

The Word@ZPC

The Case for God in an Anti-God World

Messiah Complex

Is Jesus Really God?

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Roars of Protest About the “Onlyness” of Jesus

“I am absolutely against any religion that says that one faith is superior to another. I don’t see how that is anything different than spiritual racism.”

Rabbi Schmuley Boteach

“...absurd religious chauvinism.”

Rosemary Radford Reuther

“Religious exclusivity is not just narrow – it’s dangerous. Religion has led to untold strife, division, and conflict. It may be the greatest enemy of peace in the world. If Christians continue to insist that they have ‘the truth’ – and if other religions do this as well – the world will never know peace.”

Geoff, NYC resident

“...insufferable presumption... Are we to believe that only Christians are right?”

Charles Templeton

A Heart for Christ _____ is the most counter-cultural of the Six Marks.

While Jesus is widely admired and applauded, the religion that attempts to follow and serve him is increasingly pummeled for alleged spiritual narrowness.

Best-selling books blame _____ and its _____.

We must keep in mind that every religion makes exclusive truth-claims.

We must ask: *Did Jesus himself claim to be divine?*

Jesus’ Explicit Claims

In at least nine places in the gospel of John, Jesus declares himself unique.

“I am the _____ of Life.” (John 6:35)

“I am the Light of the World.” (John 8:12)

“I am the _____” (John 10:9); “I am the Good Shepherd.” (John 10:14)

“I am the Resurrection and the Life” (John 11:25)

“I am the _____.” (John 15:5)

“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6)

“I and the Father are _____.” (John 10:30)

The crowds responded, “You, a mere man, claim to be God.” (10:33)

“Before Abraham was, _____.” (John 8:58)

This echoed God’s identity as “Yahweh” in Exodus 3:14.

He claimed to be the Son of Man (Matt 8:20) and the Messiah (Mark 15:61-62),

Jesus’ Implicit Claims

We can make a case that Jesus believed himself to be divine by considering a number of secondary matters.

Jesus chose 12 disciples, which echoed the 12 _____ of Israel.

If Jesus wasn’t one of them, what role did he see for himself?

Jesus taught by saying, “Truly I say to you...” (Matt 5:22; John 6:53)

Judaism required the authority of two _____.

Jesus shifted Judaism’s entire understanding of relating to God.

Until Matthew 6:9, no one had ever called God _____.

Jesus claimed to forgive sin and to be sinless himself (Mark 2:5-12).

His detractors gasped, “Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

It is difficult to account for the beauty, profundity, and sheer wisdom of Jesus' teaching.

Could this possibly have been accomplished by a later committee?

Psychologist R. Scott Peck came to Christ after pondering Jesus' interactions with people, especially the _____ he gave to them.

Can Jesus' Claims be Validated?

The alternatives for Jesus' identify fall into four categories:

Liar

Lunatic

Legend

Lord

The Bible itself – since it portrays Jesus as a real human being – seems to argue against his divinity. How are we to explain this?

Paul says that Jesus “_____ himself,” or “made himself nothing.” (Philippians 2:7)

The *kenosis* theory proposes that when Jesus entered the world, he voluntarily gave up some of his divine attributes and prerogatives.

Jesus' miracles, fulfilled prophecies, and resurrection argue for his divinity.

Many would say that the ultimate validation is a _____.

If I Don't Receive Jesus, Am I Going to Hell?

The doctrine of divine judgment is a deeply offensive idea in our culture.

It's worth noting that the famous John 3:16 is followed immediately (see verses 18 & 19) by Jesus' own declaration of judgment.

Jesus has more to say about _____ than anyone else in the Bible.

The Bible's teaching on hell is founded on three propositions:

God has done his _____ to bring us to himself.

God has given us _____ to reject him.

Rejecting God has _____ consequences.

Jesus didn't come into the world to make bad people good, but to make _____ people _____.

Final judgment is a necessary undergirding for pursuing justice and peace.

"Hell is not a place where people are consigned because they were pretty good blokes, but they just didn't believe the right stuff. They're consigned there, first and foremost, because they defy their maker and want to be at the center of the universe. ...[Hell] is filled with people who, for all eternity, *still* want to be the center of the universe and who persist in their God-defying rebellion."

D.A. Carson

"There are only two kinds of people – those who say, 'Thy will be done' to God or those to whom God in the end says, 'Thy will be done.' All that are in hell choose it. Without that self-choice it wouldn't be hell. No soul that seriously and constantly desires joy will ever miss it."

C.S. Lewis

"Hell is simply one's freely chosen identity apart from God on a trajectory into infinity."

Tim Keller

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