



Was Jesus
the son of
God?

What we've seen so far

- We know that a man named Jesus lived in Palestine
- He taught a doctrine and performed signs that were recognized and resisted by the Jewish leaders
- We know that he predicted that he would raise himself from the dead and rule over a kingdom
- After his death, a small group of followers quickly grew into a “sect of the Jews” which was scattered throughout the Roman empire
- Within 300 years, half of the empire’s population claimed Jesus as their lord, as the son of God
- The universally accepted premise was that Jesus had risen from the dead and ascended to the Father

Jesus: a failed zealot turned God?

- Jesus was not a peaceful rabbi seeking righteousness and repentance, but a zealot seeking military restoration of Israel
- He was arrested and executed, but his followers believed he was resurrected and continued following his teachings
- Paul's conversion marked the split with followers seeing Jesus as God
- Paul's followers – who rejected Judaism – eventually became the ruling influence and “founded” Christianity

“Only in the latest of our Gospels, John, a Gospel that shows considerably more theological sophistication than the others, does Jesus indicate that he is divine. I had come to realize that none of our earliest traditions indicates that Jesus said any such thing about himself. ... To put it differently, if Jesus claimed he was divine, it seemed very strange indeed that Matthew, Mark, and Luke all failed to say anything about it. Did they just forget to mention that part? I had come to realize that Jesus’ divinity was part of John’s theology, not a part of Jesus’ own teaching.” — Bart D. Ehrman, *Jesus, Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible*

Bart Ehrman isn't the only one

- "When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people gathered together, both chief priests and scribes. And they led him away to their council, and they said, "If you are the Christ, tell us." But he said to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I ask you, you will not answer." - Luke 22:66-68
- So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." - John 10:24

Why doesn't God simply tell us?

- “... nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, **that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him.** Yet he is actually not far from each one of us.” - Acts 17:25-27
- Man is called to reason, to examine evidence – Psalm 19:1-4, Romans 1:19-20

Why did Jesus speak in parables?

Then the disciples came and said to him, “Why do you speak to them in parables?” And he answered them, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. **This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.**” - Matthew 13:10-13

The plan for God's revelation

- I will send a messenger - Malachi 3:1 (Luke 11:49-51)
- Witnesses to the end of the earth - Acts 1:8,
- John emphasizes: "If I alone bear witness about myself, my testimony is not true." (John 5:31)
- But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant, and they said to him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes; have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise'?" - Matthew 21:15-16

Do the Gospels show Jesus as God?

- He was attested by Heaven, Matthew 17:5 (v. 9)
- He spoke with authority beyond that of a prophet, Matthew 23:33, Matthew 7:19-23
- He did not deny the conclusion of others, Matthew 16:17, Mark 5:7
- He claimed the authority to forgive sins, Luke 5:24
- He made logical arguments, Matthew 22:41-45
- He accepted worship, Matthew 14:33
- He claimed a unique relationship with the Father, John 5:17-18

Why didn't Jesus say so? He did!

And the high priest stood up and said, "Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?" But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven." - Matthew 26:62-64

John's response to the Gnostics

- In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. - John 1:1-3, (John 20:31)
- “Although Gnostic teachings show some diversity on this subject, they tend toward docetism — the doctrine that the descent of the Christ was spiritual and not material, despite any *appearance* of materiality. It was even claimed that Jesus left no footprints behind him when he walked on the sand.” – Douglas Groothuis, *The Gnostic Jesus*, Christian Research Journal

Jesus' inescapable testimony

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, **but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.** For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." - Matthew 12:38-40

Jesus' inescapable testimony

“For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.” - John 10:17-18

- This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. - Acts 2:32-33
- Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.” - Acts 2:36

Jesus' resurrection was proof that he was not simply “Elijah or one of the prophets”

Why does any of this matter?

- “He shall save his people from their sins...”
Matthew 1:21, Acts 4:12, 5:31
- If Jesus isn’t raised, then he isn’t God
- If Jesus isn’t God, he’s just another man who died for being godly
 - Isaiah’s blood couldn’t save me
 - David’s blood couldn’t save me
 - Moses’ blood couldn’t save me
- What made Jesus any different?

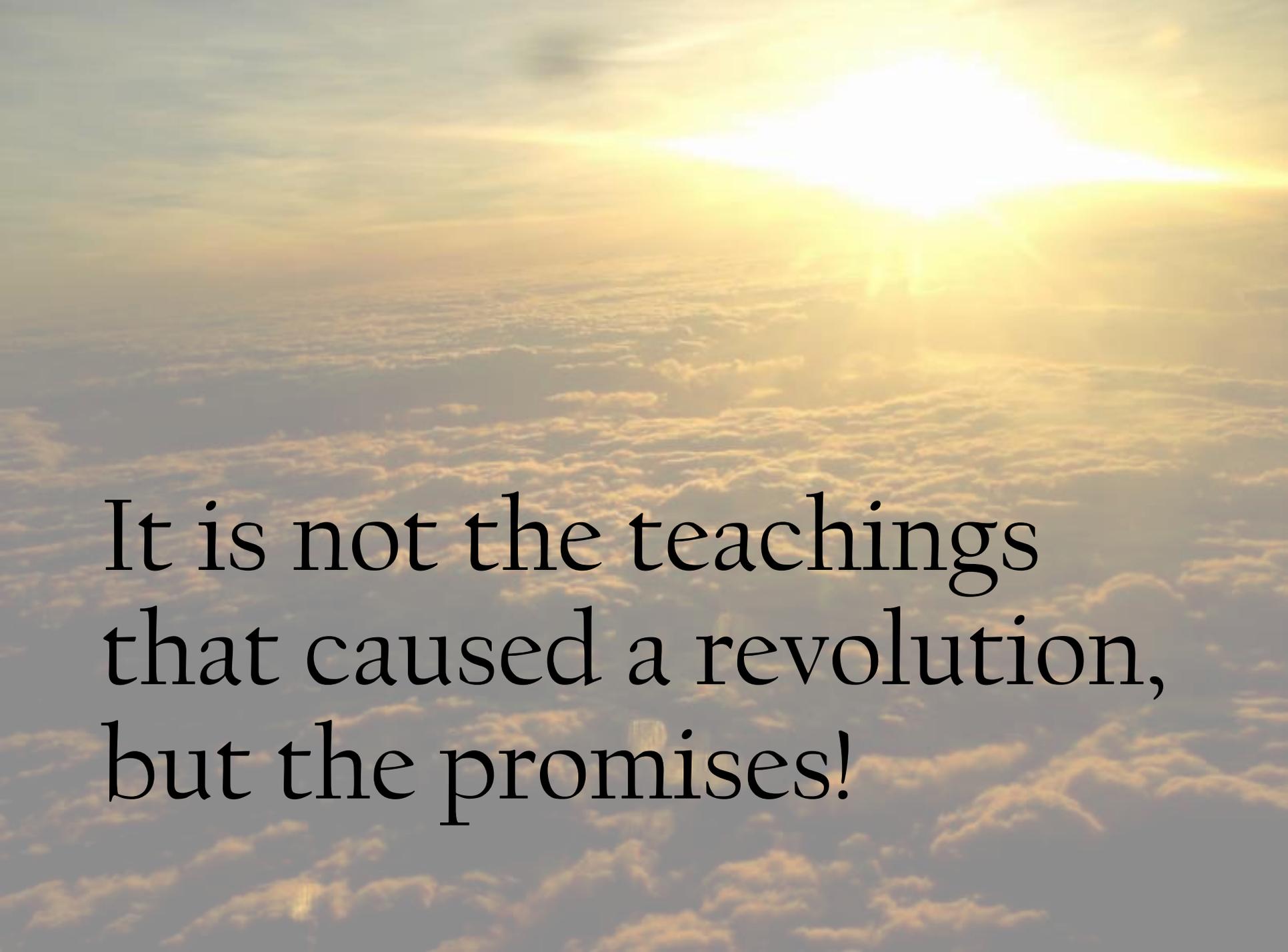
Jesus made promises that he could not fulfill unless he could give his own life and take it up again

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Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that **you are the Christ, the Son of God**, who is coming into the world.”- John 11:25-27

- Jesus had to be able to remove the guilt of sin
- Jesus had to be able to control and bestow life to the dead

But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. **For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.** Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.” - 1 Corinthians 15:12-19



It is not the teachings
that caused a revolution,
but the promises!

Ehrman's arguments

- The gospels were not written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, but by Christians hundreds of years afterward
 - Already seen that the dates are much closer, and had to have been from originals written during a contemporary time
 - Claims are based typically on assumptions, i.e. “the writer wrote in Greek, and Jesus didn't speak Greek”
- The gospels are riddled with errors and changes from later scribes
 - “Riddled” amounts to approximately 1 percent difference when ruling out typos, unessential content
 - Errors of content are typically events or supposed contradictions born out of assumptions about the early writers or the time in which they wrote

God's plan of reconciliation

- We can attain the salvation that comes from knowing God, II Peter 1:2, 3
- We can be one with God despite our sin, I John 1:3, 7, John 14:23
- We can be conformed to the image of our Father and be holy and gracious, Rom. 8:29, I Peter 1:14
- We can be given a body that can truly exist in the presence of God, I Cor. 15:42-43, 50-53