

## Vintage Jesus, week 1 Is Jesus the Only God?

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“. . . you, a mere man, claim to be God.”

— Jesus’ enemies in John 10:33

Jesus Christ.

No one is more loved and hated than Jesus Christ.

The name *Jesus* is derived from the Old Testament name *Joshua*, which means, “Yahweh God is salvation.” The title *Christ* means one chosen and anointed by God to be the Messiah who delivers God’s people.

He is the most famous person in all of human history. More songs have been sung about Him, artwork painted of Him, and books written about Him than anyone who has ever lived. Furthermore, billions of people from the nations of the earth worship Him as God. Even unbelievers are constantly reminded of His influence since we measure time around His life. Our calendar is divided into the years before and after His birth, which are noted as BC (“before Christ”) and AD (*anno Domini*, meaning “in the year of the Lord”).

No army, nation, or person has changed human history to the degree that Jesus, the homeless man, has. Every year the media is filled with discussions about Jesus. Musicians like Kanye West cannot help but sing about Jesus even if they do not worship Him as God. Jesus even appears regularly on *The Simpsons*, *Mind of Mencia*, and *South Park*. He also appears on t-shirts worn by Madonna, Pamela Anderson, Ashton Kutcher, Ben Affleck, and Brad Pitt. Roughly one hundred films have been made about Jesus, including top-grossing movies like *The Passion of the Christ* and *The Da Vinci Code*, along with the Canadian kung-fu horror comedy *Jesus Christ Vampire Hunter*. In the film *Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby*, comedian Will Ferrell (as Ricky Bobby) prays to “baby Jesus.” Jesus even appears on a 110-foot, 750-pound hot-air balloon, a monster truck, and innumerable tattoos. The Beatles’ frontman John Lennon even said, “We’re more popular than Jesus now.”

As Paul promised in 2 Corinthians 11:3–4, the opinions about Jesus are numerous among cults and world religions:

- Liberal “Christians” say He was merely a good man, not God.
- Jehovah’s Witnesses say that Jesus was merely an archangel and a created being that became a man.
- Mormonism teaches that Jesus was not God but only a man who became one of many gods; and that he was the half-brother of Lucifer.
- Unitarian Universalism teaches that Jesus was not God but rather a great man of teaching, love, justice, and healing.
- Bahá’ís say that Jesus was a manifestation of God and a prophet but inferior to Muhammad and Bahá’u’lláh.
- Buddhism teaches that Jesus was not God but rather an enlightened man like the Buddha.
- Christian Science founder Mary Baker Eddy flatly states, “Jesus Christ is not God.”

- Islam teaches that Jesus was merely a man and a prophet who is inferior to Muhammad.
- Hindu Mahatma Gandhi said, “I cannot say that Jesus was uniquely divine. He was as much God as Krishna, or Rama, or Mohammed, or Zoroaster.”

With so many varying and contradictory opinions about Jesus, it is important that we not only examine what is said about Jesus but also what Jesus said about Himself. We will examine twelve amazing claims that Jesus made showing that He is the only God.

1. Jesus said He came down from heaven.

- John 6:38, 41–42, 60, 66 *“For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.” . . . At this the Jews began to grumble about him because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” They said, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven?’” . . . On hearing it, many of his disciples said, “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?” . . . From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.*

2. Jesus said He was more than just a good man.

- Mark 10:17–18 *As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone.”*

3. Jesus said He was the Son of Man.

- Daniel 7:13–14 *“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”*
- Mark 13:26 *“At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.”*

4. Jesus performed miracles.

- John 10:36b–39 *“Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, ‘I am God’s Son’? Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.” Again they tried to seize him, but he escaped their grasp.*

5. Jesus said He was God.

- Mark 14:61–64 . . . *Jesus remained silent and gave no answer. Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?” “I am,” said Jesus. “And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand*

*of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.” The high priest tore his clothes. “Why do we need any more witnesses?” he asked. “You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?”*

- John 8:58–59 *“I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!” At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.*
- John 10:30–33 *“I and the Father are one.” Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to them, “I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?” “We are not stoning you for any of these,” replied the Jews, “but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.”*

6. Jesus confirmed to others He was God.

- Matthew 26:63–65 *But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, “I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” “Yes, it is as you say,” Jesus replied. “But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.” Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy.”*

7. Jesus said He was sinless.

- John 8:46 *“Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me?”*

8. Jesus forgave sin.

- Mark 2:5 *When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”*

9. Jesus taught people to pray to Him as God.

- John 14:13–14 *“And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.”*
- John 15:7 *“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.”*

10. Jesus promised to judge all people as God.

- John 5:22–24 *“Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him. I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”*

11. Jesus said He was the only way to heaven.

- John 14:6 *Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”*

- John 11:25 *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies."*

12. Jesus claimed authority and supremacy over all people, political parties, races, genders, nations, religions, cultures, beliefs, and sexual orientations.

- Matthew 28:18 . . . *Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."*

How should we respond to the incredible person, work, and claims of Jesus? British author C. S. Lewis (1898–1963) wisely said, "A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

The appropriate response to Jesus is turning from sin to worship Him alone as God. According to the first two commandments, there is only one God, and that God alone is to be worshipped (Exodus 20:1–6). The one God to be worshipped is Jesus. In Scripture we see that Jesus was worshipped as the only God by the blind man (John 9:38), the previously demonized man (Mark 5:6), Thomas the doubter (John 20:28), his best friend John (Isaiah 6:1–5 cf. John 12:41; Revelation 1:17–18), all of the disciples (Matthew 14:33; 28:17), a group of women (Matthew 28:8–9), the mother of James and John (Matthew 20:20), angels (Hebrews 1:6), entire churches (1 Corinthians 1:2), His own mother (Acts 1:14), His own brothers (James and Jude), little children (Matthew 21:14–16 cf. Psalm 8:3), and His former enemies like Paul (Romans 9:5; Colossians 1:15; 2:9; Titus 2:13).

**Next week:** How human was Jesus?