

22T01f Tough Questions? – I AM

Hello my friends. Thanks for joining me today for an @ the PUNLA coffee table.

Even if you have been a Christian for a long time, there are some things in the bible and in the traditions of the modern church that are tough to understand. I find many of these downright confusing. Some of these have troubled me for years.

We want to ask those “tough questions” and then do the research to see if we can find or develop a better understanding for these “tough questions”.

I AM...Did Jesus claim to be God? Now before we get started, I believe Jesus is God. But I've heard this question asked a lot in recent years. Some say Jesus was just a good teacher or even a prophet but He never claimed to be God. As Christians, we need to be prepared for this question.

Let me read you John 10:22-30 (NLT) *²²It was now winter, and Jesus was in Jerusalem at the time of Hanukkah, the Festival of Dedication. ²³He was in the Temple, walking through the section known as Solomon's Colonnade. ²⁴The people surrounded him and asked, "How long are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." ²⁵Jesus replied, "I have already told you, and you don't believe me. The proof is the work I do in my Father's name. ²⁶But you don't believe me because you are not my sheep. ²⁷My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, ²⁹for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father's hand. ³⁰The Father and I are one."*

Let's pray. Heavenly Father please guide our discussion today. Help me to stay out of the way, so you can use me. If I say anything wrong, please don't let them remember my errand words but remember what you want them to hear regardless of my words. We trust you and we know you have promised the wisdom we need to understand your word in the Bible. Help us to let the Holy Spirit lead us and guide us. Bless our time together and I pray all these things in your name Lord Jesus. Amen.

Okay, did Jesus say He was God. It sure sounds like it in John 10, I and My father are one. The Jewish leaders understood what he was saying, and they wanted to stone Him for blasphemy.

Read on in John 10:31-33 (NLT) *³¹Once again the people picked up stones to kill him. ³²Jesus said, "At my Father's direction I have done many good works. For which one are you going to stone me?" ³³They replied, "We're stoning you not for any good work, but for blasphemy! You, a mere man, claim to be God."*

So, they believed Jesus was saying He was God. So, why is the non-Christian world trying to say this. There are lots of books of this subject, including one from Bart

Ehrman, who is an agnostic and Historian of early Christianity. He is one of the worlds for most experts on the new testament manuscripts. Bart Ehrman asked this question in his book "How Jesus Became God: The Exaltation of a Jewish Preacher from Galilee." But Ehrman said this is an interview about the book on Fresh Air, "In this book I actually do not take a stand on either the question of whether Jesus was God, or whether he was actually raised from the dead. I leave open both questions because those are theological questions based on religious beliefs and I'm writing the book as a historian."

So even this very famous writer and historian is willing to ask the question but gives little evidence to back it up.

In fact, during Jesus' trial in front of the Sanhedrin in both Mark 14 and Matthew 26. Jesus answers the high priest by saying, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven." The high priest instantly tore his clothes and called this blasphemy. The phrase "I AM", is the same phrase God told Moses. It is often used as a title for God in the old testament. "I AM who I AM" or "I AM sent you" etc. When Jesus said I AM, he was saying he is God.

But Jesus removes all question when you read John 14:8-11 (NLT) ⁸Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." ⁹Jesus 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? ¹⁰Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me. ¹¹Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of the work you have seen me do.

Jesus said if you see Him, you have seen God the father. Jesus is saying He is God.

But in case there is still a doubt in your mind let me rapid fire a few verses. Matthew 1:22-23 (NLT) after the angel appeared to Mary, Matthew writes, ²²All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet: ²³"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.'"

John begins his Gospel this way in John 1:1-3 (NLT) ¹In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He existed in the beginning with God. ³God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him.

Paul writes this in Philippians 2:5-7 (NLT) ⁵You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. ⁶Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. ⁷Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being.

And again, in Colossians 2:8-9 (NLT) *⁸Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ. ⁹For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body.*

And there are others. Paul says, Jesus was the fullness of God, Equal with God. He is saying Jesus was and is God. John started his Gospel with the word or Jesus was God. And the Jesus was Emanuel, God with us.

Father God, thank you for giving us the resources and sources to answer these tough questions. we know you know all things. When we see how things fit perfectly in your plan. Wow. Only with God is this possible Thank you for giving us the Holy Spirit to guide us and help us. Help us to open the Bible and look into history to answer our questions. I pray these things in your name Lord Jesus, Amen

Thank you for joining me @ the PUNLA Coffee Table today, I hope you'll join us for the rest of the series about the "Tough Questions" that we struggle with as Christians.

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See you next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.