

Then Lewis adds this about Jesus: “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 up with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to” (from *Mere Christianity*).

Make no mistake about it: Jesus claimed to be God. He didn’t leave another option. His claim must be either *true* or *false*. It’s something that must be given serious consideration.

### Who do you say that Jesus is?

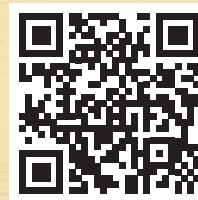
Jesus asked his disciples, “who do you say that I am?” (Matthew 16:15). It is a question that every one of us must answer now ... or when we face God at the final judgment: It is “appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). Thankfully, the Bible says that whoever believes in

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as their Savior from sin *is not condemned*. But it warns that “whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God” (John 3:18).

Three days after his crucifixion, Jesus rose from the grave, proving victory over sin’s ultimate consequence—death. He cleared the way to God “by being the first to rise from the dead” (Acts 26:23)!

Have you trusted in Jesus Christ as your Savior? If you haven’t, why not let him know right now that you believe that he is God’s Son, that you fully realize that when he died on the cross he was dying to take the penalty for your sins, so you can be forgiven by God and receive eternal life. Tell him that you want him to turn your life around, so you can please him in the way you live.

Discover for yourself that Jesus Christ is much, much more than a carpenter!



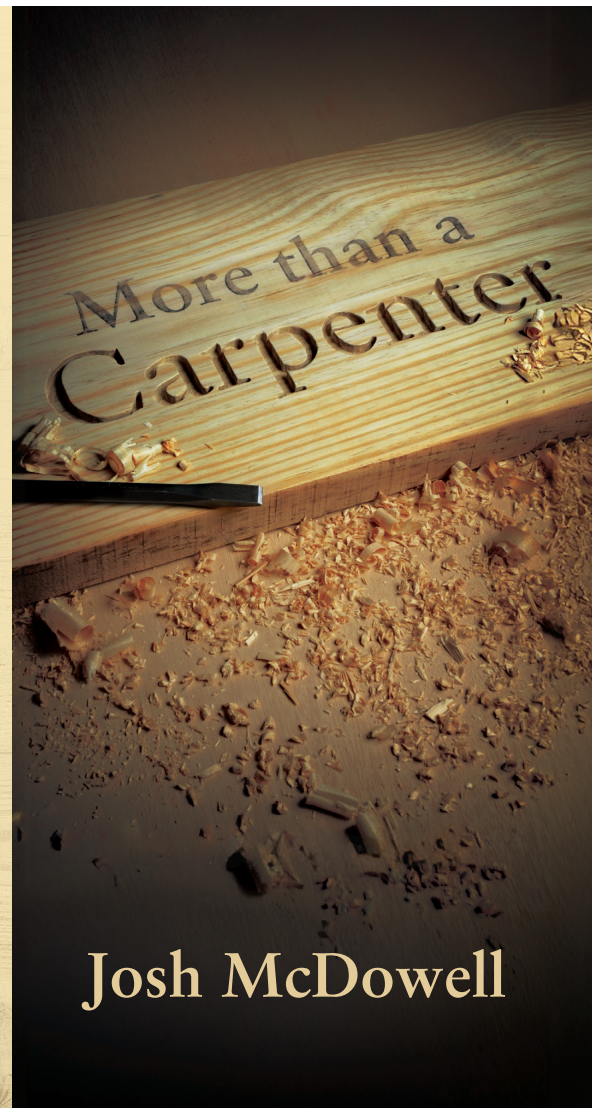
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# More Than a Carpenter

Two thousand years ago Jesus entered the human race. He was a member of a poor family, part of a small Jewish community, and a resident of one of the smallest countries in the world. For most of his 33 years on earth he was a carpenter, following in the profession of his stepfather. His last three years were spent in public ministry.

Ask a group of people “Who is Jesus Christ?” and they will usually respond that he was a great religious leader. I agree, but I believe he was much more.

## Who did Jesus claim to be?

The distinct claims of Jesus to be God eliminate the popular idea that he was just a good moral man or a prophet who said lots of profound things. Often such conclusions are passed off as the only

ones acceptable to scholars. The trouble is that many people agree, never seeing the error of such reasoning.

Who people believed Jesus to be was fundamentally important to him. To say the things Jesus said about himself and to claim the things he claimed, there's no way we can conclude that he was just a good moral man or a religious prophet. For example ...

He forgave sins—something only God can do.

“When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, ‘Son, *your sins are forgiven*.’ Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, ‘... *Who can forgive sins but God alone?*’” (Mark 2:5-7).

He claimed equality with God.

“*I and the Father are one*,” Jesus said. When the religious leaders prepared to stone him to death, Jesus asked, “I have shown you many good works from the Father;

for which of them are you going to stone me?” They answered, “It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but *for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God*” (John 10:30-33).

He claimed to be the only way to God.

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes *to the Father except through me*” (John 14:6).

These are hardly claims an ordinary person would make!

## How should we respond to Jesus' claims?

Author C.S. Lewis once believed that Jesus was just a good, moral teacher. Then he came to understand the logical conclusion of the claims Jesus made, and experienced a complete change of heart.

Afterwards 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’s 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.”

