OCR H573 | INDEPENDENT REVISION

A* Model Essay

Jesus Christ

Christian Thought

To what extent does a claim to divinity explain the authority of Jesus?

1,546 response words | Complete annotated PDF | Individual topic edition

What is included

A complete original response, an argument plan, paragraph-level AO1/AO2 annotations and source works for further reading.

A* describes the intended style of this teaching model. This is independently written, not an OCR-marked script or a guaranteed grade.

Use this model to study argument and evaluation, then write your own answer. Do not submit it as your own assessed work.

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Argument plan

To what extent does a claim to divinity explain the authority of Jesus?

Thesis: For orthodox Christianity, Jesus' divinity is the ultimate ground of his unique authority: his teaching, forgiveness and saving work carry God's authority because the agent is the incarnate Son. Yet divinity alone does not explain how that authority is recognised or exercised. The Gospels present authority through wisdom, liberation, self-giving and resurrection, while Chalcedonian Christology insists that it is genuinely human as well as divine. Jesus' authority therefore comes decisively, but not exhaustively, from his divinity.

1. Jesus' divine identity makes his authority categorically different from that of a prophet or moral teacher.

Counter-argument: Claims about divine identity may reflect the theological development of the early Church and can appear circular when used to prove authority.

> Interim judgement: Divinity is the strongest ontological ground of unique authority, but it requires support from the character and effects of Jesus' ministry.

2. Miracles and resurrection vindicate Jesus' authority as divine authority.

Counter-argument: Signs are ambiguous, and resurrection evidence is already interpreted within faith.

> Interim judgement: These events are powerful cumulative evidence rather than neutral demonstrations that compel assent.

3. Jesus' wisdom and moral teaching possess intrinsic authority even before a hearer accepts his divinity.

Counter-argument: A wisdom-teacher Christology cannot adequately explain Christian worship of Jesus or the universal scope of salvation through him.

> Interim judgement: Teaching explains the intelligibility of his authority, while divinity explains its ultimate reach.

4. Liberating action reveals authority through solidarity with the excluded and confrontation with injustice.

Counter-argument: Reducing Jesus to a political revolutionary narrows both his kingdom message and the meaning of the cross.

> Interim judgement: Liberation is the enacted form of divine authority, but not an alternative to divine identity.