

Questioning Jesus' Motives



Nothing grates my cheese quite like someone questioning my motives. You don't like having your motive questioned either, and I know why. (*See what I did there? I assumed to know your motive for not liking your motives questioned.*)

It's part of our human nature to question people's motives, and we primarily do it because our own motives are not always pure. It's especially easy to question the motives of people and groups we dislike or don't trust.

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(And someone is off to the side right now questioning why I picked on a Republican first.)

We just assume the other person's motives are suspect. *Of course, he's wrong!*

C. S. Lewis even coined a phrase for this: bulverism. Bulverism is assuming the other person is wrong, and we can assume we know their motives for what they do and why they're wrong.

"I call it 'Bulverism'. Some day I am going to write the biography of its imaginary inventor, Ezekiel Bulver, whose destiny was determined at the age of five when he heard his mother say to his father—who had been maintaining that two sides of a triangle were together greater than a third—'Oh you say that *because you are a man*.' At that moment', E. Bulver assures us, 'there flashed across my opening mind the great truth that refutation is no necessary part of argument. Assume that your opponent is wrong, and explain his error, and the world will be at your feet.'" (C.S. Lewis, *God at the Dock*, (Eerdmans, 2014, p. 300).

We get a lot of things wrong we just "know" are right. And our assumptions keep us from ever digging deeper to see if we're right or not. *Don't confuse me with the facts.*

The world does this all the time with Jesus. Culture and other religions just assume the church has it wrong. They

assume Christians have read too much into the Gospels ... or not enough. But not to worry! They're here to correct our fallacy and tell us who Jesus is and why He came to earth.

- Jesus was a mortal man sent by God as a prophet. (This is taught in Islam.)
- Jesus was a Jewish apocalyptic who believed the world as he knew it was going to come to a screeching halt and God would overthrow the forces of evil in a cosmic act of judgment.
- Jesus was a prophet of social change.
- Jesus was a healer, a man of great wisdom and courage who taught a message of inclusiveness, tolerance, and liberation.

People assume to know Jesus' motive, His reason for coming the earth. But these false assumptions are based on what we want Jesus to be, the kind of Messiah, Savior, or religious leader we want.

What matters is what Jesus said about why He came.

- *"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).*
- *"Jesus answered them, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance'" (Luke 5:31-32).*

Left on our own, we're in a mess. If you turn over a new leaf right now and never do a single bad thing again—not even something slightly annoying—it wouldn't make up for the sin and failure of the past.

- If a building contractor installs a window incorrectly but proceeds to install all the others properly, the house is still flawed.
- If a person foolishly destroys his liver through too much alcohol, no amount of healthy diet and exercise afterwards will make up for the damaged body.



We need intervention. We need Jesus the Carpenter, the Great Physician, to fix what only He can fix. He can—and He wants to.

That's why He came.

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