

Reason 5: Jesus Claimed to Be One with God

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Some have suggested that the one we know as Jesus never claimed for Himself what His followers did. Yet the commotion surrounding His life can be best explained by His repeated claim to be more than a man.

Mart De Haan (at the pool of Bethesda): Down through the centuries generation after generation have acknowledged that Jesus was a good man, that He was a philosopher, that He was a good teacher, that He was a wonderful example, that...thoughtful people down through the ages have also wondered did this man, Jesus of Nazareth, did He claim for Himself the kinds of things that His followers claimed?

Jimmy De Young: These are the pools of Bethesda located just outside the Temple Mount next to what once was called “the sheep market” here in the Old City of Jerusalem. At one time there were five pools here in Bethesda, which translated means “the house of mercy.” And those that were diseased, crippled, would come here to be healed. The gospel writer John tells us that Jesus came here at the time of a Jewish feast and saw a man who had been crippled for thirty-eight years. He said to the man, “Would you like to be healed?” The man looked up to Jesus and said, “I would, but when the waters are stirred, I have no one to help me down the steps to the pool.” Jesus said, “Take up thy bed and walk.” And the man was made whole. Well, John continues the narrative by saying that the religious leaders were not happy about the healing of this lame man, but instead they confronted Jesus Christ that the healing had taken place on the Sabbath. In His response Jesus said that “My Father works and I work on the Sabbath.” [Jesus’] having made that statement, the religious leaders determined that they were going to kill Jesus because He had made Himself equal with God (see John 5:1–23).

John 5:18, 23 (NKJV)

Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.

A few moments later Jesus further angered His listeners by saying,

“that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.”

Darrell Bock: How does Jesus portray Himself in the Gospels? This is a good question. In John He does it very straightforwardly, by making claims that identify Himself with...as the Son of God or saying He and the Father are One. These are very direct kinds of claims.

In a direct claim to be eternal, Jesus said,

“Before Abraham was, I AM.” (John 8:58 NKJV)

In a claim to be one with God, Jesus said to His disciples,

“I and My Father are one.” (John 10:30 NKJV).

And again, Jesus said to them,

“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.” (John 14:6–7 NKJV)

Anyone who reads the Gospels must conclude that Jesus did not see Himself as merely a Jewish son of Israel. Over and over He spoke as One who thought of God as His Father.

Gerry E. Breshears: In two different contexts in the book of John, we find Jesus claiming to be one with God. In chapter 10, He makes the specific statement, John 10:30: “I and the Father are one.” We could understand it would be like a husband and wife are just one. But when He does it in the context of protecting believers, the people realized that when He’s claiming to be one with God, it’s more than just a union of purpose, He’s saying I am God.

John 10:37–38 (NKJV)

In addition to His claim to be one with God, Jesus went on to say,

“If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him.”

Darrell Bock: Jesus actually shows who He is more by what He does than what He says. He lets His actions speak for whatever words He might have said. And He does this by doing things like forgiving sins. And when the Jews see it, they say no one forgives sins but God alone, how can He make this claim? Or He does it by raising people from the dead and showing His authority over life. Who has authority over life but God Himself? He does it by calming the winds of nature. Well, who has authority over the creation but God Himself? He does it by dealing with disease. Well, who can overcome that but God Himself? Or casting out demons—who has authority over the spirit world but God Himself? And it is this kaleidoscope of activity that surrounds Jesus that actually makes a greater claim for who Jesus is, or as great a claim as . . . Jesus is, as His own few words here and there that says, I am the Son of God. When He forgives sins or exorcises demons or raises people from the dead or calms the winds, He is saying, I am the One who is sent by God and have the authority of God. I am the Son of God.

Mart De Haan (in Galilee, at a tree stand): And so the record that God became a man could be compared to this tree. At first glance it doesn't make sense; it doesn't seem reasonable that it could hold its position through the winds and the storms of the Galilee. And yet just as its secret is in its powerful root system, its strong foundation, so the doctrine of the God-man has been able to stand the test of hundreds of years of question and doubt and skepticism.

Because it is well rooted in the Old Testament Scriptures, it's well rooted in the eyewitness accounts of men who saw a man do things that no other man has ever done, who taught with authority, the authority of God of heaven itself and then who rose from the dead to show that He was not speaking merely in His own behalf. Yes, the evidence is that God did intervene. And for a reason that is also well rooted in our need, because we needed it to happen, we needed God Himself to make a sacrifice for our sin, to offer us life on the basis of a gift, which is exactly what the New Testament says that Jesus did.

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