

Jesus Christ's Identity Claim

What do you think of Jesus Christ? Who is he? This is the most important question you or I will ever have to face. You will have to give an answer sooner or later. Furthermore, the quality of your life here and your eternal destiny depend upon your answer.

Who is Jesus Christ? Whose Son is he? If Jesus was only a man or just a prophet or religious teacher or rabbi, then you can safely forget him. Perhaps you could try to imitate his good example and regard him as a model person. But in no way could he be your Savior

On the other hand, if Jesus is the unique Son of God - the One sent from the Father- the Promised Messiah who is God and man, He can be your Savior. If you believe his claims as all true Christians do, then you must bow before him and serve him with your whole heart.

The Gospel of John records some distinct times when Jesus claimed he is deity. John 10:24 reads, "So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, the Messiah, tell us plainly." In response Jesus pointed to his works as from the Father and his giving eternal life to those who believe in him. His sheep are protected by the Father. He then asserted identity with the Father when he said, "I and the Father are one.' (v 30). The Jews knew exactly that he was claiming deity. "The Jews picked up stones to stone him. When Jesus' asked them why they were doing this, they replied. "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."

In John 5:18 in the context of a Sabbath controversy, John writes, "This was why the Jews were seeking even more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal

with God." Then Jesus claims the same prerogatives as God, such as judgment and honor and life eternal.

One of the boldest of Jesus' claim to deity was taking to himself the eternal name of God. Jesus told them that Abraham had seen his day. They replied, "You are not 50 years old; how could you have seen Abraham? Then Jesus took to himself the very name of God. Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **before Abraham was, I Am.**" So they picked up stones to throw at him.

To understand his meaning, you go to Exodus 3:13ff. Moses asked God for his name. "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" ¹⁴ God said to Moses, "**I AM WHO I AM.**" And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: '**I AM has sent me to you.**'" ¹⁵ God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'Yahweh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' **This is my name forever**, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. In addition, every time Jesus proclaimed an "I Am" statement of which 7 are recorded in John, he is consciously asserting that he is God in the flesh. Jesus is not a creature, not a created being but eternal deity who took to himself our humanness for us people and our salvation.

The Gospel of John was written for the expressed purpose of relating to us the identity and mission of Jesus of Nazareth. The Apostle John, Jesus' closest earthly companion, does this by relating a number of different signs, miracles and figures of speech to sum up some of the essential characteristics of Jesus and the claims Jesus was making in them.

Let's ask John the question- Who is Jesus? What do you think of him? Who did he reveal himself to be? In fact, it is to answer these questions that he wrote his good news narrative. He tells us plainly, " Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ 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 20:30ff

The first 18 verses of the gospel account of John which are his prologue give us a summation of his whole argument of who Jesus is. Listen to these key verses:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

² He was with God in the beginning. ³ All things were created through Him, and apart from Him not one thing was created that has been created. ... ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and took up residence among us, and we saw his glory, glory as of the one and only from the Father, full of grace and truth.... ¹⁸ No one has seen God at any time. The one and only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, has declared him.

Jesus Christ is the magnificent and eternal Word of God who took upon himself our human flesh and lived among us. He is no less than the incarnate God who came to humanity. He is to be received and embraced as one's own Lord and Savior. Why not do that today, that you might know the fellowship and joy of knowing and serving the living Son of God, whom to know is life eternal.

Prayer: Spirit of God, our teacher be, show to us and reveal to our understanding the glories of the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Amen.