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Is Jesus God?

Hasting in *The Dictionary of the Bible* says: “It is doubtful whether Jesus used the expression ‘Son of god’ to refer to himself.”

Adrian Thatcher wrote: “There is scarcely a single competent New Testament scholar who is prepared to defend the view that the four instances of the absolute use of “I am” in John, or indeed most of the other uses, can be historically attributed to Jesus.”¹

David Brown stated that: **“There is good evidence to suggest that Jesus never saw himself as a suitable object of worship,”** it is “impossible to base any claim for Christ’s

¹ Adrian Thatcher, *Truly a Person, Truly God* (London: SPCK, 1990) p.77

divinity on his consciousness once we abandon the traditional portrait as reflected in a literal understanding of St. John's Gospel."² But, he says, "It is incoherent to suppose that a human mind could be conscious of its own divinity."³

The late Archbishop and New Testament scholar, Michael Ramsey, wrote: "**Jesus did not claim deity for himself.**"⁴ He also stated: "The title '*Son of God*' need not of itself be of high significance, for in Jewish circles it might mean no more than the Messiah or indeed the whole Israelite nation, and in popular Hellenism there were many sons of God, meaning inspired holy men."⁵

James Barr argues that the expression *abba*, commonly used to illustrate Jesus' 'divine sonship,' did not have the intimate sense that is often attributed to it, but simply meant 'father.'⁶

² David Brown, *The Divine Trinity* (1985) p. 108

³ *ibid.* p. 106

⁴ Michael Ramsey, *Jesus and the Living Past* (1980) p. 39

⁵ *ibid.* p. 43

⁶ James Barr, 'Abba, Father' in *Theology Journal* – Vol. 91, no. 741; 1988

James Dunn mentions both arguments, for and against, for the nature of the use of 'Abba.' Dunn also says: **“There is no real evidence in the earliest Jesus traditions of what could fairly be called a consciousness of divinity.”**⁷

Brian Hebblewaite admits, **“It is no longer possible to defend the divinity of Jesus by reference to the claims of Jesus.”**⁸

Sanders writes: “The oft-repeated claim that Jesus “put himself in the place of God” is overdone. He is often said to have done so in forgiving sins, but we must note that he only pronounced forgiveness, which is not the prerogative of God, but of the priesthood.”⁹

⁷ James Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, p.60

⁸ Brian Hebblewaite, *The Incarnation* (1987), p. 74

⁹ Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (1985), p.240