**Jesus**

**is**

**God**

## Perhaps the most unique and controversial thing about Christianity is that it claims that Jesus, a real man living 2000 years ago, was and is actually the God of the Universe.

Many other religions have views on Jesus but these are very different:

* Muslims say that Jesus was a great prophet, that He never sinned but was still nothing but a normal human.
* Many Buddhists say that Jesus was an 'enlightened man' as Buddha was.
* Some Hindus consider Him to be a wise man – wiser than almost all who have ever lived.

But Christians say that Jesus is God, the God who created all that we see, the God who sustains all that exists. No other founder of a world religion ever claimed to be God. Mohammed, Buddha, Zoroaster, Moses – none of these men claimed to be God. Yet Jesus did: *Jesus was different*.

There is a trend these days to say that Jesus was just a 'good man' and that He never claimed that He was God – some say this 'God' idea was invented by people after He died and Jesus would never have wanted people to worship Him. But in the Bible Jesus is pretty clear about who He is.

**Jesus tells us that He ‘came down from Heaven’** in John 6.38. This is not claiming He had some kind of near death experience or a vision of Heaven in a dream but that He *was in Heaven before His earthly life*. Essentially, Jesus is saying that He is God come down to us.

**Jesus often called Himself the ‘Son of Man’.** This is a very special name which is taken from the Old Testament, from the Hebrew prophets living many, many years before Jesus was born. In the Old Testament the ‘Son of Man’ is the title given to the divine person who saves and rules the world.

**The New Testament records Jesus performing over 40 miracles.** Jesus healed the sick, cured people with leprosy, made disabled people walk, cast out demons, made blind people see and deaf people hear. He even raised people from the dead and controlled the weather. In John 10.36-39 Jesus tells us that His miracles were to show people that He is God. Today we may want to think that these were stories made up later to make Jesus seem more amazing than He was – but it is worth remembering that it is not only the Bible that says that Jesus did amazing miracles; even His enemies and those who didn't believe He was God, both Jewish and Roman, admitted He performed miracles and we have their writings to prove it.

**Jesus said that He was sinless.** This is pretty remarkable. Jesus says that He is perfect. There are different kinds of sins: there are what we call ‘sins of omission’, where we fail to do something, and ‘sins of commission’, where we actively do something wrong. Even imagining sin is a breaking of God's perfect standard. No one in all of history has ever credibly claimed to have never, ever, sinned. Mohammed, Gandhi, Mother Teresa and the Popes all admitted to being sinners. Yet Jesus openly challenged his opponents to find any sin in Him (John 8.46) and they couldn't.

Though we know He was tempted (Luke 4) those who knew Him best couldn't find a single fault in Him – His brother James (James 5.6 – and when did brothers ever not see problems with each other!), His closest friends Peter (Acts 3.14/1Peter 1.19) and John (1 John 3.5) none of them could find any sin. Even Paul, who dedicated His life to killing all of Jesus' followers before He found Jesus Himself, said Jesus, His lifelong enemy, never did anything wrong at all (2 Corinthians 5.21) and Judas Iscariot, the man who betrayed Him, when He realised what He had done, said Jesus was sinless (Matthew 27.3-4). Only God could ever be sinless.

**Jesus forgave other peoples sins.** As humans we spend countless billions of pounds trying to end wars, cure diseases, eradicate poverty, stop depression but no amount of money has ever been able to forgive people for the wrongs they have done. At best, most other religions teach that you can make up for your wrongdoings by doing more good than bad or by being reincarnated as something else after you do – such as coming back as a slug! But Jesus openly and publically told people, even those He had never met, that their sins and everything they had done wrong in their lives were totally forgiven (for example Luke 7.48). The people of that time knew that only God could ever forgive people their sins in any way that matters and so they saw this as Jesus claiming to be God and decided He deserved to die for blasphemy (Luke 5.20-21).

**Jesus told us to pray to Him as God.** We see this a number of times in the Gospel of John (John 14.13-14; 15.16; 16.24). To tell people that they should pray to you and that you can hear all their prayers and have the power to answer them is an amazing claim. We know that shortly after His death Christians were already praying to Him – Acts 7.59

**Jesus simply said that He was God! ‘Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” And Jesus said, *“I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.”* And the high priest tore his garments and said, “What further witnesses do we need? You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?” And they all condemned him as deserving death.’** **Mark 14.61-64**

**In John's gospel we find Jesus saying that He existed before Abraham did** (who lived thousands of years before His earthly life) and used the Holy Name that God gave to identify Himself to Moses: **‘I AM’** (John 8.58-59). In John 10.30-33 Jesus tells people that He and 'The Father' are 'one' – this is Jesus claiming to be Divine, part of the Holy Trinity that is God – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, three persons one in essence.

Ultimately, this is the blasphemy for which Jesus was killed. Many in history have claimed to be sent by God or to speak for God, very few have dared to say that they *are* God. By 60AD – 30 years after His death – Paul, once the greatest enemy of the Christians, was openly calling Jesus God (Romans 9.5).

**Jesus said that He was the only way to get to Heaven**. In John 14.6, when talking about people going to heaven, Jesus tells us that He is **‘the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me’.** This is a bold claim! Only God can decide who goes to Heaven and who doesn't, yet Jesus says that unless you believe in Him you cannot get there. Jesus is the only way to heaven, Jesus is the real truth and in Jesus alone is there everlasting life – and life in all its fullness.

**Jesus rose from the dead.** Three days after He was killed for claiming to be God Jesus rose from the dead, no one came and prayed over Him, He just did. Some people claim that the disciples stole His body – but how could they overcome the Roman Guards without being found out? Some say they simply lost the tomb – but we know to whom it belonged so this is not likely and would they really forget where they had buried their friend and Lord? Some say the He had not really died – but scientifically no-one could survive crucifixion and then being left in a cold tomb for three days, especially after being stabbed in the chest by a spear! Some claim it was hallucinations but there is no such thing as mass hallucinations which make whole crowds see the same thing. Importantly, if the Jewish authorities wanted to easily end the Christians surely they would just have taken out the body to prove He was still dead, they knew where it was as they had had the guards posted. Jesus coming back from the dead is the divine stamp of approval on all He ever said or did.

It is not possible to just say that Jesus was a 'good man' either He was a liar, a lunatic, or He is Lord. Jesus clearly said that He was God and told people He alone granted access to Heaven and we should pray to Him.

**Either Jesus was lying, a horrible deceit and evil thing to do given how many people died because of their belief in Him.**

**Or Jesus was simply a lunatic, a madman with deranged views, a sociopath who either intentionally or unintentionally led people astray.**

**Or Jesus was none other than God Almighty, the great I AM who created the world, the only perfect and sinless One, the only one who can forgive sins and the only one who can answer prayers.**

*If you would like to know more then we advise that you buy and read* ***'Vintage Jesus' by Pastor Mark Driscoll****. Much of this information and more is found somewhere in this book – or arrange to speak with a member of the ministry team.*

*This booklet was written by the Rev'd Adam Young*