

Was Jesus Divine?

"Until that moment in history, Jesus was viewed by His followers as a mortal prophet...a great and powerful man, but a man nonetheless. A mortal" (233).

"Establishing Christ's divinity was critical to the further unification of the Roman empire and to the new Vatican power base. By officially endorsing Jesus as the Son of God, Constantine turned Jesus into a deity who existed beyond the scope of the human world, an entity whose power was unchallengeable. This not only precluded further pagan challenges to Christianity, but now the followers of Christ were able to redeem themselves only via the established sacred channel – the Roman Catholic Church" (233).

"It was all about power. Christ as Messiah was critical to the functioning of the Church and state. Many scholars claim that the early Church literally stole Jesus from His original followers, hijacking His human message, shrouding it in an impenetrable cloak of divinity, and using it to expand their own power" (233).

It is clear from the Biblical record that the writers of both the _____ Testament and the _____ Testament, the _____, _____ himself, as well as the early church _____ all clearly believed Jesus to be the Messiah, God in human flesh.

Part 1: What Does the Bible Reveal about Jesus' Divinity?

1. The _____

Genesis 1:26a

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image

2. The _____

John 1:1-3

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning. ³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

Matthew 16:13-16

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" ¹⁶Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

3. The _____

Colossians 1:15

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

Philippians 2:5-7

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

2 Peter 1:16

We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

Titus 2:13

while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,

4. _____

Matthew 26:62-66

Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" ⁶³But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." ⁶⁴"Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of

heaven." ⁶⁵Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. ⁶⁶What do you think?" "He is worthy of death," they answered.

John 10:30
I and the Father are one."

Part 2: What Did the Early Church Fathers Say about Jesus' Divinity?

1. _____ – A.D. 107, wrote Jesus was "God Incarnate...God himself appearing in the form of a man."
2. _____ – A.D. 150 (2nd Century apologist), wrote of Jesus, "being the first-begotten Word of God, is even God"; "both God and Lord of hosts."
3. _____ – A.D. 175 (Bishop of Lyons), referred to Jesus as "our Lord, and God, and Savior, and King."
4. _____ – A.D. 200, called him "truly most manifest Deity, He that is made equal to the Lord of the universe; because he was His Son."
5. _____ – A.D. 177, wrote, "He was man, yet He is God. . ."

"How could Constantine have invented the doctrine of Jesus' divinity if the church had regarded Jesus as God for more than 200 years?" – Jaroslav Pelikan, Yale University, world's foremost authority on ancient Christian creeds

Part 3: Did the Disciples Make Up the Story of Jesus' Divinity?

Why it is unlikely that the disciples fabricated the story:

1. Jesus would have been a poor _____.
2. Jewish apostles understood _____.
3. Most died a _____ death.

Part 4: Has Man Made Jesus into His Own Image?

The culture's claims and the Christian's responses:

Claim 1: Jesus was a _____.

Response: The world is full of the _____ of great men.
(Acts 2:32-36)

Claim 2: Jesus was just a great _____.

Response: Teachers point us to the _____ while Jesus was the _____.

John 14:6

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Claim 3: Jesus was a great _____.

Response: Jesus was the _____ of all true _____.

The Old Testament, written over a one-thousand-year period, contains over _____ predictions concerning the coming Messiah, all of which were fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth.

Claim 4: Jesus was a _____ or a _____.

Response: To think that the powerful _____,
_____, and _____ change that Christ brought were
made by a liar or a lunatic is a great leap of faith.

"...Well, then, why [was Jesus not a] liar or a lunatic?...Almost no one who has read the Gospels can honestly and seriously consider that option. The savviness, the canniness, the human wisdom, the attractiveness of Jesus emerge from the Gospels with unavoidable force to any but the most hardened and prejudiced reader....Compare Jesus with liars...or lunatics like the dying Nietzsche. Jesus has in abundance precisely those three qualities that liars and lunatics most conspicuously lack: (1) his practical wisdom, his ability to read human hearts; (2) his deep and winning love, his passionate compassion, his ability to attract people and make them feel at home and forgiven, his authority, "not as the scribes"; (3) his ability to astonish, his unpredictability, his creativity. Liars and lunatics are all so dull and predictable! No one who knows both the Gospels and human beings can seriously entertain the possibility that Jesus was a liar or a lunatic, a bad man." – *Peter Kreeft, philosopher*