

Jesus = God

Of the many religions under the big umbrella of “Christendom,” it is interesting that some do not even claim to believe in Jesus, and yet are still included in this montage. Jehovah’s Witnesses, for instance, argue that Jesus never personally claimed to be God. Is this true?

Apparently, the Pharisees and lawyers of Jesus’ day did not understand it that way. John records the following incident: “And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God” (John 5:16-18). There was no doubt in the minds of Jesus’ contemporaries that He was claiming to be equal with God.

This was not the only occasion that Jesus taught this truth. In John 10:30-31, He said: “I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.” What was it about Jesus’ claim that incensed the Jews enough to try to stone Him? He was stating that He was God! In fact, it is still repugnant to Jews today, as Shmuley Boteach, author of *Judaism for Everyone*, explains: “Certain beliefs have been deeply ingrained into the Jewish psyche for so many of thousands of years that even the most secular and disinterested of Jews accept them as axiomatic. Foremost among these is the simple belief that no man could ever be God. ... The idea that a man could be God is anathema to everything Judaism stands for and everything that Judaism came into this world to accomplish” (Boteach, p.401-2).

Therefore, when Jesus claimed to know Abraham personally, He was claiming eternity. “Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at him...” (John 8:58-59a). Jesus even used these words to identifying the true God to Pharaoh and the Jews of Jesus’ day knew it.

Those who do not believe that Jesus Christ is God (Muslims, Buddhists, Taoists, Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, etc.) cannot be saved while clinging to this error. “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24). This may not fit into an acceptable mold in our religiously pluralistic society but it is the truth.

Our most convincing work with unbelieving religious groups might be the argument that they must accept one of two conclusions about Jesus: (1) He was telling the truth (He was God in the flesh), or (2) He was a liar and not a great or good man, as liars do not make for good prophets.

Jesus is God or He is not God; there is no middle ground (Matthew 12:30).

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