

Appendix II – The Uniqueness of Jesus, or Why His Claims Deserve a Hearing

“The God of the universe, the Creator, come in human flesh.” That is what Jesus claimed of Himself, and for that reason he cannot be accepted as just one great moral or religious teacher among many. It goes far beyond anything Mohammed, Buddha, or Moses dared to claim. As C.S. Lewis said:

A man who was merely a man and said the sort of thing Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic - on a level with a man who says he is a poached egg - or else He would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice...But let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.³⁰⁰

But did Jesus truly make this claim? Well, it is what we find in the earliest writings about Him, the epistles of Paul and the four gospels. The claim is implicit throughout: He spoke of Himself as “Lord of the Sabbath” (Matt.12:8; Mk.2:28; Lk.6:5). He claimed to be “greater than the Temple,” God’s earthly throne (Matt.12:6). By His own authority He added to and definitively interpreted the Law God had given to Moses (Matt.5:17). He even forgave people’s sins, and as his opponents asked, “Who can forgive sins but God alone” (Mark 2:7)? Mark’s Gospel, written only thirty years after the crucifixion, tells us that that it triggered His death sentence:

Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” And Jesus said, “I am; and you will see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.” The high priest tore his clothes. Why do we need any more witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy.” They all condemned him as worthy of death (Mark 14:61-64).

To claim to be the “Son of the Blessed” was to claim to be God’s offspring, divine, and therefore His equal. The early Christians recorded other instances where this claim was explicitly made: “I and the Father are one”

³⁰⁰ Lewis, C.S., *Mere Christianity*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co.,1943), p.56