

Is Jesus Truly the Son of God?

A central belief of Christianity is that Jesus is divine, the Son of God. But, how do we know Jesus himself made that claim and how can we know if it's true? There are several places in the New Testament recording Jesus' claims that he was divine, including:

- "I am the bread of life. I came down from heaven [so] that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life. The living Father sent me."
(John 6:35,38,40,57)
- "Again the High Priest questioned him, 'Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed God?' 'I am,' answered Jesus." (Mark 14:61-62)

A common counter-argument is that Jesus himself did not make these claims of divinity, but these words were later "put in his mouth" by his overzealous followers. If that was the case, how do we explain why Jesus was crucified? For if Jesus was not crucified for claiming to be God, then why did the Jewish leaders want him killed? See John 19:7. It is difficult to explain Jesus' crucifixion, which is a well-attested historical fact, if he did not actually claim to be God.

Since Jesus claimed to be divine, he was either telling the truth, or he was a

deliberate liar or sadly delusional. As C.S. Lewis noted in *Mere Christianity*, for Jesus to have talked as he talked, lived as he lived, and died as he died, he was either a boldfaced liar, an insane lunatic, or truly our Lord and God.

However, what would Jesus have gained by dying for a lie? People do not give up their lives for what they know to be a lie. Even non-Christians agree that Jesus was a great moral teacher, a good and wise person. However, a liar is the opposite of good. A lunatic is the opposite of wise.

Suppose it was Jesus' disciples who invented the lie. But, what motive would they have for doing this? What liar would suffer torture and death for what they knew to be a lie? This makes no sense. Rather, they proved their sincerity by martyrdom.

However, could Jesus have been delusional and deceived his disciples? After all, there are many lunatics in asylums who believe they are God. The character traits of the "divinity complex" are well known: egotism, narcissism, inflexibility, dullness, and an inability to love others. Would thousands of people follow such a person, many to their death? Would you?

Furthermore, how could the Apostles have been so successful in gaining followers and fostering the transformed lives of so many if they were just naive fools who had been deceived by a delusional Jesus? And, is it realistic to expect that all of the Apostles would have been so deceived? For not one of them ever denied what they believed to be true. It is unrealistic to expect that they and thousands of people throughout the centuries would willingly suffer torture and death if what they believed was a false deception. Insane or delusional people just aren't this widely successful for so long. It's hard to ex-

pect that a deliberate lie or false delusion would have "withstood the test of time" for twenty centuries without being exposed as such.

Of course, anyone claiming to be divine must have some pretty solid evidence to back up their claim in order to be taken seriously. What evidence is there that caused Jesus' claim of divinity to be taken seriously, including by those who wanted him crucified?

First, the originality and authority of Jesus' teachings, especially his parables, is evidence of his divinity. Who else has told so many profoundly insightful stories, in such an impromptu manner, that are still relevant two thousand years later? Anyone hearing or reading the parables of Jesus cannot help but marvel at the "superhuman" creativity and wisdom of their author.

Jesus' many miracles are also evidence of his divinity. In addition to his teachings, it was his miracles that drew huge crowds. If the miracles did not actually happen, would so many people have been drawn to him?

Finally, Jesus' Resurrection is the most compelling evidence of his divinity. The transformed lives of his followers after the Resurrection confirm its validity. Before the Resurrection they were scared and timid, afterwards they couldn't stop boldly proclaiming that Jesus is indeed God and that he suffered and died for the salvation of all.