

Did Jesus Ever Claim to Be God?

Written by Bill Perkins

Many believe that Christianity is a broad and accepting religion that would eliminate no one who sincerely seeks God. While they believe all religions have some technical distinctions, they believe all religions are basically the same. They would say, "It doesn't matter how you get to God as long as you get there."

The Hub and the Hill

Some view God as the hub of a wheel with the spokes representing the different world religions. Others see God as sitting on top of a hill and the different world religions are the paths to God.

Jesus Taught It First

Tension builds whenever there is discussion about the exclusive claims of Christ. Since its beginning, orthodox Christianity has held that the only access to God is through Jesus Christ. At first glance, this seems arrogant. Yet, it's not Christians who first taught this. Jesus did!

In John 3:18, Jesus said, "Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son."

Again in John 14:6 we read, "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"

Unique Among Founders

Christ is unique among the founders of world religions. While some promoted their teaching as the only way to God, Christ promoted himself as the only way to God because he was God.

Did He Claim to Be God?

Of course, some people insist that Jesus never actually claimed to be God. Did he? Consider his words in John 10:30 "I and the Father are ONE." The Jews again picked up stones to stone Him. Jesus said, "I've shown you many good works from My Father. For which of these are you going to stone Me?" The Jews answered Him, "We aren't going to stone You for a good deed, but for blasphemy, because You, a mere man, claim to be God."

Jesus answered them, "Isn't it written in your law, (Psalm 82:1) 'I said, "You are gods?"' J" Upon hearing Jesus' claim, we read that, ". . . the Jews picked up stones to stone him ." Why did they want to stone him? We could guess? But it would better to let them answer that question. In John 10:33 they said, "For blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God."

Make no mistake about it, Jesus didn't stutter, or stammer or hem-haw when he identified himself to the Jews. He claimed to be God in the flesh.

Why So Narrow

Why did Christ claim to be the only way to his Father? He taught that man is sinful and separated from God. The only way for man to bridge the gap between himself and God was to accept Christ's payment for his sins. If we seek to bridge this gap through our own good deeds, we fall short. All the ways of approaching God apart from the sacrifice of Christ are based on the system of human effort and merit.

It's crucial for us to understand that Christ taught a very narrow and restrictive way of approaching God. The question isn't whether Christianity is narrow, but whether it is right.