

### 11. Jesus: Lord, Liar or Lunatic

Who is Jesus Christ? Two-thousand years ago in Jerusalem, the people of Judea faced this question. Jesus came into conflict with the Jewish and Roman authorities as he interacted in their world.

Jesus of Nazareth made some fantastic claims. He claimed to; be the “Son of God”, to exist before Abraham, and to be the judge of mankind. During his three and half years of ministry, the person of Jesus became troublesome eventually leading to his execution by Roman authorities. After his execution on a wooden cross, (Crucifixion), his followers spread His message and claims throughout the known world.

Today, two-thousand years later the world is still confronted with the question, “Who is Jesus Christ?” Did he even exist? Was he who he said he was? Alternatively, did others make claims about him? Was Jesus God? Or was he lunatic or even worse a liar?

Can we examine the evidence about Jesus, using reason, logic and facts and conclude His identity? We can examine the eyewitness accounts of his followers, his claims and archeological evidence. We can also examine what his Roman and Jewish critics said about him. When we assemble this information, we can come to a point of decision about who Jesus is.

#### *History affirms Jesus existence and his claims*

Our understanding of Jesus is not limited to the writings of early Christians. We can consult Jewish and Romans claims about Jesus. The most famous Jewish historian Josephus was born four years after Jesus’ crucifixion in 37 AD; he wrote about Jesus, his brother James and John the Baptist. *Josephus* writes:

- James

“He assembled the Sanhedrin of the judges and brought before them the brother of Jesus who was called Christ, whose name was James”

- John the Baptist

“Now, some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod’s army came from God, and very justly, as a punishment of the what he did against John, who was called the Baptist; fro Herod slew him who was a good man and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue...and so come to baptism .

- Jesus

Josephus also writes about Jesus claim to the Christ apart from his record of James’ death. This account is disputed because Josephus would not have acknowledged Jesus as Messiah if He did not believe, but F.F. Bruce feels Josephus is being sarcastic in his comments about Jesus.

Now there was about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him. For he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct to this day.

The Jewish, *Babylonian Talmud*, written between, 70 to 200 AD, says the following about Jesus.

“On the eve of Passover Yeshu was hanged. For forty days before the execution took place, a herald went forth and cried, “He is going forth to be stoned because he has practiced sorcery and enticed Israel to apostasy. Any one who can say anything in his favor let him come forward and plead on his behalf.” But since nothing was brought forward in his favor he was hanged on the eve of the Passover!” (Babylonian Talmud)

*Pliny the Younger*, the Roman governor of Bithynia wrote about the followers of Christ the following in his correspondece to Trajan the Roman emperor.

"They were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as a to a god, and bound themselves by solemn oath, not to do any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which it was their custom to separate, and them then reassemble to partake of food—but food of an ordinary and innocent kind" (Pliny the Younger, L 10:96).

*Lucian of Samosata*, a writer dating about 165 AD wrote about Christians (Followers of Christ) and their beliefs.

"The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day—the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account...You see, these misguided creatures start with the general conviction that they are immortal for all time, which explains the contempt of death and voluntary self-devotion which are so common among them; and then it was impressed on them by their original lawgiver that they are all brothers from the moment that they are converted, and deny the gods of Greece, and worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws. All this they take quite on faith, with the result that they despise all worldly goods alike, regarding them merely as common property (Lucian of Samosata, DP,11-13)

Archelological evidence and non-Christian records validate Jesus did exist and that he claimed to be Messiah and was killed on passover. Norman Geisler writes the following;<sup>1</sup> can be gathered from non-Christian documents about the person of Jesus.

1. Jesus was from Nazareth;
2. he lived a wise and virtuous life;
3. he was crucified in Palestine under Pontius Pilate during the reign of Tiberius Caesar at Passover time, being considered the Jewish king;
4. he was believed by his disciples to have been raised from the dead three days later;
5. his enemies acknowledged that he performed unusual feats they called "sorcery";
6. his small band of disciples multiplied rapidly, spreading even as far as Rome;
7. his disciples denied polytheism, lived moral lives, and worshiped Christ as Divine.

We can then ask, What did Jesus say about Himself and who was he?. The disciples recorded Jesus words about Himself and his claims in the Gospels and Epistles.

*What did Jesus say about himself*

## 1. The focus of the Old Testament

During his ministry years Jesus made many claims about his person and his identity. He claimed to be the central focus of not only the New Testament scriptures but also the Old Testament or the Hebrew scriptures.

<sup>39</sup>You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. <sup>40</sup>But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life. John 5:39-40

<sup>44</sup>Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." <sup>45</sup>And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Luke 24:44-45

Not only did Jesus declare Himself central to the writings of the Moses, the Prophets and Psalms, He made very clear and precise declarations about who He claimed to be.

## 2. The Son of Man

The first use of the "Son of Man" in a "Messianic" way is in the Book of Daniel. Son of man means descendent of mankind. Daniel used this term to describe and individual being brought before the "Ancient of days", God.

<sup>13</sup> "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven!

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<sup>1</sup> Unshakable Foundations, Geisler, 2001, Pg. 269, Bethany House

He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him.  
14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom *the one* Which shall not be destroyed. Daniel 7:13-14

The “Son of Man” in Daniel is described as coming with the clouds of heaven, being brought before God and ruling over the nations of the earth for eternity. Jesus calls Himself the “Son of Man” seventy-seven times in the New-Testament scriptures, and many times in a Messianic context.

1. <sup>6</sup>But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”—then He said to the paralytic, “Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” Matthew 8:6
2. <sup>41</sup>The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, Matthew 13:41
3. <sup>28</sup>Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.” Matthew 16:28
4. <sup>28</sup>So Jesus said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Matthew 19:28
5. <sup>30</sup>Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. Matthew 24:30
6. <sup>31</sup>“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the <sup>1</sup> holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. <sup>32</sup>All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats. Matthew 25:31-32
7. <sup>26</sup>For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, <sup>27</sup>and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. John 5:26-27
8. <sup>27</sup>Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.” John 6:27

From this sampling of verses where Jesus addresses Himself as “Son of Man” we can list several characteristics about His identity and nature.

The Son of Man;

- Has the power to forgive sins
- He has command over the angels
- He sits on the throne as judge
- He will appear in the clouds with great glory and power
- He will judge the nations
- He will execute judgment
- He will give eternal life

As we can see Jesus, use of the term “Son of Man” was not metaphorical in the slightest but was “Messianic” and demonstrative of whom He claimed to be. Many of the attributes of the Son of Man are reserved for God Himself in the writings of the Old Testament.



**Messiah will rule the Earth as Son of Man**

### 3. Son of God

Another term Jesus used to describe Himself was “Son of God”. Was he using this in a metaphorical sense or as a claim about His nature? The term “Son of God” is Messianic in its context. When David wanted to construct a Temple (A House) for the Lord at first Nathan the prophet told David to go forward because the Lord is with him. God then informed

Nathan; David could not construct His house because his hands were blood stained. However, David’s son would construct a house for him. David’s son (a descendent of David) would also be called the “Son of

God” and will have an eternal kingdom.

<sup>12</sup>“When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. <sup>13</sup>He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom



The Messiah will be a Son of David

forever. <sup>14</sup>I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. <sup>15</sup>But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. <sup>16</sup>And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before <sup>1</sup> you. Your throne shall be established forever.”” 2 Samuel 7:12-16

David’s son Solomon did build an earthly temple but both the Temple and kingdom were destroyed in the Babylonian invasion 587 BC. Nathan was speaking of an eternal kingdom, not one like Saul’s. For this reason the Messiah is seen as a descendent of David but also the “Son of God”. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Psalm develops this theme more in describing the Messiah who will be the “Son” of God.

### Psalm 2

<sup>1</sup> Why do the nations rage,  
And the people plot a vain thing?  
<sup>2</sup> The kings of the earth set themselves,  
And the rulers take counsel together,  
Against the LORD and against His Anointed,  
saying,  
<sup>3</sup> “Let us break Their bonds in pieces  
And cast away Their cords from us.”  
<sup>4</sup> He who sits in the heavens shall laugh;  
The LORD shall hold them in derision.  
<sup>5</sup> Then He shall speak to them in His wrath,  
  
And distress them in His deep displeasure:  
<sup>6</sup> “Yet I have set My King  
On My holy hill of Zion.”  
<sup>7</sup> “I will declare the decree:  
The LORD has said to Me,  
“You are My Son.”  
Today I have begotten You.  
<sup>8</sup> Ask of Me, and I will give You  
The nations for Your inheritance,  
And the ends of the earth for Your possession.  
<sup>9</sup> You shall <sup>1</sup> break them with a rod of iron;  
You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s  
vessel.””  
<sup>10</sup> Now therefore, be wise, O kings;  
Be instructed, you judges of the earth.  
<sup>11</sup> Serve the LORD with fear,  
And rejoice with trembling.  
<sup>12</sup> <sup>1</sup> Kiss the Son, lest <sup>1</sup> He be angry,  
And you perish in the way,  
When His wrath is kindled but a little.  
Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.

The coming of Moshiach has been likened to birth, for it is Moshiach who is alluded to in the Psalm (2:7) “This day I have begotten you.” Birth, in essence, is the revelation of an infant who had been concealed in its mother’s womb. With the coming of Moshiach, the essential Four-Letter Name of G-d (Havaya), which is now concealed in the self-obscuring contractions of the Divine Name “Elokim,” will likewise become manifest. When a Jew stimulates the revelation of the Name “Havaya” by his fulfillment of the mitzvot, he brings nearer the self-revelation which will take place in time to come. (Torah Ohr Hosafot of the Mittlerer Rebbe, Rabbi Dovber)<sup>2</sup> (*Orthodox Jewish view on Psalm 2*)

**מָשִׁיחַ** māshīyach is the Hebrew word for “Anointed”

The Messiah will one day be King over the earth.  
His kingdom will be everlasting and worldwide as promised in 2 Samuel 7:12-16, Daniel 7:13-14,  
His kingdom will include the whole earth. Psalm 2:8,  
Here we are also told the same Messiah (Anointed) will be addressed as “You are my Son”.  
Here the Messiah is also seen as in judgment over the Kings of the Earth.  
We are told to submit (Kiss the Son) for all will be blessed who put their trust in Him

<sup>18</sup>“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. John 3:18

<sup>25</sup>Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. <sup>26</sup>For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself,

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.mashiach.org/study/frame\\_tho2.html](http://www.mashiach.org/study/frame_tho2.html)

John 5:25-26

<sup>36</sup>do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? John 10:36

4When Jesus heard that, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." John 11:4

When we examine the title "Son of God", we see that Jesus is not using the words in metaphor but as descriptive. He is describing His claim to be Messiah as well as what his role as will entail. We can summarize this from these verses where Jesus calls Himself "Son of God"

- Those who believe in "Son of God" will not be condemned
- The Son of God will grant eternal life to all who hear His voice
- The Son of God was glorified through miracles
- Jesus did not consider it blaspheming to call Himself "Son of God"

Again as in the title "Son of Man", the title "Son of God" Jesus has claimed prerogatives that belong to God alone. His glorification, his ability to prevent condemnation and his granting eternal life are attributes of God. In addition to claiming to be the Messiah, did Jesus claim to be God?

#### 4. Jesus claims equality with the God

Jesus claims about his identity and character are in the Gospels and Epistles, specifically his relationship with God, His Father. He claims a unique relationship with the Father unparalleled by any other being.

##### 4a. Knowledge of God

27All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. Matthew 11:27

- Knowledge of the Son is unique to the Father
- Knowledge of the Father is unique to the Son
- The Son is the only one who reveals the Father

##### 4b. Honor due the Father

<sup>7</sup>But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."

<sup>18</sup>Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. John 5:17-18

23that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

24"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. John 5:23-24

<sup>19</sup>Then they said to Him, "Where is Your Father?"

Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also." John 8:19

<sup>25</sup>Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. <sup>26</sup>But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, <sup>1</sup> as I said to you. <sup>27</sup>My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. <sup>28</sup>And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. <sup>29</sup>My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father's hand. <sup>30</sup>I and My Father are one."

<sup>31</sup>Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. <sup>32</sup>Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?"

<sup>33</sup>The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God." John 10:25-33

Jesus clearly claimed equality with the Father, in John 5:23-24, He says, “all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father”. The word honor in the Greek is *timaō* ( *τιμάω* ).

Meaning to estimate or fix the value, Jesus tells us his value is equal to that of the Father. In the context of this conversation, the Jews are trying to kill Jesus for making Himself equal with God. They understood completely what Jesus was saying, Jesus was claiming equality with God. This point is again understood in John 10:31 as the Jews take up stones to stone Jesus for calling saying Him and the Father are one.

#### 4c. The Name of God

<sup>58</sup>Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.”

<sup>59</sup>Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple,<sup>1</sup> going through the midst of them, and so passed by. John 8:58-59a

When God appeared to Moses in a burning bush, Moses asked God who shall I say has sent me, and God gave Moses his name to tell the children of Israel.

13Then Moses said to God, “Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?”

14And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” Exodus 3:13-14

“I AM WHO I AM” means self existent one, God’s person and character is demonstrated in His name, His existence does not depend on anyone or thing. (יהוה), a combination of the tetragrammaton (YHWH) with the vowels of *’Ādhōnāy*, transliterated as *Y<sup>e</sup>hōwāh*, but read aloud by the Hebrews *’ādhōnāy*). Jesus, in the Temple, understood what He was saying and his audience understood what He was saying when Jesus said before Abraham was, “I AM”. Jesus was calling Himself *Y<sup>e</sup>hōwāh*, for this reason they took up stones to kill him. The name for God is written as LORD in the Jewish scriptures.

#### 4d. Claim to Deity

<sup>14</sup>Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. John 14:1

<sup>8</sup>Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.”

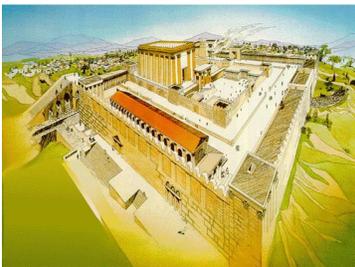
<sup>9</sup>Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? John 14:8-9

Jesus before Passover is meeting with His disciples and is talking about what is expected, and He then informs them that belief in Him is related to their belief in God. Phillip then asked to see the Father, Jesus responds that to see Him is to see the Father. In both verses Jesus is clearly equivocating Himself with God.

#### 4e. Common ownership of all things with God

<sup>15</sup>All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He<sup>1</sup> will take of Mine and declare *it* to you. John 16:15  
Jesus is claiming possession of what all the Father has, unless, Jesus is God this would be a blasphemous statement.

### 5. Jesus claimed prerogative that belonged only to God



#### 5a. Forgiving Sins

<sup>5</sup>For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise and walk’?

<sup>6</sup>But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”— then He said to the paralytic, “Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” Matthew 9:5-6

<sup>5</sup>When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven you.”

<sup>6</sup>And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, <sup>7</sup>“Why does this *Man* speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” Mark 2:5-7

<sup>47</sup>Therefore I say to you, her sins, *which are many*, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loves little."

<sup>48</sup>Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

<sup>49</sup>And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" Luke 7:47-49

The ability to forgive an offense requires that the one offended release the party from the offense. For example, if someone steals money from someone in a distant city and a couple years later feels bad about the offense and comes to you and asks you to forgive. You could feel sorry and even have compassion for the person but unless the money was yours or you are connected to the offense, your forgiveness is meaningless. The offended party is the only one who can forgive.

For this reason, the Jews viewed Jesus' statement, "Son, your sins are forgiven you" as blasphemous. They asked the right question, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" The whole purpose of the sacrifice, priesthood and Temple was for the atonement of sins. Moreover, here, Jesus says, "Your sins are forgiven".

<sup>27</sup>And if a person sins unintentionally, then he shall bring a female goat in its first year as a sin offering. <sup>28</sup> So the priest shall make atonement for the person who sins unintentionally, when he sins unintentionally before the LORD, to make atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him. Numbers 15:27-28

Since God is creator and owner of the Earth, sin intentional or unintentional is an offense to God. And atonement must be made for this offense.

- Unless Jesus was God, He had no right to forgive sins
- Only the one sinned against can forgive
- The Jews understood what Jesus was implying by "Forgiving sins"

#### **5b. Greater than the Temple**

<sup>50</sup>Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? <sup>6</sup>Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple. Matthew 12:5

Jesus is with his disciples in a grain field on the Sabbath, and they have picked grain. Accused by the Pharisees of breaking the Sabbath, He then informs them, "One greater than the Temple is here". The Temple location, Mt. Moriah, was "Most Holy" spot. On Moriah, sacrifices were brought, for the Priesthood to administer atonement for sins against God.

- Jesus declared Himself greater than the Temple.
- Unless Jesus is God this would be blasphemous.

#### **5c. Lord of the Sabbath** (See also Luke 6:1-11, Mark 2:23-3:6)

<sup>7</sup>But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. <sup>8</sup>For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." Matthew 12:7-8

The Sabbath was a command from God, given to Moses for the children of Israel. Here Jesus tells the Pharisees that he is Lord even of the Sabbath. Since the Sabbath is LORD's possession, how can Jesus, the "Son of Man" be Lord of the Sabbath? This would only be possible if Jesus is God.

<sup>8</sup>Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup>Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>10</sup>but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. <sup>11</sup>For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it. Exodus 20:8-11

- Unless Jesus is God, he cannot be LORD of the Sabbath

#### **5d. Accepts worship from others**

<sup>2</sup>And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." Matthew 8:2

35Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of God?"

36He answered and said, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?"

37And Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you."

38Then he said, "Lord, I believe!" And he worshiped Him. John 9:35-38

31And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

33Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God." Matthew 14:31-33

27Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."

28And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

29Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." John 20:27-29

When Peter met Cornelius (Act 10:25-26), Cornelius fell at Peter's feet in worship<sup>3</sup>. Peter promptly informed him, "Stand up, I am only a man myself". In the book of Revelation (19:10) we see John who falls at the feet of an angel to worship, but the angel quickly responds, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God" The word for worship is *proskuneo* meaning to kiss, or prostrate oneself in homage.

Unlike Peter or the angel, Jesus never rejected worship (*proskuneo*) when it was offered to Him as the Son of God or in any context. Unless Jesus is God, He has no right to receive worship.

13But you shall destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images 14(for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God), Exodus 34:14

- Only God has the right to be worshipped
- Jesus was worshipped as the Son of God
- Jesus has no right to receive worship unless Jesus is God

## 6. New Testament writers viewed Jesus as God

### 6a. Jesus is called God

5of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen. Romans 9:5

13looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, Titus 2:13

6who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. 9Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:6-11

Paul in Philippians describes the pre-incarnate Jesus as being in the form of God, but taking on flesh and appearing as a man. Paul in his description of Jesus reiterates the point by saying equality with God was not robbery for Jesus. Paul then references Isaiah 45:23 in connection to the name of Jesus.

23 I have sworn by Myself; The word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, And shall not return, That to Me every knee shall bow, Every tongue shall take an oath. Isaiah 45:23

In Isaiah, the LORD declares to Him, "Every knee shall bow" and "Every tongue shall take an oath". Paul applies this verse in Isaiah to Jesus, reaffirming his earlier statement about Jesus being God before his incarnation.

<sup>3</sup> προσκυνέω *proskuneō pros-koo-neh'-o* From G4314 and probably a derivative of G2965 (meaning to *kiss*, like a dog *licking* his master's hand); to *fawn* or *crouch to*, that is, (literally or figuratively) *prostrate* oneself in homage (*do reverence to, adore*):—worship.

## 6b. Jesus is creator of all things

15He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. Colossians 1:15-17  
9For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; 10and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. Colossians 2:9

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God.  
<sup>3</sup>All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 14And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:1-3,14

3who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, Hebrews 1:3

## 6c. God commands the angels to worship Jesus

<sup>6</sup>But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says:

*"Let all the angels of God worship Him."*

<sup>7</sup>And of the angels He says:

*"Who makes His angels spirits  
And His ministers a flame of fire."*

In Hebrews, the author through the Holy Spirit informs us at the birth of Jesus, the angels were told to worship (Proskuneo) the Son, when Jesus was brought into the world. Unless Jesus was God, this would break God's own commands.

## 6d. The Father calls Jesus God

<sup>8</sup>But to the Son He says:

*"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever;  
A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.  
You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness;  
Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You  
With the oil of gladness more than Your companions."*

<sup>10</sup>And:

*"You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth,  
And the heavens are the work of Your hands.*

<sup>11</sup>*They will perish, but You remain;*

*And they will all grow old like a garment;*

<sup>12</sup>*Like a cloak You will fold them up,*

*And they will be changed.*

*But You are the same,*

*And Your years will not fail."* Hebrews 1:8-12

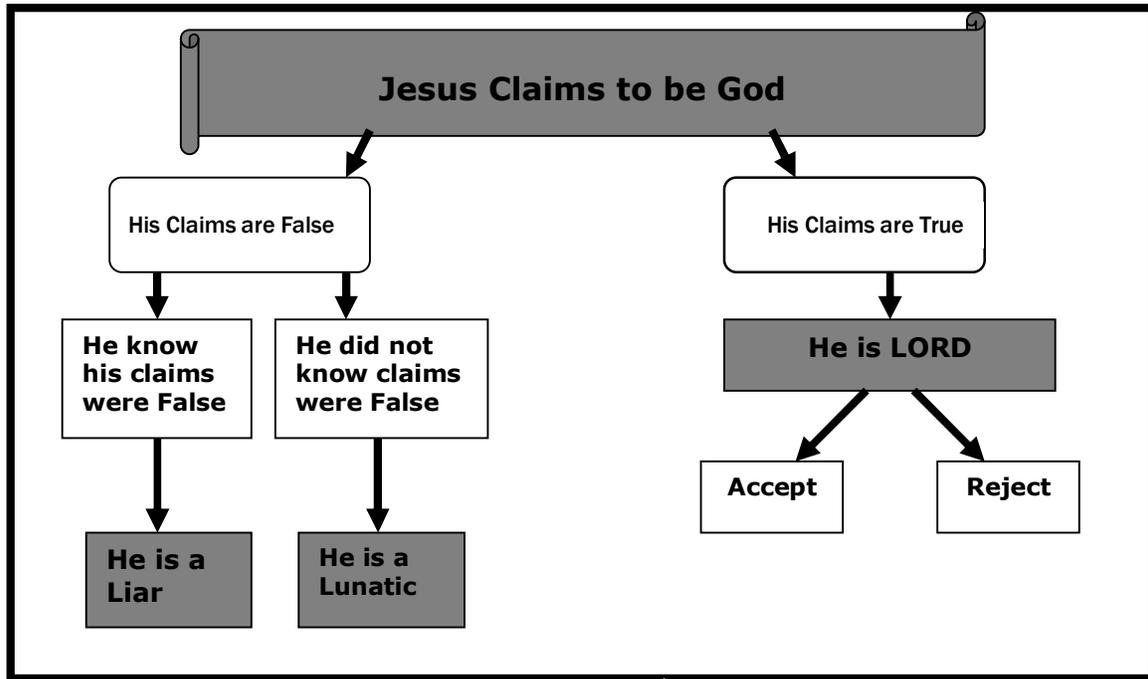
Quoting from Psalm 45:6-7, the author of Hebrews applies these verses to Father's declaration about the Son, calling Him God. This is reiterated with the words, "throne", "forever", "scepter" and "kingdom". Still further, quoting from Psalm 102:25-27, which refers to the LORD, Hebrew's, applies this verse to the "Son" who laid the foundations.

So we need to conclude three points about Jesus when we ask the question, "Who is Jesus?"

**1 Jesus is a historical figure who claimed to be more than just a man**

**2 Jesus claimed to be the Messiah and the Son of God.**

**3 Jesus was either Lord, Liar or Lunatic**



Title/Attribute	As used of Yahwen	As used of Jesus
<b>YHWH</b>	Exodus 3:14 Deuteronomy 32:39 Isaiah 43:10	John 8:24 John 8:58 John 18:5
<b>Giver of Life</b>	Genesis 2:7 Deuteronomy 32:39 1 Samuel 2:6	John 5:21 John 10:28 John 11:25
<b>Forgiver of Sin</b>	Exodus 34:6-7 Nehemiah 9:17 Daniel 9:9	Mark 2:1-12 Acts 26:18 Colossians 2:13
<b>Omnipresent</b>	Psalms 139:7-12 Proverbs 15:3	Matthew 18:20 Matthew 28:20
<b>Omniscient</b>	1 Kings 8:39 Jeremiah 17:9-10, 16	Matthew 11:27 Luke 5:4-6 John 2:25; 16:30 John 21:17 Acts 1:24
<b>Omnipotent</b>	Isaiah 40:10-31 Isaiah 45:5-13, 18	Matthew 28:18 Mark 1:29-34 John 10:18
<b>Preexistent</b>	Genesis 1:1	John 1:15, 30 John 3:13, 31-32 John 6:62; 16:28 John 17:5
<b>Eternal</b>	Psalms 102:26-27 Habakkuk 3:6	Isaiah 9:6 Micah 5:2 John 8:58
<b>Immutable</b>	Numbers 23:19	Hebrews 13:8