



## The Divinity of Christ

All Christians at all times have made a claim about Jesus Christ that no other religion has ever made about its leader: namely, that He is God in the flesh. Unfortunately, this doctrine that many Christians take for granted is now coming under vigorous attack from many quarters, even among those who claim to believe in the inspiration of the Bible. Does the Bible indeed teach that Jesus is God?

### Jesus Called Himself “God”

First of all, it is clear that Jesus referred to himself as God. “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM” (Jn 8:58). “I AM” is the Divine Name, the unutterable name, the name revealed to Moses from the burning bush (cf. Ex 3:13–14). By taking upon Himself the Divine Name, Jesus is declaring His divinity. The passage from John’s gospel also strongly implies that Jesus is outside of time: an attribute that only God possesses. If Jesus is not God, then His words here are completely nonsensical.

Jesus’ words during His Temptation in the desert are also instructive. When Satan tempted Jesus to throw Himself off a cliff, even presuming to quote Scripture so as to make the temptation more persuasive, Jesus responded by saying, “You should not tempt the Lord your God” (Mt 4:7) — in reference to Himself! Satan was tempting God by tempting Jesus, and Jesus made sure that Satan knew it.

Jesus also called Himself the “Son of God,” which, to the Jewish mindset, was a very radical statement. During Jesus’ trial before the Jewish leaders, the High Priest said to Jesus, “I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God” (Mt 26:63). Jesus responded by saying, “You have said so” (vs. 64), or as the NIV has it, “Yes, it is as you say.” The High Priest responded by tearing his robes and saying, “He has uttered blasphemy. Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy” (vs. 65).

Later, before Pontius Pilate, the Jews said, “We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he has made himself the Son of God” (Jn 19:7). They knew that to declare oneself to be “the Son of God” was to declare that one was of the same nature as God. The son of a father always takes on the nature of the father. Or, as the Letter to the Hebrews tells us, “The Son ‘reflects the glory of God and bears the same nature as his nature’ (1:3).

The Jews rebuked Jesus for healing a man who couldn’t walk, and telling him to carry his pallet on the Sabbath. Jesus responded by saying, “My Father is working still, and I am working” (Jn 5:17). Immediately after this,

John is sure to tell us, in case we are not convinced, “This was why the Jews sought all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the sabbath but also called God his Father, *making himself equal with God*” (vs. 18).

Jesus, in order to make this more explicit, even said to the Jews, “I and the Father are one” (Jn 10:30). When they heard this, “The Jews took up stones again to stone him” (vs. 31). Jesus answered them, “I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of these do you stone me?” (vs. 32) The Jews answered him, “It is not for a good work that we stone you but for blasphemy; because you, being a man, *make yourself God*” (vs. 33).

Finally, when John, in his Revelation, saw a vision of “the Son of Man,” this figure said to him, “Fear not, I am the first and the last” (Rev 1:17). By saying “I am the Son of Man was equating Himself with “the Word,” who is and who was and who is to come” (John 1:1). The Son of Man who said, “I am the Alpha and the Omega” (Rev 1:8). Jesus, of course, is this “Son of Man.” Jesus referred to Himself on many occasions throughout His ministry (28 times in Matthew’s Gospel alone).

### People Called Jesus “God”

In many passages the apostles and followers of Christ call Him “God” as well. John began his Gospel with the words: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the word was God” (Jn 1:1). We know that this “Word” is the Second Person of the Trinity — Jesus Christ — for John 1:14 says, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father” (vs. 14). John also called Jesus “the true God and eternal life” in his first letter (5:20).

Peter, for his part, rebuked the Jews in the Temple of Jerusalem for their “murder of life” when they asked that Barabas be released and Jesus to be crucified (cf. Acts 3:12–15). And yet, Paul is clear that it is **God** who gives life to all things (cf. 1 Tim 6:13). Thus, Jesus cannot be the Author of life (or Creator) unless He is God. Peter specifically called Jesus “our God and Savior” in his second letter (1:1), as did Paul (cf. Titus 2:13). Paul also said of Christ that “in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (Col 2:9). According to Paul, Christ is the one, “who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,” or, as the Douay-Rheims has it, “thought it not robbery to be equal with God” (Phil 2:6).

## God the Father Called Jesus “God”

The words of God in the Letter to the Hebrews are very interesting:

Hebrews 1:5–8 “For to what angel did God ever say, ‘Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee’? Or again, ‘I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son’? And again, when he brings the first-born into the world, he says, ‘Let all God’s angels worship him.’ Of the angels he says, ‘Who makes his angels winds, and his servants flames of fire.’ But of the Son he says, ‘Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, the righteous scepter is the scepter of thy kingdom.’”

In this remarkable passage the Father is addressing the Son by saying, “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.” It is fitting that God the Father would provide the final seal upon the witness of the Son’s divinity.

### People Worshiped Jesus

In the New Testament, on numerous occasions people specifically worshiped Jesus as God. In fact, from the moment of His birth, He was worshiped. The Magi were very clear about their intentions:

Matthew 2:2, 11 “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him’ ... and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him.”

When Jesus saved His apostles from the storm by walking on the water and calming the storm by His own power (itself an expression of His divinity), Matthew tells us, “And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, ‘Truly you are the Son of God’” (Mt 14:33). Of the man cured by Jesus of an unclean spirit it is said, “when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped him” (Mk 5:6). When Jesus asked the man whom he had cured of blindness if he believed in the Son of man, “He said, ‘Lord, I believe’; and he worshiped him” (Jn 9:38).

After Jesus’ death, He continued to be worshiped. When He appeared to Thomas after His resurrection and Thomas was able to actually see and touch the wounds of the Risen Lord, “Thomas answered him, ‘My Lord and my God!’” (Jn 20:27–28). When He appeared likewise to His disciples, “they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him” (Mt 28:9). Jesus later appeared on a mountain in Galilee and “when they saw him they worshiped him” (vs. 17). When Jesus ascended into heaven, the apostles “worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy” (Lk 24:51–52, KJV).

