

This is an important question and depending upon who you ask, you will get a variety of answers. Jesus himself asked His disciples this question (Matt 16:13-17).

"Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He began asking His disciples, saying, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' And Simon Peter answered and said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered and said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.'

Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. This is quite a claim, and it is reasonable for someone to ask, "Why should I believe such a claim?" In today's world, even the term "Son of God" means different things to different people. So, what makes Jesus different than other religious leaders or other deities that people worship? Is there any evidence to validate such a claim? This will be the focal point here.

Unlike some so-called deities that people worship in the world today, Jesus is not a myth, but He is a historical person. Flavius Josephus was a Jewish Historian during AD 37–c.100.

His works are the principal source for the history of the Jews from the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (BC 17–63) to the fall of Masada (AD 73). There is a very interesting statement regarding Jesus recorded in:

The Works of Josephus, Book 18, Chapter 3, pages 63 and 64:

"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 [the] 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 at this day.

This is only one of many proofs that could be quoted to verify Jesus was indeed a real person in history. This quote also verifies parts of the Gospel story. We are not talking of some myth or fairy tale, but of historical facts.

Some people would ask, "Couldn't Jesus have just been a good man and a great teacher and nothing more?" Jesus Himself did not allow room for this view. Jesus claimed to be from heaven, and He was the only way in which mankind could come to God the Father (John 3:13, John 14:6). A good man or a great teacher would not make such claims if he did not believe them to be true. If he made these claims knowing they were false then he would not be a good man or a great teacher, but rather he would be a liar. On the other hand, if Jesus believed these claims to be true and they were not, that would make Him a crazy person. Usually, people who say Jesus was merely a good man or a teacher are not willing to call Jesus either a liar or a crazy person. They simply have not thought out this concept very far. Jesus had to be a liar, a crazy person, or the Son of God. He simply did not leave room in His teachings to be labeled only a great man or a teacher. He himself claimed to be much more!

Unlike other religious leaders Jesus was prophesized about, in some detail, before He was born. The Dead Sea Scrolls are ancient manuscripts that were discovered in 1948. They are proof that the Old Testament books date to before Jesus was born. This means they could not have been written later, to merely make it look as though Jesus fulfilled these prophecies. The Dead Sea Scrolls contain a portion of every book in the Old Testament except for Esther.

Some people don't think that the stories about Jesus in the New Testament are true. However, there are other historical records besides the Bible that provide evidence that Jesus was in fact a real person. The stories concerning Jesus in the New Testament were being circulated in the same area where Jesus lived and traveled. It was here that the church was established and grew. This took place in the same time frame among the same people who knew Jesus before He was crucified. If the events that are recorded in the New Testament were manufactured or highly exaggerated, church growth should have been nearly impossible. We see in the book of Acts the people who lived in that era and objected to Christianity did not deny that Jesus taught and did the things recorded in the New Testament letters. The Jews considered the teachings blasphemous or ludicrous and commanded the disciples to be quiet. However, they acknowledged that Jesus did in fact teach such things and perform what the people considered miracles.

In a court of law when the hostile witness agrees with the defense, it is considered a fact. Imagine a murder trial. The prosecuting attorney says that David murdered Albert. The defense gets up and says David did indeed kill Albert, but it was an accident. Since both sides agree that David killed Albert, this would be considered a fact, and it would not be called into question. Since the actual events regarding Jesus' ministry and crucifixion are not disputed by those opposed to Christianity in that time frame, the events themselves should be considered fact.

Following are some prophecies concerning Jesus Christ in the Old Testament before He was born and the fulfillment by Him in the New Testament. You can find this and other prophecies that Jesus fulfilled in greater detail in Josh McDowell's book Evidence that Demands a Verdict. This book also supplies an abundance of evidence for the reliability of the Bible. I am highlighting only a few prophecies about the Messiah that were fulfilled in Jesus. Fritz Ridenour in the book Who Says? declares that there are some 333 prophecies concerning the Messiah which are fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

1. BORN OF A VIRGIN; PROPHECY

(Isaiah 7:14) "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel."

BORN OF A VIRGIN; FULFILLMENT (Matthew 1:18-25) (See also Luke 1:26-35)

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.' Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, 'Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,' which translated means, 'God with us.' And Joseph arose from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took her as his wife, and kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus."

(Jesus was literally "God with us"[John.1:1 and 14] and the name Jesus means "Jehovah is salvation," i. e., "is the Savior".)

2. MESSIAH TRACED TO ABRAHAM; PROPHECY

(Genesis 22:18) (See also Genesis 12:2-3)

This had to be through David, Jesse, Judah, Jacob and Isaac to fulfill prophecy. The context here is the Lord talking to Abraham:

"And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

MESSIAH TRACED TO ABRAHAM, FULFILLMENT

(Matthew 1:1) (See also Galatians 3:16)

"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."

To fulfill this prophecy, Jesus had to be from the bloodline of this one man. I have not been able to find that anybody from Jesus' time tried to argue that He was born of the wrong bloodline. The letters which are now our New Testament openly declare and trace the bloodline of Jesus back to Abraham. In Biblical times, lineage was extremely important.

The Messiah was also to be born through Isaac (Genesis 21:12); this is shown fulfilled in Luke 3:23-34 and Matthew 1:2-16. Since Abraham had two sons — Isaac and Ishmael — God at this point cut off half of the lineage of Abraham. The Messiah also had to come through the line of Jacob (Numbers 24:17, Genesis 35:10-12). We can see this fulfilled in Luke 3:23-24 and 1:33; and Matthew 1:2. Isaac had two sons — Jacob and Esau — so God here eliminates half of the line of Isaac. The Messiah was to come from the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10, Micah 5:2). The fulfillment of this can be seen in Luke 3:23-33, Matthew 1:2, and Hebrews 7:14. The twelve tribes of the Hebrew nation developed from Jacob's twelve sons. God here cut off 11/12 of the tribes of Israel. The Messiah was to come through Jesse (Isaiah 11:1 and 10). We can see this fulfilled in Luke 3:23-32 and Matthew 1:6-16. The Messiah was to come through David (Jeremiah 23:5, 2 Samuel 7:12-16, Psalms 132:11). The fulfillment of this can be seen in Luke 3:23-31, Matthew 1:1; 9:27; and 15:22, Acts 13:22-23, and Revelation 22:16. Jesse had at least eight sons (see 1 Samuel 16:10,11). God now cuts off all of these except David.

It should be clear that the odds are stacking up against somebody fulfilling this prophecy by being born through the correct lineage. Remember this is something that cannot be fulfilled intentionally; it takes the divine act of God to accomplish this.

3. BORN IN BETHLEHEM; PROPHECY (Micah 5:2)

"But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity."

BORN IN BETHLEHEM; FULFILLMENT (Matthew 2:1) (See also John 7:42, Matthew 2:4-8, Luke 2:4-7) (His days are from eternity — Colossians.1:17)

"Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem..."

Not only does a person have no control over what family through which he is born, there is also no control concerning the location of birth. The Messiah had to be born in Bethlehem, not Jerusalem, or anywhere else, to fulfill prophecy. Where He was born was not disputed in Jesus' day.

4. PRESENTED WITH GIFTS; PROPHECY (Isaiah 60:6) (See also Psalm 72:10)

"A multitude of camels will cover you, the young camels of Midian and ephah; all those from Sheba will come; they will bring gold and frankincense and will bear good news of the praises of the LORD."

PRESENTED WITH GIFTS; FULFILLMENT (Matthew 2:1-11)

1 — "Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem,

11 — And they came into the house and saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell down and worshipped Him; and opening their treasures they presented to Him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh."

A person has no control over what gifts someone may present to him as a child — i.e., it is not very likely that Jesus could have manipulated the situation so that the magi would travel a distance to give him these gifts.

5. HIS ZEAL FOR THE HOUSE OF GOD; PROPHECY (Psalm 69:9)

“For zeal for Thy house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach Thee have fallen on me.”

HIS ZEAL FOR THE HOUSE OF GOD; FULFILLMENT (John 2:15-17)

“And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the moneychangers, and overturned their tables; and to those who were selling the doves He said, ‘Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a house of merchandise.’ His disciples remembered that it was written, ‘Zeal for Thy house will consume me.’”

6. PROCEEDED BY MESSENGER; PROPHECY (Isaiah 40:3)

“A voice is calling, ‘Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.’”

PROCEEDED BY MESSENGER; FULFILLMENT (Matthew 3:1-2) (See also Matthew 3:3-11, 11:10, John 1:23, Luke 1:17)

“Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”

7. PERFORMER OF MIRACLES; PROPHECY (Isaiah 35:5-6) (See also Isaiah 32:3-4)

“Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. Then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb will shout for joy.”

PERFORMER OF MIRACLES; FULFILLMENT (Luke 7:20-22) (See also Luke 7:20-22, Matthew 9:32-35; 11:4-6, John 5:5-9)

“And when the men had come to Him, they said, ‘John the Baptist has sent us to You,’ saying, ‘Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?’ At that very time He cured many people of diseases and afflictions and evil spirits; and He granted sight to many who were blind. And He answered and said to them, ‘Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have the gospel preached to them.’”

Josephus, the Jewish historian in that time, indicated that Jesus performed miracles.

8. TEACHER OF PARABLES; PROPHECY (Psalm 78:2)

“I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old...”

TEACHER OF PARABLES; FULFILLMENT (Matthew 13:34)

“All these things Jesus spoke to the multitudes in parables, and He did not speak to them without a parable...”

9. HE WAS TO ENTER JERUSALEM ON A DONKEY; PROPHECY (Zechariah 9:9)

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

HE WAS TO ENTER JERUSALEM ON A DONKEY; FULFILLMENT (Luke 19:35-38)

“And they brought it to Jesus, and they threw their garments on the colt, and put Jesus on it. And as He was going, they were spreading their garments in the road. And as He was now approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, saying, ‘Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!’”

Jesus could have purposely tried to fulfill this by riding the donkey into town. Yet it is unlikely that he could have persuaded the crowd to behave as they did. That they did on their own.

BETRAYED BY A FRIEND; PROPHECY (Psalm 41:9) (See also Psalm 55:12-14)

" my close friend, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me."

BETRAYED BY A FRIEND; FULFILLMENT (John 13:21-26)

(See also Matthew 10:4 and 26:47-50)

“When Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me.’ The disciples began looking at one another, at a loss to know of which one He was speaking. There was reclining on Jesus’ breast one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore gestured to him, and said to him, ‘Tell us who it is of whom He is speaking.’ He, leaning back thus on Jesus’ breast, said to Him, ‘Lord, who is it?’ Jesus therefore answered, ‘That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him.’ So, when He had dipped the morsel, He took and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.”

It seems unlikely that someone would purposely try to deceive someone else into thinking he was something that he was not — especially knowing that the deception would lead to his own death — simply to fulfill a prophecy.

11. SOLD FOR THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER, POTTERS FIELD PURCHASED; PROPHECY (Zechariah 11:12-13)

“‘If it is good in your sight, give me my wages; but if not, never mind!’ So, they weighed out thirty shekels of silver as my wages. Then the LORD said to me, ‘Throw it to the potter, that magnificent price at which I was valued by them.’ So, I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the LORD.”

SOLD FOR THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER, POTTERS FIELD PURCHASED; FULFILLMENT (Matthew 27:5-7)

“And he threw the pieces of silver into the sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the pieces of silver and said, ‘It is not lawful to put them into the temple treasury, since it is the price of blood.’ And they counseled together and with the money bought Potter’s Field as a burial place for strangers.”

Notice the detail here: an exact number of coins is mentioned, and it was silver, not gold; the money was thrown, not placed; this happened in the house of the Lord; the money was used to buy the Potters field.

12. HE WAS SILENT BEFORE ACCUSERS; PROPHECY (Isaiah 53:7)

“He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth.”

HE WAS SILENT BEFORE ACCUSERS; FULFILLMENT (Matthew 27:12-14)

“And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He made no answer. Then Pilate said to Him, ‘Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?’ And He did not answer him with regard to even a single charge, so that the governor was quite amazed.”

13. HANDS AND FEET PIERCED, LOTS CAST FOR GARMENTS; PROPHECY

(Psalm 22:16-18)

"a band of evildoers has encompassed me; they pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots."

HANDS AND FEET PIERCED, LOTS CAST FOR GARMENTS; FULFILLMENT (Luke 23:33-35)
(See also John 19:23-24)

"And when they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. But Jesus was saying, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.' And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves. And the people stood by, looking on. And even the rulers were sneering at Him, saying, 'He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One.'"

(John 20:25 and Luke 24:39-40 show that they used nails, which pierced His hands and feet, during His crucifixion.)

Crucifixion originated with the Phoenicians and Persians. It was practiced from the 6th century BC until the 4th century AD. The Roman emperor Constantine banned crucifixion in 337 AD. The 22nd Psalm is attributed to David around BC 1000. It is said that a person's bones become prominent during crucifixion. The pierced hands and feet came from being nailed to the cross.

This means the results of crucifixion and the type of death Jesus would die were described before crucifixion was invented!

Ref. NASB, ABC's of the Bible by Readers Digest, International Bible Encyclopedia, Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia. The Bible Knowledge Commentary.

14. FORSAKEN CRY; PROPHECY (Psalm 22:1)

"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning."

FORSAKEN CRY; FULFILLMENT (Matthew 27:46)

"And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?'"

HEARTBROKEN, BONES NOT BROKEN, SIDE PIERCED; PROPHECY

(Psalm 22:14; 34:20, and Zechariah 12:10)

Psalm 22:14 — “I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it is melted within me.”

(Psalm 34:20) — “He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken.”

Zechariah 12:10 — “And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced.”

HEARTBROKEN, BONES NOT BROKEN, SIDE PIERCED; FULFILLMENT (John 19:32-34)

“The soldiers therefore came, and broke the legs of the first man, and of the other man who was crucified with Him; but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs; but one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water.”

From a medical perspective, the presence of blood and water suggests that Jesus may have died from cardiac rupture or cardiorespiratory failure.

16. DARKNESS OVER THE LAND; PROPHECY (Amos 8:9)

“ ‘And it will come about in that day,’ declares the Lord GOD, ‘That I shall make the sun go down at noon and make the earth dark in broad daylight.’ ”

DARKNESS OVER THE LAND; FULFILLMENT (Matthew 27:44-45)

“And the robbers also who had been crucified with Him were casting the same insult at Him. Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour.”

Because the Jews reckoned twelve hours from sunrise to sunset, it would make the sixth hour near noon and the ninth hour about three o'clock. Thallus, a historian, mentioned the darkness and the events surrounding the crucifixion around AD 52 His words are recorded by Julius Africanus.

17. BURIED IN RICH MAN'S TOMB; PROPHECY (Isaiah 53:9)

“His grave was assigned with wicked men, yet He was with a rich man in His death, because He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth.”

BURIED IN RICH MAN'S TOMB; FULFILLMENT (Matthew 27:57-60)

“And when it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given over to him. And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb.”

18. BODILY RESURRECTION; PROPHECY (Psalm 16:10; see also Psalm 41:9-10)

“For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol; neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay.”

BODILY RESURRECTION; FULFILLMENT (Acts 2:31 and John 2:19-22) (See also Acts 13:34, Luke 24:46)

Acts 2:31 — “He looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay.”

John 2:19-22 — “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’ The Jews therefore said, ‘It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?’ But He was speaking of the temple of His body. When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had spoken.” (underline emphasis mine)

Some people try to say that Jesus only rose from the grave spiritually, not physically — this is one of the proofs that this assumption is false. His body did not rot, because he physically rose from the dead. He said he would raise his body, and he did.

Professor Peter W Stoner and a group of college students decided to try and figure the mathematical odds of Jesus fulfilling just eight of the Old Testament prophecies. They took this figure and made a word picture we can all understand. Let's say you took the entire state of Texas and buried it two feet deep in silver dollars. Next you put an X on one of the silver dollars. Then, you mix them all up, using bulldozers. Now you send out a man blindfolded and allow him to pick up one coin. The students determined that the blindfolded man picking up the coin with the X on it, would have the same odds as Jesus fulfilling the prophecies by chance.

You would certainly stand a better chance of winning the lottery a few times, than you would at winning a bet that Jesus was not the Messiah foretold in the Old Testament. Other people have made amazing predictions, but they have also been wrong. The Bible, on the other hand, contains more predictions than any single individual, and it has never been wrong. Jesus declared that these Scriptures testified of Him (John 5:39). The prophecies concerning Jesus before His birth help in verifying this point.

Jesus is the only religious leader in history who predicted His own death and resurrection and then actually died and then rose from the dead. Historical evidence indicates that this is not merely a narrative, but an established historical fact.

The sermon Peter preached in Jerusalem about the resurrection in Acts 2:14-41 took place within a short walk of where Jesus was buried. Three thousand people accepted the Gospel message there. This would be rather hard to explain if the body of Jesus was still in the tomb (See Luke 24:18-24, 18:31-34). What motive would the disciples have to die martyrs for this Gospel message if they did not really see Jesus after He was raised from the dead? Why did the non-believers Paul and James change, and profess to have also seen the risen Christ, if it were not so? How does one explain more than 500 eyewitnesses (1 Corinthians 15:5-8)? It has been shown that the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ would stand in a court of law, based upon historical evidence. These facts are established by critical and historical procedures. It is not logical reasoning to reject the resurrection simply because one does not accept the inspiration of the scriptures.

Considering these credentials that Jesus has: (1) been foretold with detailed prophecy before He was born; (2) predicted His own death and physical resurrection; (3) bodily risen from the dead just as He said He would — I do not believe that there are any other religious leaders that deserve our attention more than Jesus Christ.

WHO DID JESUS CLAIM TO BE?

His enemies understood Him to claim to be God. John 10:30-33 says: “‘I and the Father are one.’ The Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, ‘I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?’ The Jews answered Him, ‘For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God.’”

Here is Jesus' response in verses 36-39:“ ‘...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'? If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father.’ Therefore, they were seeking again to seize Him, and He eluded their grasp.”

Jesus declared that He and the Father are One. The Jews understood this as a claim to be God. **Jesus then calls Himself the “Son of God”** and reaffirms His statement of "I and the Father are one". The question that remains is, did the Jews correctly understand what He meant when He called himself the “Son of God”? Was He also claiming to be God? I believe the answer is “yes”, He did claim to be God. We see this clearly in John 20:28-29: "Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘**My Lord and my God!**’ Jesus said to him, ‘Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see and yet believed.’”

In these verses, Thomas calls Jesus his “Lord and God”. Jesus, being the teacher that He was, would have rebuked or at least corrected Thomas, if Thomas had been incorrect to refer to Jesus with those words. Certainly, Jesus would not have let such a misunderstanding, or use of the Lord’s name in vain (as some have interpreted it), go by without some correction. Jesus' answer to Thomas shows that Thomas was correct to call Him “Lord and God”.

Jesus not only claimed to be the “Son of God” and “God One with the Father”, but He also claimed to be the expected Messiah as foretold in the Old Testament. John 4:25-26: "The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."

Jesus often referred to himself as the Son of man. Matthew 17:22-23:“And while they were gathering together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, ‘**The Son of Man** is going to be delivered into the hands of men; and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day.’ And they were deeply grieved.”

It is interesting that Jesus would call Himself this, since he was not a “son of man” in the way we would assume. He was born of the Virgin Mary and by the Holy Spirit — Joseph was not his biological father. Jesus was, however, the Son of man in two other ways:

Jesus is the Son of Man as the Messiah, being born through the family of David, as well as through Jesse, Judah, Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham, as shown earlier. This genealogy traces him through man. Both Mary and Joseph's bloodlines can be traced through these people (Matthew 1:1-16, Luke 3:23-38). The title "Messiah" is also applied to Jesus because the Messiah that was to come in Old Testament prophecy was called the “Son of Man” (Daniel 7:13-14).

Jesus is also seen as the Son of Man in reference to His humanity — God becoming man

Philippians 2:5-8 says, “Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

In the first chapter of John, verse one, we see: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”; then, verse fourteen of the same chapter: “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO ACCEPT JESUS' CLAIM OF WHO HE IS?

According to Jesus, it is very important

John 8:24-25: "I said therefore to you, that ‘you shall die in your sins’; **for unless you believe that I am He you shall die in your sins.** And so, they were saying to Him, ‘Who are You?’ Jesus said to them, ‘What have I been saying to you from the beginning?’”

As we have already seen, Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, God One with the Father, and the Son of God. He said that unless men accepted these things as His identity, they would die in their sins. What does it mean to die in your sins? It means to die and be separated from God. The Bible declares that those who are separated from God spend eternity in a place called Hell. Fortunately, Eternal Life in God’s presence is a free gift. All you must do to gain eternal life is repent and accept Jesus as your Savior and substitutional sacrifice for your sins and accept him as Lord of your life (Matthew 25:31-41, John 3:16-18, Romans 3:23, 1 John 1:10, James 2:10, Matthew 5:22, Ephesians 2:8-9, Luke 6:44-49).

WHO DOES THE BIBLE DECLARE JESUS TO BE?

The church usually answers this question by referring to the “Trinity”. The Trinity is a title of a doctrine that the Bible teaches. Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary defines the Trinity as follows: "The coexistence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the unity of the Godhead (divine nature or essence). The doctrine of the trinity means that within the being and activity of the one God there are three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

Throughout the Bible we find that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all referred to as “God”, and all three persons possess the attributes of God. We also find that there is only one God — not three Gods in one. All three are also seen as separate persons, even though they are one God. Jesus is God the Son, the second person in the Trinity. Although much could be written about the Trinity concept, I will be focusing on Jesus.

The Bible calls Jesus God

Isaiah 9:6: “For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.”

Acts 20:28: "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood." (According to this verse the church was purchased with whose blood?)

Colossians 2:8-9: “See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form.”

1 John 5:20: “And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, in order that we might know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.”

2 Peter 1:1: “Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ...”

Revelation 1:7-8: “Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. Even so. Amen. ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, ‘who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.’”

Compare this with Revelation 2:8 "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life..."

Hebrews 1:8: “But of the Son He says, ‘Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom.’”

Titus 2:13: “Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.”

DOES JESUS POSSESS THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD?

We would expect God to be seen as Creator, Judge, Savior (able to forgive sins), omniscient (all knowing), omnipotent (all powerful), omnipresent (able to be everywhere at once), eternal (having always existed), and worshipped. As I will show, all these things can be found in Jesus Christ.

Jesus is Creator: Colossians 1:13-16:

“For He delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him.”

(See also John 1:3, Hebrews 1:8-10, 1 Corinthians 8:6, Isaiah 44:24)

Jesus is Judge: John 5:22:

"For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son..."

(See also 2 Timothy 4:1, Romans 14:10)

(He can forgive sins): Mark 2:5:

“And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, ‘My son, your sins are forgiven.’”

We can forgive someone for sinning against us, but we cannot forgive someone for sinning against God, as Jesus did here. And in Acts 5:30-31: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."

(See also Mark 2:10, Colossians 2:13)

Jesus is Omniscient (all knowing or all wise):

1 Corinthians 1:24:

“to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

Jesus is shown in the New Testament to have knowledge far beyond our human understanding. We do not know the heart of every man, but John 2:24-25 says Jesus knew all men and what was in man. In John 6:64 we are told Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him. Then in John 13:1 we find that Jesus knew His hour had come to die and go to the Father. In John 16:30 the disciples said, "Now we know that You know all things". John 18:4 says that Jesus knew all the things that were about to happen to Him. While Jesus was on the cross, we are told He knew the Old Testament prophecies concerning Himself and our redemption had been fulfilled. Nobody else knew that at that time, yet He did (John 19:28). Peter declared that Jesus knew His heart and all things (John.21:17). What man has ever had this kind of knowledge? This knowledge is far beyond even any of the prophets in the Bible. They may have foretold future events but none of them knew the heart and thoughts of every man. These are only a few examples that could be shown that Jesus knew such things.

Jesus is Omnipotent (all powerful, unlimited authority): Matthew 28:18:

“And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.’”

In the following references we see that: Jesus will return with power; power flowed through Him to heal people who merely touched Him; Jesus had power over demons; He was able to give power to His disciples to heal others; Peter declared there was power in Jesus' name; Jesus is the power of God; it was through Jesus that Paul received power; Jesus has the power to subject everything unto Himself; it is by His power that we will be raised from the dead; He upholds all things by the word of His power; Jesus has the keys (i.e.. the power) over death and Hades; and that the time will come when Jesus will abolish all other rule, authority and power.

(See also Mark 13:26,5:30; Luke 4:36, 6:19, 9:1; Acts 4:7-10; Romans 1:4; 1 Corinthians 1:24, 15:23-25; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Philippians 3:20-21; Hebrews 1:3; 2 Peter 1:16; Revelation 1:17-18.)

Jesus is Omnipresent (present at all places at all times): **Matthew 18:20, 28:20:**

Jesus said, "For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst" (18:20). He also told His disciples, "and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (28:20). Paul declared that Jesus dwells in the hearts of believers. Paul further stated if this is not true of an individual they do not belong to Him (Romans 8:9).

(See also 2 Corinthians 13:5, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 3:17, Colossians 1:27, Revelation 3:20.)

Jesus is eternal (He has always existed): **Micah 5:2:**

"But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity."

(See also John 1:1-2, 17:5, 8:58; Revelations 1:17,2:8, 22:13.)

Jesus is worshipped: Hebrews 1:6:

"And when He again brings the first-born into the world, He says, 'And let all the angels of God worship Him.'"

Matthew 14:33:"And those who were in the boat worshipped Him, saying, 'You are certainly God's Son!'"

(See Matthew 4:10 for text regarding how worship belongs to God alone. See also Matthew 2:2 and 11. For "lamb on throne" references, see Revelations .4:10, 7:17; John 1:29-36)

THE TERM "SON OF GOD"

As I stated earlier, the term "Son of God" means different things to different people. I have tried to show who the Son of God is, but it is also important to recognize that everyone that uses this term is not speaking about the same thing. The following are three examples.

Historic Christianity — The teachings that can be traced back through the Protestant Reformation, the Catholic church, the Apostolic Fathers and the original church referred to as "The Way" in Acts 19:23. There are many Christian denominations and non-denominational churches that would fall into this category. It is these churches that teach the doctrine that is now called the Trinity. Historic Christianity teaches that the Son of God is God the Son, the second person in the Trinity, God in human form.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints — Also referred to as L.D.S., or the Mormons. To this church the Son of God is: The literal son of Elohim through a physical relation with Mary. He is also the brother of Lucifer and our elder brother. He is one of many Gods. This church believes that God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are three separate Gods.

This can be verified in their books in the following locations: Religious Truths Defined pg.44, Mormon Doctrine pgs.546-547 ,Doctrines of SalvationVol.1 pg.102, Evidences and Reconciliations pg.209,Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section Six 1843–44 pg.370, Discourses of Brigham Young, pg.22 .

The Watchtower Society — These churches are known as Kingdom Halls, and the people are commonly referred to as “Jehovah Witnesses”. This church believes that the Son of God is a mighty god, but not Jehovah, who is the only Almighty God. Jesus is a created being also known as Michael the Archangel. Watchtower doctrine teaches that Jesus should not be worshipped.

This can be verified in their books in the following locations: Reasoning from the Scriptures pgs.213, 416-417 , Aid to Bible Understanding pgs.918, 920, 1152,1241-1242 .

If Jesus was the brother of Lucifer, who is a fallen angel, as the Mormon Church claims— or Michael the Archangel, as Jehovah Witnesses claim— in both cases this would make Him an angel. Angels are not to be worshipped (Colossians 2:18 and Luke 4:8). Jesus Himself created angels (Colossians 1:13-17). He cannot be the brother of His own creation, nor can He Himself be His own creation. Also, if He is a mighty god separate from Jehovah, as the Witnesses claim or one of many Gods, as Mormons claim— He would have to be a false god. The Bible is very clear about the fact that there is only one God (Isaiah 44:6-8).

WHAT DID CHRISTIANS THINK IN THE 1ST CENTURY AFTER JESUS? DID THEY BELIEVE THE SAME AS WHAT CHRISTIANS TEACH TODAY ABOUT JESUS?

The Christians in the 1st century had a better understanding of what the writers of the New Testament meant. I say this because some of what are known as the “Ante-Nicene Fathers” personally knew the writers of the New Testament. For example, Ignatius was a personal disciple of one or more of the original apostles. (This can be found in the book *A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs* .) Therefore, it stands to reason that, if we are interpreting the New Testament correctly, our beliefs about who Jesus is should not have drastically changed from what was believed about Jesus in the 1st century.

The following quotes can be found in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to AD 325*

Ignatius was the head of the church of Antioch [died AD110].

Volume 1, The epistle of Ignatius to the Romans, chapter 3 (Vol.1 PDF pg. 60)

"For our God, Jesus Christ, now that He is with the Father, is all the more revealed in His glory. Christianity is not a thing of silence only, but also of manifest greatness."

Justin Martyr is recognized to be one of the most important Christian writers [AD110-166].
Volume 1, The first Apology of Justin, chapter 63 (Vol.1 PDF pg. 150)

"...the Father of the universe has a Son, who also, being the first-begotten Word of God, is even God. And of old He appeared in the shape of fire and in the likeness of an angel to Moses and to the other prophets; but now in the times of your reign, having, as we before said, become Man by a virgin, according to the counsel of the Father, for the salvation of those who believe on Him, He endured both to be set at nought and to suffer, that by dying and rising again He might conquer death. And that which was said out of the bush to Moses, "I am that I am, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, and the God of your fathers,"

(See Exodus 3:1-6, Mark 12:18-31)