

Apologetics and Theology

Answering the Question: Is Jesus God?

Selected Scriptures

1. Questions and Types of Questions and How To Answer Them:

A. The Genuine Question:

“Does the Bible say that Jesus is God? Did Jesus ever claim to be God?”
These questions are easily answered in the Scriptures by showing that Jesus is God and that He claimed to be God.

B. Red-Letterism:

“I don’t want to hear what other people said about Jesus, but just where He said that He was God.” This question attempts to set the rules for how God has chosen to declare that Jesus is God. While a clear and convincing answer can be given within these parameters, it is important to stress that the words spoken by Jesus do not have a uniquely special significance compared to the rest of the Bible for answering this question (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

C. A Foolish or Unreasonable Standard:

“Simple question: Does Jesus ever say, ‘I am God, worship me’? Anything else does not count.” This person has an over-inflated view of their own perspective. To require that God must address and answer the question with a specific formula like this is ridiculous. You can attempt to show this person how Jesus did make clear claims to be God and received worship, but it may result in further scorn or derision. This may be a case where you ought not to engage further in answering this question (cf. Matt 7:6).

2. Explicit and Primary Statements about the Deity of Jesus

A. John 1:1-3

John states that Jesus (cf. John 1:14, 29, 36-37) is identified as God (v.1), He has the attributes that only God has in that He is eternal (v.2) and that He has done the activity that only God has done in creating the world (v.3).

B. Colossians 1:15-17

Paul says that Jesus is the very image of God (v.15a; cf. John 14:8-9), anyone who has seen Him has seen God. He has sovereignty and rulership over all of creation that belongs only to God (v.15b). He performed the actions that only God has done in the past by creating all things (v.16) and He does the job that only God can do by sustaining all things (v.17).

C. Hebrews 1:1-4

Jesus (cf. vs.1:4; 2:9) is the one through whom God made the world (v.2). He owns all of creation because He created all things (v.2b). He is the very image of God (v.3) and He sustains all of creation by His own command (v.3).

3. But What About Jesus’ Own Words?

A. Jesus’ Explicit Claim to Be God

I. John 8:56-59 (cf. Ex. 3:14; Deut. 32:39)

Jesus claimed for Himself the divine name, Yahweh, in His answer. This was clearly understood by those who heard Him speak.

II. Matt. 26:63-66 (also: Mark 14:61-64)

The LORD (Yahweh) said to David’s Lord (Adonai), who is also the coming Messiah, that He would rule and reign and subdue His enemies. Jesus attributes this to Himself and the priests see this as nothing else than Jesus claiming to be the Messiah and Lord. The Lord, Adonai, is clearly God (cf. Isa. 6:3).

III. Luke 22:66-71

Luke records the same basic interrogation that Matthew and Mark do, but He is asked a followup question for clarification wherein Jesus clearly identifies Himself as the unique Son of God who can sit beside God.

B. Jesus Referred to God as His Own Father

I. John 5:18

This is a text that is key to understand just how frequently Jesus clearly claimed to be more than a good man, a good teacher, or even merely some highly exalted man. His claims to be the unique Son of God by calling God His own father was a claim of equality with God.

II. Other References:

Matt 7:21; 10:32-33; 11:27; 12:50; 15:13; 16:17; 18:10, 19, 35; 20:23; 25:34; 26:29, 39, 42, 53; **Mark** 8:38; **Luke** 2:49; 9:26; 10:22; 22:29; 24:49; **John** 2:16; 5:17, 43; 6:32, 40; 8:16, 28, 38, 49, 54; 10:15, 17, 18, 25, 29, 39; 14:2, 7, 13, 20-21, 23; 15:1, 8, 15, 23-24; 20:17