

Intro:

Even an antagonistic atheist would have to admit that Jesus of Nazareth made some astounding claims. There's something so absolute, so emphatic, so final about the claims Jesus made.

In John 14, Jesus said, "I am preparing a place for my people in heaven (1-4). That's an amazing claim! And then He said this, "I am the ONLY way to get to heaven. I am THE way, THE truth, and THE life; no man comes to the Father except through Me (6)." We pondered that claim last week. There's no getting around the fact that Jesus' claim was both inclusive (He offers us life that is both abundant and eternal) and exclusive (He said He's the ONLY one that has a legitimate offer!).

Q: What gives Jesus the right to make such astounding claims?

A: The answer boils down to this. It's a matter of credentials.

Illust: When I was in the 1st grade, I had a classmate named Brett. One day word spread that Brett said he had something pretty amazing in his garage. First, he said he had a monkey. That's not unheard of, but I'd never met a 1st grader with his own personal monkey! But the other piece of news was the clincher. He claimed he had a spaceship in his garage, and that he used it to send his monkey into outer space. Now that's a big time claim for a rocket scientist to make, let alone a first grader!

I'll let you in on something I figured out back then. Brett's claim was a false claim. You know how I figured it out? I figured there was no way he could do what he claimed because he didn't have the credentials.

It's a matter of credentials. It's one thing to make great claims. But claims mean nothing if you don't have the credentials.

Q: What about Jesus? What gave Him the right to make such emphatic claims as He declared in John 14:1-7? What are His credentials?

That's exactly the issue Jesus addressed in His next answer--John 14:8-11.

Proposition: In John 14:8-11, we're confronted with 2 issues relating to the credentials of Jesus Christ.

I. The Truth of Jesus' Credentials (8-9)

When you know Jesus, you know God.

II. The Proof of Jesus' Credentials (10-11)

- A. His Character: Who He Is
- B. His Words: What He Said
- C. His Works: What He Did

I. The Truth of Jesus' Credentials (8-9)

Jesus and the 12 disciples (minus Judas Iscariot) are in the Upper Room. John 14 takes place in an upper room in Jerusalem. Knowing that His time on earth is short,

and knowing that His disciples' hearts are heavy, Jesus shared a message with them. We commonly refer to it as what? The Upper Room Discourse (John 14-16).

In v 5, Thomas raised his hand (so to speak) to clarify a point of confusion (READ vv 5-7).

Jesus' answer cleared up one question, but raised another, this time Philip's.

V 8 "Philip said unto Him..."

Philip was one of the earliest disciples. When Jesus met him, he lived in Bethsaida in Galilee, the same town Peter and Andrew called home. Philip is the one who brought Nathaniel to Jesus. He's also the one Jesus singled out just before He fed the 5000, and asked (Jn 6), "Philip, where are we going to buy bread for all these people?" And Philip replied, "Lord, 200 days wages worthy of bread wouldn't be enough. Philip was a practical, facts and figures kind of guy. He was pragmatic, analytical, and methodical.

Faith was difficult for Philip. He was one of those fellows who had to see it to believe it.

By the way, if you say, "That's me. And I'll never change," let me tell you something else about Philip. Tradition tells us that years later Philip died as a martyr. Do you know why? Because he wouldn't deny Christ. I don't know why reliable the tradition is, but it says that Philip was stripped naked, hung upside down by his feet, and pierced through his ankles and thighs so he would slowly bleed to death. He had only one request--that his body would not be wrapped in linen like the body of his Lord. He did not feel worthy of that. He died exhibiting great faith. What made the difference? Jesus transformed Philip. He made him a new man.

Look again at what Philip said to Jesus (8), "Lord show us the Father, and then we'll be satisfied." What's Philip asking? Does he want a theophany: a visible manifestation of the Father's glory, you know, like what Moses saw on Mt. Sinai? Maybe he wants another Mount of Transfiguration. Remember only Peter, James, and John were permitted to Jesus that glorious moment (Mt 17).

Watch how Jesus responded to Philip.

V 9 "Jesus said to him"

First a question, "Have I been such a long time with you (plural), and yet you (singular) still don't know me, Philip?" Do you sense the disappointment in Jesus' voice? A loving disappointment. Jesus addressed Philip, but it applied to the rest as well, "Philip, after 3 years with Me, and you still don't get it. You still don't know who I am?"

I chuckle at the heading D. A. Carson gives to this section in his commentary. He calls vv 8-14, "A Lesson for Slow Learners." Then Carson remarks (32-3), "As a teacher, I am greatly encouraged that Jesus himself had slow learners. As one of Jesus' slowest learners, I am more grateful yet."

After His initial question, Jesus followed up with another, even more potent question.

V 9 "He that has seen Me has seen the Father; and how sayest thou...?"

It's that middle statement that's the issue. "He that has seen Me has seen the Father."

Just think of that. We know that God is a Spiritual Being. He is invisible. He is omnipresent. He is not limited by time and space. Yet when Philip looked into the eyes of Jesus of Nazareth, who was He seeing? Jesus said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father!"

Here's the truth that is at the heart of Jesus' credentials.

The Truth: When you know Jesus, you know God.

Philip had a problem with this. So did the other 11. Do you know why? They were Jews. They were steeped in Jewish heritage that held such a narrow view of monotheism, that the doctrine of the Trinity was inconceivable to them.

Sad to say, some of Jesus' enemies were quicker to catch on to Jesus' claim than were the apostles. Remember in John 10, where the Jewish leaders tried to kill Jesus? What was their reason? "For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because thou, being a man, makest thyself God." The Jews caught it.

Yet in his mind, Philip still saw a chasm between Jesus and the Father.

Jesus bridged that chasm when He said, "Philip, if you've seen Me, you've seen God the Father."

Q: How can that be? How can an invisible, infinite God, a God who is not limited by time and space, be seen? We need to turn to John 1 to see the answer. Years later, the apostle John commented on Jesus' incarnation, and wrote...

Jn 1:17 "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

Jn 1:18 "No man has seen God at any time."

Stop and notice that. God is invisible. No man can see His splendor and live.

Jn 1:18 "The only begotten Son...has declared Him."

Who is the only begotten Son? Jesus Christ. What did He do? He "declared" the Father. What does that mean? It's from this greek word that we get the word "exegesis." Jesus Christ is the exegesis of the Father. Jesus Christ has given us a full account of the Father. Jesus Christ has disclosed the Father. Jesus Christ revealed the Father. How could He do that? He could because He is One with the Father (1:1-2).

Let me ask you a couple of questions. Was Jesus of Nazareth a man? Yes. He had real bones, and skin, and blood, and feelings. Was Jesus of Nazareth also God? Yes. He was indeed the God-man. Not 50% man and 50% God. But 100% man and 100% God.

You say, "Well why then, if He was God, didn't men die when they beheld Him? I thought no man could see God and live."

Good question. Did God the Son give up His deity when He entered the world as a man? No. Did God the Son give up some of His attributes when He became a man? No. Col 2:9 insists that "all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form."

Theologians have put it this way. When the Son of God became a man, He gave up the "independent use of His divine attributes." He laid aside His glory.

D.A. Carson offers us a needed word of caution (36), "We are dealing with holy things, things which despite our best efforts at analysis and formulation, still defy our finite capacities to understand--they prompt us to cover our mouths in silent worship."

Oh friend, ponder the truth of this. When you know Jesus, you know God!

Think of the implications. When we introduce someone to Jesus Christ, we are bringing that person face to face with none other than God Himself.

Perhaps you're thinking, "Well that was true for Philip, because Jesus was in the room with him. But we don't have that privilege. We can't see Jesus." That's true. But do you remember what Peter wrote to the second generation Christians, to those who with physical eyes had never seen Jesus? He wrote this in I Pt 1:8, "Whom having not seen, ye love."

Here is the crux of Christianity. When you know Jesus, you know God. But the opposite is also true. If you don't know Jesus, you don't know God.

You may be thinking, "Now wait. Are you sure? I have a friend who says he gets to know God in his own private way out in the woods. What about that?"

Quote: G. Campbell Morgan (247), "A man tells me he has given up going to Church, and worships in the country. He is deluded. He never gets near to God in that way, so as to meet humanity's dire need. A man may have an aesthetic titillation of his senses in the country, but for God's sake don't let him call that religion. Don't let him imagine that so he is dealing with God. 'No man cometh to the Father, but by Me.' There is no other way."

You can't get to know God in nature. You can get to know ABOUT Him, about His power, and His wisdom, and splendor. But there's only one way to get to know Him personally. And that's through His Son Jesus Christ.

Quote: Anonymous "To the artist He is..."

Tran: What gave Him the right to make the emphatic claims He made? His Credentials. He declared to Philip the Truth of His credentials.

Q: Why should we believe in Jesus, and in His claim to Deity?

II. The Proof of Jesus' Credentials (10-11)

Vv 10-11 "Believest thou not that I am..."

Look at those first 3 words, "Believest thou not?" "Don't you believe?" Right there is our #1 problem. Unbelief. It's what keeps a person from salvation. It's also what robs a Christian of joy! Do you struggle with unbelief?

Allow me to ask you a few questions. How much confidence do you have in Jesus Christ? Do you believe He is in control of your life? Do you trust Him to lead you in your life? Is He real in your family relationships? Are you aware of the fact that He is with you on the job?

Illust:

Q: "How can I be sure that I can trust in Jesus and His claim?"

A: He gave Philip a three-fold proof. These are 3 reasons I can believe...

A. I can believe Jesus because of His Character: Who He Is

V 10 "Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in Me?"

Jesus said, "I am IN the Father, and the Father is IN Me." What did Jesus mean? Is He talking about pantheism? No. Atheism says there is no God. Theism says there is a God. Pantheism says that all is god, that god is everywhere ("god" is in objects, in the trees, even in us; New Age talks about the spark of divinity within us).

When Jesus describes His relationship with the Father, He's revealing something about His Character, about Who He is. "Philip, you just asked to see the Father? Well look at Me! I am One with the Father." God the Father and God the Son are One in essence.

Beware of religious groups that teach that Jesus was merely a created being, even if they assert He was the greatest of all created beings. By His own claim, He is not a created being. He is the Creator. He is One with God the Father. You can believe Him today because of Who He is. Proof #1--His Character.

Illust:

B. I can believe Jesus because of His Words: What He Said

V 10 "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but the Father..."

The Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, points to Christ. The Word of God is a powerful testimony to the authority of Jesus Christ. Do you recall what Jesus told the religious leaders who were skeptical of Him?

Jn 5:39 "Search the Scriptures...they are that which testify of Me."

Jn 5:46-47 "For had ye believed Moses...he wrote of Me."

When Jesus was on the earth, crowds of people thronged to hear Him. They were fascinated by His powerful message. Where did He get His message? V 10 says He spoke the message the Father gave Him. That doesn't mean that the Father acted like a ventriloquist who spoke through his dummy. Remember, the Father and the Son are One. When the Son spoke the mind of the Father, it was His own mind as well.

Philip said, "Show us the Father." Jesus said, "For the past 3 years, every time you heard Me speak a word, you heard nothing less than a message revealed by My Father. My Words are My Father's Words."

Illust:

C. I can believe Jesus because of His Works: What He Did

V 10 "He doeth the works."

V 11 "Believe Me."

Stop. The verb is plural. Jesus is speaking to all 11 disciples now. It's also an imperative. He commands them. "Believe Me." Trust Me.

I catch the sense in v 11 that Jesus is saying this, "I know the truth of My Oneness with the Father is baffling to you. It's beyond your ability to figure out. But you don't have to figure it out. Just believe Me. Trust Me. And one other matter that will help you. Look at my miracles. That'll help."

V 11 "Or else believe Me for the very works' sake."

Just think about what Jesus did, and you will know that He was no ordinary person. He caused the natural elements to change (turned water into wine). He merely spoke a word and a violent storm ceased immediately. He took a boy's sack lunch and fed 5000+ people. One day, He stood by the tomb of a man who'd been dead 4 days, and said "Come out!", and the dead man Lazarus came back to life!

Listen. If you have any question about Jesus' identity, examine His works! And His greatest work of all was when He dealt the death blow to mankind's greatest enemy, death itself. His works testify to His greatness. His works shout loudly, "This is no ordinary Man! This is the Son of God!"

Jn 5:36 "...the works that the Father has given Me...bear witness of Me..."

Illust:

Conclusion:

Q: What's the point?

Illust: At breakfast earlier this week I was pondering the amazing claims Jesus made in John 14. I was thinking about the relationship between His claims and credentials. One of my daughters was at the table (Julie-age 7). She wondered what I was doing. I thought I'd get a child's perspective on John 14. I said, "Do you know what Jesus claimed? He said He's preparing heaven. He said He's the only way for a person to go to heaven. Those are pretty big claims, aren't they? Why can Jesus make those claims? What's the difference between Jesus saying that, and Me making those claims? Could I claim to be the only way to heaven?" She said, "No." "Why then could Jesus make such an amazing claim?" And as only a child can respond, she said matter-of-factly, "Because Jesus is the Son of God."

Do you remember what Jesus said in Luke 18:17? "Verily I say unto you, Whoever shall not receive the kingdom of God like a little child shall in no way enter it."

We've seen the Truth and the Proof of Jesus' Credentials.

Q: What effect should it have on us today?

It all boils down to one question. In fact, all of life boils down to this one question. When we stand before God our Judge on Judgement Day, one question will be preeminent, "What have you done with the Person of Jesus Christ?"

Have you acknowledged His claims to be true? Do you know Him as the Savior and Lord of your life? Are you living in obedience to Him?

Jesus didn't tell Philip, "Believe ABOUT Me." He said, "Believe ME."

What have you done with the Person of Jesus Christ in your life?