

The Radical Teachings of Jesus

*The Radical Teachings of Jesus
will move you to the core of your being.*

—Mark Finley, Evangelist

Derek J. Morris

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This book is

Dedicated

to Jesus—

The Way, the Truth, and the Life.

*May His light shine brightly
in the heart and mind of every reader.*

In Praise of *The Radical Teachings of Jesus* . .

.

When Jesus is the center of each Bible truth, hearts are touched and lives are changed. Derek Morris uplifts the Jesus of the New Testament in all of His richness and matchless charms. But the gospel Jesus preached is not a soft, watered-down version of easy believism. The Radical Teachings of Jesus will move you to the core of your being.

—Mark Finley, Evangelist

This is a practical and powerful book on the life-changing teachings of Jesus. I have known Derek Morris for many years, and he has proved himself to be one of the most qualified Christian leaders to write on this topic. As you read the deep insights in this book, ask the Holy Spirit to work on your heart, and you too will become radically changed for the better!

—Jerry Page, President Central California Conference

The Radical Teachings of Jesus is a book worth reading. It will challenge your thinking and transform your life. Derek Morris makes the teachings of Jesus practical and helps the reader understand what the ministry of Jesus is all about.

—Jack Blanco, Th.D., Retired Dean of Theology

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To my beloved wife, Bodil—who has always encouraged me to fix my eyes on Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, and to boldly proclaim the radical teachings of Jesus.

Each of these individuals, along with others unnamed, encouraged me to sit at the feet of Jesus, listen carefully to His radical teachings, and share with others what I have learned .

Most of all, I want to thank Jesus, my Savior and Lord. I am fully persuaded that Jesus is all He claimed to be—Son of God, Messiah, Savior of the world, and soon-coming King! I echo the testimony of the great prophet John the Baptist: “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God!”

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Introduction

We are currently in the midst of an amazing miracle of God! Since the publication of *The Radical Prayer* in 2008, more than 40,000 copies have already been printed. *The Radical Prayer* has been translated into numerous languages, and thousands of study groups across North America and around the world have begun using *The Radical Prayer* DVD series.* But that is just the beginning.

Since I personally responded to the appeal of Jesus, crying out to the Lord of the harvest to throw me out into His harvest, God has been working in miraculous ways in my own life. In the spring of 2009, I was thrown out to Vancouver, Washington, to conduct a citywide series of meetings called The Radical Teachings of Jesus. The presentations stretched me to the limit—I felt like a lamb, just like Jesus had foretold! In spite of some radical challenges, I learned to radically depend upon the Lord of the harvest. The result? I returned with radical joy, not only because I saw with my own eyes that the harvest truly is great, but also because I experienced the joy of salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord in a deep and personal way.

This book is the result of that miracle. It is my prayer that as you join me on a journey, exploring the radical teachings of Jesus, your own life will be transformed.

* To learn more about *The Radical Prayer*, go to www.TheRadicalPrayer.com.



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What Jesus Taught About Himself

Have you heard the latest “news” about Jesus? Some say that He married Mary Magdalene and fathered a child. Others assert that Judas was the real hero in the gospel story. If you haven’t studied the story of Jesus for yourself, you could easily get led astray. What did Jesus have to say about Himself, and are His radical claims true?

Radical Claims of Jesus

Jesus was bold in His declarations about Himself. The apostle John remembered and recorded those radical claims:

- “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6).
- “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life” (John 8:12).

- “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst” (John 6:35).
- “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die” (John 11:25, 26).
- “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM” (John 8:58).
- “My Father has been working until now, and I have been working” (John 5:17).
- “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9).

Radical claims indeed! The renowned Christian apologist C. S. Lewis was right when he asserted that Jesus didn’t give us the option to recognize Him as merely a great moral teacher. Jesus was either a lunatic, totally out of touch with reality, a malicious deceiver intent on leading others astray, *or* He was and is who He claimed to be—the Messiah, the Savior, the Son of God.

Jesus left us with no doubt about whom He believed Himself to be: “I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me” (John 6:38). Of course, *anyone* can make outrageous claims like that. How do we know the radical claims of Jesus are true? To find an answer to that question, we must begin with the testimony of the early followers of Jesus.

What His Followers Said

John the Baptist was one of the first to speak about Jesus. When he saw Jesus coming to the river Jordan to be baptized, he exclaimed, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). After baptizing Jesus, John the Baptist gave this startling testimony: “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. . . . And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God” (John 1:32-34). The viewpoint of John the Baptist was clear: he boldly declared that Jesus was the Son of God!

A godly woman named Martha, the sister of Mary and Lazarus, gave her testimony about Jesus. Martha and her siblings were close friends of Jesus. They knew Him well and loved Him. As she conversed with Jesus near the grave of her brother, Lazarus, Martha declared: “I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world” (John 11:27).

Even skeptics experienced a radical change in their lives when they had a personal encounter with Jesus. When Nathanael’s friend Philip said he had found the Messiah, a teacher from Nazareth, Nathanael replied, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” (John 1:46). But when Nathanael met Jesus face to face, he was convicted that Jesus was no ordinary man, and certainly not a lunatic or a malicious deceiver. Here is Nathanael’s testimony: “Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” (John 1:49).

Thomas was another skeptic who became a disciple of Jesus.

After the resurrection of Jesus, Thomas struggled to believe that He had actually risen from the dead. When he eventually met the risen Christ and saw Jesus with his own eyes and touched Him with his own hands, he exclaimed, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28).

You may have noticed that all the radical claims of Jesus cited above and all the quoted testimonies about Jesus come from the Gospel of John. One of the first disciples of Jesus, John, son of Zebedee, wrote his Gospel with the specific purpose of convincing people about who Jesus was. He proclaimed near the conclusion of his book: “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; *but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*, and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:30, 31, emphasis supplied).

Authenticity of John’s Testimony

John’s Gospel gives such a sophisticated picture of Jesus that many liberal scholars question its authenticity. They suggest that the Gospel of John must have evolved through a century or more, and propose that it was written late in the second century A.D., long after John’s death. They say the Gospel of John may contain a few fragments of true tradition, but in its present form it is not an authentic testimony from the disciple “whom Jesus loved” (John 21:20).