

# Acts 4 v 12 Part 1

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Preacher: Brian Edwards

[ 0 : 00 ] Acts chapter 4 verse 1. The priests and the captains of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people.

They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. They seized Peter and John and because it was evening they put them in jail until the next day.

But many who heard the message believed and the number of men grew to about 5,000. The next day the rulers, elders and teachers of the law met in Jerusalem.

Annas the high priest was there and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and the other men of the high priest family. They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them. By what power or what name did you do this?

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, Rulers and elders of the people, if we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel, it is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom you crucified, but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.

[ 1 : 18 ] He is the stone the builders rejected, which has become the capstone. Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

And when they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together, what are we going to do with these men?

They asked. Everybody living in Jerusalem knows they've done an outstanding miracle and we can't deny it. But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn these men to speak no longer to anyone in this name.

Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, Mark that.

[ 2 : 36 ] We'll come back to that passage shortly. We're going to sing a hymn. I guess it'll come up on the overhead. I hope it will or I'll be singing a solo. But that won't please you.

It's a great hymn. Hallelujah, Raise the Anthem. It actually comes from the Praise Hymn Book and it's an old Baptist hymn. First published in September 1805.

So that's quite a long time ago, just over 200 years ago now. It speaks of Jesus Christ as creator. He planned our salvation and he is now in glory.

It was first published in the Gospel magazine and there have been many revisions of it since then. So we're not singing exactly the original but then you rarely do with any of your hymns. And the tune it's being played to, Neander, is even older than the hymn.

The tune, the original tune goes back to the 17th century. So let's stand. Yes, stand. Visitor, non-visitor, we'll stand and we'll sing this great hymn together.

[ 3 : 38 ] Turn with me again in your Bible please to the passage we read in Acts chapter 4.

It's always good to have it open in front of you. And verse 12 is the verse I want to bring to you both this morning and if you're back again this evening, as I hope many of you will be, I'm going to stay with the same verse and take it from a different angle.

But this morning, verse 12, chapter 4 of the Acts of the Apostles. Peter says, salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

I want to talk to you this morning about what I call the authentic Jesus. The persecution of Christians in the first three centuries up until the early part of the fourth century centered around two

particular reasons.

The first was what we may call exclusivism. In other words, the Christians said, there is no other name. There is no other God.

[ 5 : 02 ] There is no other way of salvation. Now if the Christians had said to the Roman authorities, listen, we've got a new God. His name is Jesus. Can we add him to the pantheon, the Roman pantheon of all the gods that the Greeks and the Romans have?

The Romans would have said, be our guest. Where would you like to put his image? Where would you like to put a new temple for him? If you can build it, you can afford it, you can build it. There would have been no problem.

But the Christians could not say that. The Christians said there is no other name. Only the name of Jesus for salvation. The other problem was what we may call evangelism.

You see, the whole of the Roman world was what we call a polytheistic world. That means there were many gods, loads of them, gods and goddesses. But there was one exception and that was the Jews.

They only believed in one God. And the Romans were quite comfortable with that because the Jews kept their head down and they didn't evangelize. They didn't keep telling everybody else.

[ 6 : 05 ] They didn't trouble anybody else. They kept quiet about it and they got on and worshipped their God. And the Romans said, that's okay. Just behave yourselves and you can carry on. But the Christians couldn't do that either.

They were so passionate and certain that there was no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. Everybody must know it. And so they were constantly, here's Peter, standing up in the streets of Jerusalem telling everybody that they must believe in Jesus. They must be saved. And so for those two reasons, exclusivism, evangelism, the Christians were persecuted for 300 years.

And 2,000 years later, nothing has changed. True Christianity will always clash with contemporary society on those two counts.

And the ridicule that biblical Christianity receives is nothing new, is it? Didn't the master receive the same? Listen to some of the things they said about Jesus.

[ 7 : 09 ] Isn't this the carpenter's son? Who does he think he is? Nazareth? Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?

Nazareth? Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed? Oh, I know, it's by the prince of demons that you cast out demons.

We know, they said, that this man is a sinner. He deceives the people. This man is blaspheming. Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.

That's what they said about Jesus of Nazareth. That was their estimate of him. So we're in company with him when we're ridiculed by the world around us. Interestingly, the National Geographical Channel, in a detailed program on the false gospel of Judas that they discovered some years ago, though, as the young people can tell you, we knew it a long time ago because it was written about in about the year 180 AD.

But they discovered it, or what was left of it anyway, and they published it. And they conceded that most critics believe that the gospels in your Bible, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, were written down some between 60 and 70 AD.

[ 8 : 29 ] And they then added that this was long after the death of Christ. Well, actually, in the scheme of historical writing, I have to tell you that is very close to the death of Christ.

For the gospels all to have been written down within 30 years of the death of Christ, 30 or 40 years of the death of Christ, is very close. And I was rather glad that the National Geographic magazine, there's no friend of the Bible, actually put it as close as that.

Peter's bold claim on the day of Pentecost towers over the centuries as a magnificent statement of the uniqueness, not simply of Christianity, but of Christ himself.

And that is where we should focus on our Savior, Jesus Christ. So let me remind you of the authentic Jesus. I want to tell you first about the Jesus of history.

Yes, he really was real. Once upon a time, back in the 19th century, German New Testament scholars declared that most of the stories about Jesus in the Bible were made up around the 3rd century AD.

[ 9 : 34 ] There are still a few of yesterday's people around, and they grab the headlines from time to time, but I have to tell you that view is losing ground heavily. Young people again will tell you that Bishop Robinson, some years ago, a liberal Bible critic, wrote a book called Redating the New Testament, in which he said, Every single book of your New Testament...

How many books in the New Testament? Thank you. 27. Every single book in the New Testament was completed before the year AD 70.

None of this sort of oral stuff that lasted for 200 years when all the errors crept in. AD 70. But let's lay the Bible on one side for a moment, shall we?

Pretend you haven't got it. Close it up for a minute. Cornelius Tacitus, a Roman lawyer, consul and historian, who was just four years old, actually, at the time of the Great Fire of Rome in 64 AD. Probably the time when the Apostle Paul was martyred. Writing in his Annals of the Emperors from Augustus to Nero, he comments on the rumor that Emperor Nero, to deflect the accusation that he's the one who started the fire, which he probably did because he wanted a brownfield site to build a new temple in his palace in his own honor, and to deflect the criticism, he blamed the Christians.

[ 10 : 54 ] This is what Cornelius Tacitus wrote. A Roman, remember, not a Christian. And so to get rid of this rumor, Nero set up as the culprits and punished with the utmost refinement of cruelty a class hated for their abominations, who are commonly called Christians.

Christus, from whom their name is derived, was executed at the hands of procurator Pontius Pilate in the reign of Tiberius. So there you have it. Tacitus, a Roman historian, writing at the time, says he was executed by Pontius Pilate.

That at least confirms the biblical account of Jesus Christ. What about the historian, the Jewish historian, kind of Jewish turned Roman, Josephus? He wrote in his Antiquities of the Jews around AD 93.

That would have been before the Apostle John was dead. He considered Jesus, I'm now quoting him, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works.

He was the Christ. And Josephus wrote of his death under Pilate, his resurrection, and the fact that, quote, the tribe of Christians so named from him are not extinct to this day.

[ 12 : 05 ] Now clear statements like that in Josephus' writings has inevitably led so many people to say, well, they were of course written into Josephus later by some Christian editor.

The problem with that argument is the oldest manuscripts of Josephus that go back to the 4th century, every single one of them includes this. So you can't just imagine and hope.

Wishful thinking won't change it. Josephus wrote it from all the evidence that we have. And we could go on and on illustrating that Jesus was a historical figure.

And I say this because there are very clever people today who are still trying to persuade us that Jesus never lived. You know, years ago, the Soviet, in the time of the Soviet Empire, the Soviet encyclopedia, the great Russian encyclopedia, described Christ as the, quote, mythical founder of Christianity.

And there are people who are still trying to pretend that today. But you know, it is beyond doubt that Jesus lived as a real figure of history. But we've got to go a lot further than that.

[ 13 : 10 ] I want to tell you not only about the Jesus of history, but about the Jesus of reality. To believe in the Jesus of history, I've just shown you, we actually don't need our Bible. He lived.

But to understand the Jesus of history, we can't do without our Bible. Take our man Peter, for example. Some clever people tell us that much of our Bible is myth.

And when you talk about a myth for these clever theologians, they say, oh, well, of course, it is very important. It's not just a little fairy story for the kid's bedtime. It's very important.

It's a made-up story with religious truth. That's what they mean when they talk about a myth. The only thing is, Peter was ahead of them for about 2,000 years.

In 2 Peter 1 verse 16, he says, We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the coming and majesty of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

[ 14 : 11 ] And the word that is translated cleverly invented stories is in the Greek the word muthos, from which we get our word myth. So let's read it again. We did not follow cleverly invented myths. They weren't myths, he said, made-up stories to illustrate something.

We saw him. That's Peter. Listen to Paul and his great chapter on the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15. Listen to him. What I received I passed on to you of the first importance, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised the third day according to

the Scriptures, and then he goes on, as some of you will know, to name those who saw Jesus after his resurrection.

Paul is saying, go check it out. Go ask them. It's real. Or listen to Luke as he begins his gospel. He begins us telling it was carefully investigated, and it was, Luke 1 verses 3 and 4, an orderly account so that you may know the certainty of the things that have been taught.

Or listen to the apostle John. Three years he'd spent with Christ. And he closes his record of the life and teaching of Christ like this. This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down, and we know that his testimony is true.

And years later, he wrote some letters to the churches, and he included this, that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked on.

[15:42] He says, I lived with him for three years. I know what I'm talking about. These men were writing of what they had seen and what they knew.

And all of these books and letters we just heard, even by the critics, were circulating before the end of the first century. So don't let anyone tell you anything differently.

This is the Jesus of reality. Oh, and before we move on, I want to tell you something else. I want to pause a moment and focus on the Gospels as an authentic history.

What I mean by that is that they bear all the hallmarks of an authentic eyewitness. They record details in a way that would be unknown in first century literature.

Let me just give you two examples. John 8 verse 6. The story that many of you will know of a woman who was found committing adultery and the Jews bring her in, throw her down in the sand in front of Jesus and say, so what are you going to do about her?

[16:39] Moses said, stone her. What are you going to do? And do you know what we read next in John chapter 8? We read this. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger in the sand.

Do you know what he wrote? You have no idea. And nor have I. And nor has anybody. What do you think John would have done, who's writing that, at the end of that interview with that woman when everybody had gone?

Well, I know what I'd have done. I'd have shot straight out the front. See, what did he write? Oh, in the sand. It's all scuffed over. I'd have gone to Jesus and said, Jesus, what did you write? And I can only imagine, I don't know, that Jesus just smiled at him and said, wouldn't you like to know, John? So why did John put it in? Wholly irrelevant. But it's there. Now, C.S. Lewis, the Irish literary critic, and famous, of course, for the Narnia stories and a great deal more, he actually comments on that story and he reminds his readers that he has spent his life reading ancient literature.

And he says, never would an apparently meaningless bit of information be recorded unless it really happened. Have you got that? It struck John as odd, so we wrote it down.

[17:56] Let me give you another illustration. Do you remember the way Philip introduced Jesus to Nathanael in John chapter 1, verse 44? Listen to him. We have found the one Moses wrote about in the law and about whom the prophets also wrote.

Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. Now, there were two things there that would never have been written a hundred years later. And they are these. Jesus of Nazareth.

Now, he said Jesus of Nazareth because that's where Jesus was brought up as a teenager. But that's not where he was born. And there is nothing in that. The word Nazareth, the name Nazareth, is not even mentioned in the Old Testament.

It forms no part of the Jewish messianic expectations. So what you would have said if you were making it up a hundred years later is we've met Jesus from, where do you think?

Bethlehem. Prophet Micah 5, verse 2 tells us about that. So you would never have put Jesus of Nazareth because it meant nothing. But it just happened to be where he was brought up.

[18:59] Oh, and then what does he say? He actually said Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. If you were writing a hundred years later, you would not have said that. Because by then they'd got it clearly in their minds that he was not the son of Joseph, the son of Mary, but not the son of Joseph.

He was the son of God. And you would have said, we've met him of whom Moses and the prophets in the law spoke, Jesus from Bethlehem, the son of God. But he didn't write that because that's not what Philip said.

Philip said all he knew at the time. That's a mark of authentic writing. Have you got it? That's important. And you'll find these marks of an authentic narrative again and again as you read the Gospels.

The Jesus of history. The Jesus of reality. But let me tell you something about the Jesus of prophecy which I've already hinted at. You remember Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 says that Jesus rose again from the dead according to the Scriptures.

You know, one great embarrassment for those who try to downgrade Christ and the Gospels is this problem of prophecy. You see, way back in one of the books of the Old Testament, the book of Micah, chapter 5, verse 2, written down 500 years, 500 or 600 years before Jesus was born, the very birthplace of the Messiah, Bethlehem, was foretold.

[ 20 : 16 ] In a few months' time you'll be singing about that. And then his miraculous conception in the womb of a virgin, Isaiah 7, verse 14, 700 years before Jesus was born.

And then even his riding into town on the back of a donkey and them throwing palm leaves down. Zechariah, chapter 9 and verse 9, about 500 years before Jesus was born.

And the betrayal by a close friend, Psalm 41, verse 9, a thousand years, 900 years before Jesus was born. All clearly written down long before Jesus was born and fulfilled perfectly in his lifetime. But for a moment I want to focus on just one. If you turn up sometime when you go home to Psalm 22 in your Bible and read it through, you'll be startled, not just at the way it begins, but the way it continues.

Because it begins, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Have you heard that before? Oh yes, you say. Wasn't that what Jesus said when he hung on the cross?

[ 21 : 17 ] You're right. Ah, but you see, he was hanging on the cross and he said that because he knew it came from Psalm 22. And all he wanted to do was try and prove that he was fulfilling Psalm 22. Okay, I'll accept that.

But then read on in Psalm 22. Because in Psalm 22, the details perfectly fit everything that happened over which, humanly speaking, he had no control. Psalm 22 goes on and talks about them casting dice for his clothes.

Psalm 22 talks about them piercing his hands and his feet. Psalm 22 talks about his thirst and his tongue cleaving to the roof of his mouth. Psalm 22 talks about the mocking and scorning him, all of which you read in the Gospels.

And he had no control over that. That's what other people were doing. But he was actually fulfilling, that Psalm was being fulfilled perfectly. The details are specific.

How do you explain that away? The apostles were either liars and deceivers or they were eyewitnesses. But a witness has the right to be held trustworthy until he is proved untrustworthy.

[ 22 : 26 ] And no prosecution wins a case by wishful thinking. The Jesus of history, reality, prophecy. But fourthly, the Jesus of authority.

I want you to listen to Jesus Christ and watch him and the reaction of the crowds to him during his life. The common people, we're told, heard him gladly and they said he preached like no one else. Well, maybe he was just specially gifted. But look at his claims. John 5, verse 16. He referred to God as his Father. Now, for you and me, sitting here this morning, well, you are, I'm not, and you're sitting there and you think, well, what's big about that?

What's the big deal with him calling God his Father? Can't I do that? Particularly if I'm a Christian, I can call God my Father. And you're right. But the Jews knew he was saying something more than that. They knew he was putting himself in a very special relationship with God.

And how do I know that? Well, because we are told that immediately he said this, quote, for this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him. He was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

[ 23 : 36 ] So the Jews knew that that claim by Jesus that God was his Father was a special claim and he was making himself equal with God. Now that's either true or it was a blasphemy.

Jesus said, if you've seen me, you've seen the Father. True or a blasphemy. You choose. He had authority, didn't he?

Over sickness, over disability, over death, over a storm, over the hungry. He could feed a multitude with a handful of bread and fish. Then take his claim to forgive sins.

Mark and Luke actually claim that they accused him being a friend of sinners. And Jesus was a friend of sinners. And he said to people, your sins are forgiven.

And they said, who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but only God? Isn't that true? I mean, you can forgive sins if somebody sins against you, but you can't forgive anybody if they sin against me.

[ 24 : 39 ] That's not possible. People try to do that, but it's a nonsense. You can't do that. You can only forgive sins against you. And when Jesus forgave people their sins, it wasn't because they'd robbed him or they'd trodden on his foot or something and he said, it's all right, I forgive you.

It's because he was saying, I forgive you all your sins. Who can do that? But only God. And they knew that's what he was claiming.

And then came the most ridiculous thing he ever said. Looking out once in the face of his enemies, he said to them, which one of you can convince me of sin?

Listen, is there anybody here who would like to stand up in this congregation, and this is a genuine invitation, and tell us that you have never sinned? You can do that right now. I'll let you come up here. I have a few questions to ask, but that won't be a problem because you've never sinned. Can anybody do that? I've thrown that challenge out many times. I've never had it taken up yet. And yet Jesus did. Can any of you accuse me of sin?

[ 25 : 44 ] He said, that was right in front of the very people who were trying to pull him down. It was easy to catch him. All they had to do was take their clipboard and walk down the high street in Nazareth. Tell us about, you remember Joseph the carpenter and his wife there?

Yeah, yeah, we remember. And the family? Yeah, yeah, we remember them. Do you remember there one of the children called, what was his name? Jesus. Yeah, we remember him. Tell us about him, will you? Can you remember when he laid on his back in the sand with his feet in the air as a toddler having a tantrum?

Well, as a matter of fact, no. Can you tell us as he grew up as a teenager, with the girls, huh? No. There was something remarkably different about him all the way through.

We can't catch him anywhere. And no one to this day, 2,000 years later, has been able to appoint a finger against Jesus Christ. Can you? So who was he then?

Who was he? The Jesus of history, the Jesus of reality, the Jesus of prophecy, the Jesus of authority, and then, of course, the Jesus of Calvary. We're past by Gethsemane and the betrayal by Judas.

[ 26 : 53 ] We'll overlook the mockery of a trial by the Sanhedrin and then by Pilate and then by Herod and then by back to Pilate. We won't linger on the route to the cross. I want to see him there in his final destination.

Listen to his prayer for the Roman soldiers as they hammer nails into his hands and his feet.

Father, forgive them for they don't understand what they're doing. That was a prayer for the soldiers. The rest of the Jews should have known what they were doing.

These guys didn't. Listen to his beautiful concern for his mother and disciple. He said to John, John, you take her and look after her. And he said to his mother, John will be with you and he'll look after you.

His care. The Romans were standing in their open mouth. They'd never seen a man be crucified like this. Normally when they hammered the nails in they were cursing and swearing and writhing and they had to hold him down.

And they sat on the cross spitting at the people that were spitting at them. They knew it all. These were tough Roman guys. And there were those with him who echoed at the end of it all, he was the son of God.

[ 27 : 59 ] Even the centurion said as he scratched his helmet, I don't understand this. He, this was a righteous man. Even the mocking crowds fell silent and went home with their heads low.

And listen to the Father in heaven as Jesus Christ hung on the cross. The Father with whom he created all things right at the beginning of time and the universe. By whom he came into this world and the one who loved him and at the first testified of his love to him, this is my beloved son, listen to him.

Listen to the one, the Father in heaven when his son hangs on the cross and there's never been a moment's break between them from all eternity. They have been together in perfect harmony. Now listen to the Father as the son is hanging, bleeding, broken, dying on the cross. But I hear nothing.

Nothing. Why is heaven silent when even his tormentors seem to know who he is? Doesn't the Father care? Oh no, my friend, it's because he does care.

[ 29 : 07 ] He cares for you and for me so much that he left his son, his only son, to die. Peter wrote years later, he bore our sins in his own body on the tree.

Paul added, he who knew no sin became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God. John says, this is love, not that we love God but that he loved us and gave himself, his son, for us.

The Father treated his son as our disobedience and sin deserved so that we could be forgiven. That is the Jesus of Calvary. And to Nicodemus, very early in his ministry, he had said, the Son of Man must be lifted up so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.

That includes you. And Martha, at the grave of her brother, heard him say, I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live and he who lives and believes in me will never die.

[ 30 : 13 ] Martha, do you believe this? When you die, you'll go on into eternity of life with me. Do you believe this, Martha? Yes, she said, I believe. Do you? Do you? And to the disciples shortly before he left them, he said, in my Father's house and many rooms, if it were not, so I'd have told you, I'm going to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you, I'll come back and receive you to myself that where I am, there you may be also.

Do you believe that as well? His ministry was constantly pointing his hearers to another world and I think the writer to the Hebrews perhaps gives us the finest description of the Son in concert with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Listen to him. Hebrews chapter 1, 2 and 3. In these last days he's spoken to us by his Son whom he appointed heir of all things and through whom he made the universe. The Son, listen, is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being sustaining all things by his powerful work.

That's who was hanging on the cross. The one who created everything and is the perfect reflection of the Father in heaven. Not the bouncing off of rays like the sun shining on a mirror or the guy who's been cleaning his car all day Saturday.

No, no, that's a reflected glory. Jesus was not the reflected glory of the Father. He was the glory of God. It was his own glory. He made the universe all of it.

[ 31 : 38 ] Placed the stars and planets in the infinity of space. He fashioned the earth and designed every living creature. He created our first parents and gave them the uniqueness of humanity with a mind and soul and then set them apart from the animal kingdom.

He is our Christ, the radiance of God's glory. And he died on the cross. All that the Father is, Christ is. And his ministry was constantly pointing to the Father.

And he died on the cross for us. The Jesus of history, reality, prophecy, authority, Calvary. One more thing and then I'm through. The Jesus of necessity.

Something compelling about Jesus Christ, isn't there? We must respond. You will this morning. Every member of this congregation will. Everyone who ever hears about him and learns his life and death and resurrection must respond.

They do respond. They have no choice. The facts demand it. His life and ministry insist on it. His death and resurrection compel it. And that's why so many have to deny Christ and doubt the records of his life.

[ 32 : 48 ] You see, my friends, there's no need to poke at the life of Muhammad. In fact, it's very dangerous to do so. But if you did, you don't gain anything anyway. Because Islam is as relevant or irrelevant even without the life of Muhammad.

You could get him out, leave him out and just keep the Quran and Islam is exactly the same. They don't need Muhammad. He's only a man. He died. He's gone. He's finished. It isn't like that with Christ.

We must accept with Christ everything or nothing. What is he to you? Is he only a great man? Have you ever dropped into this danger?

Somebody here this morning of saying, you know, I believe in Jesus. Yeah, he was a good man, a great man. I don't believe all this stuff about him being the Savior. I don't believe him being the Son of God, equal with God.

But a great man. Above everybody. Well, let C.S. Lewis, one of our greatest literary critics, have the last word. And here's his conclusion in a passage that many of you will know from mere Christianity.

[ 33 : 52 ] In the light of all I've been saying, this is what he has to say about those who believe that Jesus was just a great man. I'm trying, he says 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 a son of God. That is the one thing, Lewis says, we must not say. A man who merely was man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher.

He would either be a lunatic on a level with the man who says he's a poached egg, this is Lewis, not Edwards, or else he would be the devil of hell. You must make your choice, Lewis says.

Either this man was and is the son of God, or else he's a madman or something worse. 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, says Lewis, not come up with any patronising nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He did not leave that open to us, he concludes.

[ 35 : 11 ] He did not intend to. He's a liar, a lunatic, or Lord. There are no other options.

You must choose. In fact, we all do this morning. As you walk out of this building at Whitby Evangelical Church, you will call him Lord, or a liar, or a lunatic.

But if you call him Lord, you have to begin at the cross. You acknowledge there your sin, and you accept his love, and you own his right to rule in every part of your life.

Let's pray together. Quietly, Lord, in your presence, we open our heart and mind to you.

For you read us like an open book, we're all window to you. We can't hide anything. You know, Lord, what we are thinking right now.

[ 36 : 20 ] And we pray, Father, that you will help us, all of us, to see Jesus as our Lord, as God, as Savior, who wants to be our friend and to take us on through life.

help us to bow humbly before you and acknowledge him as our Lord and Savior. Amen. Jesus Christ for a side.

That's right. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.