

How did Jesus refer to Himself?

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Scholars agree that Jesus was a religious teacher and some even say a prophet, but is Jesus God? For some, this may be pushing it. Jesus said, “your sins are forgiven.” Who can forgive sins except God? Jesus claimed to be God and accepted being called God by His disciples. Thomas said to Jesus, “my Lord and my God” (John 20:28). Below are just a few examples of how Jesus referred to Himself.

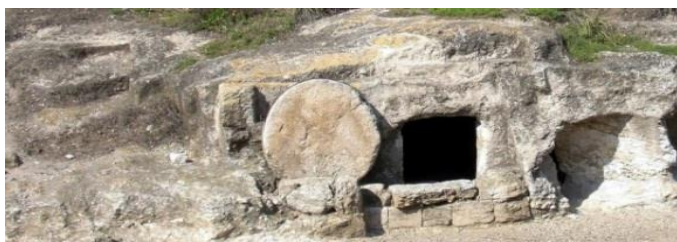
“If you come to me, I will set you free”
“If you welcome me, you welcome God”
“If you receive me, you receive God”
“Anyone who has seen me, has seen God”
“I am the way, the truth, and the life”
“If you believe in me, you will never die”
“I am the light of the world”
“I am the bread of life”

Was Jesus who He Claimed to be?

There are only three options to consider:

1. He wasn't God, but He thought He was, which would make Him delusional.
2. He wasn't God, and went around deceiving everyone, which would make him a liar.
3. He was who He said He was, the Son of God.

Eye witnesses testify that Jesus healed the sick, raised the dead and performed numerous miracles which are documented inside and outside of the Bible. He had a series of books written about Him before He was born. He fulfilled over 300 prophecies, including the place (Bethlehem) of his birth, the manner of His death and His resurrection. Perhaps the single most significant piece of evidence is found in Jesus's resurrection, beginning with the absence of His body from the tomb. To prevent anyone from stealing the body, which might validate Jesus's claim to rise from the dead, a Roman guard was placed outside Jesus's tomb. When the tomb was discovered open, it was only His body that was missing. His burial cloths were still present.



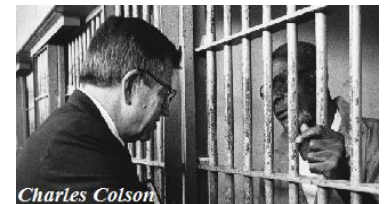
Evidence for His Resurrection

The celebration and witness of Jesus's followers is one of the most significant pieces of evidence of His resurrection. They said, “we've seen Him, we spoke with Him, we saw His wounds.” On numerous occasions, many witnesses said they saw Jesus after his death. On one occasion there were 500 witnesses. The Apostles also performed signs and wonders in Jesus's name.

There was an explosion of evangelization as the early Christians shared the stories of miracles that Jesus performed, His fulfillment of prophecies and His teachings. They were prepared to accept any punishment before denying Him. If they had not witnessed Jesus risen from the dead, they would have been disillusioned or gone into hiding after His crucifixion. Instead they went to their deaths as courageous witnesses proclaiming that He rose from the dead. They only had to deny His resurrection to have their lives spared.

Charles Colson served as Special Council to President Richard Nixon. Colson gained notoriety at the height of the Watergate scandal in 1972, and pleaded guilty to obstruction of justice.

While in prison, he became a Christian and founded a non-profit ministry “Prison Fellowship.” Colson says it best about the resurrection:



“I know the resurrection is a fact, and Watergate proved it to me. How? Because 12 men testified, they had seen Jesus raised from the dead, then they proclaimed that truth for 40 years, never once denying it. Every one was beaten, tortured, stoned and put in prison, all but one, had a martyr's death. They would not have endured that if it weren't true. Watergate embroiled 12 of the most powerful men in the world-and they couldn't keep a lie for three weeks. You're telling me 12 apostles could keep a lie for 40 years? Absolutely impossible! People will give their lives to what they believe to be true, but they will never give their lives for what they know is a lie.”

The evidence is overwhelming that the first Christians believed that Jesus was the prophesied Messiah. They shared His words of repentance, love and mercy as the Christian message spread throughout the Roman empire and beyond, where today, there are over 2 billion Christians worldwide. This could never have happened without the resurrection of Jesus. It is beyond any reasonable doubt that Christianity is true, it then becomes a leap of faith to remain a disbeliever.