

Q&A: Did Jesus claim to be God?

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Jesus spoke and acted as God in the flesh. We can consider the evidence for Jesus being God in five related categories, which you can remember using the mnemonic HANDS:

Jesus gets God's *Honors*

Jesus has God's *Attributes*

Jesus has God's *Names*

Jesus does God's *Deeds*

Jesus sits in God's *Seat*

Let's look at a few examples of each of these.

Honors: Jesus expected people to honor him "just as they honor the Father" (Jn 5:23). He accepted worship from his disciples (Mt 14:33; 28:17). He encouraged them to have faith in him as they did in God (Jn 14:1). He invited them to pray to him: "If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it" (14:14).

Attributes: Jesus claimed to be just like God the Father—so much so that if you saw him you had seen the Father (Jn 14:7–10). He revealed himself to be omnipresent when he asserted that he would be present with his disciples wherever they gathered in his name (Mt 18:20). He even said that he had existed before creation (Jn 17:5).

Names: The way Jesus spoke of himself as God's Son implied that he was on a par with God the Father (Mt 11:27; Jn 5:17–18). His "I am" sayings echoed the way God identified himself in the Old Testament (cp. Is 43:10 with Jn 8:24,28,58). Jesus's favorite title for himself, "the Son of Man," refers to Old Testament prophetic visions of a divine yet human figure (Ezk 1:26–28; Dn 7:13–14). Jesus accepted Thomas's reference to him as "my Lord and my God" (Jn 20:28).

Deeds: Jesus did things, and claimed to do things, that only God could do. He calmed a raging storm with a simple word, walked on the sea, and fed thousands of people with one boy's lunch (Mt 8:23–27; 14:13–33). He claimed the right to forgive people of all their sins (Mt 9:1–8; Mk 2:1–12). Jesus said that he would raise the dead (Jn 5:28–29; 11:25–26) and judge all humanity (Mt 25:31–46; Jn 5:22–23).

Seat: Jesus claimed that he would sit on the seat of God's own throne, the place from which God rules over his entire creation (Mt 25:31; Mk 12:36; Lk 20:42–43). That is exactly what Jesus will do there: rule over the entire created order (Mt 11:25–27; 28:18; Lk 10:21–22).

The religious people who rejected Jesus understood that he was claiming to be equal to God (Mk 2:7; Jn 5:17–18; 10:27–33)—they just didn't believe him. We should not only recognize that Jesus claimed to be God but also commit our lives to him as our Lord and Savior.