

What Effect Does Jesus Have on You?

Matthew 16:13-18

Who is Jesus? What should we think of Him?

The people of Israel had many expectations of what the Messiah would be like when He came. Jesus did not match most people's expectations. They had a political-military person in mind. He would be the One who would save their nation from the plunder of the Gentiles against them. He would restore Israel to some former glory and escalate them to a higher glory. Of course He would be a "good and righteous" person, but action was what they were looking for. The humble beginnings of the man from Nazareth, Galilee wasn't in the scope of their imagination. It did not match their understanding of the Scriptures. The meek and lowly Jesus wasn't enough "*Messiah*" for many people. His miracles were amazing, confusing and, for many, maddening.

Jesus knew that there was much controversy and debate going on about Himself. It was important that His disciples did not get caught up in the confusion. So, He asked them the vital question: "... *But who do you say that I am?*" The blessed answer was not, "You are a good moral teacher." It was not, "You are the great reformer of Israel, and destroyer of the Roman Empire." The blessed answer was, "*You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!*"

Many people want to fit Jesus into their scheme of things. They would portray Him as "the good moral teacher who agrees with me. Jesus is on my side." The question, of course, is "Are we on His side?" Nicodemus tried to get on the good side of Jesus by coming to Him, one evening, and saying, "... *Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs / miracles that You do unless God is with him...*" (John 3:2). That confession was not good enough, and in the following verses Jesus let him know it. Some people try to "graciously" offer that Jesus is one of many ways to heaven. But Jesus told His disciples, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through me!*" (John 14:6). Things came to a climax, late one night, when the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes brought Jesus to an illegal trial. They spoke to Him plainly, "*If you are the Christ, tell us... Are you then the Son of God?*" He answered them plainly, "*Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God... You (rightly) say that I am (the Son of God)*". See Luke 22:66-71. That was enough to convince the Jewish counsel to have Jesus crucified. When it comes to believing, loving, or honoring Jesus, there is no middle ground. He either **was** a lying, blasphemous, lunatic – or He **is** God who became flesh and dwelled with us, died for our sins, and rose from the dead to accomplish the work of redemption – the **only** redemption that will save us and bring us to God. See John 1:1-18; Hebrews 1:1-3, 8-12; 7:24-27; Revelation 1:4-18.

Who is Jesus? What should we do with Him?

Consider the great teachers of religion, morality, and philosophy. None of them ever made the claim to be God – even those who falsely claimed to be the Messiah. The thought never entered their mind. They had no qualifications to claim divinity. But Jesus did. Buddha, Confucious, Socrates, Mohammed – all taught their ideals, sought followers, and died. Only Jesus rose from the dead. He is in a category all by Himself. Why should you follow Jesus? He’s the only One there is to follow. Following the followers of other religions and philosophies isn’t going to get you through life in this world, or prepare you for the next world (John 4:14; 5:21-29; 6:35-40; 7:37-39; 8:30-36; 10:27-30; 11:25-26; 14:1-6; 16:33; Romans 8:28-39).

C. S. Lewis suggested that there were three basic effects that Jesus had on people – Hatred, Terror, and Adoration (See his book, *“God in the Dock”*). No one in Jesus’s day ever tried to pass Him off as a mere good moral teacher. You either embraced His divinity, or you would be against Him, or at least avoid Him. People didn’t all come to their decisions about Jesus quickly. Some people reacted and we never see the final outcome of their decision concerning Jesus.

Let’s consider from Scripture some other effects that Jesus had on people. We can see these same effects today.

Sadness and Confusion

Matthew 19:16-22; John 3:1-10

Contemplation, Curious Respect, and Indecision

Mark 12:28-34; John 7:32-46 (cp. John 7:47-53)

Division, Debate, Conflict

John 7:43 (cp. John 7:40-44); Matthew 10:34-36

A decision is required (Matthew 10:32-39; John 8:21-59; 10:22-31 [cp. John 18:4-6 – How could they ignore / defy such authority and power?]). It is a decision that you have to live with. It is a decision that you have to live out. See Matthew 16:24-27; John 6:63-69; Philippians 3:8-16; Colossians 3:1-17; Romans 7:14 – 8:18; Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:12-16; 10:4-25; Galatians 2:20; II Corinthians 3:18.

The real question is not, “What will I do with Jesus?” It is really, “ What will He do with me?”

What will you do with Jesus?

Neutral you cannot be.

One day your heart will be asking,

What will He do with me?