



AREOPAGUS PROCLAMATION

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He solved insolvable problems.
He also gave totally to others, including his very life. ... Lunatics are not wonderful, but Jesus was the most wonderful person in history. If that were lunacy, lunacy would be more desirable than sanity.” (3)

William Lane Craig, Ph.D., in the concluding remarks of a debate with Bart Erhman:

“You see, if Christ is really risen from the dead as the evidence indicates, then that means that Jesus is not just some ancient figure in history or a picture on a stained glass window. It means that He is alive today and can be known experientially. For me, Christianity ceased to be just a religion or a code to live by when I gave my life to Christ and experienced a spiritual rebirth in my own life. God became a living reality to me. The light went on where before there was only darkness, and God became an experiential reality, along with an overwhelming joy and peace and meaning that He imparted to my life. And I would simply say to you that if you are looking for that sort of meaning, purpose in life, then look not only

Was Jesus Deluded?

compiled by Rick Carver,
AIIA Associate Director

Jesus once asked some Jewish leaders who were angry with Him: “Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?” The Jews answered Him saying, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make yourself God.” (1)

Jesus claimed He was God come to earth. Was He self-deluded, a lunatic?

Here is some expert commentary:

Peter Kreeft, Ph.D., and Ronald K. Tacelli, S.J., professors of philosophy at Boston College:

“Why couldn’t Jesus be a lunatic? First: because the psychological profiles are opposite. The lunatic lacks the very qualities that shine in Jesus: practical wisdom, tough love, and unpredictable creativity. (2) There are lunatics in asylums who sincerely believe they are God. The ‘divinity complex’ is a recognized form of psychopathology. Its character traits are well known: egotism, narcissism, inflexibility, dullness, predictability, inability to understand and love others as they really are and creatively relate to others. In other words, this is the polar opposite of the personality of Jesus! More than any other man in history, Jesus had the three essential virtues every human being needs and wants: wisdom, love and creativity. He wisely and cannily saw into people’s hearts, behind their words.

Gary R. Collins, Ph.D., holds a doctorate in clinical psychology from Purdue University:

“Psychologists don’t just look at what a person says. They’ll go much deeper than that. They’ll look at a person’s emotions, because disturbed individuals frequently show inappropriate depression, or they might be vehemently angry, or perhaps they’re plagued with anxiety. But look at Jesus: he never demonstrated inappropriate emotions. For instance, he cried at the death of his friend, Lazarus – that’s natural for an emotionally healthy individual. (4)

Other deluded people will have misperceptions, they think people are watching them or are trying to get them when they’re not. They’re out of contact with reality. . .

People with psychological difficulties may have thinking disorders – they can’t carry on a logical conversation, they’ll jump to faulty conclusions, they’re irrational.

We don’t see this in Jesus. He spoke clearly, powerfully, and eloquently. He was brilliant and had absolutely amazing insights into human nature. ... He was much healthier than anyone else I know – including me!” (5)

The people listening to Jesus clearly got the idea that He claimed to be equal with God. Sure, Jesus was an historical figure. Many even agree that He was a ‘good’ teacher of sorts. But was He correct about who He claimed to be?

Arguably the best evidence that Jesus was not self-deluded is found in the resurrection account itself.



at the historical evidence, but also pick up the New Testament and begin to read it and ask yourself whether or not this could be the truth. I believe that it can change your life in the same way that it has changed mine.” (6)

ADDITIONAL EXPERT COMMENTARY ON THIS SUBJECT

- *The New Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, Josh McDowell, 1999, Thomas Nelson Publishers, pp 160-162
- *Jesus: God, Ghost, or Guru*, Jon A. Buell, 1978, Zondervan, pp 87-102

This latter text is no longer in print, but can still be purchased used, or viewed at AIIA’s Study Center. It offers a powerful 14-page refutation of the “Delusion” postulate, examining four psychiatric categories in which delusions may be a symptom.

(1) John 10:30-32, NKJV • (2) *Handbook of Christian Apologetics*, Kreeft & Tacelli, 1994 InterVarsity Press, p.160 • (3) *Ibid.* p.159 • (4) *Case for Christ*, Strobel, 1998, Zondervan, p.146. • (5) *Ibid.* p.147 • (6) *Transcripts of William Lane Craig vs. Bart Ehrman*, College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, MA. March 28, 2006; Craig’s concluding remarks.