only three options, and only one makes reasonable sense. Once you answer who Jesus is, you must answer what you will do with him.