

### Further Divisions among the Jews Because of Jesus Christ

#### John 10:19-21

John 10:19-21 - *“Therefore there was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings.”<sup>20</sup> And many of them said, “He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him?”*

<sup>21</sup> *Others said, “These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”*

#### Background notes

*“There was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings” (v10).*

This is the third time in the Gospel of John that we read of a division among the Jews because of Jesus Christ, His words, and His works.

John 7:40-43 says, *“Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, “Truly this is the Prophet.” Others said, “This is the Christ.” But some said, “Will the Christ come out of Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?” So there was a division among the people because of Him.”*

And in John 9:16, there was again a division among the Jews: *“Therefore some of the Pharisees said, “This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath.” Others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” And there was a division among them.”*

Now in John 10:19 we read, for a third time, of a division among the Jews. Once again it was the words of Jesus Christ that caused the division. *“There was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings.”* What were the particular sayings that caused the problem? During the Lord’s teaching about the shepherd and the sheep, it was especially **the Lord’s claims to deity** that caused the division.

A nice little story about sheep and a shepherd wouldn’t have caused a division among the Jews. But the fact that the Lord referred to Himself as the one true Shepherd, and that He would lay down His life for the sheep, and that He had power in Himself to come back to life again - in those sayings He was claiming to be **God!**

The Jews were divided in their opinion of Him because these saying were claims either of a man who was insane, or the claims of someone who was **more than a Man!** But He had healed a man who had been blind from birth, and they had to

admit that someone who was deluded or insane certainly couldn’t have done this miracle! So there was a division among them.

That same division will take place today when Jesus Christ's claims to deity are analyzed.

### **Doctrinal / Teaching Point**

#### **If Jesus was not more than a good man, He was a bad man or a madman!**

If Jesus was not **more** than a good man, He was a very **bad** man, or He was a **madman**! That statement may shake you at first, but it is a very logical statement.

As Christians, we know that Jesus was much more than a "good man." He was God – and He is God!

But many unbelievers will say, "I agree that Jesus existed, but I think that Jesus was a good man - but wasn't God!" Well, we can show unbelievers, **logically**, that Jesus **had** to be God. If Jesus said he claimed to be God but He wasn't God, then He was a liar (not a "good man, but a very bad man), or He was mentally ill (a lunatic or a madman). So logically, the unbeliever **can't** conclude that Jesus was just a "good man." He was either **more** than a good man, or else He lied, or He was insane!

I'm sure some of you have seen the "Liar, Lunatic, or Lord" logic diagram – you can find it in Josh McDowell's books. In case you haven't seen the diagram or heard this "Liar, Lunatic, or Lord" argument, I'll talk you through it, because the reasons for the division of the Jews in John 10 can definitely be shown from this logical argument.

Just about everyone agrees that Jesus was a real, historical person. He was not a fantasy or a legend. But what about His claim to be God? Did He make that claim or not? The evidence is **overwhelming** that Jesus **did indeed** claim that He is God – and not only biblical evidence, but also extra-biblical evidence as well.

As to the biblical evidence, the Gospel of John is loaded with statements He made that claimed His deity. For example, in John 14:8-11 Philip asked the Lord, *"Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us."* Jesus said to him, *"Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves."*

And in John 8:56-59 the Lord said to the Pharisees, *"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."* Then the Jews said to Him, *"You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"* Jesus said to them, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."* (That is the divine title from the Old Testament.) *Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by."*

When the Lord Jesus said, "Love your neighbor as yourself" the Pharisees didn't pick up rocks to stone Him. No – they were picked up rocks to stone the Lord because He had claimed to be God – and they knew it!

In John 10:30-33, His claim to deity is very clear. Once again we see the violent reaction of the Jews: *"Then the Jews took*

*up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?" The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God."*

The Jews didn't stone people for ethical statements like "Turn the other cheek," or "Love your neighbor as yourself." No, they stoned people for **blasphemy**. They considered claiming to be God was blasphemy - and rightly so! They tried to stone Jesus, because He had stated that He was God. The biblical evidence is that Jesus clearly claimed to be God.

Now what about "extra-biblical" evidence? What about ancient sources other than the Bible? Writings other than Scripture are definitely available, and they show that Jesus claimed to be God. I think that the best are the early Jewish sources, ancient sources like the Talmud. In these ancient Jewish writings, Jesus is not only acknowledged as having lived, but having done the miracles as well.

So you can go to sources other than the Bible and get documentation that Jesus did miracles. The Talmudic writings of the Jews certainly attest to His miracles. Of course they say that He did His miracles by a different power - but they don't deny the miracles. The Talmud doesn't do what the modern liberals try to do. Modern liberals either completely deny the miracles - or they try to water them down with "natural" explanations. The ancient Jewish sources didn't accept Jesus as the Messiah, but they didn't deny His miracles.

When it comes to the claims Jesus made, these early Jewish sources say that He "beguiled and deceived the people." That's the way they put it. Remember that Judaism didn't accept Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, but why would they say He deceived the people? You don't "beguile" or "deceive" people for saying, "Love the Lord thy God with all your heart and soul and mind." The Jews would never have said that He deceived the people for making statements like that! Clearly the evidence is that Jesus claimed to be God, and the Jewish leaders recognized that.

So Jesus **did** claim to be God, and the evidence is available from biblical sources and extra-biblical sources as well.

Well, if Jesus claimed to be God, but He really **wasn't** God, then He clearly was **not** a **good** man. He was not a "great human leader." If He claimed to be God, but that claim was false and He **knew** the claim was false, then He was a liar - a **bad** man!

And the record of the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth is far from being the record of a liar! Liars are notorious for lying to protect themselves. Liars are not caring and self-giving to other people. There's no evidence that Jesus was a liar.

If Jesus claimed to be God, but that claim was false and He **didn't know** the claim was false, then He was deluded, or He was insane, or He was demonically possessed. And that is exactly what some of the Jews concluded. *"Therefore there was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings. And many of them said, "He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him?" Others said, "These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"*

But the historical record shows that Jesus of Nazareth was anything but deluded or unbalanced or demon-possessed. Insane people aren't concerned for the welfare others as Jesus was. In fact many of the Jews concluded, *"These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"*

So - logically - a person has only three options from which to choose. Either Jesus was a liar, or He was a lunatic - or He is truly Lord! **And the only logical conclusion is that Jesus was and is Lord!** And once that fact is established, a person has only two choices. They must either believe and accept Him as Savior - or reject Him.

No one can logically conclude that Jesus was just a "good man." We've shown that if Jesus was not **more** than a good man, He was a bad man or a madman. As believers, we know that He was more than a good man! He was God - and He is God! We know it, and we can show unbelievers that it's logical to conclude this as well. There really is no other option!

## Practical Application

### Let's not lose our "logic advantage"!

How many of you know unbelievers who would say that they believe Jesus existed, but He was "just a good man." I'm sure many of you have heard that comment before. We probably all know people like that.

Well, the next time you witness to them, don't lose your "logic advantage"! Show them that they **can't** take the position that Jesus was just "a good man." It's an untenable position. It's not logical!

Don't let them off the "logic hook"! We have the logic advantage on our side here, so let's not lose it. As we have seen, there is **no** way that Jesus was **just** a good man! If He wasn't who He said He was - **God** - He either lied or He was deluded.

You can help your unbelieving, skeptic friends to see that they can't take the position that Jesus was just a good man. It's impossible! Force them to that point!

Let's not lose our "logic advantage"!