

## Who is Jesus?

### **Introduction**

In the most general sense, a “Christian” is a *follower of Christ*. That is, a Christian is someone who tries to *obey the teachings* of Jesus of Nazareth.

As a result, it occurs to me that Christians should want to know *who*, exactly, Jesus is. After all, if one is going to *follow* Jesus, then doesn’t it make sense to learn something about his *identity*?

So, in this article, I would like to discuss my beliefs about who Jesus is – and who he is *not*.

### **Is Jesus actually Almighty God?**

Almost all Christian denominations believe that Jesus, himself, is actually Almighty God – by virtue of the fact that he is the “second person of the Trinity.”

The question is, does Scripture *actually* teach that Jesus is Almighty God?

Let’s examine Scripture, to see what it actually says about Jesus – in order to determine if he really is Almighty God. (All verses are from the ESV.)

### **What are God’s Characteristics?**

Let’s start off by taking a look at some of the characteristics of Almighty God – i.e., some of the “qualities” that He has. Then, we will see if Jesus has those same characteristics.

If Jesus actually is Almighty God, then – by definition – he must have the same characteristics that God has.

### **Almighty God is Omniscient**

Almighty God is “omniscient” – that is, God knows about *everything* that has ever happened. In other words, God sees *every* event that occurs – even if things are done in secret. For example, see Matthew 6:3-6.

Jesus, however, does *not* know everything. For example, he does *not* know who touched him in Luke 8:43-46, and he does *not* know if the man could see in Mark 8:22-26.

In addition, God knows when He will send Jesus back to earth; but Jesus does *not* know when he will return – see Matthew 24:36 and Mark 13:32.

Since God *is* omniscient – and Jesus is *not* – that is an indication that Jesus is *not* Almighty God.

## **Almighty God Cannot be Tempted**

Another quality of Almighty God is that He *cannot* be tempted – i.e., He cannot be enticed with evil. That is explicitly stated in James 1:13.

However, Jesus *was* tempted – he was tempted by the adversary for 40 days, in the wilderness. This is stated in Matthew 4:1, Mark 1:13 and Luke 4:1-2.

Since God *cannot* be tempted – and Jesus *was* tempted – that is another indication that Jesus is *not* Almighty God.

## **Almighty God is Immortal**

A third quality of Almighty God is that he is immortal (see 1 Tim 1:17). This means that God *cannot* die – He is not subject to death at all.

However, Jesus *did* die. All four gospels contain records of the crucifixion – in which Jesus died.

Since God *cannot* die – and Jesus *did* die – this is yet another indication that Jesus is *not* Almighty God.

## **Does Jesus have a “Dual Nature”?**

Most Christian denominations do not “pay attention” to the contradictions listed above – they try to “explain away” those contradictions with the “dual nature” doctrine.

According to this doctrine, Jesus is both “fully God” *and* “fully man”. In other words, according to that doctrine, Jesus is “100% God, and 100% man”. So, according to this doctrine, Jesus’ “human nature” is *not* omniscient, but his “God nature” *is* omniscient.

However, this “dual nature” doctrine does not appear anywhere in Scripture. Of course, any doctrine that is not listed in Scripture cannot be relied upon as being the truth.

Not only that, but Scripture *explicitly* states that God is not a man:

Numbers 23:19:

<sup>19</sup> “God is not a man, that He should lie,  
Nor a son of man, that He should repent;  
Has He said, and will He not do it?  
Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”

Scripture demonstrates that Jesus is a **man**; because he was tempted, because he is not omniscient, and because he died on the cross. Scripture also explicitly states us that God is not a **man**. Since Jesus is a man – and God is not a man – that definitively indicates that Jesus is not Almighty God!

## **What did the prophets say about Jesus?**

There are many, *many* prophecies about the promised Messiah – Jesus – in the Old Testament. What do those prophecies say about him? In particular, do those prophecies say that the Messiah would actually be Almighty God?

So, let's take a look at some of the more definitive prophecies about the Messiah, in the Old Testament.

### **“I will raise up your offspring.”**

God told David the following, in 2 Samuel 7:12:

When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.

This tells us that the Messiah will be a literal, *genetic* descendant of king David – in other words, that David's DNA will be passed down to the Messiah.

The reason why this is important is because part of the Trinity doctrine is the idea that Jesus is the “incarnation” of God. This means that God “transformed” Himself into a human embryo – and then He implanted Himself into Mary's womb. If Jesus is the incarnation of Almighty God, though, then he is not a genetic descendant of David. So, this “incarnation” doctrine contradicts Scripture.

### **“A prophet like you.”**

God told Moses the following information, in Deuteronomy 18:8:

I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

In the above passage, God states that the Messiah will be a prophet “like Moses”; and that he will be “from the Israelites”. Of course, the prophet in question is Jesus. If Jesus is actually Almighty God, then how is he “like Moses” – and how is he “from the Israelites”? After all, neither Moses nor the Israelites are Almighty God.

Also, if Jesus is actually Almighty God, then why does God state that “he shall speak ... all that I command him”? If Jesus is actually God, then that passage states that “God shall speak ... all that God commands him”.

### **“The LORD says to my Lord”**

In Psalm 110:1, we have the following prophesy:

The LORD says to my Lord:

"Sit at my right hand,  
until I make your enemies your footstool."

This verse shows us that The LORD is not the same as my Lord. The word for LORD in that verse is the personal name of Almighty God – the four Hebrew characters YHVH. However, the word for my Lord is the Hebrew word *adoni*.

Of course, YHVH refers to Almighty God – because it is His name. However, the word *adoni* never refers to Almighty God, anywhere in Scripture. From the New Testament, we know that “my Lord”, in that verse, refers to Jesus. Since Jesus is referred to as *adoni*, that indicates that Jesus is *not* Almighty God.

### **What did Jesus *actually* say about himself?**

The next topic we will explore is what Jesus, himself, *actually* said about himself. In particular, we will determine, from Scripture, if Jesus actually stated that he is Almighty God or not.

Most Christians assume that Jesus *did* state that he was God – but let’s see what is *actually* written in Scripture.

### **“Not as I will, but as you will.”**

In some cases, Jesus’ will is different than God’s will:

Matthew 26:39:

And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.”

(Mark 14:36 and Luke 22:42 contain similar information.)

If Jesus is Almighty God, then – *by definition* – his will is God’s will. Of course, we can see from the above verses that sometimes Jesus’ will is *not* God’s will. This indicates that Jesus is *not* Almighty God.

### **“I am ascending to my God and your God.”**

Jesus stated that he has a God – in fact, he has the *same* God that *we* have:

John 20:17:

Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

(Many verses are similar; see Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34, 1 Peter 1:3, and Colossians 1:3, among others.)

Almighty God, Himself, does not have a God – because Almighty God is the most powerful being in all of creation. Since Jesus *does* have a God, that indicates that Jesus is *not* Almighty God.

### **“The Father is the only true God.”**

Jesus explicitly stated that the Father is the only true God, when he was praying to his Father:

John 17:3:

And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

There are two beings mentioned above: the only true God, and Jesus Christ. Since one of those beings is the only true God, that means that the *other* being – Jesus Christ – is not the only true God.

As a result, we can see that the Father, *alone*, is Almighty God – and that Jesus is *not*.

### **“Why do you call me good?”**

Jesus explicitly stated that only Almighty God is intrinsically good:

Mark 10:17-18:

And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone."

(Matthew 19:17 and Luke 18:19 contain similar information.)

In the above passage, Jesus explicitly tells us that he, himself, is not Almighty God. He objects to being called “good” – because only Almighty God is intrinsically good. That definitively indicates to me that Jesus is *not* Almighty God.

### **What did the apostles say about Jesus?**

The apostles personally knew Jesus – so it is very instructive to see what they had to say about him.

If the apostles thought that Jesus was actually Almighty God, then they certainly would have stated that in their writings.

So, let’s see what the apostles actually did have to say about Jesus.

### **“A man attested to you by God.”**

In Acts 2:22, the apostle Peter tells a group of Jews the following about Jesus:

"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—

Peter does not say *anything* about Jesus actually *being* God – rather, he states that Jesus is a man that God approved of.

**“God has made him both Lord and Christ.”**

In Acts 2:36, Peter states the following about Jesus:

Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

If Jesus actually is God, then Jesus would *always* have been our Lord – from the beginning of time. In other words, God would not have had to *exalt* Jesus to that position – because Jesus would *always* have held that position.

**“There is one God, and there is one Lord.”**

In 1 Corinthians 8:6, the apostle Paul states the following:

yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

In that verse, Paul explicitly states that only one person is Almighty God – and that one person is the Father. If Paul had believed in the Trinity, then he would have stated that there is one God, who exists as “three co-equal persons”.

Paul also states that there is one Lord – Jesus Christ. Jesus certainly is our Lord – i.e., he is our “master”, or “boss”. However, he definitely is not Almighty God – because Paul tells us that only one person – the Father – is God.

**“The man Christ Jesus.”**

In 1 Timothy 2:5, the apostle Paul states the following:

<sup>5</sup>For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

In that verse, Paul tells us that Jesus is the mediator between God and mankind. Of course, in order for Jesus to be that mediator, he cannot actually be God. (By definition, a “mediator” is a third party, who stands *between* two other parties.)

Paul also states that Jesus is a man. This is important, because Paul wrote that passage after Jesus had ascended into heaven. This means that even now – in heaven – Jesus is still a man!

## What About These Verses?

Most Christian denominations point to a number of “proof texts”, in order to support their doctrine that Jesus is Almighty God.

However, those proof texts do *not* actually state that Jesus is Almighty God, when we take *all* of Scripture into account.

Let’s take a look at some of these proof texts – to see if they actually say that Jesus is God.

### “I and the Father are one.”

One of the most commonly cited proof texts is John 10:30, which reads as follows:

“I and the Father are one.”

Trinitarians claim that this verse means that Jesus is “one in substance” with God – and therefore, that Jesus is God.

However, in John 17:11, Jesus prayed this about his disciples:

“Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.”

So, if John 10:30 means that Jesus is actually God, then John 17:11 means that the disciples are also God!

From the context, the term “one” – in both verses – apparently means “one in purpose”; i.e., that they are in *agreement* with each other.

### “Before Abraham was, I am.”

A rather infamous proof text is John 8:58, in which Jesus says the following:

“Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.”

Trinitarians compare that verse to Exodus 3:14, in which God refers to Himself as “I AM WHO I AM.” From this, they draw the conclusion that Jesus, himself, is Almighty God.

The Greek phrase which is translated as “I am” is *ego eimi*. In *every other verse* where that phrase appears, it is translated as “I am he”. In John 8:58, though, it is rendered as “I am” – presumably to try to identify Jesus with God.

My understanding of John 8:58 is that Jesus said “I am he” – and that means that Jesus is the promised Messiah, who was prophesied about long *before* Abraham was born.

### **“Making himself equal with God.”**

Another common proof text is John 5:18, in which Jewish leaders *claimed* the following about Jesus:

This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

From this, Trinitarians draw the conclusion that Jesus is *actually* equal to God – and therefore, that Jesus must be Almighty God Himself.

However, it was the Jewish leaders – the *Pharisees* – who made that claim. Did Jesus, himself, claim to be equal to God?

In John 14:28, Jesus explicitly says, “The Father is greater than I.” Similarly, in John 10:29, he states that “The Father is greater than all.” Also, in John 5:19, Jesus states that he cannot do anything of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing.

Jesus never claimed to be equal to God. On the contrary – he always stated that God is greater than he is.

### **“My Lord and my God.”**

In John 20:28, the disciple Thomas exclaims the following, when he sees the resurrected Jesus:

Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

Trinitarians use this verse as proof that Jesus is actually Almighty God.

This verse is an example of the Hebrew concept of “agency”. In ancient Israel, it was common for people to authorize *other* people, to act in their behalf. For example, person “A” could authorize person “B” to act in his behalf. Almighty God also uses this concept of “agency”.

There are many examples of this concept in scripture. For example, in Exodus 7:1, God tells Moses that Moses will be “like God to Pharaoh”. Does this mean that Moses is *actually* Almighty God? No, it means that God has *authorized* Moses to act on His behalf.

Similarly, in Exodus 21:6 and 22:8, human judges are referred to as “gods” (Hebrew *elohim*) – because they *represent* Almighty God.

So, in John 20:28, Thomas acknowledged that Jesus *represents* God – i.e., that Jesus is the agent of God.

### **“I am the first and the last.”**

In Revelation 1:17, Jesus describes himself as “the First and the Last”:



<sup>17</sup> When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last,

Almighty God also uses that phrase to describe Himself; e.g. in Isaiah 44:6 and 48:12. Trinitarians see this as proof that Jesus is *actually* Almighty God – since Jesus uses the same phrase to describe himself as God does.

This passage is *another* example of the Hebrew concept of “agency”. If person B is acting as the agent of person A, then person B is treated as if he *actually were* person A.

There are many examples of this. In Exodus 3:2-6 (the burning bush) an angel states that he is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In Genesis 31:11-13 (Jacob’s dream) an angel states that he is the God of Bethel. Those passages do not mean that the angel is *actually* God – they mean that the angel is acting as the agent of God; i.e., the angel is *speaking for* God.

Similarly, when Jesus says “I am the first and the last”, he does not mean that he is *actually* God. Instead, Jesus means that he is the *agent* of God – he is *speaking for* God.

### **“The Word was God.”**

The most famous proof text of all, by far, is John 1:1. That verse states:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

In addition, John 1:14 states:

The Word became flesh, and walked among us.

Trinitarians use those two verses as *absolute proof* that Jesus is actually Almighty God, in human flesh.

There are two main items to note about John 1:1. First, the Greek word which is translated as “Word” is *logos*. That Greek word is more properly translated as “thought”, or “plan”. (Note that the English word “logic” comes from the Greek *logos*.)

Also, the *second* occurrence of the word “God” in John 1:1 is *anarthrous*. This means that it does not have the word “the” before it. As a result, that word is more properly translated as the adjectives “godlike”, or “divine”.

With the above information, a paraphrase of John 1:1 could be stated this way:

“In the beginning, God had a plan. The plan was in God’s heart, and the plan was divine.”

Also, John 1:14 would read as follows:

“The plan became flesh, and walked among us.”

This means that a human being – who would *carry out* God’s plan – was born. In other words, Jesus is the “embodiment” of God’s plan. For a much more detailed explanation of John 1:1 and 1:14, see [this article](#).

### **Who, exactly is Jesus?**

If Jesus is *not* Almighty God, then *who* is he? My belief is as follows:

First, Jesus was a part of God’s *plan of salvation*, from the very beginning of creation. That is, Jesus “existed” in God’s *plan*. In other words, God had Jesus “in mind”, when He began creating the universe.

About 2000 years ago, God caused Mary to *conceive* – that is, He caused one of Mary’s eggs to become fertilized. That, in turn, caused Jesus’ life to begin. As a result, Jesus is *literally* the Son of God.

Three days after Jesus was crucified, God *resurrected* Jesus. During that resurrection, God gave Jesus a “glorified” body – so that Jesus will *never* die again.

Jesus is currently in heaven, with God. At some point in the future, God will send Jesus back to earth – and when that happens, Jesus will establish the *kingdom of God*, on the earth.

This basic set of beliefs is called the “Biblical Unitarian” doctrine.

### **Is Jesus a “mere” man?**

Most “mainstream” Christians object to the Biblical Unitarian doctrine – because they claim that that doctrine reduces Jesus to a “mere” man.

Well, Jesus certainly is a *man* – because that is *exactly* what Scripture tells us he is. However, there is nothing “mere” about him:

- He is the only man who was conceived in a virgin, by power of the Holy Spirit;
- He is the only man who lived a completely perfect life – i.e., he never sinned against God;
- He is the only man who died for the sins of *all* mankind;
- He is the only man who has been granted *all* authority on heaven and earth;
- He is the only man who will *rule* the kingdom of God, on the earth.

Jesus is not a “mere” man at all – he is a completely unique and special man. He is also our Lord – so we should try to follow him. In other words, we should try to obey God – *like Jesus did*.