

[A Letter About Jesus–Marcus Borg responds](#)

Marcus Borg is a leader in progressive Christianity. I honour him and respect his work. There are some differences in our thinking, but I thought I'd put this exchange that Marcus had with a follower about the divinity of Jesus out to you for your input. At the end I've written some questions for your consideration. Please leave a comment.

[A Letter About Jesus:](#) June 30, 2014 by Marcus Borg 300

A very few days ago, I received by e-mail a letter about Jesus from a person who is reading one of my books. His thoughts and questions struck me as being of interest to many people. I quote the letter at length and then share my response.

The Letter

Your book has persuaded me that much of the language of the Bible and theology is metaphorical and should not be taken literally. Granted that, at what point do you think one reaches a gray area as to whether Jesus was even divine? I believe I'm getting a better sense of your views as I read, but please correct me if I'm misinterpreting. You essentially say that many of the gospel stories should be taken metaphorically. This, you argue, doesn't imply that they can't have a rich meaning or even be divinely inspired (?) In fact, we may derive more meaning from it by taking a metaphorical/historical approach.

But it does mean that Jesus didn't really do x, y, or z. Clearly you must believe Jesus was divine. Otherwise why would you be a "Christian"? I think you said something along the lines of Jesus being the perfect embodiment of what God is like in human form. That's different from saying that he WAS God, or God incarnate.

So, do you believe he was God? And if so, what has convinced

you? I mean if the miracle stories are metaphorical (you say he must have been a great healer, but I think you believe there have been other great healers/mystics), what are we left with as evidence that he was more than a man?

He clearly was a revolutionary and a wisdom teacher, but that doesn't make him more than a man. You are not convinced that he rose in bodily form, which is fine. But is it not just a small step to go from saying that he was "experienced" in some way after his death to saying he didn't appear at all? Are we placing the idea of his divinity solely on these "experiences" of him, if we aren't taking the miracle stories or the bodily resurrection literally? As a side note, what if it's possible for other people's spirits to appear after death – ordinary people who pass onto a spirit world and aren't divine but perhaps in very rare occasions can be seen again? Doesn't it leave open the possibility that Jesus was just one of these and not God incarnate?

What has convinced you that he is worthy of being worshiped? Is it the stories of the unshakable belief and devotion by the apostles after his death? And are many of these even credible? (I haven't read enough to know.) Sorry for the length of my epistle.

Marcus Borg's Response

To say the obvious, the core of your letter concerns the divinity of Jesus. About that there's more than one thing to say.

1. Was Jesus God? No. Not even the New Testament says that. It speaks of him as the Word of God, the Son of God, the Messiah, and so forth, but never simply identifies him with or equates him with God. As John's gospel puts it, he is the Word become flesh – that is, he reveals what can be seen of God in a finite human life. To say, "I believe Jesus was God" (as some Christians do, or think they are supposed to) goes beyond what the New Testament affirms and is thus more than biblical. He

is the Word incarnate – not the disembodied Word

2. Did some of his followers experience Jesus as a divine reality after his death, and have some Christians had such experiences in the centuries since, including into the present? Yes. These experiences led to the conviction that Jesus was “one with God,” “at the right hand of God,” and ultimately to the doctrine of the Trinity: that God is one (monotheism) and yet known/experienced in three primary ways (as God, the Son, and the Spirit). This is the context in which it makes sense to praise and pray to Jesus. But this doesn’t mean that Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus during his historical life, was “God.”

3. Jesus of Nazareth was completely human. He did not have a divine component that made him different in kind from the rest of us. That’s what it means to say he was “true man,” “fully human.” He didn’t have a divine supercharger.

4. Does that make him ordinary? No. I think he is one of the two most remarkable human beings who ever lived. I don’t really care who the other one was – my point is that what we see in Jesus is a human possibility. That’s what makes him so remarkable. If he was also divine, then he’s not all that remarkable. If he had the knowledge and power of God, he could have done so much more.

5. Christian language about the exalted status of Jesus – as the Word of God, the Son of God, the Messiah, and so forth, is testimony, witness: this is who Jesus became and who he is in Christian experience, life, and thought. This is who he is for those of us who are Christians.

Best wishes,
Marcus Borg

Bruce’s Questions for You

1. What do you think about Marcus’s response? Jesus is not G_d in his opinion. How does that sit with you? He makes the point

that you can't find any reference in the New Testament to Jesus as G_d. True?

2. He distinguishes between the "Word incarnate" and the "Word". As Word incarnate he is human. What do you think?

3. Are we, too, "Word incarnate"? Is there an *essential* difference between Jesus and you/me. Or is it one of degree? That is, he is more human than most of us. If so, what makes him "more" human?

4. Is there anyway in which we are more evolved than Jesus?

5. Mystics in every religion have experienced themselves as one with G_d, and to the extent that humans are transparent to this unity are we not divinely human? Or is that even a meaningful distinction?

(For what it's worth, my take is that we need to focus on becoming humans, and let the chips fall where they may. As we evolve out of fear and toward love, out of ignorance toward conscious realization, out of the illusion of being in control to a condition of radical trust, we realize our humanity, and when we do we also become as divine as we're even going to get as enfleshed beings. Perhaps this is why Jesus called himself "The Son of the Human One". And in his realization of that lofty condition of being an actual human, the tradition saw his divine nature. I think there is too much new agey desire to realize our divinity. It is actually spiritual by-passing. I say, let go of that desire, and let's start with becoming human. Then, with Jesus, we may be raised up to sit at the right hand of G_d.)

Seeing as there are so various families buying online and likewise exploring the internet market place, it has become

increasingly famous to purchase medications online. So the next question is where can you get data that is reliable. You can find useful information fleetly and conveniently by going online. The most common sexual problems in men are erectile dysfunction and ejaculation disorders. A lot of doctors think about "[levitra cost](#)". Did learned something about "[buy levitra online usa](#)"? Other matter we are going to is "[buy generic levitra online](#)". In effect, a medical reviews found that up to three quarters of folk on such drug experience side effects. Luckily, most cases of sexual dysfunction are treatable, so it is momentous to share your concerns with your partner and physician. Today, there are many options for men who suffer from erectile disfunction. Get emergency help if you have any of these signs of a side effect to this medication. Talk to your health care purveyor to see if it's sure to make the switch.