

marketplace *crosstalk*

March 1, 2018

Dear Friends:

Many people today insist that Jesus was a great teacher of wisdom, morality, and ethics, and that this is the *main way* he should be regarded.

However, what do you do with the divine “claims” that Jesus made about himself? For example:

- Jesus assumed authority to *forgive all sins* (Mark 2:7-11)
- He *alone* could *give eternal life* (John 6:39-40)
- He has a *power* that could *eliminate and destroy death* (John 11:25-26)
- He has the *truth and authority* as no one else ever had (Mark 1:22)
- He claimed to be **the truth** itself (John 14:6)
- He assumed the authority to “*judge the world*” (Mark 14:62)
- He assumed the right to *receive worship* (John 9:38 & 20:28-29)
- He puts his own *knowledge on a par with God the Father* (Matthew 11:27)
- He claimed to be *perfectly sinless* (John 8:46)
- To *know him* is to *know God* (John 8:19)
- To *see him* was to *see God* (John 12:45)
- To *receive him* is to *receive God* (Mark 9:37)
- He claimed that only through himself can anyone *know God* (Matt.11:27)
- He actually *takes upon himself the divine name of God “I AM”* (John 8:58)

(NOTE: To verify any of these claims, please read the references ... in context.)

Anyone who would make such audacious “claims” about themselves might be considered to be many things, but certainly NOT a great teacher of wisdom, morality, and ethics. Frankly, it is extraordinarily difficult to claim to be perfect and divine and then to get the people who actually live with you to believe it. But Jesus did it. What a life he must have lived!

As Timothy Keller observes in his book, *Making Sense of God*:

*“What is surprising is not only that his claims were so self-centered, but also that his character and his actions were so completely **un**-self-centered. In the whole history of the world, there is only one person who not only claimed to be God himself, but also got enormous numbers of people to believe it. Only Jesus combines claims of divinity with the most beautiful life of humanity.”*

The fact is ... we believe that Jesus **WAS** who he claimed to be. That the unthinkable became thinkable. That Jesus **WAS** worshipped by Jews as God. And ... that he demonstrated his authenticity by “rising from the dead”. There was an empty tomb ... there were hundreds of eyewitnesses ... and Jesus’s followers lives were dramatically changed.

Keller suggests: *“If we try to explain the **changed lives** of the early Christians, we may find ourselves making even greater leaps of faith than if we believed in the Resurrection itself.”*

How has your life changed? I know mine has.

Yours for reaching the marketplace.

Carl