



**SERIES – Believe: The Book of John**

**SPEAKER: Nat Crawford**

**Friday, February 17, 2023**

**Scripture: John 10:31-33**

**TITLE: Liar, Lunatic or Lord**

In John 10:31-33 we read,

“The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, ‘I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?’ The Jews answered him, ‘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.’”

It was the year 1859 when Rabbi John Duncan wrote, “Christ either 1) deceived mankind by conscious fraud, or 2) he was himself deluded and self-deceived, or 3) he was divine. There is no getting out of the trilemma. It is inexorable.”

In 1936 famous Christian leader Watchman Nee wrote: “First, a person who claims to be God and yet, in fact, is not, he has to be a madman or a lunatic. Second, if he is neither God nor lunatic, he has to be a liar, deceiving others by his life. Or third, if he is neither of these, he must be God. You can only choose one of three possibilities. There is no need for us to prove if Jesus of Nazareth is God or not. All we have to do is find out if he is a lunatic or a liar. If he is neither, he is God!”

Then in 1942 C.S. Lewis added these famous words: “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 [like Peter in a boat overfilled with fish] and call him Lord and God. He must be a liar or a lunatic or the Lord!”

The difference between Jesus – the Good Shepherd and the religious leaders of his time – the false shepherds, was day and night. Ezekiel 34 describes the legacy of the religious leaders as being thieves, robbers and hirelings, whereas Jesus comes in the door because He is well-known by the doorkeeper. He speaks gently and His voice brings reassuring comfort to His flock. He is present, He is providing, He is protecting, He is placing His own life between His flock and whatever may threaten. They hear His voice, they know His voice, and they immediately follow. He demonstrates His intimate knowledge of them as one by one He calls out their names. And He does not round them up to drive them, but rather He walks among them to lead.

Unlike the false shepherds in His presence, who rather than care for the man born blind, find ways to make his existence even more miserable. When the blind man’s sight was given to him, they did not rejoice and welcome but rather became hostile and drove him away. They literally cast him out of the temple! But Jesus, the Good Shepherd, heard and sought him out. And he who had given his blind eyes 20/20 clarity, opened his ears to recognize the voice of his

shepherd. He spoke and the one who had once been blind but now could see, immediately believed and followed him!

He promised them life—true life—and the security of true freedom. Those who hated Him would see to it that He died. But even as He was dying, He held those He loved securely. Even death could not take them out of the security of His hand. His grip was unbreakable. And His Father who was even stronger would clamp His hand over the hands of His Son. His sheep would live secure!

And then, like striking a matchhead across the surface of the flint, Jesus lit a murderous flame. “I and the Father are one!” As they had done earlier in that same week, “The Jews picked up stones again to stone him!” As His haters dipped back into their Old Testament law to justify their murderous attempt by labeling Him guilty of blasphemy, Jesus went to that same law and put before them two validating witnesses in His own defense. The now divided crowd of leaders argued: “These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon!” Or again, “I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of these are you going to stone me?”

Two witnesses required by the law were brought to His defense: His Words and His Works. Nothing He had said and nothing He had done had taken place in secret. All His life was lived under the scrutiny of those who despised Him. As evidence of His innocence he simply challenged them to explain away the works that they had seen him do.

“Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”—John 20:30-31

**Commented [BZ1]:** This verse has been updated: The text was changed to the ESV text, and the reference was corrected (orig. John 20:20-21)

Is He a liar? Is He a lunatic? Or is He the Lord? Who do you say that He is?

Can you say, “The Lord is my shepherd...no wants”?