

# What Leading Thinkers Have Said About Jesus

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In the last article we looked at what Jesus had to say about Himself in the Gospel record. Now in light of such claims by Jesus, consider what informed and great people historically and today—believers and unbelievers alike—have said about Him. Could all of them, down to the last one, be mistaken? Certainly if men and women, as those listed below, felt it was vital to be informed about Jesus Christ, perhaps you should also become informed. Can you read *all* of the statements in the following chart and still believe investigating Jesus is not a worthwhile endeavor?

*Blaise Pascal*, French philosopher and scientist, author of the classic work *Pensees*:

“Jesus Christ is the centre of everything and the object of everything, and he who does not know Him knows nothing of the order of nature and nothing of himself.”

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*, American poet and transcendentalist: “The unique impression of Jesus upon mankind—whose name is not so much written as ploughed into the history of the world—is proof of the subtle virtue of this infusion.”

*Augustine of Hippo*, church theologian and philosopher: “Christ is not valued at all unless He be valued above all.”

*Napoleon Bonaparte*, Emperor of France: “I know men; and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between Him and every other person in the world, there is no possible term of comparison. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I have founded empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded His empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for Him.... There is not a God in heaven, if a mere man was able to conceive and execute successfully the gigantic design of making Himself the object of supreme worship, by usurping the name of God. Jesus alone dared to do this.”

*Pope John Paul II*: “Christ is absolutely original and absolutely unique.” <sup>5</sup>

*Robert Louis Stevenson*, Scottish novelist and poet: “When Christ came into my life, I came about like a well-handled ship.”

*Alfred Lord Tennyson*, English poet: “The Lord from Heaven born of a village girl, carpenter’s son, Wonderful, Prince of Peace, the mighty God.”

*Lew Wallace*, American lawyer, soldier, and author of *Ben Hur*: “After six years given to the impartial investigation of Christianity, as to its truth or falsity, I have come to the deliberate conclusion that Jesus Christ was the Messiah of the Jews, the Savior of the world, and my personal Savior.”

*H. G. Wells*, English novelist and historian, author of *The Time Machine*, *War of the Worlds*, and *An Outline of History*: “The Galilean has been too great for our small hearts.”

*Malcolm Muggeridge*, English novelist and critic: “The coming of Jesus into the world is the most stupendous event in human history.... What is unique about Jesus is that, on the testimony and in the experience of innumerable people, of all sorts and conditions, of all races and nationalities from the simplest and most primitive to the most sophisticated and cultivated, He remains alive. That the resurrection happened seems to be indubitably true. Either Jesus never was, or He still is.” <sup>6</sup>

*Albert Einstein*, American physicist who originated the theory of relativity: "I am enthralled by the luminous figure of the Nazarene."

*Sir Lionell Luckhoo*, listed in the *Guinness Book of Records*, the world's "most successful lawyer," knighted twice by the queen of England: "I have spent more than forty-two years as a defense trial lawyer appearing in many parts of the world.... I say unequivocally the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ is so overwhelming that it compels acceptance by proof which leaves absolutely no doubt." <sup>7</sup>

*George Barlow*: "The example of Christ is supreme in its authority."

*Vance Havner*: "Jesus was the most disturbing person in history."

*John M. Mason*, American educator, provost, Columbia College: "He who thinks he hath no need of Christ hath too high thoughts of himself. He who thinks Christ cannot help him hath too low thoughts of Christ."

*G. Campbell Morgan*, British preacher, author: "Everything that is really worthwhile in the morality of today has come to the world through Christ."

*Sholem Asch*, Polish novelist and playwright: "Jesus Christ is the outstanding personality of all time...no other teacher—Jewish, Christian, Buddhist, Mohammedan—is *still* a teacher whose teaching is such a guidepost for the world we live in....He became the Light of the World. Why shouldn't I, a Jew, be proud of that?"

*William E. Biederwolf*, American educator and evangelist: "A man who can read the New Testament and not see that Christ claims to be more than a man, can look all over the sky at high noon on a cloudless day and not see the sun."

*William Ellery Channing*, Unitarian leader and abolitionist: "I know of no sincere enduring good but the moral excellency which shines forth in Jesus Christ."

*Joseph Ernest Renan*, French nationalist and skeptic, humanist historian of religion: "Jesus was the greatest religious genius that ever lived. His beauty is eternal, and His reign shall never end. Jesus is in every respect unique, and nothing can be compared with Him. All history is incomprehensible without Christ... Whatever may be the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed.... All ages will proclaim that among the sons of men there is none born greater than Jesus."

*P. Carnegie Simpson*: "The face of Christ does not indeed show us everything, but it shows the one thing we need to know—the character of God. God is the God who sent Jesus."

*Phillips Brooks*, Harvard-educated preacher and bishop of Massachusetts who preached before Queen Victoria: "That Christ should be and should be Christ appears the one reasonable, natural, certain thing in all the universe. In Him all broken lines unite; in Him all scattered sounds are gathered into harmony."

*Jean Baptiste Lacordaire*, French prelate and revolutionary: "Whatever motives Jesus Christ might have had against calling Himself God, He did call Himself God; such is the fact."

*Bishop William Quayle*: "This calm assumption of Jesus that He is not a sinner will take hold of the wrists of any thoughtful mind and twist them till it must come to its knees."

*Leonce De Grandmaison*: "Either Jesus was and knew what He was, what He proclaimed Himself to be, or else He was a pitiable visionary."

*W. A. Visser't Hooft*, Dutch ecumenical, grand secretary of the World Council of Churches: "The Christian Church stands or falls with this simple proposition: that Jesus is nothing less than God's self-communication to men, and the only certain source of our knowledge of God."

*Fulton J. Sheen*, Roman Catholic bishop and broadcaster: "If we are to find the secret of

His Timelessness—the simplicity of His Wisdom, the transforming power of His Doctrine, we must go out beyond time to the Timelessness, beyond the complex to the Perfect, beyond Change to the Changeless, out beyond the margins of the world to the Perfect God.”

*Dorothy Day*, American writer and social reformer: “Christ is God or He is the world’s greatest liar and imposter.”

*Herbert E. Cory*: “The witnesses for the historical authentication and for the proofs of the Divinity of Jesus, from the earliest days, are far more comprehensive than the testimonies for the existence of many famous historical characters we accept without question.”

*P. T. Forsyth*, Congregationalist theologian who rejected his earlier liberalism and, according to E. Brunner, became the greatest British theologian of his day: “An undogmatic Christ is the advertisement of a dying faith.”

*Charles Lamb*, English essayist and critic, author of *Tales from Shakespeare*: “If Shakespeare should come into this room, we would all rise; but if Jesus Christ should come in, we would all kneel.”

*C. F. Andrews*, Anglican missionary to India: “The supreme miracle of Christ’s character lies in this: that He combines within Himself, as no other figure in human history has ever done, the qualities of every race.”

*F. R. Berry*: “The Humanist suggestion that Jesus was ‘morally right, but religiously mistaken’ defies all psychological probabilities.”<sup>8</sup>

All this is no mean testimony, but it could be multiplied many times over. Still, there are many people and groups today claiming false things about Jesus, and many others who reject or oppose Him. This includes liberal theologians who reject His deity, religious cults like Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses who claim to honor Him and accept His teachings but do not, and those in other world faiths who reinvent His messages to conform to their own.<sup>9</sup> Because such misinformation is widespread today, even the one who names the name of Christ needs to be thoroughly versed on what history and Scripture teach about Him and why contrary views are invalid.

#### Footnotes:

5. Pope John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), p. 42.

6. Malcolm Muggeridge, *Jesus: The Man Who Lives* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), pp. 7, 184, 191.

7. Sir Lionell Luckhoo, *What Is Your Verdict?* (Fellowship Press, 1984), p. 12 cited in Ross Clifford, *Leading Lawyers Look at the Resurrection* (Claremont, CA: Albatross, 1991), p. 112.

8. Unless otherwise indicated these citations were taken from various books of contemporary or historical quotations, i.e., Rhoda Tripp (compiler), *The International Thesaurus of Quotations*; Ralph L. Woods (compiler and ed.), *The World Treasury of Religious Quotations*; William Neil (ed.), *Concise Dictionary of Religious Quotations*; Jonathan Green (compiler), *Morrow’s International Dictionary of Contemporary Quotations*.

9. See e.g., our “Facts On” series on Mormonism, Jehovah’s Witness, Islam, our book *Cult Watch* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1993), and other titles.