

Who Is Jesus of Nazareth?

by Britt Gillette

Nevertheless, the bible testifies to this human desire to physically assault the Lord. In almost every instance in which the rebels of this world rejected Christ and His ministry, they weren't merely content to refute Him verbally. They also sought to physically harm Him. The Gospel of John illustrates a number of these instances: Who Is Jesus of Nazareth?

Who was Jesus of Nazareth? For nearly two thousand years, the world has debated this question. Some say He was a prophet. Some think He was a madman. Still others think He was a great teacher. But for those who recognize His voice, the question is not 'Who was Jesus of Nazareth?', but rather 'Who is Jesus of Nazareth?' Because unlike other men of history, Jesus of Nazareth was, is, and will be for all of eternity.

A careful examination of the historical record reveals that Jesus of Nazareth is nothing less than the Word of God dwelling as flesh among men. The Holy Spirit of God became a man and walked among us:

“In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God.”
John 1:1 (NLT)

“So the Word became human and made his home among us.” John 1:14 (NLT)

“In Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body.” Colossians 2:9 (NLT)

While most of the world's people desperately search for truth – to become closer to God Almighty, the Creator of the Universe – the door is wide open for them to experience a personal relationship with that same God. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. His name is Jesus of Nazareth.

But don't take my word for it. God has a number of identifiable character traits. If Jesus of Nazareth is worthy of the title of God Almighty and Lord of Heaven's Armies, then the historical account of His life will reveal that He shared these unique traits. Let's examine them.

Omniscient (All-Knowing)

The definition of God requires Him to be all-knowing. God must have knowledge of all things, including the thoughts of others. Did Jesus exhibit this character trait? Yes. He did.

History reveals a number of instances in which Jesus displayed His omniscience. Here, we'll examine a few.

The Coin In The Fish – Jesus illustrated His knowledge of the future, as well as His knowledge of the most minute details of creation when He revealed to His disciples that they were to catch a fish, open its mouth, and find a large silver coin inside:

“Go down to the lake and throw in a line. Open the mouth of the first fish you catch, and you will find a large silver coin.” Matthew 17:27 (NLT)

The Samaritan Woman – Upon meeting a Samaritan woman, Jesus told her everything she had ever done. His knowledge was enough to convince her that He was the Messiah, and His words were enough to convince many in her town that He is the Living Son of God:

“Many Samaritans from the village believed in Jesus because the woman had said, ‘He told me everything I ever did!’” John 4:39 (NLT)

“You Know Everything” – The disciples, who spent more time with Jesus during His earthly ministry than anyone else, testified that He knows everything – the very definition of omniscience:

“Now we understand that you know everything, and there’s no need to question you. From this we believe that you came from God.” John 16:30 (NLT)

“A third time he asked him, ‘Simon son of John, do you love me?’” Peter was hurt that Jesus asked the question a third time. He said, ‘Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you.’” John 21:17 (NLT)

12-Year Old Jesus In The Temple – As a young boy, Jesus and His family made a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem. While there, Jesus amazed the Jewish religious teachers with His understanding:

“Three days later they finally discovered him in the Temple, sitting among the religious teachers, listening to them and asking questions. All who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.” Luke 2:46-47 (NLT)

“How Does He Know All This?” – Jesus taught in the Temple, and the people were amazed at the depth of His knowledge, since He was not a man educated and trained by men:

“Then, midway through the festival, Jesus went up to the Temple and began to teach. The people were surprised when they heard him. ‘How does he know so much when he hasn’t been trained?’ they asked.” John 7:14-15 (NLT)

“One Of You Will Betray Me” – Jesus had fore-knowledge of His betrayal. He knew that one of the most trusted members of His inner-circle would betray Him:

“Then Jesus said, ‘I chose the twelve of you, but one is a devil.’ He was speaking of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, one of the Twelve, who would later betray him.” John 6:70-71 (NLT)

Jesus Knew Of His Death – Jesus had full knowledge of His purpose in coming into the world. He knew what would happen to Him, the hands by which it would happen, and the miraculous event which would take place three days later:

“From then on Jesus began to tell his disciples plainly that it was necessary for him to go to Jerusalem, and that he would suffer many terrible things at the hands of the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but on the third day he would be raised from the dead.” Matthew 16:21 (NLT)

Omnipotent (All-Powerful)

A second character trait of God is omnipotence. By definition, God is all-powerful. He has power over all things. Did Jesus of Nazareth exhibit this character trait? History reveals that He did.

The Power To Forgive Sin – According to the Old Testament, only God has the power to forgive sins. And the Prophet Jeremiah prophesied of the day when God will forgive men of their wickedness and never again remember their sins:

“And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins.” Jeremiah 31:34 (NLT)

Yet, in spite of His knowledge that only God can forgive sins, Jesus clearly announced His own power to forgive sins, thus revealing Himself as God:

“Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, ‘My child, your sins are forgiven.’ But some of the teachers of religious law who were sitting there thought to themselves, ‘What is he saying? This is blasphemy! Only God can forgive sins!’” Mark 2:5-11 (NLT)

Power To Lay Down His Life – Throughout history, men and woman have died. Despite the immense power some of these individuals wielded, not a single one of them displayed the power to come back to life once dead. Yet Jesus claimed to have this power:

“The Father loves me because I sacrifice my life so I may take it back again. No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again.” John 10:17-18 (NLT)

Three days and three nights after His crucifixion, Jesus of Nazareth exhibited this power.

Power Over Wind and Waves – Like one would expect of God, Jesus of Nazareth had power over wind and waves:

“When Jesus woke up, he rebuked the wind and the raging waves. Suddenly the storm stopped and all was calm. Then he asked them, ‘Where is your faith?’ The disciples were terrified and amazed. ‘Who is this man?’ they asked each other. ‘When he gives a command, even the wind and waves obey him!’” Luke 8:24-25 (NLT)

Power Over Fish – Similar to His power of the wind and waves, Jesus illustrated His power over all of creation by commanding the very movements of fish: “Then he said, ‘Throw out your net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you’ll get some!’ So they did, and they couldn’t haul in

the net because there were so many fish in it.” John 21:6 (NLT)

His Breath Blew Down Soldiers – The Roman Army is known throughout human history as one of the most ruthless and powerful fighting forces the world has ever known. Yet, Jesus of Nazareth cast Roman soldiers to the ground with the very breath of His mouth:

“As Jesus said ‘I AM he,’ they all drew back and fell to the ground!” John 18:6 (NLT)

Power over Physical Realm

In addition, the miracles of Jesus testify to His identity. They proclaim His power over the physical universe:

“A man with leprosy came and knelt in front of Jesus, begging to be healed. ‘If you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean,’ he said. Moved with compassion, Jesus reached out and touched him. ‘I am willing,’ he said. ‘Be healed!’ Instantly the leprosy disappeared, and the man was healed.” Mark 1:40-42 (NLT)

“After Jesus left the girl’s home, two blind men followed along behind him, shouting, ‘Son of David, have mercy on us!’ They went right into the house where he was staying, and Jesus asked them, ‘Do you believe I can make you see?’ ‘Yes, Lord,’ they told him, ‘we do.’ Then he touched their eyes and said, ‘Because of your faith, it will happen.’ Then their eyes were opened, and they could see!” Matthew 9:27-30 (NLT)

“One of the men lying there had been sick for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him, ‘Would you like to get well?’ ‘I can’t, sir,’ the sick man said, ‘for I have no one to put me into the pool when the water bubbles up. Someone else always gets there ahead of me.’ Jesus told him, ‘Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk!’ Instantly, the man was healed! He rolled up his sleeping mat and began walking!” John 5:5-17 (NLT)

“He saw that they were in serious trouble, rowing hard and struggling against the wind and waves. About three o’clock in the morning Jesus came toward them, walking on the water. He intended to go past them, but when they saw him walking on the water, they cried out in terror, thinking he was a ghost.” Mark 6:48-49 (NLT)

And Jesus performed many other miracles which required power over the physical universe, far too many to be examined here.

Omnipresent (Ever-Present)

By definition, God is omnipresent. He is everywhere at all times. He exists in all places in the past, present, and future. Can this be said of Jesus? Did Jesus of Nazareth really exhibit this character trait? Yes. He did.

“I Saw You Under The Fig Tree” – Upon first meeting Nathanael, Jesus proclaimed that He saw him under the fig tree earlier that day. His statement mesmerized Nathanael, who recognized this as knowledge that no other man could have. But Jesus was there. As the omnipresent Spirit of

God, He was present when Nathanael was under the fig tree:

“As they approached, Jesus said, ‘Now here is a genuine son of Israel – a man of complete integrity.’ ‘How do you know about me?’ Nathanael asked. Jesus replied, ‘I could see you under the fig tree before Philip found you.’ Then Nathanael exclaimed, ‘Rabbi, you are the Son of God – the King of Israel!’” John 1:47-49 (NLT)

The Holy Spirit – God is Spirit, and the Spirit of God became flesh in the name of Jesus of Nazareth:

“In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.” John 1:1-5 (NLT)

Be With You Always – Reminding them of His omnipresence, Jesus assured His disciples He would always be with them, even to the end of the age:

“And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:20 (NLT)

This unique ability to be present with each individual (not just the twelve disciples, but all who believe in Him), at all times throughout history, is demonstrative of the omnipresence of Jesus.

Him Who Fills All – In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul testifies that Jesus “fills all things everywhere with himself”:

“And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.” Ephesians 1:23 (NLT)

Eternal

Yet another characteristic of God is His eternal nature. God is not bound by time or death. He is the First and the Last, the Alpha and the Omega. According to the Old Testament, there is no other God:

“This is what the Lord says – Israel’s King and Redeemer, the Lord of Heaven’s Armies: ‘I am the First and the Last; there is no other God.’” Isaiah 44:6 (NLT)

Does this character trait describe Jesus of Nazareth? The Apostle John testified yes:

“When I saw him, I fell at his feet as if I were dead. But he laid his right hand on me and said, ‘Don’t be afraid! I am the First and the Last.’” Revelation 1:17 (NLT)

What Did Jesus Say?

So far, we’ve examined the evidence as recorded by the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament witnesses. But what did Jesus Himself have to say about this subject? If we were truly the

righteous religious teacher and holy man many claim Him to be, would He call Himself God if to do so were false? Of course not. Yet this is exactly what Jesus claimed. On many occasions, He unequivocally stated that He is God Almighty.

The Father and I Are One – Jesus Himself claimed to be equal with God:

“The Father and I are one.” John 10:30 (NLT)

Before Abraham, I AM – According to the Old Testament, when Moses requested to know the name of God, the Almighty replied “I AM”:

“But Moses protested, ‘If I go to the people of Israel and tell them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ they will ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what should I tell them?’ God replied to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM. Say this to the people of Israel: I AM has sent me to you.’” Exodus 3:13-14 (NLT)

In answering His critics, Jesus proclaimed Himself to be “I AM”: “Jesus answered, ‘I tell you the truth, before Abraham was even born, I AM!’” John 8:58 (NLT)

“Philip, Don’t You Know Me?” – When Philip asked to see the Father, Jesus plainly told Him he had already seen the Father. To look upon Jesus, is to look upon the Father:

“Jesus replied, ‘Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don’t know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you?’” John 14:9 (NLT)

You Will See the Son of Man on Clouds of Heaven – While standing before the High Priest to be interrogated, Jesus was asked who He was. No one with knowledge of the Old Testament scriptures can mistake His response:

“Jesus replied, ‘You have said it. And in the future you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God’s right hand and coming on the clouds of heaven.’” Matthew 26:64 (NLT)

By claiming they would see Him seated in the place of power at God’s right hand, Jesus was proclaiming Himself to be the Lord of the Old Testament:

“The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit in the place of honor at my right hand until I humble your enemies, making them a footstool under your feet.’” Psalm 110:1 (NLT)

By claiming they would see Him coming on the clouds of heaven, Jesus was proclaiming Himself to be the One whose rule is eternal: “As my vision continued that night, I saw someone like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient One and was led into his presence. He was given authority, honor, and sovereignty over all the nations of the world, so that people of every race and nation and language would obey him. His rule is eternal – it will never end. His kingdom will never be destroyed.” Daniel 7:13-14 (NLT)

Jesus proclaimed Himself to be none other than God Himself.

Accepts Worship From Others Without Rebuke – In addition to His statements, what Jesus didn't say has a lot to say about His identity. For example, Jesus clearly stated a person must only worship God:

“Get out of here, Satan,’ Jesus told him. ‘For the Scriptures say, ‘You must worship the Lord your God and serve only him.’” Matthew 4:10 (NLT)

Yet, when people worshipped Jesus or fell down at His feet or called Him Lord, He did not rebuke them. He did not respond to them by saying, “I’m only a man. Don’t worship me.” Instead, He perpetuated the notion that He should be honored like God the Father:

“He has given the Son absolute authority to judge, so that everyone will honor the Son, just as they honor the Father.” John 5:22-23 (NLT)

The following examples show Jesus accepting this high praise and honor: “My Lord and my God!’ Thomas exclaimed. Then Jesus told him, ‘You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me.’” John 20:28-29 (NLT)

“Suddenly, a man with leprosy approached him and knelt before him. ‘Lord,’ the man said, ‘if you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean.’” Matthew 8:2 (NLT)

“But she came and worshiped him, pleading again, ‘Lord, help me!’” Matthew 15:25 (NLT)

“And as they went, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they ran to him, grasped his feet, and worshiped him.” Matthew 28:9 (NLT)

“Yes, Lord, I believe!’ the man said. And he worshiped Jesus.” John 9:38 (NLT)

In each of these instance, human beings gave Jesus praise, honor, and titles worthy of God alone. And He gladly accepted their praise.

What Did God Almighty Say?

If Jesus were the only witness of His divinity, then He shouldn't be believed. But He's not the only witness. His Father in heaven also testified to the identity of Jesus of Nazareth:

“And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.’” Matthew 3:17 (NLT)

I Will Share My Glory With No One

The Old Testament clearly documents God's intention to share His glory with no one else:

“I am the Lord; that is my name! I will not give my glory to anyone else, nor share my praise

with carved idols.” Isaiah 42:8 (NLT)

In fact, one of the ten commandments outlaws worship of false gods:

“You must not have any other god but me.” Exodus 20:3 (NLT)

If God will not share His glory with anyone else, then by definition, Jesus of Nazareth can not share in His glory. Unless, of course, Jesus and God are one and the same. And this is the position put forth by the Creator of the Universe:

God’s Voice Speaks

God testified before men that He would bring glory to the name of Jesus:

“‘Father, bring glory to your name.’ Then a voice spoke from heaven, saying, ‘I have already brought glory to my name, and I will do so again.’” John 12:28 (NLT)

And Jesus spoke of the glory they share: “Now, Father, bring me into the glory we shared before the world began.” John 17:5 (NLT)

Following the birth of Jesus, a host of angels praised God in full sight of men, thus giving glory to Jesus: “Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others – the armies of heaven – praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.’” Luke 2:13-14 (NLT)

John also testifies to the glory of Jesus: “We have seen his glory, the glory of the Father’s one and only Son.” John 1:14 (NLT)

It’s the same glory God proclaimed He would give to His son in the Old Testament:

“The king proclaims the Lord’s decree: ‘The Lord said to me, ‘You are my son. Today I have become your Father.’” Psalm 2:7 (NLT)

How could God glorify Jesus, and stay true to His word to never give His glory to anyone else, unless giving glory to Jesus is the same as giving glory to God?

Conclusion

The characteristics of God, all shared by Jesus of Nazareth, reflect the fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy – a promise to the world. God promised a sign, that a virgin would conceive a child, a boy whose name means ‘God is with us,’ meaning He would be God in the flesh:

“All right then, the Lord himself will give you the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel (which means ‘God is with us’).” Isaiah 7:14 (NLT)

This prophecy was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus of Nazareth:

“As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. ‘Joseph, son of David,’ the angel said, ‘do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’ All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord’s message through his prophet: ‘Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means ‘God is with us.’” Matthew 1:20-23 (NLT)

Yet, despite this miraculous sign, and the miraculous life which followed, most of the world has failed to recognize the Creator among them.

They Did Not Recognize Him

This is the message of the Gospel of John. God came into the world in human form, yet the very world He created failed to recognize Him:

“He came into the very world he created, but the world didn’t recognize him.” John 1:10 (NLT)

Even those who lay claim to the wisdom of this world failed to recognize their own Creator:

“But the rulers of this world have not understood it; if they had, they would not have crucified our glorious Lord.” 1 Corinthians 2:8 (NLT)

Even many self-proclaimed Christians fail to recognize the true identity of Jesus of Nazareth. He is the Christ, the Lord of lords, and King of kings. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

Don’t repeat the mistakes of those who refuse to acknowledge the glory of Jesus of Nazareth. He is more than a holy man, a prophet, and a teacher. He is God among us.

Britt Gillette is founder of [BrittGillette.Com](http://www.brittgillette.com), a website examining the relationship between bible prophecy and emerging trends in technology. For more information or to sign up for his email alerts, please visit <http://www.brittgillette.com>.