

Is Jesus God?

A. Knowing the Challenge

1. Barna released a study in 2015 on this very topic:
 - a. 92% of all American adults believe Jesus was a real, historical person
 - b. Among millennials, however, that number drops to 87%
 - c. Only 56% of American adults believe Jesus was also God
 - d. That number drops to 48% for millennials
 - e. Only 52% of American adults believe Jesus was sinless
 - f. That drops to on 44% of millennials
 - g. Finally, 46% of millennials claim to have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ, but only 56% of that 46% believe that they will go to heaven because of that commitment
2. Other religions
 - a. **Catholicism:** accepts the orthodox view
 - b. **Mormonism:** it's rather complicated. Mormons believe in the existence of more than one god but only claim to worship God the Father. Jesus is one in purpose with God, and is "a" Son of God, but not God. He was not pre-existent as God, but rather worked His way up to godhood. They reject the trinity claiming that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three distinct gods, not one God in Three Persons. They claim to believe in His death, burial and resurrection, and that salvation is found in Him, but believe that salvation is ultimately their becoming gods themselves through works...just like Jesus did.
 - c. **Jehovah Witnesses:** believe that Jesus was God's first created being, and therefore refer to Him as God's Son, but he is not God but rather "a" god (one of many of God's sons). So, they reject the Trinity. They believe he was crucified, but on a stake instead of the Cross, and that He ceased to exist upon his death. Instead, He was re-created by God as a new Michael the Arc Angel and that is who appeared to the disciples. They also believe that the second coming of Jesus has already happened spiritually.
 - d. **Islam:** believe in the virgin birth of Jesus and that Jesus was a prophet, but reject that he was God or the Son of God. They deny that He was crucified or died on the cross, but believe that he ascended into heaven and will return to revive Islam
 - e. **Judaism:** Jesus was a rabbi (teacher) with many disciples, but he wasn't God. They accept that he was crucified, and that his followers claimed he rose from the dead, but they reject His resurrection
 - f. **Hinduism:** Jesus was a holy man, wise teacher and is one of many gods
 - g. **Buddhism:** Jesus was an enlightened human being and wise teacher but not God

B. Knowing the Truth

1. Proof #1: His Birth: It fulfilled the OT prophecies that God would come in the flesh
 - a. Isaiah prophesied Jesus' birth and that he would be "God with us": **"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"** (Isaiah 7:14).
 - b. Micah prophesied Jesus would be born in Bethlehem and referenced His eternal pre-existence: **"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**" (Micah 5:2)—the Magi applied this to Jesus in Matthew 2:5-6
- c. Mary was told by the Angel that her child would be "holy" and the "Son of God": **"The angel answered and said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God' (Luke 1:35)**
 - d. John declared Jesus to be God: **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" and "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:1 & 14)**
2. Proof #2: He led a sinless life
 - a. The Bible states directly that Jesus did not sin:
 - 1) 1 Peter 2:22: **"who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth."**
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 5:21: **"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."**
 - 3) Hebrews 4:15: **"For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin."**
 - b. Other's recognized his superior moral character:
 - 1) The Jews could only accuse him of having a demon: John 8:46-52
 - 2) Pilate found no fault in Him: Luke 18:28-40
 - 3) Even the thief on the cross recognized Jesus' sinless life: Luke 23:39-43
 3. Proof #3: He claimed to be God
 - a. John 8:58: **"Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.'"**
— here Jesus equates Himself with God by alluding to how God the Father addressed Abraham in Exodus 3:14 as "I AM"
 - b. John 12:45: **"He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me."**
 - c. John 14:9: **"Jesus said to him, 'Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"**
 - d. John 17:5: **"Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was."**
 - e. One argument that some try to use is that Jesus never specifically said "I am God" and therefore, that He never claimed to be God. However, the Jews understood that He was claiming to Be God:
 - 1) According to John 5:18, the Jews were trying to stone Jesus because He was **"making Himself equal with God."**
 - 2) In John 10:30-38 Jesus said **"I and the Father are One"** and the Jews try to stone Him again claiming **"because you, being a man, make Yourself out to be God."**
 4. Proof #4: He could control nature
 - a. He calmed the storm and sea: Matthew 8:23-27
 - b. He walked on water: Matthew 14:22-32
 - c. He controlled the fish: Luke 5:3-10; John 21:4-11; Matthew 17:24-27 (fish with coin in mouth)
 - d. He made the fig tree wither: Matthew 21:18-22

5. Proof #5: He performed miracles (over 40 are recorded in the NT)
 - a. He turned water into wine; John 2:1-11
 - b. He multiplied food—according to Matthew He did this twice: Matthew 14:16-21 (5000); Matthew 15:29-39 (4000)
 - c. He healed the lame: Luke 5:18-26 (the paralytic); Mark 3:1-6 (the man's withered hand)
 - d. He cured the sick: John 4:46-54 (Official's son); Luke 4:38-39 (Peter's mother); Luke 4:40-41 (the masses); Luke 5:12-15 (the leper); John 9:1-7 (blind man); Mark 7:31-37 (deaf man)
 - e. He raised the dead: Luke 7:11-17 (the widow's son); Luke 8:41-42, 49-56 (Jairus' daughter); John 11:38-44 (Lazarus)
6. Proof #6: He rose from the dead
 - a. Jesus predicted both His death and His resurrection: John 2:18-22
 - b. He predicted these as a sign to His enemies: Matthew 19:39-40
 - c. He also predicted these things as a comfort and preparation for His disciples (Matthew 16:21)
 - d. His predictions were common knowledge: Matthew 27:62-64
 - e. He also claimed that He would raise Himself: John 10:17-18 (the Bible attributes the resurrection to all three members of the Trinity)
7. Proof #7: The claims made by others
 - a. God: **"and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.'"** (Matthew 3:17)
 - b. The Centurion at foot of the cross: **"Truly this man was the Son of God!"** (Mark 15:39)
 - c. Thomas: **"Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!'"** (John 20:28)
 - d. John:
 - 1) John 1:1 & 14: **"and the Word was God...and the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as the only begotten from the Father..."**
 - 2) 1 John 5:20: **"This [reference to Jesus] is the true God and eternal life"**
 - e. Paul:
 - 1) Titus 2:13: **"our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ"**
 - 2) Philippians 2:6: **"who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,"**
 - 3) Colossians 1:15: **"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 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 through Him and for Him. 17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together."**
 - 4) Colossians 2:9: **"For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,"**
 - f. Peter: **"our God and Savior, Jesus Christ"** (2 Peter 1:1)

C. Knowing How to Respond

- S. Jesus wasn't real. He's just a myth.
- A. That's interesting that you would say that because there are very few historians in the world who deny that Jesus was a real person. This is because there is just too much historical evidence. The

Bible isn't the only record of Jesus's life. There were Roman historians like Josephus, Pliny and Tacitus who lived just a short time after Jesus who mention Him in their writings. Plus, Jewish historians referred to Jesus quite often as well. To say that Jesus didn't exist is to deny the overwhelming historical evidence.

- S. Jesus was just a good man but wasn't the Son of God.
- A. Jesus was a good man, but the Bible reveals that He was also the Son of God. There are so many things that demonstrate this. The Old Testament predicted that God would come to earth in the form of a human baby, and even gave His name and location of His birth. The birth of Jesus fulfilled these prophecies. Jesus also claimed to be God by declaring that He and the Father were One (John 10:30) and that whoever saw Him saw God the Father (John 12:45). He also did things no man can do, like controlling nature, performing miracles, healing the sick, and raising the dead. In fact, one of the greatest proofs that Jesus is God is that He predicted both His death and His resurrection and they both came true just as He predicted.
- S. Jesus was just a wise religious leader and no different than other religious leaders.
- A. You're right that Jesus was wise, but the Bible says He was more than that. He was the sinless Son of God who died for us in order to pay the penalty for our sins so that we could be given eternal life. This is what John 3:16 says, **"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."** Jesus didn't come to start a religion or become a religious leader, He came to die for us and save us from our sin. Can I ask you a question? Jesus claimed to be the Son of God and that His death and resurrection would save us from our sin. If these things are not true, then He was either lying to us, or He was deceived. In either case, we certainly wouldn't consider Him a wise man or a moral leader. You can't claim someone is wise if they are crazy and delusional. Likewise, you can't claim they are moral if they lie. Josh McDowell, a famous apologist, says that there are only three options when it comes to Jesus. He was either a liar, a lunatic or Lord. The evidence doesn't support the idea that he was a liar or a lunatic. Rather, it supports the fact that He was the Lord and exactly Who He claimed to be.