

Reason 7: Jesus' Friends Saw More Than a Man



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After spending three years together, one of Jesus' closest disciples concluded that to know Jesus was to know God Himself. John described his friend Jesus not merely as one who spoke the words of heaven, but who was Himself God's Word to us. John referred to Jesus as the eternal Word of God when he wrote,

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1 NKJV)

All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. (John 1:3)

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

J. P. Moreland: I think it's clear that if you want to discover who Jesus was, you have to consult the best historical sources that we have available. Now there are sources about Jesus and about what He was like outside of the New Testament. We know from ancient Roman and Jewish and Greek historians that He lived, that He gathered a group of disciples around Him, that He was a wonder worker, a magician of some sort. That after He was executed His followers preached that He had risen from the dead—across the Roman Empire. We know some things about Jesus from outside of the New Testament. But the best sources of information about Jesus turned out to be the New Testament documents, because they were written by eyewitnesses who knew Jesus and who lived right side by side with Him when He lived and ministered in Palestine in the first part of the first century. So the New Testament is the best source of information we have about who Jesus was.

Luis Palau: The fact that His closest friends and associates, that we call the apostles, knew Him and spoke of Him as more than human, as Divine ... Like John, one of His apostles, said, "What we

have seen and heard and felt of the Word of life,” they say, “this is what we proclaim to you.” And then he repeats it again, “What we have seen and heard, this we proclaim to you”—the eternal Life which was revealed to us, their eternal life (see 1 John 1:1–3). So they saw in Jesus Christ one far superior to the other eleven that traveled with Him. They saw in Jesus Christ one that had not only life, His own life, but eternal life. In other words, He was superior, he was divine.

It is recorded in the New Testament that on one occasion Jesus asked His disciples who they thought He was, and Peter exclaimed,

“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” To this response, Jesus replied, “Blessed are you ... for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 16:16–17 NKJV)

These would have been outrageous claims except that, according to witnesses, the One who made them also walked on water, stilled angry skies, healed the sick, restored paralyzed limbs, gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and even raised an embalmed man by the name of Lazarus from the dead.

J. P. Moreland: In my opinion the best explanation for why the early followers of Jesus, who are all Jewish, changed so dramatically in the few years after He had been crucified was that they were convinced that they had actually seen Him arisen from the dead and performed miracles that no mere man could ever have done. And it was the signs that He performed that convinced them to be willing to give up their Judaism and risk their own souls for Him, because they saw what He did.

Because of what they had seen and heard, friends of the Teacher from Nazareth were convinced that Jesus was more than a man.