

CLAIMS MADE BY JESUS

- to fulfil expectation of prophets

- 'The scriptures ... bear witness to me' (J 5.39)
- 'Moses ... wrote of me' (J 5.46)
- 'Everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must come about' (L 24.44)
- 'Scripture has come about today in your hearing' (L 4.21) (ie. Isaiah's prophecy about the Messiah)
- 'Abraham rejoiced to see my day' (J 8.56)
- 'Many prophets longed to see what you are seeing now' (M 13.17)
- 'The Son of Man has come ... to be a servant' (Mk 10.45) (taking the words of Daniel and Isaiah) (Mk 14.62)
- 'I am the good shepherd' (J 10.11) (taking the word of Ezekiel)
- 'The Son of Man is going the way appointed for Him in the scriptures' (M 26.24)

- to be greater than the greats

- 'Are you greater than our father Abraham?' ... 'Before ... Abraham was born, I AM' (J 8.53,58)
- 'Are you a greater man than Jacob?' (J 4.12)
- 'Not Moses, but my Father, has given you bread ... I am the bread of life' (J 6.32,35)
- 'Here is a greater than Solomon' (M 12.42)
- 'Here is a greater than Jonah' (L 11.31)
- 'Here is something greater than the temple' (M 12.6)

- to be the Messiah

- 'Are you the Messiah ...? 'I am', said Jesus (Mk 14.4)
- 'Many will come in my name, claiming I am the Messiah' (Mt 24.5) cf.v.23)
- '... in my name ... because you belong to the Messiah' (Mk 9.41)
- '... this man ... claims to be the Messiah' (L 23.2)
- 'Jesus said, 'Didn't the Messiah have to suffer these things ...?' (L 24.26, 46)
- 'The woman said, "I know that the Messiah ... is coming". Jesus said, "I who speak to you am he"'. (J 4.26)

He also accepted others' identification of Him as Messiah (eg. Martha - J 11.27; Peter - M 16.16,20, Mk 8.29, L 9.20, J 6.69; the Baptist - M 11.2-6; Pharisees - M 22.42). Note also references to Messiah built into the idea of Son of Man, Servant, King, reign of God, entry to Jerusalem etc.

cont./....

- to teach the truth and interpret the OT law

- 'I have come into the world to bear witness to the truth' (J 18.37)
'Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away' (Mk 13.31, L 21.33)
'I have been taught by my Father' (J 8.29)
'Father ... I have taught them the words which You gave to me' (J 17.8)
'God speaks the truth; for He whom God sent utters the words of God' (J 3.34)
'You have learned ... but what I tell you is this ...' (M 5.22,28,32,34,39,44)

(So He issued moral directives, made promises without doubt as to keeping them, predicted the future with conviction &c).

- to have all authority from God

- 'Everything is entrusted to me by my Father' (M 11.27, L 10.22)
'Full authority ... has been committed to me' (M 28.18)
'Father, glorify Your Son ... You have made Him sovereign over all mankind (J 17.2)

(So He claimed authority over nature, disease, mental disorder, guilt, death &c).

- to have pre-existed with God

- 'Father, glorify me ... with the glory I had with You before the world began ... I came from You ... You sent me into the world ... You loved me before the world began' (J 17.5,8,11,24)
'Before Abraham was born, I AM' (J 8.58)
'I came from the Father and have come into the world' (J 16.28, cf. 3.13)

- to be in unique relationship to God

- 'No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him' (M 11.27)
'You, Father, are in me and I in You' (J 17.21)
'I am in the Father and the Father in me' (J 14.10)
'The Father and I are one' (J 10.30; 17.23)
'Baptise men everywhere in the name of the Father and the Son and the holy Spirit' (M 28.19)
'My Father ...' (M 18.10,19,35; 7.21; 20.23; 26.53 &c)
'Are you the ... Son of the Blessed?' 'I am', said Jesus. (Mk 14.41)
'If you had known me, you would have known my Father' (J 14.7)
'Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father' (J 14.9)
'To deny honour to the Son is to deny it to the Father' (J 5.23)
'When a man believes in me, he believes in Him who sent me' (J 12.44)
'Whoever receives me receives ... the One who sent me' (Mk 9.37)

To know Him is to know God (J 8.19; 14.7)
To see Him is to see God (J 12.45; 14.9)
To honour Him is to honour God (J 5.23)
To hate Him is to hate God (J 15.23)
To trust Him is to trust God (J 12.44; 14.1)
To receive Him is to receive God (Mk 9.37)
God's kingdom is His kingdom (M 13.41 &c)

- to be unique and distinctive as a man

'He who sent me is with me ... I always do what is acceptable to Him ... Which of you can prove wrong in me?' (J 8.29,46)

'The prince of this world ... has no rights over me' (J 14.30)

He sees others as 'lost sheep' but Himself as 'Shepherd'
He sees others as 'sick' but Himself as 'Physician'
He sees others as 'in darkness' but Himself as 'Light of the World' J 8.12
He sees others as 'needing freedom' but " as 'Saviour/Liberator'
He sees others as 'hungry' but Himself as 'Bread' J 6.35
He sees others as 'in death' but Himself as 'Life' J 11.25,26; 14.6
He sees others as 'thirsty' but Himself as 'Living Water'
He sees others as 'in error' but Himself as 'Truth' J 14.6

Other great teachers point away from themselves: 'There is the Truth; follow that'; but Jesus points to Himself: 'I am the Truth', 'Follow Me'.

- to be the means of man's liberation

'The Son of Man has come ... to liberate men's lives' (L 9.56)

'The Son of Man has come ... to give His life a ransom for many' (Mk 10.45)

'This is my body broken ... my blood poured out for the forgiveness of failure' (M 26.28)

'The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep' (J 10)

'The Son of Man has come to seek out and liberate what is gone astray' (L 19.10)

'The Messiah is to suffer death and to rise from the dead ... and ... release from failures is to be proclaimed to all peoples (Lk 24.46)

'My own flesh ... I give for the life of the world' (J 6.51)

- to forgive failures

'The Son of Man has the right on earth to forgive failures' (Mk 2.10)

'My son, your failures are forgiven' (Mk 2.5)

'Your failures are forgiven ... Your faith has liberated you. Go into shalom' (L 7.48,50)

(The reaction: 'This is blasphemy. Who but God alone can forgive failures (Mk 2.7) shows that they saw Jesus as claiming prerogatives of God).

- to be the 'link-man' with God

'No one comes to the Father but by me' (J 14.6-7)

'I am the Door; by me if anyone enters, he shall be liberated'.

'I am the ... way' (J 14.6)

- to be defeating cosmic evil

'The antagonist ... was a murderer from the beginning ... a liar and the father of lies' (J 8.44)

'I watched how the opponent fell ... like lightning. And ... I have given you power to tread underfoot ... all the forces of the enemy and he will have no way at all to harm you' (L 10.18,19)

'If it is by the finger of God that I drive out demons, then be sure the reign of God has already come upon you. When a strong man fully armed is on guard over his castle his possessions are safe; but when someone stronger comes upon him and overpowers him, he carries off the arms and armour on which the man had relied and divides the plunder' (L 11.20-22) cf. M 12.28,29

'Now is the hour of judgment for this order of things; now shall the prince of this order of things be driven out. And I shall draw all men to myself when I am lifted up' (J 12.31,32)

'The prince of this order of things stands condemned' (J 16.11)

- to give and sustain life

'I am the bread of life; the person coming to me shall certainly not be hungry' (J 6.35)

'If anyone eats from this bread he shall live into the hidden time' (J 6.51)

'Whoever drinks from the water that I shall give him will not thirst into the hidden time. The water that I shall give him will become an inner spring continuously welling up into life of the hidden time' (J 4.14)

'The person trusting on me shall not be thirsty of any time' (J 6.35)

'Father ... this is the life of the hidden time: to know You ... and Jesus the Messiah You have sent' (J 17.2)

'The Son gives life to men as He determines' (J 5.21)

'I am the Vine; you are branches; he who stays in me (as I in him) produces much fruit' (J 15.5)

'Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has the life of the hidden time' (J 6.54)

- to raise men from death for judgment

'All who are in the graves shall hear His voice and come forth' (J 5.28)

'It is my Father's will that I should ... raise them all up on the last day' (J 6.39)

'I am the resurrection' (J 11.25)

- to judge the world

'The Father does not judge anyone, but has given full jurisdiction to the Son' (J 5.22)

'At the end of time, the Son of Man will send out His messengers' (M 13.41)

'The Son of Man is to come in the glory of His Father ... and then He will give each man the due reward for what He has done' (M 16.27)

'You will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power ...' (Mk 14.62)

'Before him will be gathered all the peoples, and he shall separate them as a shepherd separates sheep from goats' (M 25.32)

- to rise to life after His own death

'... the Son of Man ... must be killed and after three days rise again' (Mk 8.31 cf. 9.31; 10.34)

'The Son of Man ... must be crucified and the third day be raised again' (L 24.7 cf. 24.46; 18.33; M 17.9)

'Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days' ... But the temple he had spoken of was his body' (J 2.20,21)

'As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a sea monster, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth' (M 12.40 cf. L 11.30)

- to be sending God's Spirit to his disciples

'When the One comes who supports, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, He will testify about me' (J 15.26 cf. 14.17,26; Mk 13.11; L 12.12)

'He breathed on them and said, "Receive the holy Spirit"' (J 20.22)

- to be with his disciples always in person

'Surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age' (M 28.20)

- to merit complete loyalty

'He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me' (M 10.37)

- to merit the allegiance of the nations

'Going, ... make all peoples my disciple' (M 28.19)

'Go to every part of the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation!' (M 16.15)

Jesus accepted the response of others to him as the Messiah, as God's Son, as King of Israel, as Lord and God. This response of worship he didn't reject or discourage but accepted as of right (J 1.49; M 16.13; J 11.25; 20.28).

What kind of man was Jesus, then?

- Either (a) very sane, but shrewd confidence trickster deliberately
deceiving the gullible masses with cunning fraud, an
opportunist and charlatan
- Or (b) deluded, a megalomaniac obsessed with his own imagined
greatness, a religious crank, or at best a tragically
misguided self-deceived visionary
- Or (c) neither deceived nor deceiving, but all he claimed to be

Study his character.
Listen to his words.
Take note of his actions.

Does he live up to his claims?

'WHO IS THIS about whom I hear such things?' asked Herod. (Lk. 9.9)

'WHO IS THIS who speaks blasphemies?' asked the religious leaders
(Mk 4.41)

'WHO IS THIS that wind and sea obey him?' asked the disciples
(Lk 5.20,21)

'WHO IS THIS who even forgives sins?' asked fellow dinner guests
(Lk 7.49)

'The whole city was stirred and asked WHO IS THIS?' (M 21.10)

'And what about you?', asked Jesus. 'WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?'
(M 16.15)