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# Welcome

## Evidence That Demands a Verdict

by Josh McDowell

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#### SECTION I. THE BIBLE-I TRUST IT

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An intelligent person who is seeking truth would certainly read and consider a book that has the historical qualifications of the Bible. These unique qualifications separate the Scriptures from any book that has ever been written.

Chapter 2: [How Was the Bible Prepared?](#)

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## Chapter 4: The Reliability of the Bible

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The use of the "if...then" argument is applied to Christ. In other words, "*If* GOD became man, *then* what would He be like?" or "Did Jesus possess the characteristics of GOD?" Incorporates many quotations and observations of great men, Christians and non-Christians, about the person, character, life and death of Jesus of Nazareth and His impact on the world for 2,000 years.

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This section contains several illustrations of the probabilities that all these prophecies could be fulfilled in one man to answer the critic who says, "It is all just a coincidence." There is a great emphasis on Jewish sources confirming these predictions as being Messianic to answer the accusation, "That's the way you Christians look at them, but what about the Jews?"

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## SECTION III. GOD AT WORK IN HISTORY AND HUMAN LIVES

### Chapter 11: Prophecy Fulfilled in History

This unique section deals with one of the great proofs that there is a living GOD behind the Bible and history. Twelve prophecies are dealt with in detail. There is a listing of the prophecies, their dating, historical background, and an outlining of the historical fulfillment of each prediction.

### Chapter 12: The Uniqueness of the Christian Experience

So often the Christian negates the authority of a transformed life as evidence of Christ's reality because it is a subjective experience or argument. This section shows that it is supported by an objective reality - the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

### HE CHANGED MY LIFE

The testimony of how a relationship with Jesus Christ transformed the author's life.

### ADDITIONAL HISTORICAL SOURCES OF CHRISTIANITY

## Evidence That Demands a Verdict

### Introduction

### LET'S HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING

#### Use of Apologetics

"But sanctify Christ as LORD in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence..." (I Peter 3:15).

The word "defense" (GK. *apologia*) indicates "a defense of conduct and procedure". Wilbur Smith puts it this way: "...a verbal defense, a speech in defense of what one has done or of truth which one believes..." 19/481

"*Apologia*" (basic English translation is apology) was used predominantly in early times "but it did not convey the idea of excuse, palliation or making amends for some injury done". 2/48

"*apologia*" translated by the English word "defense" is used eight times (including I Peter 3:15 above) in the New Testament:

- Acts 22:1  
"Brethren and fathers, hear my *defense* which I now offer to you."
- Acts 25:16  
"And I answered them that it is not the custom of the Romans to hand over any man before the accused meets his accusers face to face, and has an opportunity to make his



*defense* against the charges".

- I Corinthians 9:3  
"My *defense* to those who examine me is this..."
- II Corinthians 7:11  
"For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you, what vindication of yourselves [*defense*], what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter".
- Philippians 1:7  
"...since both in my imprisonment and in the *defense* and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me".
- Philippians 1:16  
"...the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the *defense* of the gospel..."
- II Timothy 4:16  
"At my first *defense* no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them".

The manner in which the word "defense" is used in I Peter 3:15 denotes the kind of defense one would make to a police inquiry, "Why are you a Christian?" A believer is responsible to give an adequate answer to that question.

Paul Little quotes John Stott saying, "We cannot pander to a man's intellectual arrogance, but we must cater to his intellectual integrity" [And, I add, questions of honest inquiry must be answered]. 10/28

Beatty concludes that:

"Christianity is either EVERYTHING for mankind, or NOTHING. It is either the highest certainty or the greatest delusion...But if Christianity be EVERYTHING for mankind, it is important for every man to be able to give a good reason for the hope that is in him in regard to the eternal verities of the Christian faith. To accept these verities in an unthinking way, or to receive them simply on authority, is not enough for an intelligent and stable faith". 2/37,38

The basic "apologetic" theme of these notes is:

"There is an infinite, all-wise, all-powerful, all-loving GOD who has revealed Himself by means natural and supernatural in creation, in the nature of man, in the history of Israel and the Church, in the pages of Holy Scripture, in the incarnation of GOD in Christ, and in the heart of the believer by the gospel". 15/33

**Christianity is a FACTual Religion**

Christianity appeals to history, the facts of history, which P. Carnegie Simpson calls, "the most patent and accessible of data". Simpson continues that "He [Jesus] is a fact of history cognizable as any other".

J.N.D. Anderson records D.E. Jenkins' remark, "Christianity is based on indisputable facts..."  
1/10

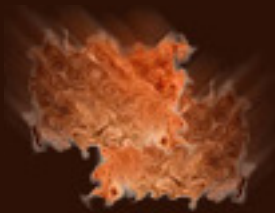
Clark Pinnock defines this type of facts:

"The facts backing the Christian claim are not a special kind of religious fact. They are the cognitive, informational facts upon which all historical, legal, and ordinary decisions are based".  
14/6,7

One of the purposes of these "notes on Christian evidences" is to present some of these "indisputable facts" and to inquire whether the Christian interpretation of these facts is not by far the most logical. The objective of apologetics is not to convince a man unwittingly, contrary to his will, to become a Christian.

Clark Pinnock writes:

"It strives at laying the evidence for the Christian gospel before men in an intelligent fashion, so that they can make a meaningful commitment under the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. The heart cannot delight in what the mind rejects as false". 14/3



## THE BEST DEFENSE IS A...

### Good Offense

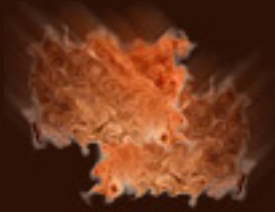
During a philosophical apologetics course in graduate school, I had to write a paper on "The Best Defense of Christianity". The writing of it was constantly being put off or avoided, not because I didn't have the material, but rather because, in my thinking, I felt I was at odds with what the professor was expecting (obviously something based on the ream of my lecture notes from his class).

Finally, I decided to voice my convictions. I started the paper with the phrase, "Some people say the best offense is a good defense, but I say unto you that the best defense is a good offense". Then I continued by explaining that I felt the best defense of Christianity is a "clear, simple presentation of the claims of Christ and who He is". I then wrote out "The Four Spiritual Laws" and recorded my testimony of how, on December 19, 1959, at 8:30 p.m., my second year in the university, I accepted Christ. I then concluded the paper with a presentation of the evidence for the resurrection.

The professor must have pondered it quite laboriously. However, he must have agreed, for I got a grade of 96.

William Tyndale was right when he believed that "a ploughboy with the Bible would know more of GOD than the most learned ecclesiastic who ignored it". In other words, an Arkansas farm boy sharing the gospel would be more effective in the long run than a Harvard scholar with his intellectual arguments.

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### HEBREWS 4:12

"For the word of GOD is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart".

We need a balance of the two above ramifications. We must preach the gospel but also "be ready to give an answer for the hope that is in [us]".

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The Holy Spirit will convict men of the truth; one does not have to be hit over the head with it. "And a certain woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of GOD, was listening; and *the LORD opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul*" (Acts 16:14).

Pinnock, an able apologist and witness for Christ, appropriately concludes:

"An intelligent Christian ought to be able to point up the flaws in a non-christian position and to present facts and arguments which tell in favor of the gospel. If our apologetic prevents us from explaining the gospel to any person, it is an inadequate apologetic". 14/7

### LET'S LAY SOME CONCRETE

Before one approaches the various evidences for the Christian faith, he ought to have some misconceptions cleared up and understand several basic facts.

### QUICK! I NEED AN ASPIRIN...

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#### Blind Faith

A rather common accusation sharply aimed at the Christian often goes like this: "You Christians make me sick! All you have is a 'blind faith'". This would surely indicate that the accuser seems to think that to become a Christian, one has to commit "intellectual suicide".

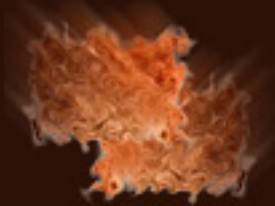


Personally, "my heart cannot rejoice in what my mind rejects". My heart and head were created to work and believe together in harmony. Christ commanded us to "...love the LORD your GOD with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your *mind*" (Matthew 22:37).

When Jesus Christ and the apostles called upon a person to exercise faith, it was not a "blind faith" but rather an "intelligent faith". The apostle Paul said, "I *know* whom I have believed" (II Timothy 1:12). Jesus said, "You shall know [not ignore] the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

The belief of an individual involves "the *mind*, emotions and the will". F. R. Beattie is quite right when he says, "The Holy Spirit does not work a blind and ungrounded faith in the heart..." 2/25

"Faith in Christianity", Paul Little justifiably writes, "is based on evidence. It is reasonable faith. Faith in the Christian sense goes beyond reason but not against it". 10/30 Faith is the assurance of the heart in the adequacy of the evidence.



## A POLITICAL MANEUVER

(Avoiding the Issue)

### The Christian Faith Is an Objective Faith

The Christian faith is an objective faith; therefore, it must have an object. The Christian concept of "saving" faith is a faith that establishes one's relationship with Jesus Christ (the object), and is diametrically opposed to the average "philosophical" use of the term faith in the classroom today. One cliché that is to be rejected is, "It doesn't matter what you believe, as long as you believe it enough".

Let me illustrate.

I had a debate with the head of the philosophy department of a midwestern university. In answering a question, I happened to mention the importance of the resurrection. At this point, my opponent interrupted and rather sarcastically said, "Come on, McDowell, the key issue is not whether the resurrection took place or not; it is 'do *you* believe it took place?'" What he was hinting at (actually boldly asserting) is that my believing was the most important thing. I retorted immediately, "Sir, it doesn't matter what I as a Christian believe, because the value of Christian faith is not in the one believing, but in the one who is believed in, its object". I continued that "if anyone can demonstrate to me that Christ was not raised from the dead, I would not have the right to my Christian faith" (I Corinthians 15:14).

The Christian faith is faith *in* Christ. Its value or worth is not in the one believing, but in the one believed - not in the one trusting, but in the one trusted.

Immediately after the above debate a Moslem fellow approached me and, during our most edifying conversations, he said very sincerely, "I know many Moslems who have more faith in Mohammed than some Christians have in Christ". I said, "That may well be true, but the Christian is 'saved'. You see, it doesn't matter how much faith you have, but rather who is the object of your faith; that is important from the Christian perspective of faith".

Often I hear students say, "Some Buddhists are more dedicated and have more faith in Buddha (shows a misunderstanding of Buddhism) than Christians have in Christ". I can only reply, "Maybe so, but the Christian is saved".

Paul said, "I Know *whom* I have believed". This explains why the Christian gospel centers on the person of Jesus Christ.

John Warwick Montgomery says:

"If our 'Christ of faith' deviates at all from the biblical 'Jesus of history', then to the extent of that deviation, we also lose the genuine Christ of faith. As one of the greatest Christian historians of our time, Herbert Butterfield, has put it: 'It would be a dangerous error to imagine that the characteristics of an historical religion would be maintained if the Christ of the theologians were divorced from the Jesus of history'. 12/145

The phrase, "Don't confuse me with the facts", is not appropriate for a Christian.

## I SAW IT WITH MY OWN EYES

### Eyewitness

The writers of the New Testament either wrote as eyewitnesses of the events they described or recorded eyewitness firsthand accounts of the events.

II Peter 1:16

"For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our LORD Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty".

They certainly knew the difference between myth, legend and reality. A professor of a world literature class in which I was speaking asked the question, "What do you think of Greek mythology"? I answered with another question, "Do you mean, were the events of the life of Jesus, the resurrection, virgin birth, etc., just myth?" He said, "Yes". I replied that there is one obvious difference between these things applied to Christ and these things applied to Greek mythology that is usually overlooked. The similar events, such as the resurrection, etc, of Greek mythology were not applied to real, flesh and blood individuals, but rather to mythological characters. But, when it comes to Christianity, these events are attached to a person the writers knew in time-space dimension history, the historic Jesus of Nazareth whom they knew



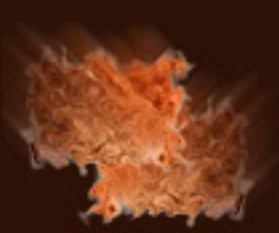
personally.

The professor replied, "You're right, I never realized that before".

S. Estborn in *Gripped by Christ* explains further the above. He relates that Anath Nath "studied both the Bible and the *Shastras*. Two biblical themes in particular deeply engaged his mind: first, the reality of the Incarnation, and second, the Atonement for human sin. These doctrines he sought to harmonize with Hindu Scriptures. He found parallel to Christ's self-sacrifice in Prajapati, the Vedic creator-god. He saw, too, a vital difference. Whereas the Vedic Prajapati is a mythical symbol, which has been applied to several figures, Jesus of Nazareth is a historic person. 'Jesus is the true Prajapati', he said, 'the true Saviour of the world.' " 6/43

J. B. Phillips, cited by Blaiklock, states, "I have read, in Greek and Latin, scores of myths but I did not find the slightest flavour of myth here. Most people who know their Greek and Latin, whatever their attitude to the New Testament narratives, would agree with him...

"A myth may be defined as 'a pre-scientific and imaginative attempt to explain some phenomenon, real or supposed, which excites the curiosity of the mythmaker, or perhaps more accurately as an effort to reach a feeling of satisfaction in place of bewilderment concerning such phenomena. It often appeals to the emotions rather than the reason, and indeed, in its most typical forms, seems to date from an age when rational explanations were not called for.' " 3/47



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**"...AND THEY SHALL LOOK UPON ME WHOM THEY HAVE PIERCED, AND THEY SHALL MOURN FOR HIM, AS ONE MOURNETH FOR HIS ONLY SON."  
ZECHARIAH 12:10b**



Welcome to the My Redeemer Bookshelf. This site is designed to present our favorite Christian books. Most of these will be college level reading; some are college textbooks. We are putting these books here to fill a need to answer many difficult questions, asked by those who are searching for truth and haven't yet found satisfactory answers.



**"...AND THEY SHALL LOOK UPON ME WHOM THEY HAVE PIERCED, AND THEY SHALL**



Evidence That Demands a Verdict, Volume 1, by Josh McDowell presents historical evidences for the Christian Faith. It primarily deals with three broad areas: (1) the trustworthiness of the Bible; (2) the person of Jesus; and (3) how GOD changed history and human lives.

Some of the most frequently voiced questions and objections which are answered in this volume are:

1. The Bible is no different from any other book. [See chapters 1 and 4.]
2. How can you trust the Bible when it wasn't officially accepted by the church until 350 years after the crucifixion of Jesus? [See chapter 3.]
3. We don't have the original writings of the Bible authors; how do you know that what we have today



**MOURN FOR HIM, AS ONE  
MOURNETH FOR HIS ONLY SON...  
ZECHARIAH 12:10b**



**"...AND THEY SHALL LOOK  
UPON ME WHOM THEY HAVE  
PIERCED, AND THEY SHALL  
MOURN FOR HIM, AS ONE  
MOURNETH FOR HIS ONLY SON..."  
ZECHARIAH 12:10b**



- was not changed from the originals? [See chapter 4.]
- 4. How can you believe in Jesus when all we know about him comes from biased Christian writers? [See chapter 5.]
- 5. Jesus never claimed to be the Messiah. [See chapter 9.]
- 6. Jesus never claimed to be GOD. How can Christians claim that He is GOD? [See chapters 6-8.]
- 7. How can Christians say Jesus rose bodily from the grave? There are lots of possible explanations. [See chapter 10.]
- 8. The Bible predicts many events that are supposed to have happened in history. Have they? [See chapter 11.]
- 9. So what if the Bible is true and Jesus is GOD? What difference does that make to me? [See chapter 12.]

There are answers - scholarly, intelligent, well-grounded answers. Answers backed by solid evidence. Answers that span over six thousand years of history. Answers which will satisfy anyone who is willing to honestly weigh the evidence.

Josh McDowell, a graduate of Wheaton College and Magna Cum Laude graduate of Talbot Theological Seminary, is a member of two national honor societies and is one of the most popular speakers on university campuses across America today. During the last 20 years he has spoken in over 60 countries to more than seven million young people and adults in over 800 universities and high schools.



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**...AND THEY SHALL LOOK  
UPON ME WHOM THEY HAVE  
PIERCED, AND THEY SHALL  
MOURN FOR HIM, AS ONE  
MOURNETH FOR HIS ONLY SON  
ZECHARIAH 12:10b**



New Life Christian School has educational games and stories for Kindergarten through 9th. We will be adding more games weekly, so please check there often.



**"...AND THEY SHALL LOOK  
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ZECHARIAH 12:10b**



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## Chapter 1 - The Uniqueness of the Bible

### THE UNIQUENESS OF THE SCRIPTURE

**Introduction:** Over and over again, like a broken record, I hear the phrase, "Oh, you don't read the Bible, do you? Sometimes it is phrased, "Why, the Bible is just another book; you ought to read...etc." There is the student who is proud because his Bible is on the shelf with his other books, perhaps dusty, not broken in, but it is there with the other "greats".

Then there is the professor who degrades the Bible before his students and snickers at the thought of reading it, let alone of having it in one's library.

The above questions and observations bothered me when I tried, as a non-Christian, to refute the Bible as GOD's Word to man. I finally came to the conclusion that they were simply trite phrases from either biased, prejudiced or simply unknowledgeable, unread men and women.

The Bible should be on the top shelf all by itself. The Bible is "unique". That's it! The ideas I grappled with to describe the Bible are summed up by the word "unique".

Webster must have had this "book of Books" in mind when he wrote the definition for "unique"; "1. one and only; single; sole. 2. different from all others; having no like or equal".

Professor M. Montiero-Williams, former Boden professor of Sanskrit, spent 42 years studying Eastern books and said in comparing them with the Bible:

"Pile them, if you will, on the left side of your study table; but place your own Holy Bible on the right side - all by itself, all alone - and with a wide gap between them. For,...three is a gulf between it and the so-called sacred books of the East which severs the one from the other utterly, hopelessly, and forever...a veritable gulf which cannot be bridged over by any science of religious thought."

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**The Bible is Unique:** It is the book "different from all others" in the following ways (plus a multitude more):

**UNIQUE IN ITS CONTINUITY.** Here is a book:

1. Written over a 1,500 year span.
2. Written over 40 generations.
3. Written by over 40 authors from every walk of life including kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, poets, statesmen, scholars, etc.:  
Moses, a political leader, trained in the universities of Egypt  
Peter, a fisherman  
Amos, a herdsman  
Joshua, a military general  
Nehemiah, a cupbearer  
Daniel, a prime minister  
Luke, a doctor  
Solomon, a king  
Matthew, a tax-collector  
Paul, a rabbi
4. Written in different places:  
Moses in the wilderness  
Jeremiah in a dungeon  
Daniel on a hillside and in a palace  
Paul inside prison walls  
Luke while traveling  
John on the isle of Patmos  
Others in the rigors of a military campaign
5. Written at different times:  
David in times of war  
Solomon in times of peace
6. Written during different moods:  
Some writing from the heights of joy and others writing from the depths of sorrow and despair
7. Written on three continents:  
Asia, Africa and Europe
8. Written in three languages:  
Hebrew: Was the language of the Old Testament.  
In II Kings 18:26-28 called "the language of Judah".  
In Isaiah 19:18 called "the language of Canaan".  
  
Aramaic: Was the "common language" of the Near East until the time of Alexander the Great (6th century BC - 4th century BC)  
Greek: New Testament language. Was the international language at the time of Christ.
9. Its subject matter includes hundreds of controversial subjects. A controversial subject is one which would create opposing opinions when mentioned or discussed.

Biblical authors spoke on hundreds of controversial subjects with harmony and continuity from Genesis to Revelation. There is one unfolding story: "GOD's redemption of man".

Geisler and Nix put it this way:

"The 'Paradise Lost' of the Genesis becomes the 'Paradise Regained' of Revelation. Whereas the gate to the tree of life is closed in Genesis, it is opened forevermore in Revelation".

F.F. Bruce observes: "Any part of the human body can only be properly explained in reference to the whole body. And any part of the Bible can only be properly explained in reference to the whole Bible".

Bruce concludes:

"The Bible, at first sight, appears to be a collection of literature - mainly Jewish. If we enquire into the circumstances under which the various Biblical documents were written, we find that they were written at intervals over a space of nearly 1400 years. The writers wrote in various lands, from Italy in the west to Mesopotamia and possibly Persia in the east. The writers themselves were a heterogenous number of people, not only separated from each other by hundreds of years and hundreds of miles, but belonging to the most diverse walks of life. In their ranks we have kings, herdsmen, soldiers, legislators, fishermen, statesmen, courtiers, priests and prophets, a tentmaking Rabbi and a Gentile physician, not to speak of others of whom we know nothing apart from the writings they have left us. The writings themselves belong to a great variety of literary types. They include history, law (civil, criminal, ethical, ritual, sanitary), religious poetry, didactic treatises, lyric poetry, parable and allegory, biography, personal correspondence, personal memoirs and diaries, in addition to the distinctively Biblical types of prophecy and apocalyptic.

"For all that, the Bible is not simply an anthology; there is a unity which binds the whole together. An anthology is compiled by an anthologist, but no anthologist compiled the Bible".

10. Conclusion of continuity - a comparison with the *Great Books of the Western World*.

A representative of the *Great Books of the Western World* came to my house recruiting salesmen for their series. He spread out the chart of the *Great Books of the Western World* series. He spent five minutes talking to us about the *Great Books of the Western World* series, and we spent an hour and a half talking to him about the Greatest Book.

I challenged him to take just 10 of the authors, all from one walk of life, one generation, one place, one time, one mood, one continent, one language and just one controversial subject (the Bible speaks on hundreds with harmony and agreement).

Then I asked him: "Would they (the authors) agree?" He paused and then replied, "No!" "What would you have?" I retorted. Immediately he said, "A conglomeration."

Two days later he committed his life to Christ (the theme of the Bible).

Why all this? Very simple! Any person sincerely seeking truth would at least consider a book with the above unique qualifications.

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## UNIQUE IN ITS CIRCULATION

I am basically quoting figures of just the Bible Societies. Figures are from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, *Encyclopaedia Americana*, *One Thousand Wonderful Things About the Bible* (Pickering), *All About the Bible* (Collett), *Protestant Christian Evidences* (B. Ramm) and *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Geisler and Nix).

The Bible has been read by more people and published in more languages than any other book. There have been more copies produced of its entirety and more portions and selections than any other book in history. Some will argue that in a designated month or year more of a certain book was sold. However, over all there is absolutely no book that reaches or even begins to compare to the circulation of the Scriptures. The first major book printed was the Latin Vulgate. It was printed on Gutenberg's press.

Hy Pickering says that about 30 years ago, for the British and Foreign Bible Society to meet its demands, it had to publish "one copy every three seconds day and night; 22 copies every minute day and night; 1,360 copies every hour day and night; 32,876 copies every day in the year. And it is deeply interesting to know that this amazing number of Bibles were dispatched to various parts of the world in 4,583 cases weighing 490 tons".

*The Cambridge History of the Bible*: "No other book has known anything approaching this constant circulation".

The critic is right: "This doesn't prove the Bible is the Word of GOD!" But it does factually show the Bible is unique.

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## UNIQUE IN ITS TRANSLATION

The Bible was one of the first major books translated (Septuagint: Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, ca. 250 BC).

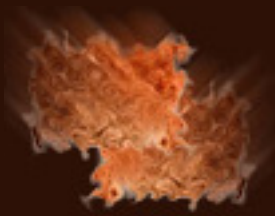
The Bible has been translated and retranslated and paraphrased more than any other book in existence.



*Encyclopaedia Britannica* says that "by 1966 the whole Bible had appeared...in 240 languages and dialects...one or more whole books of the Bible in 739 additional ones, a total of publication of 1,280 languages".

3,000 Bible translators between 1950-1960 were at work translating the Scriptures.

The Bible factually stands unique ("one of a kind") in its translation.



### UNIQUE IN ITS SURVIVAL

Survival through time

Being written on material that perishes, having to be copied and recopied for hundreds of years before the invention of the printing press, did not diminish its style, correctness nor existence. The Bible, compared with other ancient writings, has more manuscript evidence than any 10 pieces of classical literature combined.

John Warwick Montgomery says that "to be skeptical of the resultant text of the New Testament books is to allow all of classical antiquity to slip into obscurity, for no documents of the ancient period are as well attested bibliographically as the New Testament".

Bernard Ramm speaks of the accuracy and number of biblical manuscripts:

"Jews preserved it as no other manuscript has ever been preserved. With their *massora* (*parva*, *magna*, and *finalis*) they kept tabs on every letter, syllable, word and paragraph. They had special classes of men within their culture whose sole duty was to preserve and transmit these documents with practically perfect fidelity - scribes, lawyers, massoretes. Who ever counted the letters and syllables and words of Plato or Aristotle? Cicero or Seneca?"

John Lea in *The Greatest Book in the World* compared the Bible with Shakespeare's writings:

"In an article in the *North American Review*, a writer made some interesting comparisons between the writings of Shakespeare and the Scriptures, which show that much greater care must have been bestowed upon the biblical manuscripts than upon other writings, even when there was so much more opportunity of preserving the correct text by means of printed copies than when all the copies had to be made by hand. He said:

"It seems strange that the text of Shakespeare, which has been in existence less than two hundred and eight years, should be far more uncertain and corrupt than that of the New

Testament, now over eighteen centuries old, during nearly fifteen of which it existed only in manuscript...With perhaps a dozen or twenty exceptions, the text of every verse in the New Testament may be said to be so far settled by general consent of scholars, that any dispute as to its readings must relate rather to the interpretation of the words than to any doubts respecting the words themselves. But in every one of Shakespeare's thirty-seven plays there are probably a hundred readings still in dispute, a large portion of which materially affects the meaning of the passages in which they occur".

### Survival through persecution

The Bible has withstood vicious attacks of its enemies as no other book. Many have tried to burn it, ban it and "outlaw it from the days of Roman emperors to present-day Communist-dominated countries".

Sidney Collett in *All About the Bible* says, "Voltaire, the noted French infidel who died in 1778, said that in one hundred years from his time Christianity would be swept from existence and passed into history. But what has happened? Voltaire has passed into history, while the circulation of the Bible continues to increase in almost all parts of the world, carrying blessing wherever it goes. For example, the English Cathedral in Zanzibar is built on the site of the Old Slave Market, and the Communion Table stands on the very spot where the whipping-post once stood! The world abounds with such instances...As one has truly said, 'We might as well put our shoulder to the burning wheel of the sun, and try to stop it on its flaming course, as attempt to stop the circulation of the Bible.'

Concerning the boast of Voltaire on the extinction of Christianity and the Bible in 100 years, Geisler and Nix point out that "only fifty years after his death the Geneva Bible Society used his press and house to produce stacks of Bibles".

In AD 303, Diocletian issued an edict (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, Cambridge University Press, 1963) to stop Christians from worshipping and to destroy their Scriptures: "...an imperial letter was everywhere promulgated, ordering the razing of the churches to the ground and the destruction by fire of the Scriptures, and proclaiming that those who held high positions would lost all civil rights, while those in households, if they persisted in their profession of Christianity, would be deprived of their liberty".

The historic irony of the above edict to destroy the Bible is that Eusebius records the edict given 25 years later by Constantine, the emperor following Diocletian, that 50 copies of the Scriptures should be prepared at the expense of the government.

The Bible is unique in its survival. This does not prove the Bible is the Word of GOD. But it does prove it stands alone among books. Anyone seeking truth ought to consider a book that has the above unique qualifications.

### Survival through criticism

H. L. Hastings, cited by John W. Lea, has forcibly illustrated the unique way the Bible has withstood the attacks of infidelity and skepticism:



"Infidels for eighteen hundred years have been refuting and overthrowing this book, and yet it stands today as solid as a rock. Its circulation increases, and it is more loved and cherished and read today than ever before. Infidels, with all their assaults, make about as much impression on this book as a man with a tack hammer would on the Pyramids of Egypt. When the French monarch proposed the persecution of the Christians in his dominion, an old statesman and warrior said to him, 'Sire, the Church of GOD is an anvil that has worn out many hammers'. So the hammers of infidels have been pecking away at this book for ages, but the hammers are worn out, and the anvil still endures. If this book had not been the book of GOD, men would have destroyed it long ago. Emperors and popes, kings and priests, princes and rulers have all tried their hand at it; they die and the book still lives".

Bernard Ramm adds: "A thousand times over, the death knell of the Bible has been sounded, the funeral procession formed, the inscription cut on the tombstone, and committal read. But somehow the corpse never stays put.

"No other book has been so chopped, knived, sifted, scrutinized, and vilified. What book on philosophy or religion or psychology or *belles lettres* of classical or modern times has been subject to such a mass attack as the Bible? with such venom and skepticism? with such thoroughness and erudition? upon every chapter, line and tenet?

"The Bible is still loved by millions, read by millions, and studied by millions".

The phrase used to be "the assured results of higher criticism", but now the higher critics are falling by the wayside. Take, for example, the "Documentary Hypothesis". One of the reasons for its development, apart from the different names used for GOD in Genesis, was that the Pentateuch could *not* have been written by Moses because the "assured results of higher criticism" have proved that writing was not in existence at the time of Moses or, if it was in existence at that time, it was used sparingly. Therefore, it is obvious that it had to be of later authorship. The minds of the critics went to work: J, E, P, D writers put it all together. They went as far as to divide one verse into three authorships. They built great structures of criticisms. For an in-depth analysis of the Documentary Hypothesis see *More Evidence That Demands a Verdict* (Campus Crusade for Christ, 1975)

But then, some fellows discovered the "black stele". It had wedge-shaped characters on it and contained the detailed laws of Hammurabi. Was it post-Moses? No! It was pre-Mosaic; not only that, but it preceded Moses' writings by at least three centuries. Amazingly, it antedated Moses, who was supposed to be a primitive man without an alphabet.

What an irony of history! The "Documentary Hypothesis" is still taught, yet much of its original basis ("the assured results of higher criticism") has been eradicated and shown to be false. The "assured results of higher criticism" said there were no Hittites at the time of Abraham, for there were no other records of them apart from the Old Testament. They must be myth. Well, wrong again. As the result of archaeology, there are now hundreds of references overlapping more than 1,200 years of Hittite civilization. For further details on the Hittites, see the author's book *More Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, pp. 309-311.

Earl Radmacher, president of Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, quoting Nelson Glueck (pronounced Glek), former president of the Jewish Theological Seminary in the Hebrew Union

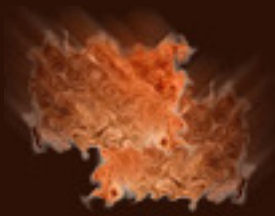


College in Cincinnati and one of the three greatest archaeologists, says: "I listened to him [Glueck] when he was at Temple Emmanuel in Dallas, and he got rather red in the face and said, 'I've been accused of teaching the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scripture. I want it to be understood that I have never taught this. All I have ever said is that in all of my archaeological investigation I have never found one artifact of antiquity that contradicts any statement of the Word of GOD'.

Robert Dick Wilson, a man who was fluent in more than 45 languages and dialects, concluded after a lifetime of study in the Old Testament:

"I may add that the result of my forty-five years of study of the Bible has led me all the time to a firmer faith that in the Old Testament we have a true historical account of the history of the Israelite people".

The Bible is unique in facing its critics. There is no book in all of literature like it. A person looking for truth would certainly consider a book that has the above qualifications.



## UNIQUE IN ITS TEACHINGS

### Prophecy

Wilbur Smith, who compiled a personal library of 25,000 volumes, concludes that "whatever one may think of the authority of and the message presented in the book we call the Bible, there is world-wide agreement that in more ways than one it is the most remarkable volume that has ever been produced in these some five thousand years of writing on the part of the human race.

"It is the only volume ever produced by man, or a group of men, in which is to be found a large body of prophecies relating to individual nations, to Israel, to all the peoples of the earth, to certain cities, and to the coming of One who was to be the Messiah. The ancient world had many different devices for determining the future, known as divination, but not in the entire gamut of Greek and Latin literature, even though they use the words prophet and prophecy, can we find any real specific prophecy of a great historic event to come in the distant future, nor any prophecy of a Savior to arise in the human race..."

"Mohammedanism cannot point to any prophecies of the coming of Mohammed uttered hundreds of years before his birth. Neither can the founders of any cult in this country rightly identify any ancient text specifically foretelling their appearance".

### History

From I Samuel through II Chronicles one finds the history of Israel, covering about five centuries. *The Cambridge Ancient History*, (Vol. 1, p.222) says: "The Israelites certainly manifest a genius for historical construction, and the Old Testament embodies the oldest history writing extant".

The distinguished archaeologist, Professor Albright, begins his classic essay, *The Biblical Period*:

"Hebrew national tradition excels all others in its clear picture of tribal and family origins. In Egypt and Babylonia, in Assyria and Phoenicia, in Greece and Rome, we look in vain for anything comparable. There is nothing like it in the tradition of the Germanic peoples. Neither India nor China can produce anything similar, since their earliest historical memories are literary deposits of distorted dynastic tradition, with no trace of the herdsman or peasant behind the demigod or king with whom their records begin. Neither in the oldest Indic historical writings (the Puranas) nor in the earliest Greek historians is there a hint of the fact that both Indo-Aryans and Hellenes were once nomads who immigrated into their later abodes from the north. The Assyrians, to be sure, remembered vaguely that their earliest rulers, whose names they recalled without any details about their deed, were tent dwellers, but whence they came had long been forgotten".

"The Table of Nations" in Genesis 10 is an astonishingly accurate historical account. According to Albright:

"It stands absolutely alone in ancient literature without a remote parallel even among the Greeks... 'The Table of Nations' remains an astonishingly accurate document... (It) shows such remarkably 'modern' understanding of the ethnic and linguistic situation in the modern world, in spite of all its complexity, that scholars never fail to be impressed with the author's knowledge of the subject".

#### Personalities

Lewis S. Chafer, founder and former president of Dallas Theological Seminary, puts it this way: "The Bible is not such a book a man would write if he could, or could write if he would".

The Bible deals very frankly with the sins of its characters. Read the biographies today, and see how they try to cover up, overlook or ignore the shady side of people. Take the great literary geniuses; most are painted as saints. The Bible does not do it that way. It simply tells it like it is:

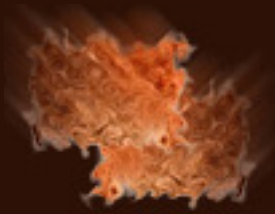
The sins of the people denounced - Deut. 9:24

Sins of the patriarchs - Gen. 12:11-13; 19:5-6

Evangelists paint their own faults and the faults of the apostles - Matt. 8:10-26; 26:31-56; Mark 6:52; 8:18; Luke 8:24,25; John 10:6; 16:32

Disorder of the churches - I Cor. 1:11; 15:12; II Cor. 2:4; etc.

Many will say, "Why did they have to put in that chapter about David and Bathsheba?" Well, the Bible has the habit of telling it like it is.



## UNIQUE IN ITS INFLUENCE ON SURROUNDING LITERATURE

Cleland B. McAfee writes in *The Greatest English Classic*: "If every Bible in any considerable city were destroyed, the Book could be restored in all its essential parts from the quotations on the shelves of the city public library. There are works, covering almost all the great literary writers, devoted especially to showing how much the Bible has influenced them".

The historian Philip Schaff (*The Person of Christ*, American Tract society, 1913) vividly describes its uniqueness along with its Savior:

"This Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar, Mohammed, and Napoleon; without science and learning. He shed more light on things human and divine than all philosophers and scholars combined; without the eloquence of schools. He spoke such words of life as were never spoken before or since, and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet; without writing a single line, He set more pens in motion, and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, learned volumes, works of art, and songs of praise than the whole army of great men of ancient and modern times".

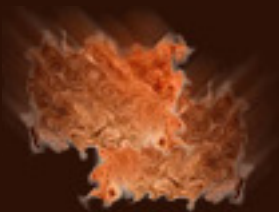
Bernard Ramm adds:

"There are complexities of bibliographical studies that are unparalleled in any other science or department of human knowledge. From the Apostolic Fathers dating from AD 95 to the modern times is one great literary river inspired by the Bible - Bible dictionaries, Bible encyclopedias, Bible lexicons, Bible atlases, and Bible geographies. These may be taken as a starter. Then at random, we may mention the vast bibliographies around theology, religious education, hymnology, missions, the biblical languages, church history, religious biography, devotional works, commentaries, philosophy of religion, evidences, apologetics, and on and on. There seems to be an endless number."

Kenneth Scott Latourette, former Yale historian, says:

"It is evidence of his importance, of the effect that he has had upon history and presumably, of the baffling mystery of his being that no other life ever lived on this planet has evoked so huge a volume of literature among so many peoples and languages, and that, far from ebbing, the flood continues to mount".





## The Conclusion is Obvious

The above does not prove the Bible is the Word of GOD, but to me it proves that it is unique ("different from all others; having no like or equal").

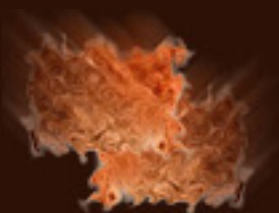
A professor remarked to me:

"If you are an intelligent person, you will read the one book that has drawn more attention than any other, *if you are searching for the truth.*"

NOTE: The Bible is the first religious book to be taken into outer space (it was on microfilm). It is the first book read describing the source of the earth (astronauts read Genesis 1:1 - "In the beginning GOD..."). Just think, Voltaire said it would be extinct by 1850.

It is also one of the (if not the) most expensive books. Gutenberg's Latin Vulgate Bible sells for over \$100,000. The Russians sold the Codex Sinaiticus (an early copy of the Bible) to England for \$510,000.

And finally, the longest telegram in the world was the Revised Version New Testament sent from New York to Chicago.



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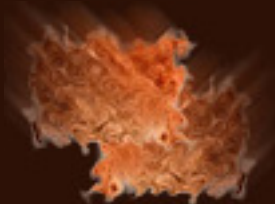
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## Chapter 2 - How Was the Bible Prepared?

### PREPARATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

Many have questions about the background of the Bible, its divisions and the material used for its production. This section will familiarize you with its construction, and, I feel, will give the reader a greater appreciation of GOD's Word.



### Materials Used in Its preparation

#### WRITING MATERIAL

*Papyrus.* Not being able to recover many of the ancient manuscripts (a MS is a handwritten copy of the Scriptures) is basically due to the perishable materials used for writing.

"All...autographs," writes F. F. Bruce, "have been long lost since. It could not be otherwise, if they were written on papyrus, since (as we have seen) it is only in exceptional conditions that papyrus survives for any length of time."

Kirsopp Lake points out that "it is hard to resist the conclusion that the scribes usually destroyed their exemplars when they copied the Sacred Books".

The most common ancient writing material was papyrus, made from the papyrus plant. This reed grew in the shallow lakes and rivers of Egypt and Syria. Large shipments of papyrus were sent through the Syrian port of Byblos. It is surmised that the Greek word for books (*Biblos*) is found in the name of this port. The English word "paper" comes from the Greek word for papyrus.

*The Cambridge History of the Bible* gives an account of how papyrus was prepared for writing:

"The reeds were stripped and cut lengthwise into thin narrow slices before being beaten and

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pressed together into two layers set at right angles to each other. When dried the whitish surface was polished smooth with a stone or other implement. Pliny refers to several qualities of papyri, and varying thicknesses and surfaces are found before the New Kingdom period when sheets were often very thin and translucent."

The oldest papyrus fragment known dates back to 2400 B.C. The earliest MSS were on papyrus, and it was difficult for any to survive except in dry areas such as the sands of Egypt or in caves similar to those like the Qumran caves where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered.

Papyrus was enjoying popular use until about the third century AD.

*Parchment.* The name given to "prepared skins of sheep, goats, antelope and other animals". These skins were "shaved and scraped" in order to produce a more durable writing material.

F. F. Bruce writes that 'the word 'parchment' comes from the name of the city of Pergamum, in Asia Minor, for the production of this writing material was at one time specially associated with this place".

*Vellum.* this was the name given to calf skin. Often the vellum was dyed purple. Some of the MSS we have today are purple vellum. The writing on dyed vellum was usually gold or silver.

J. Harold Greenlee says the oldest leather scrolls date from around 1500 BC.

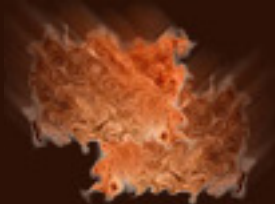
### **Other writing materials**

*Ostraca.* This was unglazed pottery popular with the common people. The technical name is "potsherd" and has been found in abundance in Egypt and Palestine (Job 2:8).

Stones were inscribed on with an "*iron pen*".

*Clay tablets* were engraved with a sharp instrument and then dried in order to make a permanent record (Jeremiah 17:13; Ezekiel 4:1). This was the cheapest and one of the most durable of the writing materials.

*Wax tablets.* A metal stylus was used on a piece of flat wood covered with a wax.



### **WRITING INSTRUMENTS**

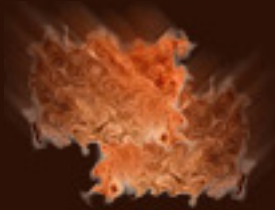
*Chisel.* An iron instrument to engrave stones.

*Metal Stylus.* "A three-sided instrument with a leveled head, the stylus was used to make incursions into clay and wax tablets."

*Pen.* A pointed reed "was fashioned from rushes (*Juncus maritimus*) about 6-16 in. long, the end being cut to a flat chisel-shape to enable thick and thin strokes to be made with the broad or narrow sides. The reed-pen was in use from the early first millennium in Mesopotamia from which it may well have been adopted, while the idea of a quill pen seems to have come from the Greeks in the third century B.C." (Jeremiah 8:8).

The pen was used on vellum, parchment and papyrus.

*Ink* was usually a compound of "charcoal, gum and water."



**Forms of Ancient Books ROLLS OR SCROLLS.** These were made by gluing sheets of papyrus together and then winding these long strips around a stick. The size of the scroll was limited by the difficulty in using the roll. Writing was usually on only one side. A two-sided scroll is called an "Opisthograph" (Revelation 5:1). Some rolls have been known to be 144 feet long. The average scroll was about 20 to 35 feet.

It is no wonder that Callimachus, a professional cataloguer of books from Alexandria's library, said "a big book is a big nuisance."

**CODEX OR BOOK FORM.** In order to make reading easier and less bulky, the papyrus sheets were assembled in leaf form and written on both sides. Greenlee says that Christianity was the prime reason for the development of the codex-book form.

The classical authors wrote on papyrus scrolls until about the third century AD.



### Types of Writing

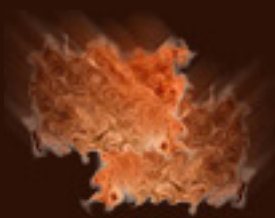
**UNCIAL WRITING** used upper case letters which were deliberately and carefully executed. This was known as the "bookhand". Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are uncial MSS.

MINISCULE WRITING was "a script of smaller letters in a running hand [connected]...was created for the production of books." This change was initiated in the ninth century.

The Greek manuscripts were written without any breaks between words. (Hebrew was written without vowels until 900 AD with the coming of the Massoretes.)

Bruce Metzger answers those who speak of the difficulty of a continuous text:

"It must not be thought, however, that such ambiguities occur very often in Greek. In that language it is the rule, with very few exceptions, that native Greek words can end only in a vowel (or a diphthong) or in one of three consonants, *v*, *p*, and *s*, (Nu, Rho and Sigma). Furthermore, it should not be supposed that *scriptio continua* presented exceptional difficulties in reading, for apparently it was despite the absence of spaces between words, by pronouncing to oneself what was read, syllable by syllable, one soon became used to reading *scriptio continua*."



## Divisions

BOOKS (See [chapter 3](#)).

CHAPTERS. The first divisions were made in 586 BC when the Pentateuch was divided into 154 groupings (sedarim).

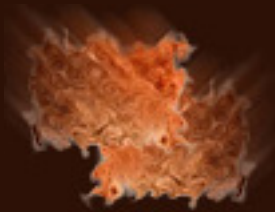
Fifty years later it was further sectioned into 54 divisions (parashiyoth) and into 669 smaller segments to assist in locating references. These were used in a one-year reading cycle.

The Greeks made divisions around 250 AD in the margins of Codex Vaticanus. Geisler and Nix write that "it was not until the 13th century that these sections were changed...Stephen Langton, a professor at the University of Paris, and afterward Archbishop of Canterbury, divided the Bible into the modern chapter divisions (ca. 1227).

VERSES. The first verse indicators varied from spaces between words to letters or numbers. They were not systematically used universally. The first standard verse divisions were around 900 AD.

The Latin Vulgate was the first Bible to incorporate both verse and chapter divisions in both Old and New Testaments.





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## Ch. 2 - The Canon

### Introduction

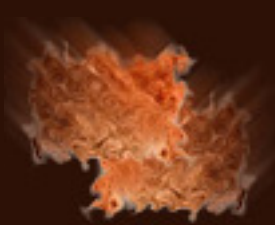
#### MEANING OF THE WORD "CANON"

The word *canon* comes from the root word "reed" (English word "cane"; Hebrew form *ganeh* and Greek *Kanon*). The "reed" was used as a measuring rod and eventually meant "standard".

Origen used the word "canon to denote what we call the 'rule of faith', the standard by which we are to measure and evaluate..." Later it meant a "list" or "index".

The word "canon" applied to Scripture means "an officially accepted list of books."

One thing to keep in mind is that the church did not create the canon or books included in what we call Scripture. Instead, the church recognized the books that were inspired from their inception. They were inspired by GOD when written.



#### TESTS OF A BOOK FOR INCLUSION IN THE CANON

We don't know exactly what criteria the early church used to choose the canonical books. There were possible five guiding principles used to determine whether or not a New Testament book is canonical or Scripture. Geisler and Nix record these five principles:

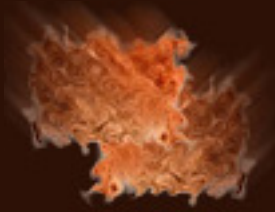
1. **Is it authoritative** - did it come from the hand of GOD? (Does this book come with a divine "thus saith the LORD?")
2. **Is it prophetic** - was it written by a man of GOD?
3. **Is it authentic?** (The fathers had the policy of "if in doubt, throw it out." This enhanced the "validity of their discernment of canonical books.")
4. **Is it dynamic** - did it come with the life-transforming power of GOD?
5. **Was it received, collected, read and used** - was it accepted by the people of GOD?

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Peter acknowledged Paul's work as Scripture parallel to Old Testament Scripture (II Peter 3:16).

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## Old Testament Canon

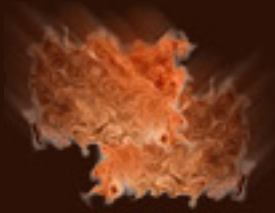
### FACTORS DETERMINING NEED OF OLD TESTAMENT CANON

The Jewish sacrificial system was ended by the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD. Even though the Old Testament canon was settled in the Jewish mind long before 70 AD, there was a need for something more definitive. The Jews were scattered and they needed to determine which books were the authoritative Word of GOD because of the many extra-scriptural writings and the decentralization. The Jews became a people of one Book and it was this Book that kept them together.

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Christianity started to blossom and many writings of the Christians were beginning to be circulated. The Jews needed to expose them vividly and exclude them from their writings and use in the synagogues.

One needs to be careful that he separates the Hebrew canon of Scripture from the assortment of religious literature.



## THE HEBREW CANON

The following is the breakdown of the Jewish Old Testament canon (taken from my seminary notes but can be found in many books such as the modern editions of the Jewish Old Testament. Check *The Holy Scriptures*, according to the Massoretic Text and *Biblia Hebraica*, Rudolph Kittel, Paul Kahle [eds.]).

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### *The Law* (Torah)

1. Genesis
2. Exodus



3. Leviticus
4. Numbers
5. Deuteronomy

*The Prophets (Nebhim)*

- A. Former Prophets
  1. Joshua
  2. Judges
  3. Samuel
  4. Kings
- B. Latter Prophets
  1. Isaiah
  2. Jeremiah
  3. Ezekiel
  4. The Twelve

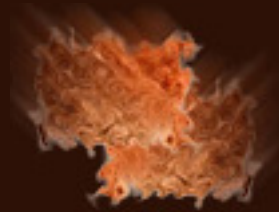
*The Writings*

*(Kethubhim or Hagiographa [GK])*

- A. Poetical Books
  1. Psalms
  2. Proverbs
  3. Job
- B. Five Rolls (*Megiloth*)
  1. Song of Songs
  2. Ruth
  3. Lamentations
  4. Esther
  5. Ecclesiastes
- C. Historical Books
  1. Daniel
  2. Ezra-Nehemiah
  3. Chronicles

Although the Christian church has the same Old Testament canon, the number of books differs because we divide Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, etc. into two books each; the Jews also consider the Minor Prophets as one book.

The order of books also differs. The Protestant Old Testament follows a topical order instead of an official order.



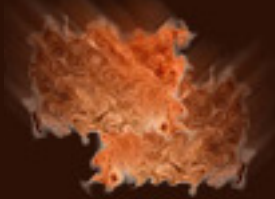
## CHRIST'S WITNESS TO THE OLD TESTAMENT CANON

Luke 24:44. In the upper room Jesus told the disciples "that all things must be fulfilled, which

were written in the law of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms concerning me." With these words "He indicated the three sections into which the Hebrew Bible was divided - the Law, the Prophets, and the 'Writings' (here called 'the Psalms' probably because the Book of Psalms is the first and longest book in this third section)."

John 10:31-36; Luke 24:44. Jesus disagreed with the oral traditions of the Pharisees (Mark 7, Matthew 15), *not* with their concept of the Hebrew canon. "There is no evidence whatever of any dispute between Him and the Jews as to the canonicity of any Old Testament book."

Luke 11:51 (also Matthew 23:35): "...from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah." Jesus here confirms His witness to the extent of the Old Testament canon. Abel, as everyone knows, was the first martyr (Genesis 4:6). Zechariah is the last martyr to be named (in the Hebrew Old Testament order. See listing above), having been stoned while prophesying to the people "in the court of the house of the LORD" (II Chronicles 24:21). Genesis was the first book in the Hebrew canon and Chronicles the last book. Jesus basically said "from Genesis to Chronicles," or, according to our order, "from Genesis to Malachi."



## EXTRA-BIBLICAL WRITERS' TESTIMONIES

The earliest record of a three-fold division of the Old Testament is in the prologue of the book *Ecclesiasticus* (ca. 130 BC). The prologue, written by the author's grandson, says: "The Law, and the Prophets and the other books of the fathers." There existed three definite divisions of Scripture.

Josephus, the Jewish historian, (end of the first century AD) writes:

"...and how firmly we have given credit to those books of our own nation is evident by what we do; for during so many ages as have already passed, no one has been so bold as either to add anything to them or take anything from them, or to make any change in them; but it becomes natural to all Jews, immediately and from their very birth, to esteem those books to contain divine doctrines, and to persist in them, and, if occasion be, willingly to die for them. For it is no new thing for our captives, many of them in number, and frequently in time, to be seen to endure racks and deaths of all kinds upon the theatres, that they may not be obliged to say one word against our laws, and the records that contain them..."

## The Talmud

Tosefta Yadaim 3:5 says: "The Gospel and the books of the heretics do not make the hands unclean; the books of Ben Sira and whatever books have been written since his time are not canonical."

Seder Olam Rabba 30 writes: "Up to this point (the time of Alexander the Great) the prophets prophesied through the Holy Spirit; from this time onward incline thine ear and listen to the sayings of the wise."

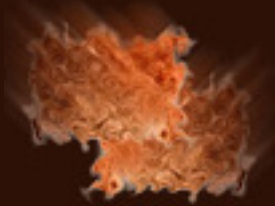
Babylonian Talmud, Tractate "Sanhedrin" VII-VIII,24: "After the latter prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, the Holy Spirit departed from Israel."

Melito, Bishop of Sardis, drew up the oldest list of the Old Testament canon that we can date (ca. 170 AD).

Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History IV.26*) preserves his comments. Melito said he had obtained the reliable list while traveling in Syria. Melito's comments were in a letter to Anesimus, his friend: "Their names are these...five books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus, Deuteronomy. Jesus Naue, Judges, Ruth. Four books of Kingdoms, two of Chronicles, the Psalms of David, Solomon's Proverbs (also called Wisdom), Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Job. Of the Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, the Twelve in a single book, Daniel, Ezekiel, Ezra."

F. F. Bruce comments: "It is likely the Melito included Lamentations with Jeremiah, and Nehemiah with Ezra (though it is curious to find Ezra counted among the prophets). In that case, his list contains all the books of the Hebrew canon (arranged according to the Septuagint order), with the exception of Esther. may not have been included in the list he received from his informants in Syria."

The threefold divisions of the present Jewish text (with 11 books in the Writings) is from the Mishnah (Baba Bathra tractate, fifth century AD).



## THE NEW TESTAMENT WITNESS TO THE OLD TESTAMENT AS SACRED SCRIPTURE

Matthew 21:42; 22:29; 26:54,56

Luke 24

John 5:39; 10:35

Acts 17:2,11; 18:28

Romans 1:2; 4:3; 9:17; 10:11; 11:2; 15:4; 16:26

I Corinthians 15:3,4

Galatians 3:8; 3:22; 4:30

I Timothy 5:18

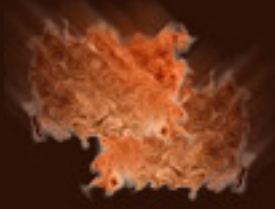
II Timothy 3:16

II Peter 1:20,21; 3:16

"...As the *Scripture* said..." (John 7:38), without more specific identity there must have been a



general understanding of the relationship of Scripture to various books.



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## THE COUNCIL OF JAMNIA

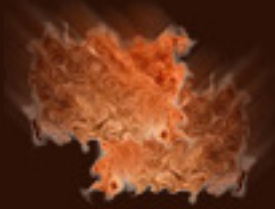
Many students remark: "Sure, I know about the canon. The leaders got together in a council and decided which books best helped them and then forced the followers to accept them." This is about as far away from the truth as one can get. (But for some people, distance is no problem in the space age.)

The comments of F. F. Bruce and H. H. Rowley are appropriate here:

F. F. Bruce: "The chief reason for asking if the 'Writings' section was complete in our LORD's time is that we have records of discussions that went on among the Rabbis after the Fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 about some of the books in this section. When the destruction of the city and temple was imminent, a great Rabbi belonging to the school of Hillel in the Pharisaic party - Yochanan ben Zakkai by name - obtained permission from the Romans to reconstitute the Sanhedrin on a purely spiritual basis at Jabneh or Jamnia, between Joppa and Azotus (Ashdod). Some of the discussions which went on at Jamnia were handed down by oral transmission and ultimately recorded in the Rabbinical writings. Among their debates they considered whether canonical recognition should be accorded to the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs and Esther. Objections had been raised against these books on various grounds; Esther, for example, did not contain the name of GOD, and Ecclesiastes was none too easy to square with contemporary orthodoxy. But the upshot of the Jamnia debates was the firm acknowledgment of all these books as Holy Scripture."

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H. H. Rowley writes: "It is, indeed, doubtful how far it is correct to speak of the Council of Jamnia. We know of no formal or binding decisions that were made, and it is probably that the discussions were informal, though none the less helping to crystallize and to fix more firmly the Jewish tradition."



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## Ch. 4 - Reliability of the Bible

### Part 1 - Confirmation by Historical Text

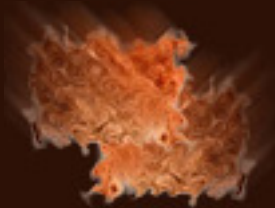
#### THE RELIABILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS OF SCRIPTURE

##### Introduction

What we are establishing here is the historical reliability of the Scripture, and its inspiration.

The historical reliability of the Scripture should be tested by the same criteria that all historical documents are tested.

C. Sanders in *Introduction to Research in English Literary History*, lists and explains the three basic principles of historiography. They are the bibliographical test, the internal evidence test and the external evidence test.



##### The Bibliographical Test for the Reliability of the New Testament

The bibliographical test is an examination of the textual transmission by which documents reach us. In other words, since we do not have the original documents, how reliable are the copies we have in regard to the number of manuscripts (MSS) and the time interval between the original and extant copy?

F. E. Peters points out that "on the basis of manuscript tradition alone, the works that made up the Christians' New Testament were the most frequently copied and widely circulated books of antiquity."



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## MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

There are now more than 5,300 known Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. Add over 10,000 Latin Vulgate and at least 9,300 other early versions (MSS) and we have more than 24,000 manuscript copies of portions of the New Testament in existence today.

No other document of antiquity even begins to approach such numbers and attestation. In comparison, the *Iliad* by Homer is second with only 643 manuscripts that still survive. The first complete preserved text of Homer dates from the 13th century.

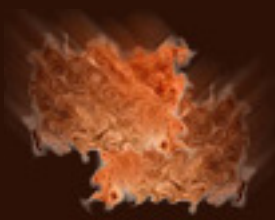
The following is a breakdown of surviving manuscripts for the New Testament.

Greek	
■ Uncials	267
■ Miniscules	2,764
■ Lectionaries	2,143
■ Papyri	88
■ Recent finds	47
■ TOTAL	5,309 Extant Greek MSS
Latin Vulgate	10,000 plus
Ethiopic	2,000 plus
Slavic	4,101
Armenian	2,587
Syriac Pashetta	350 plus
Bohairic	100
Arabic	75
Old Latin	50
Anglo Saxon	7

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Gothic	6
Sogdian	3
Old Syriac	2
Persian	2
Frankish	1



Information for the preceding charts was gathered from the following sources: Kurt Aland's *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol.87, 1968; Kurt Aland's *Kurzgefasste Liste Der Griechischen Handschriften Des Neven Testaments*, W. DeGruyter, 1963; Kurt Aland's "Neve Nevtestamentliche Papyri III," *New Testament Studies*, July, 1976; Bruce Metzger's *The Early Versions of the New Testament*, Clarendon Press, 1977; *New Testament Manuscript Studies*, (eds.) Merrill M. Parvis and Allen Wikgren, The University of Chicago Press, 1950; Eroll F. Rhodes' *An Annotated List of Armenian New Testament Manuscripts*, Tokyo, Ikeburo, 1959; *The Bible and Modern Scholarship* (ed.) J. Phillip Hyatt, Abington Press, 1965.

*John Warwick Montgomery* says that "to be skeptical of the resultant text of the New Testament books is to allow all of classical antiquity to slip into obscurity, for no documents of the ancient period are as well attested bibliographically as the New Testament."

*Sir Frederic G. Kenyon*, who was the director and principal librarian of the British Museum and second to none in authority for issuing statements about MSS, says, "...besides number, the manuscripts of the New Testament differ from those of the classical authors, and this time the difference is clear gain. In no other case is the interval of time between the composition of the book and the date of the earliest extant manuscripts so short as in that of the New Testament. The books of the New Testament were written in the latter part of the first century; the earliest extant manuscripts (trifling scraps excepted) are of the fourth century - say from 250 to 300 years later.

"This may sound a considerable interval, but it is nothing to that which parts most of the great classical authors from their earliest manuscripts. We believe that we have in all essentials an accurate text of the seven extant plays of Sophocles; yet the earliest substantial manuscript upon which it is based was written more than 1400 years after the poet's death."

*Kenyon* continues in *The Bible and Archaeology*: "The interval then between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general

integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established."

*F. J. A. Hort* rightfully adds that "in the variety and fullness of the evidence on which it rests the text of the New Testament stands absolutely and unapproachable alone among ancient prose writings."

*J. Harold Greenlee* states, "...the number of available MSS of the New Testament is overwhelmingly greater than those of any other work of ancient literature. In the third place, the earliest extant MSS of the New Testament were written much closer to the date of the original writing than is the case in almost any other piece of ancient literature."



## THE NEW TESTAMENT COMPARED WITH OTHER WORKS OF ANTIQUITY

### The manuscript comparison

*F. F. Bruce* in *The New Testament Documents* vividly pictures the comparison between the New Testament and ancient historical writings: "Perhaps we can appreciate how wealthy the New Testament is in manuscript attestation if we compare the textual material for other ancient historical works. For Caesar's Gallic Wars (composed between 58 and 50 BC) there are several extant MSS, but only nine or ten are good, and the oldest is some 900 years later than Caesar's day. Of the 142 books of the Roman history of Livy (59 BC-AD 17), only 35 survive; these are known to us from not more than 20 MSS of any consequence, only one of which, and that containing fragments of Books II-IV, is as old as the fourth century. Of the 14 books of the histories of Tacitus (ca. AD 100) only four and a half survive; of the 16 books of his *Annals*, 10 survive in full and two in part. The text of these extant portions of his two great historical works depends entirely on two MSS, one of the ninth century and one of the eleventh.

"The extant MSS of his minor works (*Dialogues de Oratoribus*, *Agricola*, *Germania*) all descend from a codex of the tenth century. The *History of Thucydides* (ca. 460-400 BC) is known to us from scraps, belonging to about the beginning of the Christian era. The same is true of the *History of Herodotus* (BC 488-428). Yet no classical scholar would listen to an argument that the authenticity of Herodotus or Thucydides is in doubt because the earliest MSS of their works which are of any use to us are over 1,300 years later than the originals."

*Greenlee* writes in *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism* about the time gap between the original MS (the autograph) and the extant MS (the oldest copy surviving), saying that "the oldest known MSS of most of the Greek classical authors are dated a thousand years or more after the author's death. The time interval for the Latin authors is somewhat less, varying down to a minimum of three centuries in the case of Virgil. In the case of the New Testament, however, two of the most important MSS were written within 300 years after the New Testament was completed, and some virtually complete N.T. books as well as extensive fragmentary MSS



of many parts of the N.T. date back to one century from the original writings."

Greenlee adds that "since scholars accept as generally trustworthy the writings of the ancient classics even though the earliest MSS were written so long after the original writings and the number of extant MSS is in many instances so small, it is clear that the reliability of the text of the N.T. is likewise assured."

Bruce Metzger in *The Text of the New Testament* cogently writes of the comparison: "*The works of several ancient authors are preserved to us by the thinnest possible thread of transmission.* For example, the compendious history of Rome by Belleius Paterculus survived to modern times in only one incomplete manuscript, from which the *editio princeps* was made - and this lone manuscript was lost in the seventeenth century after being copied by Bealus Rhenanus at Amerbach. Even the *Annals* of the famous historian Tacitus is extant, so far as the first six books are concerned, in but a single manuscript, dating from the ninth century. In 1870 the only known manuscript of the *Epistle to Diognetus*, an early Christian composition which editors usually include in the corpus of Apostolic Fathers, perished in a fire at the municipal library in Strasbourg. *In contrast with these figures, the textual critic of the New Testament is embarrassed by the wealth of his material.*"

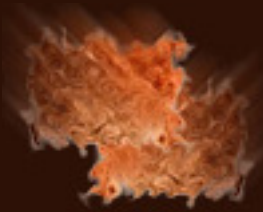
F. F. Bruce says: "*There is no body of ancient literature in the world which enjoys such a wealth of good textual attestation as the New Testament.*"

AUTHOR	When Written	Earliest Copy	Time Span	No. of Copies
Caesar	100-44 BC	900 AD	1,000 years	10
Livy	59 BC-AD 17			20
Plato ( <i>Tetralogies</i> )	427-347 BC	900 AD	1,200 years	7
Tacitus ( <i>Annals</i> )	100 AD	1100 AD	1,000 years	20 (-)
Pliny the Younger ( <i>History</i> )	61-113 AD	850 AD	750 years	7
Thucydides ( <i>History</i> )	460-400 BC	900 AD	1,300 years	8

Suetonius ( <i>De Vita Caesarum</i> )	75-160 AD	950 AD	800 years	8
Herodotus ( <i>History</i> )	480-425 BC	900 AD	1,300 years	8
Horace			900 years	
Sophocles	496-406 BC	1000 AD	1,400 years	193
Lucretius	Died 55 or 53 BC	&nbsp;	1,100 years	2
Catullus	54 BC	1550 AD	1,600 years	3
Euripides	480-406 BC	1100 AD	1,500 years	9
Demosthenes	383-322 BC	1100 AD	1,300 years	200*
Aristotle	384-322 BC	1100 AD	1,400 years	49**
Aristophanes	450-385 BC	900 AD	1,200 years	10

\* All from one copy

\*\* Of any one work



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## The Reliability of the Bible

### CHRONOLOGY OF IMPORTANT NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS

Dating Procedure: Some of the factors that help determine the age of a MS are:

1. Materials
2. Letter size and form
3. Punctuation
4. Text divisions
5. Ornamentation
6. The color of the ink
7. The texture and color of parchment

*John Rylands' MS* (130 AD) is located in the John Rylands Library of Manchester, England (oldest extant fragment of the New Testament). "Because of its early date and location (Egypt), some distance from the traditional place of composition (Asia Minor), this portion of the Gospel tends to confirm the traditional date of the composition of the Gospel about the end of the first century."

*Bruce Metzger* speaks of defunct criticism: "Had this little fragment been known during the middle of the last century, that school of New Testament criticism which was inspired by the brilliant Tubingen professor, Ferdinand Christian Baur, could not have argued that the Fourth Gospel was not composed until about the year 160."

*Bodmer Papyrus II* (150-200 AD) is located in the Bodmer Library of World Literature and contains most of John.

Bruce Metzger says that this MS was "the most important discovery of the N.T. manuscripts since the purchase of the Chester Beatty papyri..."

In his article '*Zur Datierung des Papyrus Bodmer II (P66)*,' *Anzeiger der osterreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, phil.-hist., 1960, Nr. 4, p.12033, "Herbert Hunger, the director of the papyrological collections in the National Library at Vienna, dates 66 earlier, in the middle if not even in the first half of the second century; see his article."

*Chester Beatty Papyri* (200 AD) is located in C. Beatty Museum in Dublin and part is owned by the University of Michigan. This collection contains papyrus codices, three of them containing

major portions of the New Testament.

In *The Bible and Modern Scholarship*, Sir Frederic Kenyon says, "The net result of this discovery - by far the most important since the discovery of the Sinaiticus - is, in fact, to reduce the gap between the earlier manuscripts and the traditional dates of the New Testament books so far that it becomes negligible in any discussion of their authenticity. No other ancient book has anything like such early and plentiful testimony to its text, and no unbiased scholar would deny that the text that has come down to us is substantially sound."

*Diatessaron*: meaning "a harmony of four parts." The Greek *dia Tesseracton* literally means "through four." This was a harmony of the Gospels done by Tatian (about 160 AD).

*Eusebius* in *Ecclesiastical History*, IV, 29 Loeb ed., 1,397, wrote: "...Their former leader Tatian composed in some way a combination and collection of the Gospels, and gave this the name of THE DIATESSARON, and this is still extant in some places..." It is believed that Tatian, an Assyrian Christian, was the first to compose a harmony of the Gospels; only a small portion is extant today.

*Codex Vaticanus* (325-350 AD), located in the Vatican Library, contains nearly all of the Bible.

*Codex Sinaiticus* (350 AD) is located in the British Museum. This MS, which contains almost all of the New Testament and over half of the Old Testament, was discovered by Dr. Constantin Von Tischendorf in the Mount Sinai monastery in 1859, presented by the Monastery to the Russian Czar and bought by the British Government and people from the Soviet Union for 100,000 pounds on Christmas Day, 1933.

The discovery of this manuscript is a fascinating story. Bruce Metzger relates the interesting background leading to its discovery:

"In 1844, when he was not yet thirty years of age, Tischendorf, a *Privatdozent* in the University of Leipzig, began an extensive journey through the Near East in search of Biblical manuscripts. While visiting the monastery of St. Catharine at Mount Sinai, he chanced to see some leaves of parchment in a waste-basket full of papers destined to light the oven of the monastery. On examination these proved to be part of a copy of the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, written in an early Greek uncial script. He retrieved from the basket no fewer than forty-three such leaves, and the monk casually remarked that two basket loads of similarly discarded leaves had already been burned up! Later, when Tischendorf was shown other portions of the same codex (containing all of Isaiah and I and II Maccabees), he warned the monks that such things were too valuable to be used to stoke their fires. The forty-three leaves which he was permitted to keep contained portions of I Chronicles, Jeremiah, Nehemiah, and Esther, and upon returning to Europe he deposited them in the university library at Leipzig, where they still remain. In 1846 he published their contents, naming them the codex *Frederico-Augustanus* (in honour of the King of Saxony, Frederick Augustus, the discoverer's sovereign and patron)."

A second visit to the monastery by Tischendorf in 1853 produced no new manuscripts because the monks were suspicious as a result of the enthusiasm for the MS displayed during his first visit in 1844. During a third visit in 1859 under the direction of the Czar of Russia, Alexander II, shortly before leaving, Tischendorf gave the steward of the monastery an edition of the

Septuagint that had been published by Tischendorf in Leipzig. "Thereupon the steward remarked that he too had a copy of the Septuagint, and produced from a closet in his cell a manuscript wrapped in a red cloth. There before the astonished scholar's eyes lay the treasure which he had been longing to see. Concealing his feelings, Tischendorf casually asked permission to look at it further that evening. Permission was granted, and upon retiring to his room Tischendorf stayed up all night in the joy of studying the manuscript - for, as he declared in his diary (which as a scholar he kept in Latin), *quippe dormire nefas videbatur* ('it really seemed a sacrilege to sleep')! He soon found that the document contained much more than he had even hoped; for not only was most of the Old Testament there, but also the New Testament was intact and in excellent condition, with the addition of two early Christian works of the second century, the Epistle of Barnabas (previously known only through a very poor Latin translation) and a large portion of the Shepherd of Hermas, hitherto known only by title."

*Codex Alexandrinus* (400 AD) is located in the British Museum; *Encyclopaedia Britannica* believes it was written in Greek in Egypt. It contains almost the entire Bible.

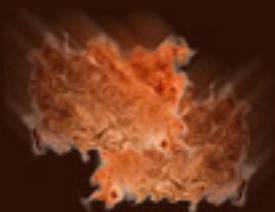
*Codex Ephraemi* (400's AD) is located in the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says that "its 5th century origin and the evidence it supplies make it important for the text of certain portions of the New Testament."

Every book is represented in the MS except II Thessalonians and II John.

*Codex Bezae* (450 AD plus) is located in the Cambridge Library and contains the Gospels and Acts not only in Greek but also in Latin.

*Codex Washingtonensis* (or Freericanus) (ca 450) contains the four Gospels.

*Codex Claromontanus* (500/s AD) contains the Pauline Epistles. It is a bilingual MS.



## MANUSCRIPT RELIABILITY SUPPORTED BY VARIOUS VERSIONS

Another strong support for textual evidence and accuracy is the ancient versions. For the most part, "ancient literature was rarely translated into another language."

Christianity from its inception has been a missionary faith.

"The earliest versions of the New Testament were prepared by missionaries to assist in the propagation of the Christian faith among peoples whose native tongue was Syriac, Latin, or Coptic."



Syriac and Latin versions (translations) of the New Testament were made around 150 AD. This brings us back very near to the time of the originals.

### **Syriac versions**

*Old Syriac Version* contains four Gospels, copied about the fourth century. It needs to be explained that "Syriac is the name generally given to Christian Aramaic. It is written in a distinctive variation of the Aramaic alphabet."

Theodore of Mopsuestia (fifth century) wrote, "It has been translated into the tongue of the Syrians."

*Syriac Peshitta*. The basic meaning is "simple". It was the standard version, produced around 150-250 AD. There are more than 350 extant MSS today from the 400's.

*Palestinian Syriac*. Most scholars date this version at about 400-450 AD (fifth century).

*Philoxenian* (508 AD). Polycarp translated a new Syriac New Testament for Philoxenas, bishop of Mabug.

*Harkleian Syriac*. 616 AD by Thomas of Harkel.

### **Latin versions**

*Old Latin*. There are testimonies from the fourth century to the thirteenth century that in the third century an "old Latin version circulated in North Africa and Europe..."

*African Old Latin* (Codex Babbienensis) 400 AD. Mestzger says that "E. A. Lower shows palaeographical marks of it having been copied from a second century papyrus."

*Codex Corbiensis* (400-500 AD) contains the four Gospels.

*Codex Vercellensis* (360 AD).

*Latin Vulgate* (meaning "common or popular"). Jerome was the secretary of Damasus, who was the Bishop of Rome. Jerome accomplished the bishop's request for a version between 366-384.

### **Coptic (or Egyptian) versions**

F. F. Bruce writes that it is probable that the first Egyptian version was translated in the third or fourth century.

*Sahidic*. Beginning of the third century.

*Bohairic* The editor, Rodalphe Kasser, dates it about the fourth century.

*Middle Egyptian* Fourth or fifth century.

### Other early versions

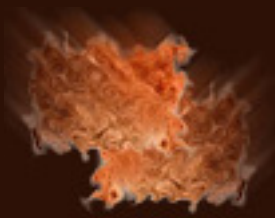
*Armenian* (400+ AD). Seems to have been translated from a Greek Bible obtained from Constantinople.

*Gothic*. Fourth century.

*Georgian*. Fifth century.

*Ethiopic*. Sixth century.

*Nubian*. Sixth century.



### MANUSCRIPT RELIABILITY SUPPORTED BY EARLY CHURCH FATHERS

*The Encyclopaedia Britannica* says: "When the textual scholar has examined the manuscripts and the versions, he still has not exhausted the evidence for the New Testament text. The writing of the early Christian fathers often reflect a form of text differing from that in one or another manuscript...their witness to the text, especially as it corroborates the readings that come from other sources, belongs to the testimony that textual critics must consult before forming their conclusions."

*J. Harold Greenlee* says that the quotations of the Scripture in the works of the early Christian writers "are so extensive that the N.T. could virtually be reconstructed from them without the use of New Testament manuscripts."

*Bruce Metzger* reiterates the above, in reference to the quotations in the commentaries, sermons, etc., by saying: "Indeed, so extensive are these citations that if all other sources for our knowledge of the text of the New Testament were destroyed, they would be sufficient alone for the reconstruction of practically the entire New Testament."

*Sir David Dalrymple* was wondering about the preponderance of Scripture in early writing when someone asked him, "Suppose that the New Testament had been destroyed, and every copy of it lost by the end of the third century, could it have been collected together again from the writings of the Fathers of the second and third centuries?"

After a great deal of investigation Dalrymple concluded:

"Look at those books. You remember the question about the New Testament and the Fathers? That question roused my curiosity, and as I possessed all the existing works of the Fathers of the second and third centuries, I commenced to search, and up to this time I have found the entire New Testament, except eleven verses."

A Precaution: Joseph Angus in *The Bible Handbook*, p. 56, gives several limitations of the early patristic writings:

1. Quotes are sometimes used without verbal accuracy.
2. Some copyists were prone to mistakes or to intentional alteration.

*Clement of Rome* (AD 95). Origen in *De Principis*, Book II, Chapter 3, calls him a disciple of the apostles.

Tertullian in *Against Heresies*, Chapter 23, writes that he [Clement] was appointed by Peter.

Irenaeus continues in *Against Heresies*, Book III, Chapter 3, that he "had the preaching of the Apostles still echoing in his ears and their doctrine in front of his eyes."

He quotes from:

Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts, I Corinthians, I Peter, Hebrews and Titus

*Ignatius* (AD 70-110) was the Bishop of Antioch and was martyred. He knew well the apostles His seven epistles contain quotations from:

Matthew, John, Acts, Romans, I Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, Galatians, Colossians, James, I and II Thessalonians, I and II Timothy, and I Peter

*Polycarp* (AD 70-156), martyred at 86 years of age, was Bishop of Smyrna and a disciple of the apostle John.

Among others who quoted from the New Testament were Barnabus (ca AD 70), Hermas (ca AD 95), Tatian (ca AD 170), and Irenaeus (ca AD 170).

*Clement of Alexandria* (AD 150-212). 2,400 of his quotes are from all but three books of the New Testament.

*Tertullian* (AD 160-220) was a presbyter of the Church in Carthage and quotes the New Testament more than 7,000 times, of which 3,800 are from the Gospels.

*Hippolytus* (AD 170-235) has more than 1,300 references.



*Justin Martyr* (AD 133) battled the heretic Marcion.

*Origen* (AD 185-253 or 254). This vociferous writer compiled more than 6,000 works. He lists more than 18,000 New Testament quotes.

*Cyprian* (died AD 258) was bishop of Carthage. Uses approximately 740 Old Testament citations and 1,030 from the New Testament.

*Geisler and Nix* rightly conclude that "a brief inventory at this point will reveal that there were some 32,000 citations of the New Testament prior to the time fo the Council of Nicea (325). These 32,000 quotations are by no means exhaustive, and they do not even include the fourth century writers. Just adding the number of references used by one other writer, Eusebius, who flourished prior to and contemporary with the Council of Nicea will bring the total citations of the New Testament to over 36,000."

To all the above you could add Augustine, Amabius, Laitantius, Chrysostom, Jerome, Gaius Romanus, Athanasius, Ambrose of Milan, Cyril of Alexandria, Ephraem the Syrian, Hilary of Poitiers, Gregory of Nyssa, etc., etc., etc.

Leo Jaganay, writing of the patristic quotations of the New Testament, writes: "Of the considerable volumes of unpublished material that Dean Burgon left when he died, of special note is his index of New Testament citations by the church fathers of antiquity. It consists of sixteen thick volumes to be found in the British Museum, and contains 86,489 quotations."

#### EARLY PATRISTIC QUOTATIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

WRITER	Gospels	Acts	Pauline Epistles	General Epistles	Revelation	Total
Justin Martyr	268	10	43	6	3 (266 allusions)	330
Irenaeus	1,038	194	499	23	65	1,819
Clement Alex.	1,017	44	1,127	207	11	2,406
Origen	9,231	349	7,778	399	165	17,922
Tertullian	3,822	502	2,609	120	205	7,258
Hippolytus	734	42	387	27	188	1,378
Eusebius	3,258	211	1,592	88	27	5,176

Totals

19,368

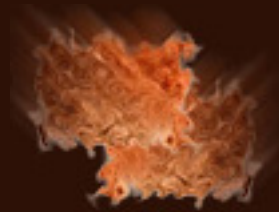
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664

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## Section II - The Academy Awards

If Jesus was not GOD, then He deserved an Oscar

This section is extremely important because it deals with the person of Jesus Christ. Who is He? Is He GOD's Son? The answer is crucial because if He is who He claimed to be, the Messiah, the Son of GOD, then one's eternal relationship with GOD will depend upon his relationship with Christ in the world. These notes will show that Jesus was a SuperSavior, not a Superstar.

## Chapter 5 - Jesus - A man of history

### JESUS IS A MAN OF HISTORY

In a debate sponsored by the Associate Students of a midwestern university, my opponent, a congressional candidate for the Progressive Labor Party (Marxist) in New York, said in her opening remarks: "Historians today have fairly well dismissed Jesus as being historical..." I couldn't believe my ears (but I was thankful she said it, because the 2,500 students were soon aware that historical homework was missing in her preparation). It just so happened that I had the following notes and documentation with me to use in my rebuttal. It is certainly not the historians (maybe a few economists) who propagate a Christ-myth theory of Jesus.

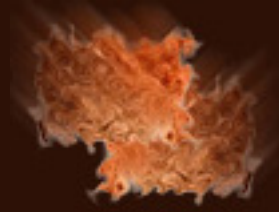
As F. F. Bruce, Rylands professor of biblical criticism and exegesis at the University of Manchester, has rightly said:

"Some writers may toy with the fancy of a 'Christ-myth' but they do not do so on the ground of historical evidence. The historicity of Christ is as axiomatic for an unbiased historian as the historicity of Julius Caesar. It is not historians who propagate the 'Christ-myth' theories."

Otto Betz concludes that "no serious scholar has ventured to postulate the non-historicity of Jesus."

Savior

Savior





## Christian Sources for the Historicity of Jesus

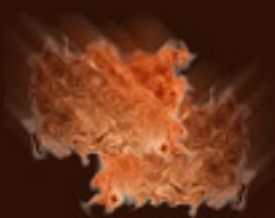
### TWENTY-SEVEN DIFFERENT NEW TESTAMENT DOCUMENTS

*John Montgomery asks:*

"What, then, does a historian know about Jesus Christ? He knows, first and foremost, that the New Testament documents can be relied upon to give an accurate portrait of Him. And he knows that this portrait cannot be rationalized away by wishful thinking, philosophical presuppositionalism, or literary maneuvering."

### CHURCH FATHERS

Polycarp, Eusebuis, Irenaeus, Ignatius, Justin, Origen, etc.



## Non-biblical Sources for Historicity of Jesus

### CORNELIUS TACITUS (born AD 52-54)

A Roman historian, in 112 AD, Governor of Asia, son-in-law of Julius Agricola who was Governor of Britain AD 80-84. Writing of the reign of Nero, Tacitus alludes to the death of Christ and to the existence of Christians at Rome:

"But not all the relief that could come from man, not all the bounties that the prince could bestow, nor all the atonements which could be presented to the gods, availed to relieve Nero from the infamy of being believed to have ordered the conflagration, the fire of Rome. Hence to suppress the rumor, he falsely charged with the guilt, and punished with the most exquisite tortures, the persons commonly called Christians, who were hated for their enormities. Christus, the founder of the name, was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the reign of Tiberius: but the pernicious superstition, repressed for a time broke out again, not only through Judea, where the mischief originated, but through the city of Rome also." *Annals XV.44*

Tacitus has a further reference to Christianity in a fragment of his *Histories*, dealing with the burning of the Jerusalem temple in AD 70, preserved by Sulpicius Severus (Chron. ii. 30.6).

### LUCIAN OF SAMOSATA

A satirist of the second century, who spoke scornfully of Christ and the Christians. He connected

them with the synagogues of Palestine and alluded to Christ as: "...the man who was crucified in Palestine because he introduced this new cult into the world...Furthermore, their first lawgiver persuaded them that they are all brothers one of another after they have transgressed once for all by denying the Greek gods and by worshipping that crucified sophist himself and living under his laws." *The Passing Peregrinus*

Lucian also mentions the Christians several times in his *Alexander the False Prophet*, sections 25 and 29.

#### FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS (born AD 37)

A Jewish historian, became a Pharisee at age 19; in AD 66 he was the commander of Jewish forces in Galilee. After being captured, he was attached to the Roman headquarters. He says in a hotly-contested quotation:

"Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was the Christ, and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians so named from him are not extinct at this day." *Antiquities*. xviii.33. (Early second century)

The Arabic text of the passage is as follows: "At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. And his conduct was good, and (He) was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned Him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that He had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that He was alive; accordingly, He was perhaps the Messiah concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders."

The above passage is found in the Arabic manuscript entitled: "Kitab Al-Unwan Al-Mukallal Bi-Fadail Al-Hikma Al-Mutawwaj Bi-Anwa Al-Falsafa Al-Manduh Bi-Haqaq Al-Marifa." The approximate translation would be: "Book of History Guided by All the Virtues of Wisdom. Crowned with Various Philosophies and Blessed by the Truth of Knowledge."

The above manuscript composed by Bishop Apapius in the 10th century has a section commencing with: "We have found in many books of the philosophers that they refer to the day of the crucifixion of Christ." Then he gives a list and quotes portions of the ancient works. Some of the works are familiar to modern scholars and others are not.

We also find from Josephus a reference to James the brother of Jesus. In *Antiquities* XX9:1 he describes the actions of the high priest Ananus:

"But the younger Ananus who, as we said, received the high priesthood, was of a bold disposition and exceptionally daring; he followed the party of the Sadducees, who are severe in

judgment above all the Jews, as we have already shown. AS therefore Ananus was of such a disposition, he thought he had now a good opportunity, as Festus was now dead, and Albinus was still on the road; so he assembled a council of judges, and brought before it the brother of Jesus the so-called Christ, whose name was James, together with some others, and having accused them as law-breakers, he delivered them over to be stoned."

#### SUETONIUS (AD 120>

Another Roman historian, court official under Hadrian, annalist of the Imperial House, says: "As the Jews were making constant disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus (another spelling of Christus), he expelled them from Rome." *Life of Claudius* 25.4

He also writes: "Punishment by Nero was inflicted on the Christians, a class of men given to a new and mischievous superstition." *Lives of the Caesars*, 26.2

#### PLINIUS SECUNDUS, PLINY THE YOUNGER

Governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor (AD 112), Pliny was writing the emperor Trajan seeking counsel as to how to treat the Christians.

He explained that he had been killing both men and women, boys and girls. There were so many being put to death that he wondered if he should continue killing anyone who was discovered to be a Christian, or if he should kill only certain ones. He explained that he had made the Christians bow down to the statues of Trajan. He goes on to say that he also "made them curse Christ, which a genuine Christian cannot be induced to do." In the same letter he says of the people who were being tried:

"They affirmed, however, that the whole of their guilt, or their error, was, that they were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verse a hymn to Christ as to a god, and bound themselves to a solemn oath, not to any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft, adultery, never to falsify their word, not to deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up." *Epistles* X.96

#### TERTULLIAN

Jurist-theologian of Carthage, in a defense of Christianity (AD 197) before the Roman authorities in Africa, mentions the exchange between Tiberius and Pontius Pilate:

"Tiberius accordingly, in those days the Christian name made its entry into the world, having himself received intelligence from the truth of Christ's divinity, brought the matter before the senate, with his own decision in favor of Christ. The senate, because it had not given the approval itself, rejected his proposal. Caesar held to his opinion, threatening wrath against all the accusers of the Christians" (*Apology*, V.2). Some historians doubt the historicity of this passage. Also, Cr. Justin Martyr, *Apology*, 1.35.

#### THALLUS, THE SAMARITAN-BORN HISTORIAN



One of the first Gentile writers who mentions Christ is Thallus, who wrote in 52 AD. However, his writings have disappeared and we only know of them from fragments cited by other writers. One such writer is Julius Africanus, a Christian writer about 221 AD. One very interesting passage relates to a comment from Thallus. Julius Africanus writes:

"Thallus, in the third book of his histories, explains away this darkness as an eclipse of the sun - unreasonable, as it seems to me' (unreasonable, of course, because a solar eclipse could not take place at the time of the full moon, and it was at the season of the Paschal full moon that Christ died)."

Thus, from this reference we see that the Gospel account of the darkness which fell upon the land during Christ's crucifixion was well known and required a naturalistic explanation from those non-believers who witnessed it.

### PHILEGON, A FIRST CENTURY HISTORIAN

His *Chronicles* have been lost, but a small fragment of that work, which confirms the darkness upon the earth at the crucifixion, is also mentioned by Julius Africanus. After his (Africanus') remarks about Thallus' unreasonable opinion of the darkness, he quotes Phlegon that "during the time of Tiberius Caesar an eclipse of the sun occurred during the full moon."

Phlegon is also mentioned by Origen in *Contra Celsum*, Book 2, sections 14,33,59.

Philopon (De. opif. mund. II 21) says: "And about this darkness...Phlegon recalls it in the *Olympiads* (the title of his history)." He says that "Phlegon mentioned the eclipse which took place during the crucifixion of the LORD Christ, and no other (eclipse), is clear that he did not know from his sources about any (similar) eclipse in previous times...and this is shown by the historical account itself of Tiberius Caesar."

### LETTER OF MARA BAR-SERAPION

F. F. Bruce records that there is:

"...in the British Museum an interesting manuscript preserving the text of a letter written some time later than AD 73, but how much later we cannot be sure. This letter was sent by a Syrian named Mara Bar-Serapion to his son Serapion. Mara Bar-Serapion was in prison at the time, but he wrote to encourage his son in the pursuit of wisdom, and pointed out that those who persecuted wise men were overtaken by misfortune. He instances the deaths of Socrates, Pythagoras and Christ:

"What advantage did the Athenians gain from putting Socrates to Death? Famine and plague came upon them as a judgment for their crime. What advantage did the men of Samos gain from burning Pythagoras? In a moment their land was covered with sand. What advantage did the Jews gain from executing their wise King? It was just after that that their kingdom was abolished. GOD justly avenged these three wise men: the Athenians died of hunger; the Samians were overwhelmed by the sea; the Jews, ruined and driven from their land, live in complete dispersion. But Socrates did not die for good; he lived on in the teaching of Plato.

Pythagoras did not die for good; he lived on in the statue of Hera. Nor did the wise King die for good; He lived on in the teaching which He had given."

## JUSTIN MARTYR

About AD 150, Justin Martyr, addressing his *Defense of Christianity* to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, referred him to Pilate's report, which Justin supposed must be preserved in the imperial archives. But the words, "They pierced my hands and my feet," he says, "are a description of the nails that were fixed in His hands and His feet on the cross; and after He was crucified, those who crucified Him cast lots for His garments, and divided them among themselves; and that these things were so, you may learn from the "Acts" which were recorded under Pontius Pilate." Later he says: "That He performed these miracles you may easily be satisfied from the 'Acts' of Pontius Pilate." *Apology* 1.48.

Elgin Moyer, in *Who Was Who in Church History*, describes Justin as a:

"...philosopher, martyr, apologist, born at Flavia Neapolis. Well educated, seems to have had sufficient means to lead a life of study and travel. Being an eager seeker for truth, knocked successively at the doors of Stoicism, Aristotelianism, Pythagoreanism and Platonism, but hated Epicureanism. In early days became somewhat acquainted with the Jews, but was not interested in their religion. Platonism appealed to him the most and he thought he was about to reach the goal of his philosophy - the vision of GOD - when one day in a solitary walk along the seashore, the young philosopher met a venerable old Christian of pleasant countenance and gentle dignity. This humble Christian shook his confidence in human wisdom, and pointed him to the Hebrew prophets, 'men more ancient than all those who were esteemed philosophers, whose writings and teachings foretold the coming of Christ...' Following the advice of the old gentleman, this zealous Platonist became a believing Christian. He said, "I found this philosophy alone to be safe and profitable.' After conversion, which occurred in early manhood, he devoted himself wholeheartedly to the vindication and spread of the Christian religion."

## THE JEWISH TALMUDS

*Tol'doth Yeshu*. Jesus is referred to as "Ben Pandera."

**Babylonian Talmud. (Giving opinion of the Amorian) writes "...and hanged him on the eve of Passover."**

***Talmud* title referring to Jesus: "Ben Pandera (or 'Ben Pantere')" and "Jeshu ben Pandera." Many scholars say "pandera" is a play on words, a travesty on the Greek word for virgin "parthenos," calling him a "son of a virgin." Joseph Klausner, a Jew, says "the illegitimate birth of Jesus was a current idea among the Jews..."**

**Comments in the *Baraila* are of great historical value:**

**"On the eve of Passover they hanged Yeshu (of Nazareth) and the herald went before him for forty days saying (Yeshu of Nazareth) is going forth to be stoned in that he hath practiced sorcery and beguiled and led astray Israel. Let everyone knowing aught in his defense come and plead for him. But they found naught in his defense and hanged him**

on the eve of Passover" (Babylonia *Sanhedrin* 43a). - "Eve of Passover."

*The Amoa 'Ulla'* ("Ulla" was a disciple of R. Yochanan and lived in Palestine at the end of the third century.) adds:

"And do you suppose that for (Yeshu of Nazareth) there was any right of appeal? He was a beguiler, and the Merciful One hath said: 'Thou shalt not spare neither shalt thou conceal him.' It is otherwise with Yeshu, for he was near to the civil authority."

The Jewish authorities did not deny that Jesus performed signs and miracles (Matthew 9:34; 12:24; Mark 3:22) but they attributed them to acts of sorcery.

"The *Talmud*," writes the Jewish scholar Joseph Klausner, "speaks of hanging in place of crucifixion, since this horrible Roman form of death was only known to Jewish scholars from Roman trials, and not from the Jewish legal system. Even Paul the Apostle (Gal. iii.13) expounds the passage 'for a curse of GOD is that which is hanged' (Deut. xxi.23) as applicable to Jesus."

*Sanhedrin* 43a also makes references to the disciples of Jesus.

*Yeb* IV 3; 49a:

"R. Shimeon ben Azzai said [concerning Jesus]: 'I found a genealogical roll in Jerusalem wherein was recorded, Such-an-one is a bastard of an adulteress.'"

*Klausner* adds to the above:

"Current editions of the *Mishnah* add: 'To support the words of R. Yehoshua' (who, in the same *Mishnah*, says: What is a bastard? Everyone whose parents are liable to death by the Beth Din). That Jesus is here referred to seems to be beyond doubt..."

An early *Baraita*, in which R. Eliezer is the central figure, speaks of Jesus by name. The brackets are within the quote. Eliezer speaking: "He answered, Akiba, you have reminded me! Once I was walking along the upper market (*Tosefta* reads 'street') of Sepphoris and found one [of the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth] and Jacob of Kefar Sekanya (*Tosefta* reads 'Sakkanin') was his name. He said to me, It is written in your Law, 'Thou shalt not bring the hire of a harlot, etc.' What was to be done with it - a latrine for the High Priest? But I answered nothing. He said to me, so [Jesus of Nazareth] taught me (*Tosefta* reads, 'Yeshu ben Pantere'): 'For of the hire of a harlot hath she gathered them, and unto the hire of a harlot shall they return'; from the place of filth they come, and unto the place of filth they shall go. And the saying pleased me, and because of this I was arrested for *Minuth*. And I transgressed against what is written in the Law; 'Keep thy way far from here' - that is *Minuth*; 'and come not night the door of her house' - that is the civil government."

The above brackets are found in *Dikduke Sof'rim* to *Abada Zara* (Munich Manuscript, ed. Rabinovits).



**Klausner, commenting on the above passage, says:**

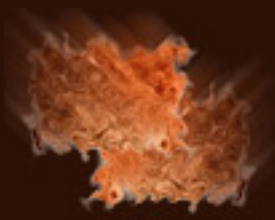
"There can be no doubt that the words, 'one of the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth,' and 'thus Jesus of Nazareth taught me,' are, in the present passage both early in date and fundamental in their bearing on the story; and their primitive character cannot be disputed on the grounds of the slight variations in the parallel passages; their variants ('Yeshu ben Pantere' or "Yeshu ben Pandera,' instead of 'Yeshu of Nazareth') are merely due to the fact that, from an early date, the name 'Pantere,' or 'Pandera,' became widely current among the Jews as the name of the reputed father of Jesus."

#### ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA

The latest edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* uses 20,000 words in describing this person, Jesus. His description took more space than was given to Aristotle, Cicero, Alexander, Julius Caesar, Buddha, Confucius, Mohammed or Napoleon Bonaparte.

Concerning the testimony of the many independent secular accounts of Jesus of Nazareth, it records:

"These independent accounts prove that in ancient times even the opponents of Christianity never doubted the historicity of Jesus, which was disputed for the first time and on inadequate grounds by several authors at the end of the 18th, during the 19th, and at the beginning of the 20th centuries."



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## Chapter 6: Jesus-GOD's Son

### DIRECT CLAIMS

#### Introduction

"Obviously *who* is Christ, is as important as what He did." So we ask who is Christ? What type of person is He?

As *Albert Wells* puts it, "One marvels at the way in which He draws attention to Himself, placing Himself at the center of every situation that arises."

As we see, He certainly does not fit the mold of other religious leaders, writes *Thomas Schultz*:

"Not one *recognized* religious leader, not Moses, Paul, Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius, etc., has ever claimed to be GOD; that is, with the exception of Jesus Christ. Christ is the only religious leader who has ever claimed to be deity and the only individual ever who has convinced a great portion of the world that He is GOD."

How could a "man" make others think He was GOD? We hear first from *F. J. Meldau*:

"His teachings were ultimate, final - above those of Moses and the prophets. He never added any afterthoughts or revisions; He never retracted or changed; He never guessed, 'supposed', or spoke with any uncertainty. This is all so contrary to human teachers and teachings."

Add to this the testimony of *Foster*:

"But the reason overshadowing all others, which led directly to the ignominious execution of the Teacher of Galilee, was His incredible claim that He, a simple carpenter's son among the shavings and sawdust of His father's workshop, was in reality GOD in the flesh!"

One may well say, "Of course Jesus is presented this way in the Bible because it was written by His associates who desired to make an everlasting memorial to Him" However, to disregard all the Bible is not to disregard all the evidence, as we have seen from historical records.

*William Robinson* states: "However, if one takes a historically objective approach to the question, it is found that even secular history affirms that Jesus lived on earth and that He was



worshipped as GOD. He founded a church which has worshipped Him for 1,900 years. He changed the course of the world's history."



## The Trial

Mark 14:16-64

"But He held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, and said unto Him, Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priests rent his clothes, and saith, what need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned Him to be guilty of death" (KJV).

*Judge Gaynor*, the accomplished jurist of the New York bench, in his address upon the trial of Jesus, takes the ground that blasphemy was the one charge made against Him before the Sanhedrin. He says: "It is plain from each of the gospel narratives, that the alleged crime for which Jesus was tried and convicted was blasphemy:...Jesus had been claiming supernatural power, which in a human being was blasphemy" (citing John 10:33). His reference is to Jesus' "making Himself GOD," not to what He said concerning the Temple.

To the questions of the Pharisees, A. T. Robertson says, "Jesus accepts the challenge and admits that He claims to be all three (the Messiah, the Son of Man, the Son of GOD). Ye say (*Humeis legete*), is just a Greek idiom for "Yes" (compare 'I AM' in Mark 14:62 with "Thou hast said' in Matthew 26:64)."

It was to Jesus' reply that the high priests rent his garments. H. B. Swete explains the significance of this: "The law forbade the High Priest to rend his garment in private troubles (Lev. x.6, xxi, 10), but when acting as a judge, he was required by custom to express in this way his horror of any blasphemy uttered in his presence. The relief of the embarrassed judge is manifest. If trustworthy evidence was not forthcoming, the necessity for it had now been superseded: the Prisoner had incriminated Himself."

We begin to see that this is no ordinary trial. Irwin Linton, a lawyer, brings this out when he states:

"Unique among criminal trials is this one in which not the actions but the identity of the accused is the issue. The criminal charge laid against Christ, the confession or testimony or, rather, act in presence of the court, on which He was convicted, the interrogation by the Roman governor and the inscription and proclamation on His cross at the time of execution all are concerned with the one question of Christ's real identity and dignity. 'What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?'"

In this same regard we hear from the one-time skeptic, Frank Morison, "Jesus of Nazareth was condemned to death, not upon the statements of His accusers, but upon an admission extorted

from Him under oath."

Also from Hilarin Felder (*Christ and the Critics*) we hear, "This inspection of the trial of Jesus should be sufficient to give us the invincible conviction that the Saviour confessed His true divinity before His judges."

Simon Greenleaf, a one-time professor at the Harvard School of Law, and himself a great lawyer, said regarding Jesus' trial:

"It is not easy to perceive on what ground His conduct could have been defended before any tribunal unless upon that of His superhuman character. No lawyer, it is conceived, would think of placing His defense upon any other basis."

Even though Jesus' answers to His judges take different form in each of the Synoptics, we see, as Morison tells us, that they all are equal in meaning:

"...These answers are really identical. The formulae 'Thou has said' or 'Ye say that I am,' which to modern ears sound evasive, had no such connotation to the contemporary Jewish mind. 'Thou sayest' was the traditional form in which a cultivated Jew replied to a question of grave or sad import. Courtesy forbade a direct 'yes' or 'no'."

To be certain that Jesus made these implications from His answers, C. G. Montefiore analyzes His statement which follows His profession of deity: "The two expressions 'Son of Man' (frequently on his lips) and 'at the right hand of power'...(a peculiar Hebrew expression for the Deity) show that the answer is perfectly in accord with Jesus' spirit and manner of speech."

It is perfectly clear then that this is the testimony that Jesus wanted to bear of Himself. We also see that the Jews must have understood His reply as a claim to His being GOD. There were two alternatives to be faced then; that His assertions were pure blasphemy or that He was GOD. His judges had to see the issue clearly - so clearly, in fact, that they crucified Him and then taunted Him because, "He trusted in GOD...for He said, 'I am the Son of GOD'" (Matthew 27:43).

Thus, we see that Jesus was crucified for being who He really was, for being the Son of GOD. An analysis of His testimony will bear this out. His testimony affirmed that:

1. He was the Son of the Blessed.
2. He was the one who would sit at the right hand of power.
3. He was the Son of Man who would come on the clouds of heaven.

William Childs Robinson then concludes from this that "each of these [three] affirmations is distinctly Messianic. Their cumulative Messianic effect is 'stunningly significant.'"

Herschel Hobbs then goes on to reiterate:

"The Sanhedrin caught all three points. They summed them up in one question. 'Art thou then the Son of GOD?' Their question invited an affirmative answer. It was the equivalent of a declarative statement on their part. So Jesus simply replied, 'Ye say that I am.' Therefore, He

made them admit to His identity before they formally found Him guilty of death. It was a clever strategy on Jesus' part. He would die not merely upon His own admission to deity but also upon theirs.

"According to them there was need for no other testimony. For they had heard Him themselves. So they condemned Him by the words 'of his own mouth.' But He also condemned them by their words. They could not say that they did not proclaim the Son of GOD guilty of death."

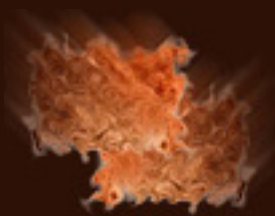
Robert Anderson says:

"But no confirmatory evidence is more convincing than that of hostile witnesses, and the fact that the LORD laid claim to Deity is incontestably established by the action of His enemies. We must remember that the Jews were not a tribe of ignorant savages, but a highly cultured and intensely religious people; and it was upon this very charge that, without a dissentient voice, His death was decreed by the Sanhedrin - their great national Council, composed of the most eminent of their religious leaders, including men of the type of Gamaliel and his great pupil, Saul of Tarsus."

From Hilarin Felder we have this statement which brings more light on the judgment the Pharisees actually impose on themselves:

"But since they condemn the Saviour as a blasphemer by reason of his own confession, the judges prove officially and on oath that Jesus confessed not only that he was the theocratical Messiah-King and human son of GOD, but also that he was the divine Messiah and the essential Son of GOD, and that He on account of this confession was put to death."

As a result of our study, we may then safely conclude that Jesus claimed deity for Himself in a way that all could recognize. These claims were regarded as blasphemous by the religious leaders and resulted in His crucifixion because "He made Himself out to be the Son of GOD" (John 19:7).



## Other Claims

### EQUALITY WITH THE FATHER

John 10:20-33. Did Jesus claim to be GOD in other parts of the narratives? The Jews said He did, as we see in this passage:

"I and My Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from My Father; for which of those works do ye



stone Me? The Jews answered Him, saying, For a good work we stone Thee not; but for blasphemy; and because Thou, being a man, makest Thyself GOD" (KJV).

An interesting and strengthening implication arises when the Greek wording is studied. From A. T. Robertson we find:

"One (*hen*). Neuter, no masculine (*heis*). Not one person (cf. *heis* in Gal. 3:28), but one essence or nature."

Robertson then adds:

"This crisp statement is the climax of Christ's claims concerning the relation between the Father and Himself (the Son). They stir the Pharisees to uncontrollable anger."

It is very evident then that in the minds of those who heard this statement, there was no doubt that Jesus claimed before them that He was GOD. Thus:

"The Jews could regard Jesus' word only as blasphemy, and they proceeded to take the judgment into their own hands. It was laid down in the Law that blasphemy was to be punished by stoning (Lev. 24:16). But these men were not allowing the due processes of law to take their course. They were not preparing an indictment so that the authorities could take the requisite action. In their fury they were preparing to be judges and executioners in one. 'Again' will refer back to their previous attempt at stoning (John 8:59)."

Their reply rejects any chance that Jesus is threatened with stoning for His good works. Rather, it is the "blasphemy". They definitely understood His teaching but, one may ask, did they stop to consider whether His claims were true or not?

John 5:17,18

"But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that GOD was His Father, making Himself equal with GOD" (KJV).

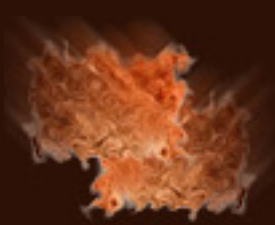
A word study from A. T. Robertson's *Word Pictures of the New Testament* gives some interesting insights:

"Jesus distinctly says, 'My Father' (*ho pater mou*). Not 'our Father,' claim to peculiar relation to the Father. Worketh even until now (*heos arti ergazetai*)...Jesus put himself on a par with GOD's activity and thus justifies his healing on the Sabbath."

It is also worthy of note that the Jews did not refer to GOD as "My Father". If they did, they would qualify the statement with "in heaven." However, this Jesus did not do. He made a claim that the Jews could not misinterpret when He called GOD "My Father".

Jesus also implies that while GOD is working, He, the Son, is working, too. Again, the Jews

understood the implication that He was GOD's Son. Resulting from this statement, the Jews' hatred has grown. Even though they are seeking, mainly, to persecute Him, they are growing in their desire to kill Him.



## "I AM"

John 8:58: "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was I am" (KJV).

"He said unto them, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you...' Prefaced by a double Amen - the strongest oath - our LORD claims the incommunicable name of the Divine Being. The Jews recognize His meaning, and, horrified, they seek to stone Him.

How did the Jews receive this statement? As Henry Alford tells us, "...All unbiased exegesis of these words must recognize in them a declaration of the essential pre-existence of Christ."

Marvin Vincent in his *Word Studies of the New Testament* writes that Jesus' statement is "the formula for *absolute*, timeless 'I AM' (*eimi*)."

By relying on Old Testament references, we can find out the significance of I AM. A. G. Campbell makes this inference for us:

"From such Old Testament references as Ex. 3:14, Deuteronomy 32:39 and Isaiah 43:10 it is clear that this is no new idea which Jesus is presenting. The Jews were quite familiar with the idea that the Jehovah of the Old Testament is the eternally existent One. That which is new to the Jews is the identification of this designation with Jesus."

From the reactions of the surrounding Jews we have proof that they understood His reference as a claim to absolute deity. Their insights prompted them to set about to fulfill the Mosaic law for blasphemy by stoning Jesus (Leviticus 24:13-16).

Campbell speaks on the above point for the non-Jew:

"That we must also understand the expression 'I am' (*eimi*) as intended to declare the full deity of Christ is clear from the fact that Jesus did not attempt an explanation. He did not try to convince the Jews that they had misunderstood Him, but rather He repeated the statement several times on various occasions."

## JESUS IS DUE THE SAME HONOR AS THAT GIVEN TO GOD

John 5:23,24

"That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (KJV).

In the last part of this verse Jesus thrusts a warning at those who accuse Him of blasphemy. He tells them that by hurling abuse at Him, they are actually hurling it at GOD and that it is GOD who is outraged by their treatment of Jesus.

We also see that Jesus claims the right to be worshipped as GOD. And from this it follows, as previously stated, that to dishonor Jesus is to dishonor GOD.

Wordsworth (cited by J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels*) remarks, "They who profess zeal for GOD do not honour Him aright, unless they honour the Son as they honour the Father."

## TO KNOW ME

John 8:19

"Then said they unto Him, Where is Thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know Me, nor My Father: if ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also" (KJV).

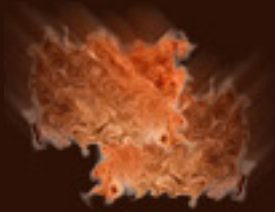


## BELIEVE IN ME

John 14:1

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in GOD, believe also in Me" (KJV). Merrill Tenney explains:

"He was doomed to death, the death that overtakes all men. Nevertheless, He had the audacity to demand that they make Him an object of faith. He made Himself the key to the question of destiny, and clearly stated that their future depended on His work. He promised to prepare a place for them, and to return to claim them."



## HE WHO HAS SEEN ME...

John 14:9

"Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hat seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?" (KJV).



## I SAY UNTO YOU...

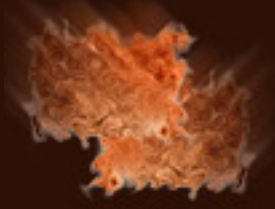
Matthew 5:20,22,26,28, etc.

In this Scripture we find Jesus teaching and speaking in His own name. By doing so, He elevated the authority of His words directly to heaven. Instead of repeating the prophets by saying, "Thus saith the LORD," Jesus repeated, "Verily, verily, I say unto you."

As Karl Scheffrahn and Henry Kreysler tell us:

"He never hesitated nor apologized. He had no need to contradict, withdraw or modify anything he said. He spoke the unequivocal words of GOD (John 3:34). He said, 'Heaven and earth will

pass away, but My Words will not pass away" (Mark 13:31).



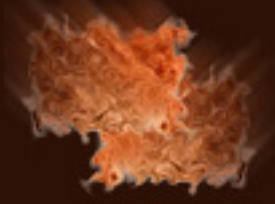
**He asked for and accepted worship as GOD.**

WORSHIP RESERVED FOR GOD ONLY

To fall down in homage is the greatest act of adoration and worship which can be performed for GOD (John 4:20-22; Acts 8:27).

Adoration in spirit and truth (John 4:24).

"Thou shalt worship the LORD thy GOD" (Matthew 4:10; Luke 4:8).



JESUS RECEIVED WORSHIP AS GOD AND ACCEPTED IT

"There came a leper and worshipped Him..." (Matthew 8:2).

The man born blind, after being healed, "falls down and worships Him" (John 9:35-39).

The disciples "worshipped Him, saying: 'Indeed Thou art the Son of GOD'" (Matthew 14:33).

"Then He said to Thomas, 'Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing.'

"Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My LORD and my GOD!'

"Jesus said to him, 'Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed'" (John 20:27-29).

## JESUS CONTRASTED WITH OTHERS

The centurion Cornelius falls at the feet of Peter and "adores him," and Peter reproves him saying, "Stand up; I myself also am a man" (Acts 10:25,26, KJV).

Before the angel of the Apocalypse, John fell at this feet to "adore him," and the angel told him that he was a "fellow servant" and that John was to "adore GOD" (Revelation 19:10).

As we see, Jesus commanded and accepted worship as GOD. It was this fact that led Thiessen to write: "If He is a deceiver, or is self-deceived, and, in either case, if He is not GOD He is not good (*Christus si non Deus, non bonus*)." [Thiessen, *Outline of Lectures in Systematic Theology*. p. 65]

## What Others Said

PAUL

Philippians 2:9-11

"Wherefore GOD also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of GOD the Father" (KJV).

Titus 2:13

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great GOD and our Saviour Jesus Christ..." (KJV).

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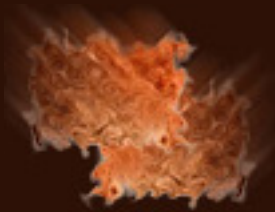
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## JOHN THE BAPTIST

"And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art My beloved Son; in Three I am well pleased" (Luke 3:22, KJV).



## PETER

Probably Peter's most famous affirmation is found in Matthew 16:15-17: "He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living GOD. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven" (KJV).

Of this, Scheffrahn and Kreysler write that "instead of rebuking for his brashness (as Jesus always did when confronted by error), Jesus blesses Peter for his confession of faith. Throughout His ministry Jesus accepted prayers and worship as rightfully belonging to Himself."

Peter again affirms his belief in Acts 2:36:

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that GOD hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both LORD and Christ" (KJV).



## THOMAS

"The Doubter" bears the following witness found in John 20:28: "And Thomas answered and said unto Him, 'My LORD and my GOD'" (KJV).

John Stott in *Basic Christianity* expounds on Thomas' exclamation:

"The Sunday following Easter Day, incredulous Thomas is with the other disciples in the upper room when Jesus appears. He invites Thomas to feel His wounds, and Thomas, overwhelmed with wonder, cries out, 'My LORD and my GOD!' (John 20:26-29). Jesus accepts the designation. He rebukes Thomas for his unbelief, but not for his worship."

## FROM THE WRITER OF HEBREWS

Hebrews 1:8

"But unto the Son he saith, 'Thy throne, O GOD, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom' (KJV).

Thomas Schultz writes that "the vocative...in 'thy throne, O GOD' is preferred to the nominative where it would be translated 'GOD is thy throne' or 'thy throne is GOD.' Once again the evidence is conclusive - Jesus Christ is called GOD in Scriptures."

## STEPHEN

Acts 7:59

"And they stoned Stephen, calling upon GOD, and saying, LORD Jesus, receive my spirit" (KJV).

Stephen here precisely asks of Jesus what Jesus had asked of GOD while He was on the cross. Stephen thereby ascribes to Jesus the qualities of deity.

## Conclusion

William Biederwolf draws a very apt conclusion from the evidence. That is:

"A man who can read the New Testament and not see that Christ claims to be more than a man, can look all over the sky at high noon on a cloudless day and not see the sun".

We quote the words of the "Beloved Apostle" John:

"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of GOD; and that believing ye might have life through His name" (John 20:30,31, KJV).



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## Chapter 7: The Trilemma - LORD, Liar or Lunatic?

### THE QUESTION: WHO IS JESUS OF NAZARETH?

Jesus considered *who* men believed Him to be of fundamental importance. C. S. Lewis, who was a professor at Cambridge University and once an agnostic, wrote: "I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be GOD.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic - on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg - or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of GOD: or else a madman or something worse."

C. S. Lewis adds: "You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him LORD and GOD. But let us not come up with any patronising nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

F. J. A. Hort has written: "His words were so completely parts and utterances of Himself, that they had no meaning as abstract statements of truth uttered by Him as a Divine oracle or prophet. Take away Himself as the primary (though not the ultimate) subject of every statement and they all fall to pieces."

In the words of Kenneth Scott Latourette, the great historian of Christianity at Yale University: "It is not His teachings which make Jesus so remarkable, although these would be enough to give Him distinction. It is a combination of the teachings with the man Himself. The two cannot be separated..."

"It must be obvious to any thoughtful reader of the Gospel records that Jesus regarded Himself and His message as inseparable. He was a great teacher, but He was more. His teachings about the kingdom of GOD, about human conduct, and about GOD were important, but they could not be divorced from Him without, from His standpoint, being vitiated."

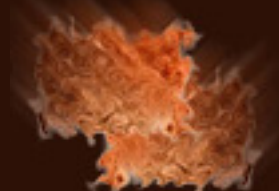
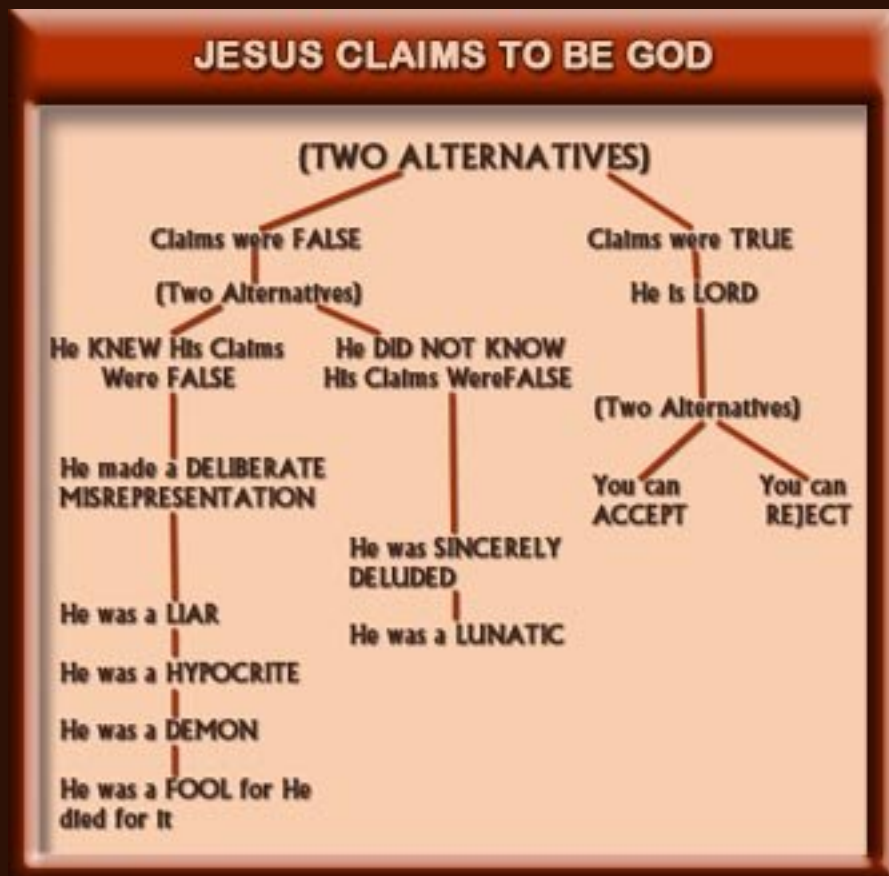
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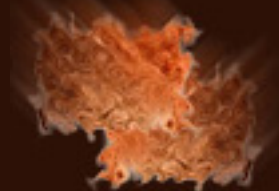
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### IS JESUS CHRIST GOD?

Jesus claimed to be GOD. He did not leave any other options. His claim to be GOD must be either true or false. If Jesus' claims are true, then He is the LORD, and we must either accept or reject His lordship. We are "without excuse."

First, consider that His claim to be GOD was false. If it was false then we have two and only two alternatives. He either knew it was false or He did not know it was false. We will consider each one separately and examine the evidence.



### WAS HE A LIAR?

If, when Jesus made His claims He knew that He was not GOD, then He was lying. But, if He was a liar, then He was also a hypocrite because He told others to be honest, whatever the cost, while Himself teaching and living a colossal lie.

And, more than that, He was a demon, because He told others to trust Him for their eternal destiny. If He could not back up His claims and knew it, then He was unspeakable evil.

Last, He would also be a fool, because it was His claims to being GOD that led to His crucifixion.

Mark 14:61-64

"But He kept silent, and made no answer. Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, 'Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed *One*?'

"And Jesus said, 'I am; and you shall see the SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.'

"And tearing his clothes, the high priest said, 'What further need do we have of witnesses?

" 'You have heard the blasphemy; how does it seem to you?' And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death."

John 19:7

"The Jews answered him, 'We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself out *to be* the Son of GOD.' "

J. S. Mill, the philosopher, skeptic and antagonist of Christianity, wrote: "About the life and sayings of Jesus there is a stamp of personal originality combined with profundity of insight in the very first rank of men of sublime genius of whom our species can boast. When this pre-eminent genius is combined with the qualities of probably the greatest moral reformer and martyr to that mission who ever existed upon earth, religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching upon this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor even now would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete than to endeavour to live so that Christ would approve of our life."

William Lecky, one of Great Britain's most noted historians and a dedicated opponent of organized Christianity, in *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne* wrote: "It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character which through all the changes of eighteen centuries has inspired the hearts of men with an impassioned love; has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments and conditions; has been not only the highest pattern of virtue, but the strongest incentive to its practice...The simple record of these three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhortations of moralists."

Philip Schaff, the Christian historian, said: "This testimony, if not true, must be downright blasphemy or madness. The former hypothesis cannot stand a moment before the moral purity and dignity of Jesus, revealed in His every word and work, and acknowledged by universal



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consent. Self-deception in a matter so momentous, and with an intellect in all respects so clear and so sound, is equally out of the question. How could He be an enthusiast or a madman who never lost the even balance of His mind, who sailed serenely over all the troubles and persecutions, a the sun above the clouds, who always returned the wisest answer to tempting questions, who calmly and deliberately predicted His death on the cross, His resurrection on the third day, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the founding of His Church, the destruction of Jerusalem - predictions which have been literally fulfilled? A character so original, so complete, so uniformly consistent, so perfect, so human and yet so high above all human greatness, can be neither a fraud nor a fiction. The poet, as has been well said, would in this case be greater than the hero. It would take more than a Jesus to invent a Jesus."

Elsewhere Schaff (*The Person of Christ*) gives very convicting evidence: "The hypothesis of imposture is so revolting to moral as well as common sense, that its mere statement is its condemnation. It was invented by the Jews who crucified the LORD to cover their crime, but has never been seriously carried out, and no scholar of any decency and self-respect would now dare to profess it openly. How, in the name of logic, common sense, and experience, could an impostor - that is a deceitful, selfish, depraved man - have invented, and consistently maintained from the beginning to end, the purest and noblest character known in history with the most perfect air of truth and reality? How could he have conceived and successfully carried out a plan of unparalleled beneficence, moral magnitude, and sublimity, and sacrificed his own life for it, in the face of the strongest prejudices of his people and ages?"

Someone who lived as Jesus lived, taught as Jesus taught and died as Jesus died could not have been a liar. What other alternatives are there?

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## LUNATIC?

If it is conceivable for Jesus to be a liar, then could not He actually have thought Himself to be GOD, but been mistaken? After all, it is possible to be both sincere and wrong.

But we must remember that for someone to think that He is GOD, especially in a culture that is fiercely monotheistic, and then to tell others that their eternal destiny depends on believing in Him is no slight flight of fantasy but the thoughts of a lunatic in the fullest sense. Was Jesus Christ such a person?

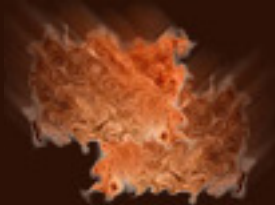
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C. S. Lewis has written: "The historical difficulty of giving for the life, saying and influence of Jesus any explanation that is not harder than the Christian explanation is very great. The discrepancy between the depth and sanity of His moral teaching and the rampant megalomania which must lie behind His theological teaching unless He is indeed GOD has never been satisfactorily explained. Hence the non-Christian hypotheses succeed one another with the restless fertility of bewilderment."

Napoleon (cited by *Vernon C. Grounds, The Reason for Our Hope*) said: "I know men; and I tell you that Jesus Christ is not a man. Superficial minds see a resemblance between Christ and the founders of empires, and the gods of other religions. That resemblance does not exist. There is between Christianity and whatever other religions the distance of infinity...Everything in Christ astonishes me. His spirit overawes me, and His will confounds me. Between Him and whoever else in the world, there is no possible term of comparison. He is truly a being by Himself. His ideas and sentiments, the truth which He announces, His manner of convincing, are not explained either by human organization or by the nature of things...The nearer I approach, the more carefully I examine, everything is above me - everything remains grand, of a grandeur which overpowers. His religion is a revelation from an intelligence which certainly is not that of man...One can absolutely find nowhere, but in Him alone, the imitation or the example of His life...I search in vain in history to find the similar to Jesus Christ, or anything which can approach the gospel. Neither history, nor humanity, nor the ages, nor nature, offer me anything with which I am able to compare it or to explain it. Here everything is extraordinary."

Even Channing, the Unitarian writer, speaking of the lunatic theory (cited by P. Schaff) said: "The charge of an extravagant, self-deluding enthusiasm is the last to be fastened on Jesus. Where can we find the traces of it in His history? Do we detect them in the calm authority of His precepts? In the mild, practical and beneficent spirit of His religion; in the unlabored simplicity of the language with which He unfolds His high powers and the sublime truths of religion; or in the good sense, the knowledge of human nature, which He always discovers in His estimate and treatment of the different classes of men with whom He acted? Do we discover this enthusiasm in the singular fact, that whilst He claimed power in the future world, and always turned men's minds to heaven, He never indulged His own imagination, or stimulated that of His disciples, by giving vivid pictures or any minute description of that unseen state? The truth is, that, remarkable as was the character of Jesus, it was distinguished by nothing more than by calmness and self-possession. This trait pervades His other excellences. How calm was His piety! Point me, if you can, to one vehement, passionate expression of His religious feelings. Does the LORD's Prayer breathe a feverish enthusiasm?...His benevolence, too, though singularly earnest and deep, was composed and serene. He never lost the possession of Himself in His sympathy with others; was never hurried into the impatient and rash enterprises of an enthusiastic philanthropy; but did good with the tranquility and constancy which mark the providence of GOD."

Philip Schaff, the historian, wrote: "Is such an intellect - clear as the sky, bracing as the mountain air, sharp and penetrating as a sword, thoroughly healthy and vigorous, always ready and always self-possessed - liable to a radical and most serious delusion concerning His own character and mission? Preposterous imagination!"

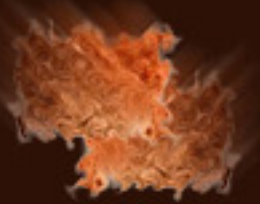


**LORD!!**



Who you decide Jesus Christ is must not be an idle intellectual exercise. You cannot put Him on the shelf as a great moral teacher. That is not a valid option. He is either a liar, a lunatic or the LORD. You must make a choice. "But," as the apostle John wrote, "these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of GOD"; and more important, "that believing you may have life in His Name" (John 20:31).

The evidence is clearly in favor of Jesus as LORD. However, some people reject the clear evidence because of moral implications involved. There needs to be a moral honesty in the above consideration of Jesus as either a liar, lunatic or LORD and GOD.



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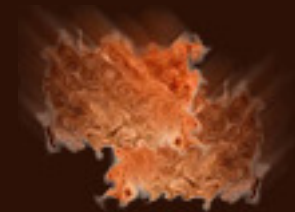
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## Chapter 8 p.1: The Great Proposition

### INTRODUCTION

"If GOD became man THEN what would He be like?" Or "Did Jesus possess the attributes of GOD? To begin to answer this question we must first answer another question, namely, why would GOD become man? We will use an ant illustration. Imagine you are watching a farmer plow a field. You notice an ant hill will be plowed under by the farmer on his next time around. Because you are an ant lover, you run to the ant hill to warn them. First you shout to them the impending danger, but they continue with their work. You then try sign language and finally resort to everything you can think of, but nothing works. Why? Because you are not communicating with them. What is the best way to communicate with them? Only by becoming an ant can you communicate with them so they will understand.

Now, if GOD wanted to communicate with us, what would be the best way? We see that in order for Him to communicate with us, He could best do so by becoming a man and thus, reach us directly.

We can begin to answer our primary question now. If GOD did become man, who or what would He be like? He would possess the attributes of GOD, He would have an unusual entrance into this world, He would perform feats of the supernatural, He would be sinless; a lasting and universal impression would be left by Him and many more things. It is my feeling that GOD came to earth in the person of Jesus Christ, and in Jesus we see manifest the attributes of GOD and the characteristics that would accompany a GOD-man.

This section will encompass the philosophical argument, "If...then." I first read of this applied to Christ in Bernard Ramm's Book, *Protestant Christian Evidences*, Chapter 6, "The Verification of Christianity by the Supernatural Character of its Founder."

The following is an outline designed to aid you in effectively using this material.

IF GOD BECAME MAN, THEN WE WOULD EXPECT HIM TO:

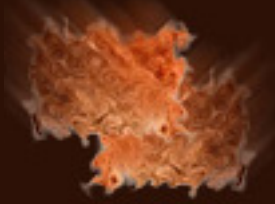
1. Have an unusual entrance into life.
2. Be without sin.
3. Manifest the supernatural in the form of miracles.
4. Have an acute sense of difference from other men.
5. Speak the greatest words ever spoken.

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6. Have a lasting and universal influence.
7. Satisfy the spiritual hunger in man.
8. Exercise power over death.

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## Testimony Concerning the Virgin Birth

The main body of testimony concerning the virgin birth occurs in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Thus, a study of their reliability and their agreement is very important in considering the miraculous birth of Jesus.

### THE CONCEPT

The concept of the virgin birth of Jesus must concur with the prescribed mode of entrance granted the Messiah in the Old Testament.

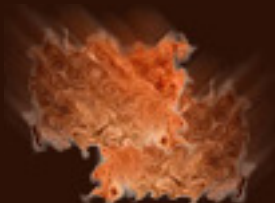
The first prophecy concerning Christ's coming is in Genesis 3:15. In this verse GOD says that the seed of woman shall crush the head of the serpent. Thus, the Deliverer would come of the woman's seed, not of man's seed as is biologically accepted.

A clearer prophecy occurs in Isaiah 7:14 which states that "...a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (KJV). This is very specific in that the reference is to a virgin. This, most logically, refers to the woman in Genesis 3:15.

Henry Morris writes: "Although its exact meaning has been debated, its usage is always consistent with the meaning 'virgin,' and in some cases this is the only possible meaning. The scholars who translated the Old Testament into the Greek Septuagint version used the standard Greek word for 'virgin' in translating Isaiah 7:14. So did Matthew when he quoted this prophecy (Matt. 1:23) as being fulfilled in the virgin birth of Christ."

Also, in Isaiah 7:14, the birth is said to be a "sign" from the "LORD Himself." This is certainly unique in that this could be no ordinary birth. Thus, we can see that the doctrine of the virgin birth presented in the Gospel is in accord with earlier Scripture teachings.

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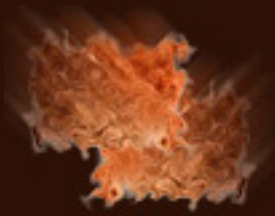


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## RELIABILITY

The reliability of the Gospel accounts should also be based on their historical accuracy.

This historicity of the Gospel accounts is attested to by the time at which each writer places the events of Jesus' birth and the events themselves. There are alleged discrepancies in Luke's account of the birth dealing with the census ordered by Quirinius. It was at first believed that Quirinius was governor only in 8 AD. Thus, this would have put him and his census after the birth of Christ and also Herod's death. However, some now believe that Quirinius served two terms of office, the first of these being 10-7 BC, which would put his first census at the time, roughly, of Christ's birth shortly before Herod's death in 4 BC.



## AGREEMENT IN TESTIMONIES

For something to be true, those who are bearing witness of it must agree in their testimonies. In regard to the accounts in Matthew and Luke, Orr states that although they are told from different points of view and originate from different sources, they agree on one central fact, "that Jesus, conceived by the Holy Ghost, was born of Mary, a Virgin betrothed to Joseph, with his full knowledge of the cause..."

### Agreement versus discrepancy of the narratives

"The critics speak of the discrepancies of the narratives. Much more remarkable, it seems to me, are their agreements, and the subtle harmonies that pervade them. The agreements, if we study them carefully, prove to be far more numerous than may at first strike us. Here, e.g., is a list of 12 points, which lie really on the surface of the narratives, yet give very clearly the gist of the whole story.

1. Jesus was born in the last days of Herod (Matt. 2:1,13; Luke 1:5).
2. He was conceived by the Holy Ghost (Matt. 1:18,20; Luke 1:35).
3. His mother was a virgin (Matt. 1:18,20,23; Luke 1:27,34).
4. She was betrothed to Joseph (Matt. 1:18; Luke 1:27; 2:5).
5. Joseph was of the house and lineage of David (Matt. 1:16,20; Luke 1:27; 2:4).
6. Jesus was born at Bethlehem (Matt. 2:1; Luke 2:4,6).
7. By divine direction He was called Jesus (Matt. 1:21; Luke 1:31).
8. He was declared to be a Savior (Matt. 1:21; Luke 2:11).
9. Joseph knew beforehand of Mary's condition and its cause (Matt. 1:18-20; Luke 2:5).
10. Nevertheless, he took Mary as wife and assumed full paternal responsibilities for her child (Matt. 1:20,24,25; Luke 2:5ff.).
11. The annunciation and birth were attended by revelations and visions (Matt. 1:20, etc.; Luke 1:26,27, etc.).

12. After the birth of Jesus, Joseph and Mary dwelt in Nazareth (Matt. 2:23; Luke 2:39)."

One apparent discrepancy in the accounts involves the family lineage of Jesus. There are two genealogies of Christ given in the Bible. Upon examination they appear to contradict. However, the one listed in Matthew is that of Joseph and the one in Luke is that of Mary. Since Joseph was descended from Jechonias, Jesus could not rightly claim the throne (see Jeremiah 22:30; Coniah, Jechonias, II Kings 24, and Jechonias in Matthew 1:11 are the same person). However, the lineage of Mary does not include Jechonias, and since Joseph did not father Jesus, He had claim to the throne as "the seed" of the woman, Mary (Luke 3:23).

**The Witness of Mark, John and Paul:**

An argument often used by critics is that there is no reference in the New Testament to the virgin birth except in Matthew and Luke. Therefore, it is often concluded that the doctrine was not vital to the message of the New Testament church.

William Childs Robinson, the emeritus professor of historical theology at Columbia Theological Seminary, points out that "what is explicit in Matthew and Luke is implicit in Paul and John."

Robert Gromacki writes that "it is not tenable to argue from silence to disbelief or from silence to an ignorance of the doctrine. The apostles did not record everything that they taught or knew (cf. John 20:30). In fact, the so-called silence argument of the liberal can boomerang on him. Since Paul did not mention any human father for the person Jesus, does that mean that he believed that Jesus had no human father? Most regard silence as assent. If Paul and the others did not believe in the virgin birth, should they not have corrected the earlier birth narratives? The argument of silence can be used both ways. Actually, no confession or denial should ever be based upon the argument from silence."

It can also be argued that "...while it is true that it appears at the beginning of both the first and third Gospels, it is absent from that of St. Mark, or, as it is commonly put, St. Mark 'knows nothing about it,' though his was the first to be written and was used by the other two. St. Mark's Gospel, we have it on good authority, was his account of what he had heard St. Peter preach. He was his 'interpreter.' It represents what St. Peter found useful or necessary in preaching in public, just as St. Paul preached on the Areopagus at Athens, or at Jerusalem, Antioch, and Rome.

"Now, for obvious reasons, the question of our LORD's birth would not have been a subject to be discussed on such occasions, especially so long as His Mother was still alive, and was, possible, personally known to those listening. The main appeal was to be teaching that Christ gave, the signs that He had wrought, and, above all, as we see from the place it occupies, the events of His Passion."

It is possible that the fourth writer infers a miraculous birth to Jesus by his use of the word "begotten" in John 3:16.

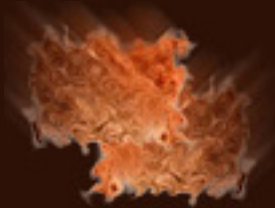
As John R. Rice states: "Jesus repeatedly referred to Himself as GOD's 'only begotten Son.'" Now the word 'begat' is a word of human genealogies, a term referring to the male part in



procreating or generating a child. It refers to the physical birth. Jesus insisted that He was not begotten of Joseph but was begotten of GOD. The same word, *monogenes*, is used six times in the New Testament about Jesus as the only-begotten of GOD, and twice Jesus Himself used it about Himself! Note that Jesus does not claim to be simply one who is begotten of GOD. Rather, He claims to be the only one ever born who was so begotten. He is the *only* begotten Son of GOD. No one else was ever born of a virgin. In a spiritual sense, it may be said that Christians are 'begotten...again unto a lively hope' (I Peter 1:3), but in the sense in which Jesus was begotten of GOD, no one else ever was. Clearly Jesus was claiming the He was physically begotten of GOD and not by any human father."

The apostle John's genealogy is essentially "in the beginning," and therefore doesn't deal with the virgin birth. "In the beginning was the Word...and the Word became flesh" (John 1:1,14).

Likewise in regard to Paul: "St. Paul knew St. Luke quite well. He was his companion for a long time in his travels, and was with him at Rome, and St. Luke is our chief authority for the story of our LORD's birth. St. Paul must have known it, and it is quite natural that, knowing it, he should have spoken of our LORD as he does when he says: 'GOD sent forth His Son born of a woman.' " Clement F. Rogers



## Historical Evidence Surrounding the Virgin Birth Other Than the Gospel Accounts

### TIME

An important consideration concerning the Gospel accounts is the time they were written. Due to the early dating of the Gospel writings, no adequate time was left for the growth of a myth surrounding the birth of Christ. Thus, we should see evidence of the teaching of the virgin birth in the early church. In relation to this are two questions:

How did the concept of a virgin birth arise so soon if it was not based on fact?

If the Gospels were not historical, how were they accepted so universally at such an early date?

In regard to the early church belief in the virgin birth, Gresham Machen writes:

"Even...if there were not a word about the subject in the New Testament, the second-century testimony would show that the belief in the virgin birth must have arisen, to say the least, well before the first century was over."

In the very early days of the church, there was a group called the Ebionites. They objected to the church's use of the passage in Isaiah concerning the virgin bearing a son (Isaiah 7:14). They

said that the verse should be translated "a young woman." The important point is that the church believed in the virgin birth.

To this thought James Orr writes:

"...Apart from the Ebionites...and a few Gnostic sects, no body of Christians in early times is known to have existed who did not accept as part of their faith the birth of Jesus from the Virgin Mary; while...we have the amplest evidence that *this belief was part of the general faith of the Church.*"

In Speaking of the early church, Aristides says, "Everything that we know of the dogmatics of the early part of the second century agrees with the belief that at that period the virginity of Mary was a part of the formulated Christian belief."



#### WITNESS OF EARLY CHURCH FATHERS

Very important in the history of the early church's belief in the virgin birth is the testimony of its early fathers. In 110 AD, Ignatius wrote in his *Epistle to the Ephesians*, "For our GOD Jesus Christ was...conceived in the womb of Mary...by the Holy Ghost."

"Now the virginity of Mary, and He who was born of her...are the mysteries most spoken of throughout the world, yet done in secret by GOD." Ignatius received his information from his teacher, John the apostle.

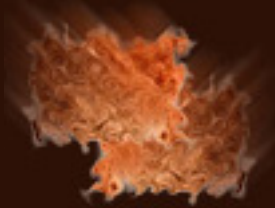
"We have further evidence," writes Clement F. Rogers, "which shows that the belief of Christians in the Virgin Birth was attacked by those outside. Cerinthus, for example, was the contemporary and opponent of St. John. It was said that the Evangelist, meeting him in the public baths, cried out, 'Let us flee lest the bath fall in while Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is here.' He [Cerinthus] taught, Irenaeus tells us, that our LORD was born of Joseph and Mary like other men."

Another of the post-apostolic writers, Aristides in 125 AD, speaks of the virgin birth: "He is Himself Son of GOD on high, who was manifested of the Holy Spirit, came down from heaven, and being born of a Hebrew virgin took on His flesh from the virgin...He it is who was according to the flesh born of the race of Hebrews, by the GOD-bearing virgin Miriam."

Justin Martyr in 150 gives ample evidence to the concept of Jesus' miraculous birth. "...Our Teacher Jesus Christ, who is the first-begotten of GOD the Father, was not born as a result of sexual relations...the power of GOD descending upon the virgin overshadowed her, and caused her, while still a virgin, to conceive...For, by GOD's power He was conceived by a virgin...in

accordance with the will of GOD, Jesus Christ, His Son, has been born of the Virgin Mary." (Apology 1:21-33; Dialogue with Trypho the Jew)

"The first great Latin-speaking Christian was the converted lawyer Tertullian. He tells us that not only there was in his days (ca AD 200) a definite Christian creed on which all churches agree, but he also tells us, its technical name was a *tessera*. Now things only get technical names when they have been established for some time. He quotes this creed four times. It includes the words '*ex virgine Maria*' (of the Virgin Mary)."



## THE EARLY JEWISH WITNESS

As should be expected, there are negative arguments concerning the virgin birth also. These were brought forth by the Jews. Our purpose here is to show that in the very early days of the church there was outside controversy concerning the birth of Jesus, and that for this controversy to have originated, the church must have been teaching Christ's miraculous birth.

Ethelbert Stauffer says that,

"In a genealogical table dating from before AD 70 Jesus is listed as 'the bastard of a wedded wife.' Evidently the Evangelist Matthew was familiar with such lists and was warring against them. Later rabbis bluntly called Jesus the son of an adulteress. They also claimed to know precisely the 'unknown father's name: "Panthera.' In old rabbinical texts we find frequent mention of Jesus ben Panthera, and the eclectic Platonist Celsus around 160 details all sorts of gossipy anecdotes about Mary and the legionary Panthera."

In the *Toldoth Jeschu*, the Jewish history of Christ, it is taught that Jesus is of "illegitimate origin, through the union of his mother with a soldier named Panthera."

Hugh Schonfield, the Jewish skeptic, relates: "R. Shimeon ben Azzai said: 'I found a genealogical scroll in Jerusalem, and therein was written, 'so-and-so, bastard son of an adulteress.' "

R. Shimeon lived at the end of the first and beginning of the second century AD. According to Schonfield, this document must have been in existence at the time of the capture of Jerusalem in 70 AD. In the older Jewish records, Jesus' name is represented by "so and so."

Schonfield then goes on to say that "there would be no object in making it unless the Christian original (genealogy) made some claim that the birth of Jesus was not normal."

Due to the reference of R. Shimeon, Schonfield says that the charge against Jesus "that he was

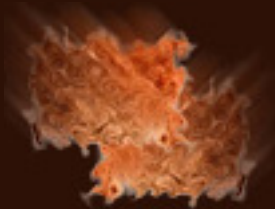


the bastard son of an adulteress, goes back to an early date."

Origen in his *Contra Celsum* states: "Let us return, however, to the words put into the mouth of the Jew, where the *mother of Jesus* is described as having been *turned out by the carpenter who was betrothed to her, as she had been convicted of adultery and had a child by a certain soldier named Panthera*. Let us consider whether those who fabricated the myth that the virgin and Panthera committed adultery and that the carpenter turned her out, were not blind when they concocted all this to get rid of the miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit. For on account of its highly miraculous character they could have falsified the story in other ways without, as it were, unintentionally admitting that Jesus was not born of an ordinary marriage. It was inevitable that those who did not accept the miraculous birth of Jesus would have invented some lie. But the fact that they did not do this convincingly, but kept as part of the story that the virgin did not conceive Jesus by Joseph, makes the lie obvious to people who can see through fictitious stories and show them up. Is it reasonable that a man who ventured to do such great things for mankind in order that, so far as in the universe, should have had, not a miraculous birth, but a birth more illegitimate and disgraceful than any?...It is therefore probably that this soul, which lived a more useful life on earth than many men (to avoid appearing to beg the question by saying 'all' men), needed a body which was not only distinguished among human bodies, but was also superior to all others."

Even in the Gospels this controversy is brought out, in Mark 6:3: " 'Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?' And they took offense at Him"

"This account," writes Ethelbert Stauffer, "which appears only in Mark does full justice to the situation. The Jews had strict rules governing name-giving. A Jew was named after his father (Jochanan ben Sakkai, for example) even if his father had died before his birth. He was named after his mother only when the father was unknown."



## THE KORAN

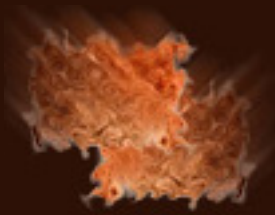
In the *Koran* we find Jesus referred to regularly as Isa ibn Maryam - Jesus, the son of Mary. Stauffer writes, "Abdullah al-Baidawi, the classical commentator on the Koran, remarks with full understanding of the Semitic practice in nomenclature: The name of the mother is borne when the father is unknown. But this name and explanation are here intended in a thoroughly positive sense. In Islam Jesus is regarded as the Son of the Virgin Mary who was begotten by the creative Word of GOD."

"In the *Logia* we learn that Jesus was berated for being a 'glutton and drunkard.' There must have been some grounds for this charge. For it fits in with all that we know about the attitude of Jesus and about his Pharisaical groups' reaction to it. Now, among Palestinian Jews this

particular insult would be flung at a person born of an illegitimate connection who betrayed by his mode of life and his religious conduct the stain of his birth. This was the sense in which the Pharisees and their followers employed the phrase against Jesus. Their meaning was: 'he is a bastard.' "

As a result of the early Jewish aversions to the illegitimacy of Christ (before AD 70), they are acknowledging the fact that there was doubt as to His parentage. The very early Christian church, at most forty years after his death, must have been teaching some doctrine about His birth, i.e., the virgin birth.

We find reference to Jesus' birth in the *Koran* (Mary v.20). When it was announced to Mary that she would bear a son, she replied, "How can this be, for I am a virgin and no mortal has ever touched me." The account goes on to say that "it is easy for Me (the LORD)." He then "breathed on her His Spirit."



### Summation by Various Writers

On the basis of the available evidence, it is important to see what some of the world's authors say about it.

*W. H. Griffith Thomas* writes: "The chief support for the doctrine is the necessity of accounting for the uniqueness of the life of Jesus."

*Henry Morris* states: "It is altogether fitting that the One who performed many miracles during His life, who offered Himself on the cross as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of men, and who then rose bodily from the dead in vindication of all His claims, should have begun such a unique life by a unique entrance into that life."

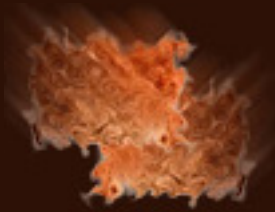
"If He is truly our Savior, He must be far more than a mere man, though also He is truly the Son of man. To die for our sins, He must Himself be free from any sin of His own. To be sinless in practice, He must first be sinless in nature. He could not have inherited a human nature, bound under the Curse and the bondage of sin as it must have been a miraculous birth. The 'seed of the woman' was implanted in the virgin's womb when, as the angel said: 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of GOD' " (Luke 1:35).

"Not only is the Virgin Birth true because it is clearly taught in the Bible, but also because it is the only type of birth consistent with the character and mission of Jesus Christ and with GOD's great plan of salvation for a lost world."

"To say that such a miracle is impossible is to deny the existence of GOD or else to deny that He can control His creation."

In summing up the evidence of Jesus' birth, *J. Gresham Machen* states: "Thus there is good ground, we think, to hold that the reason why the Christian Church came to believe in the birth of Jesus without a human father was simply that He was as a matter of fact so born."

*Clement Rogers* concludes that: "All the evidence there is goes to prove the miraculous birth of Christ."



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## Chapter 9: The Messianic Prophecies of the Old Testament Fulfilled in Jesus Christ

The apostles throughout the New Testament appealed to two areas of the life of Jesus of Nazareth to establish His messiahship. One was the resurrection and the other was fulfilled messianic prophecy. The Old Testament, written over a 1,000 year period, contains several hundred references to the coming Messiah. All of these were fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and they establish a solid confirmation of His credentials as the Messiah.

### INTRODUCTION

#### Purpose of Messianic Prophecy

GOD IS THE ONLY TRUE GOD WHOSE KNOWLEDGE IS INFINITE AND WHOSE WORD IS NEVER BROKEN

"GOD is not a man, that He should lie,  
Nor a son of man, that He should repent;  
Has He said, and will He not do it?  
Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"  
Numbers 23:19

ALL THINGS ARE SUBJECT TO GOD'S DIVINE WILL

"Remember the former things long past,  
For I am GOD, and there is no other;  
I am GOD, and there is no one like Me,  
Declaring the end from the beginning  
And from ancient times things which have not been done,  
Saying, 'My purpose will be established,  
And I will accomplish all my good pleasure.' "  
Isaiah 46:9,10

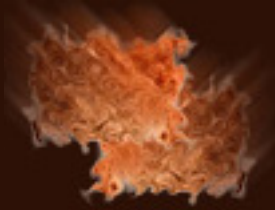
MESSIAH WILL ABSOLUTELY BE KNOWN, BASED UPON HIS CREDENTIALS

"I declared the former things long ago  
And they went forth from My mouth, and I proclaimed them.

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Suddenly I acted, and they came to pass.  
Therefore I declared them to you long ago,  
Before they took place I proclaimed them to you,  
Lest you should say, 'My idol has done them,  
And my graven image and my molten image have commanded them.' "  
Isaiah 48:3,5

"Which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared with power to be the Son of GOD by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our LORD.' "  
Romans 1:2-4



### Appeal to Messianic Prophecy

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#### JESUS

"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill."

Matthew 5:17

"And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in the Scriptures."

Luke 24:27

"Now He said to them, 'These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.' "

Luke 24:44

Savior

"You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

John 5:39,40,46,47

"And in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; And you will keep on seeing, but will not perceive.' "

Matthew 13:14 (on parables)

"This is the one about whom it was written 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You . ' "

Matthew 11:10 (on John the Baptist)

"Jesus said to them, 'Did you never read in the Scriptures, "The stone which the builders rejected, This became the chief cornerstone..."?' "

Matthew 21:42

"But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled."

Matthew 26:56

"And then they shall see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory."

Mark 13:26 (refer to Daniel 7:13,14)

"And He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all the synagogue were fixed upon Him. And He began to say to them, 'Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.' "

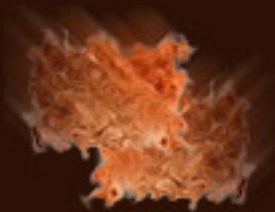
Luke 4:20,21

"For I tell you, that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, 'And He was numbered with transgressors'; for that which refers to Me has its fulfillment."

Luke 22:37

"But they have done this in order that the word may be fulfilled that is written in their Law, 'They hated Me without a cause.' "

John 15:25



## NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS APPEAL TO PROPHECIES FULFILLED IN JESUS

"But the things which GOD announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He has thus fulfilled."

Acts 3:18

"Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name every one who believes in Him has received forgiveness of sins."

Acts 10:43

"And when they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb."

Acts 13:29



"And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying 'This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ.' "

Acts 17:2,3

Savior

"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ also died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."

I Corinthians 15:3,4

"Which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures."

Romans 1:2

"You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to GOD through Jesus Christ. For this is contained in Scripture: 'Behold I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, And he who believes in Him shall not be disappointed.' "

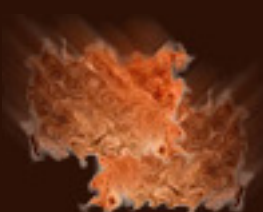
I Peter 2:5,6

"And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he began to inquire of them where the Christ was to be born. And they said to him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet,

Savior

"And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah,  
Are by no means least among the leaders of Judah;  
For out of you shall come forth a Ruler,  
Who will shepherd My people Israel." ' "

Matthew 2:4-6



IN THE WORK AND PERSON OF CHRIST THERE IS A FULFILLMENT OF THE LEVITICAL FEASTS

Savior

The Feast (Lev. 23)	The Fulfillment in Christ
Passover (April)	Death of Christ (I Cor. 5:7)
Unleavened bread (April)	Holy Walk (I Cor. 5:8)

First Fruits (April)

Resurrection (I Cor. 15:23)

Pentecost (June)

Outpouring of Spirit (Acts 1:5; 2:4)

Trumpets (Sept.)

Israel's Regathering (Matt. 24:31)

Atonement (Sept.)

Cleansing by Christ (Rom. 11:26)

Tabernacles (Sept.)

Rest and Reunion with Christ  
(Zech. 14:16-18)

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Savior

### Significance of Predictive Prophecy

CONCLUDES THAT THERE IS A DIVINE INTELLECT BEHIND THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

ESTABLISHES THE FACT OF GOD

AUTHENTICATES THE DEITY OF JESUS

DEMONSTRATES THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

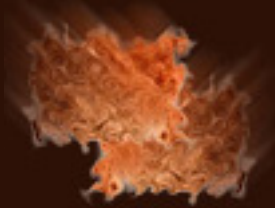
**THE OLD TESTAMENT CONTAINS OVER 300 REFERENCES TO THE MESSIAH THAT WERE FULFILLED IN JESUS**

### Objection

The prophecies were written at or after the time of Jesus, and therefore fulfill themselves.

### Answer

If you are not satisfied with 450 BC as the historical date for the completion of the Old Testament, then take into consideration the following: The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, was initiated in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-246 BC). It is rather obvious that if you have a Greek translation initiated in 250 BC, then you had to have the Hebrew text from which it was written. This will suffice to indicate that there was *at least* a 250-year gap between the prophecies being written down and their fulfillment in the person of Christ.



## CREDENTIALS OF JESUS AS THE MESSIAH THROUGH FULFILLED PROPHECY

### Prophecies Concerning His Birth:

1. BORN OF THE SEED OF WOMAN	
PROPHECY	FULFILLMENT
"And I will put enmity Between you and the woman And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel." Genesis 3:15	"But when the fulness of the time came, GOD sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law." Galatians 4:4 (Also see Matthew 1:20)

Jewish source: *Targum Onkelos* on Genesis 3:15 says, "And I will put enmity between thee and between the woman, and between thy son and her son. He will remember thee, what thou didst to him (at) from the beginning, and thou shalt be observant unto him at the end."

Jewish source: *Targum Pseudo Jonathan* on Genesis 3:15 states, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between the seed of your offspring and the seed of her offspring; and it shall be that when the offspring of the woman keep the commandments of the Law, they will aim right (at you) and they will smite you on the head; but when they abandon the commandments of the Law, you will aim right (at them), and you will wound them in the heel. However, for them there will be a remedy, but for you there will be none, and in the future they will make peace with the heel in the days of the king, Messiah."

The following is an interesting observation of David L. Cooper:



"In Gen. 3:15 we find the first prediction relative to the Saviour of the world, called 'the seed of the woman.' In the original oracle GOD foretold the age-long conflict which would be waged between 'the seed of the woman' and 'the seed of the serpent' and which will eventually be won by the former. This primitive promise indicates a struggle between the Messiah of Israel, the Saviour of the world, on one hand, and Satan, the adversary of the human soul, on the other. It foretells complete victory eventually for the Messiah. Some commentators believe that an echo of this promise and Eve's understanding of it is found in Genesis 4:1 - the statement of Eve when Cain, her first son, was born. 'I have gotten a man even Jehovah.' She correctly understood this primitive prediction but misapplied it in her interpreting it as being fulfilled in Cain, her son. It is clear that Eve believed that the child of promise would be Jehovah Himself. Some old Jewish commentators used to interpolate the word 'angel' in this passage and say that Eve claimed that her son was 'the angel of Jehovah.' There is no ground for this assertion."

The New American Standard Bible renders Genesis 4:1: "...she said, 'I have gotten a manchild with *the help of the LORD*' "

## 2. BORN OF A VIRGIN

### PROPHECY

"Therefore the LORD Himself will give you a sign:  
Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel."  
Isaiah 7:14

### FULFILLMENT

"...She was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph...kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus."  
Matthew 1:18,24,25 (Also see Luke 1:26-35.)

Virgin is denoted by two words in Hebrew:

1. *bethulah* - proper meaning denotes a virgin maiden. (Genesis 24:16; Leviticus 21:13; Deuteronomy 22:14,23,28; Judges 11:37; I Kings 1:2) Joel 1:8 is, according to Unger, not an exception because it "refers to the loss of one betrothed, not married."
2. *almah* (veiled) - young woman of marriageable age. This is the word used in Isaiah 7:14. "The Holy Spirit through Isaiah did not use *bethulah*, because both the ideas of virginity and marriageable age had to be combined in one word to meet the immediate historical situation and the prophetic aspect centering in a virgin-born Messiah."  
Virgin is denoted in Greek by: *parthenos* - a virgin, marriageable maiden or young married woman, pure virgin. (Matthew 1:23; 25:1,7,11; Luke 1:27; Acts 21:9; I Corinthians 7:25,28,33; II Corinthians 11:2)

When the translators of the Septuagint translated Isaiah 7:14 into Greek they used the Greek word *parthenos*. To them Isaiah 7:14 denoted that the Messiah would be born of a virgin.

### 3. SON OF GOD

#### PROPHECY

"I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'Thou are My son, Today I have begotten Thee.' "  
 Psalms 2:7 (Also see I Chron. 17:11-14; II Sam. 7:12-16.)

#### FULFILLMENT

"...And behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.' "  
 Matthew 3:17 (Also see Matthew 16:16; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35; 22:70; Acts 13:30-33; John 1:34,49

Mark 3:11 - The demons realized His Sonship.

Matthew 26:63 - Even the high priest realized His Sonship.

E. W. Hengstenberg says:

"It is an undoubted fact, and unanimously admitted even by the recent opposers of its reference to Him, that the Psalm (Psalm 2) was universally regarded by the ancient Jews as foretelling the Messiah."

"At the incarnation the First-begotten was brought into the world (Heb. 1:6). But it was only at and by His resurrection that His Divinity, as the Only-begotten of the Father, was manifested and openly attested by GOD. 'Made of the seed of David according to the flesh,' He was then 'declared to be the Son of GOD with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead' " (Romans 1:4).

### 4. SEED OF ABRAHAM

#### PROPHECY

#### FULFILLMENT

Savior

Savior

Savior

"And in your descendants [lit., seed] all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."  
 Genesis 22:18 (See also Gen. 12:2,3)

"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."  
 Matthew 1:1  
 "Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as referring to many, but rather to one, 'And to your seed.' that is, Christ."  
 Galatians 3:16

The importance of the event in Genesis 22:18 is established when we realize that it is the only time that GOD swears by Himself in His relationship with the patriarchs.

Matthew Henry says about Genesis 22:18, "In thy Seed, one particular person that shall descend from thee (for he speaks not of many, but on one, as the apostle observes, Gal. 3:16), shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, or shall bless themselves, as the phrase is, Isa. 65:16."

The above passage determines that the Messiah would come from the Hebrew race.

### 5. SON OF ISAAC

#### PROPHECY

"But GOD said to Abraham...through Isaac your descendants shall be named [lit., your seed will be called]."  
 Genesis 21:12

#### FULFILLMENT

"Jesus...the son of Isaac..."  
 Luke 3:23,34 (Also see Matthew 1:2.)

Abraham had two sons, Isaac and Ishmael. Now GOD eliminates one-half of the lineage of Abraham.

### 6. SON OF JACOB

#### PROPHECY

#### FULFILLMENT

Savior

Savior

Savior



"I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A star shall come forth from Jacob, And a scepter shall rise from Israel, And shall crush through the forehead of Moab, And tear down all the sons of Sheth."  
Numbers 24:17 (Also see Genesis 35:10-12)

"Jesus...the son of Jacob..."  
Luke 3:23,24 (Also see Matt. 1:2 and Luke 1:33.)

Jewish sources: *Targum Jonathan* on Genesis 35:11,12 says, "And the LORD said to him, I am El Shaddai: spread forth and multiply; a holy people, and a congregation of prophets and priests, shall be from thy sons whom thou hast begotten, and two kings shall yet from thee go forth. And the land which I gave to Abraham and to Izhak will I give unto thee, and to thy sons after thee will I give the land."

Jewish source: *Targum Onkelos* on Numbers 24:17 states, "I see him, but not nigh. When a king shall arise out of Jakob, and the Meshiha be anointed from Israel..."

In the above *Targums* we can see that the Jews have Messianic import to the passages. Likewise, the *Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah* gives a Messianic meaning to this text. Paul Heinisch relates that "at the time of Hadrian (132 AD) the Jews revolted against the Roman yoke, they called their leader Barkochba, 'The Son of the Star.' For they believed that Balaam's oracle on the star from Jacob was then being fulfilled and that through him GOD would utterly destroy the Romans."

Hengstenberg, in his *Christology of the Old Testament*, points out that "by this Ruler, the Jews from the earliest times have understood the Messiah, either exclusively, or else principally, with a secondary reference to David. Either its exclusive relation to the Messiah was maintained, or it was allowed to refer indeed, in the first instance, to David; but then both himself and his temporal victories were regarded as typical of Christ, and His spiritual triumphs, which (according to this exposition) the prophet had especially in view."

Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau. Now GOD eliminates one-half of the lineage of Isaac.

## 7. TRIBE OF JUDAH

PROPHECY

FULFILLMENT

"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples."

Genesis 49:10 (Also see Micah 5:2)

"Jesus...the son of Judah..."

Luke 3:23,33 (Also see Matthew 1:2 and Hebrews 7:14.)

"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's, from the house of Jehuda, nor sapherim teaching the law from his seed, till the time that the King, the Meshiba, shall come, the youngest of his sons; and on account of him shall the peoples flow together. How beauteous is the King, and Meshiha who will arise from the house of Jehuda!"

Jewish source: *Targum Pseudo Jonathan* on Genesis 49:11a states, "How noble is the King, Messiah, who is going to rise from the house of Judah."

Jacob had 12 sons out of which developed the 12 tribes of the Hebrew nation. Now GOD eliminates eleven-twelfths of the tribes of Israel. Joseph had no tribe named after him, but his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh did become heads of tribes.

### 8. FAMILY LINE OF JESSE

#### PROPHECY

"Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit."  
Isaiah 11:1 (Also see Isa. 11:10.)

#### FULFILLMENT

"Jesus...the son of Jesse..."  
Luke 3:23,32 (Also see Matt. 1:5)

Jewish source: *Targum Isaiah* states, "And a King shall come forth from the sons of Jesse, and an Anointed One (or Messiah) from his son's sons shall grow up. And there shall rest upon him a spirit from before the LORD, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the LORD."

Delitzsch comments, "Out of the stumps of Jesse, i.e., out of the remnant of the chosen royal family which has sunk down to the insignificance of the house from which it sprang, there comes forth a twig (*choter*), which promises to supply the place of the trunk and crown; and down below, in the roots covered with earth, and only rising a little above it, there shows itself a *netzer*, i.e., a fresh green shoot (from *natzer*, to shine or blossom). In

the historical account of the fulfillment, even the ring of the words of the prophecy is noticed: the *netzer*, at first so humble and insignificant, was a poor despised Nazarene" (Matthew 2:23).

### 9. HOUSE OF DAVID

#### PROPHECY

" 'Behold, the days are coming.' declares the LORD, 'When I shall raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land.' "

Jeremiah 23:5 (Also see II Sam. 7:12-16; Ps. 132:11)

#### FULFILLMENT

"Jesus...the son of David..."

Luke 2:32,31 (Also see Matt. 1:1; 9:27; 15:22; 20:30,31; 21:9,15; 22:41-46; Mark 9:10; 10:47,48; Luke 18:38,39; Acts 13:22,23; Rev. 22:16.)

Jewish source: The Messiah as being referred to as the "Son of David" is scattered throughout the Talmuds.

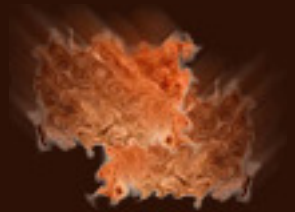
Driver says about II Samuel 17:11b, "Here Nathan comes to the main subject of his prophecy - the promise relating not to David himself, but to his posterity, and the declaration that it is not David who will build a house for Yahweh, but Yahweh who will build a house (i.e., a family) for David."

Jacob Minkin, in his book titled *The World of Moses Maimonides*, gives the view of this learned Jewish scholar: "Dismissing the mystical speculations concerning the Messiah, his origin, activity, and the marvellous superhuman powers ascribed to him, Maimonides insisted that he must be regarded as a mortal human being, differing from his fellow-men only in the fact that he will be greater, wiser, and more resplendent than they. He must be a descendant of the House of David and like him, occupy himself with the Study of the Torah and observance of its commandments."

"Behold, the days are coming" is a common expression which is used in reference to the entrance of the Messianic era (see Jeremiah 31:27-34).

Jesse had *at least* eight sons (see I Samuel 16:10,11). Now GOD eliminates all of Jesse's sons except one, David.





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Savior



Savior

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## Chapter 10: The Resurrection-Hoax or History?

After more than 700 hours of studying this subject, and thoroughly investigating its foundation, I have come to the conclusion that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the "*most wicked, vicious, heartless hoaxes ever foisted upon the minds of men*, or it is the most fantastic fact of history."

Jesus has three basic credentials: (1) The impact of His life upon history; (2) Fulfilled prophecy in His life; and (3) His resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus Christ and Christianity stand or fall together. A student at the University of Uruguay said to me: "Professor McDowell, why can't you refute Christianity?" I answered: "For a very simple reason: I am not able to explain away an event in history - the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

### THE RESURRECTION ACCOUNT IN MATTHEW 28:1-11 (See also Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20-21)

1 Now late on the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave.

2 And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the LORD descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it.

3 And his appearance was like lightning, and his garment as white as snow;

4 and the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men.

5 And the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified.

6 "He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying.

7 "And go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going before you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you."

8 And they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy and ran to report it to His disciples.

Savior

Savior

9 And behold, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him.

10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and take word to My brethren to leave for Galilee, and there they shall see Me."

11 Now while they were on their way, behold, some of the guards came into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened.



## IMPORTANCE OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

All but four of the major world religions are based on mere philosophical propositions. Of the four that are based on personalities rather than a philosophical system, only Christianity claims an empty tomb for its founder. Abraham, the father of Judaism, died about 1900 B.C., but not resurrection was ever claimed for him.

*Wilbur M. Smith* says in *Therefore Stand*: "The original accounts of Buddha never ascribe to him any such thing as a resurrection; in fact, in the earliest accounts of his death, namely, the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta*, we read that when Buddha died it was 'with that utter passing away in which nothing whatever remains behind.' "

"*Professor Childera* says, 'There is no trace in the *Pali* scriptures or commentaries (or so far as I know in any Pali book) of Sakya Muni having existed after his death or appearing to his disciples.' Mohammed died June 8, 632 A.D., at the age of sixty-one, at Medina, where his tomb is annually visited by thousands of devout Mohammedans. All the millions and millions of Jews, Buddhists, and Mohammedans agree that their founders have never come up out of the dust of the earth in resurrection."

*Theodosius Harnack* says: "Where you stand with regard to the fact of the Resurrection is in my eyes no longer Christian theology. To me Christianity stands or falls with the Resurrection."

*Professor William Milligan* states: "While speaking of the positive evidence of the Resurrection of our LORD, it may be further urged that the fact, if true, harmonizes all the other facts of His history."

*Wilbur M. Smith* concludes: "If our LORD said, frequently, with great definiteness and detail, that after He went up to Jerusalem He would be put to death, but on the third day He would rise again from the grave, and this prediction came to pass, then it has always seemed to me that everything else that our LORD ever said must also be true."



It is further stated by *W. J. Sparrow-Simpson*:

"If it be asked how the resurrection of Christ is a proof of His being the Son of GOD, it may be answered, first, because He rose by His own power. He had power to lay down His life, and He had power to take it again, John x.18. This is not inconsistent with the fact taught in so many other passages, that He was raised by the power of the FAther, because what the Father does the Son does likewise; creation, and all other external works, are ascribed indifferently to the FAther, Son and Spirit. But in the second place, as Christ had openly declared Himself to be the Son of GOD, His rising from the dead was the seal of GOD to the truth of that declaration. Had He continued under the power of death, GOD would thereby have disallowed His claim to be His Son; but as He raised Him from the dead, He publicly acknowledged Him; saying, 'Thou art My Son, this day have I declared Thee such.' "

Also, Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost is "wholly and entirely founded on the Resurrection. Not merely is the Resurrection its principal theme, but if that doctrine were removed there would be no doctrine left. For the Resurrection is propounded as being (1) the explanation of Jesus' death; (2) prophetically anticipated as the Messianic experience; (3) apostolically witnessed; (4) the cause of the outpouring of the Spirit, and thus accounting for religious phenomena otherwise inexplicable; and (5) certifying the Messianic and Kingly position of Jesus of Nazareth. Thus the whole series of arguments and conclusions depends for stability entirely upon the Resurrection. Without the Resurrection the Messianic and Kingly position of Jesus could not be convincingly established. Without it the new outpouring of the Spirit would continue a mystery unexplained. Without it the substance of the apostolic witness would have disappeared. All that would be left of this instruction would be the Messianic exposition of Psalm xvi.; and that, only as a future experience of a Messiah who had not yet appeared. The Divine Approval of Jesus as certified by His works would also remain; but apparently as an approval extended only to His life; a life ending like that of any other prophet whom the nation refused to tolerate any longer. Thus the first Christian sermon is founded on the position of Jesus as determined by His Resurrection."

Even *Adolf Harnack*, who rejects the Church's belief in the resurrection, admits: "The firm confidence of the disciples in Jesus was rooted in the belief that He did not abide in death, but was raised by GOD. That Christ was risen was, in virtue of what they had experienced in Him, certainly only after they had seen Him, just as sure as the fact of His death, and became the main article of their preaching about Him" (*History of Dogma*, Chapter II).

*H. P. Liddon* says: "Faith in the resurrection is the very keystone of the arch of Christian faith, and, when it is removed, all must inevitable crumble into ruin."

The resurrection of Christ has always been categorically the central tenet of the Church. As *Wilbur Smith* puts it:

"From the first day of its divinely bestowed life, the Christian church has unitedly borne testimony to its faith in the Resurrection of Christ. It is what we may call one of the great fundamental doctrines and convictions of the church, and so penetrates the literature of the New Testament, that if you lifted out every passage in which a reference is made to the Resurrection, you would have a collection of writings so mutilated that what remained could not be understood. The Resurrection entered intimately into the life of the earliest Christians; the fact of it appears on their tombs, and in the drawings found on the walls of the catacombs; it entered deeply into Christian hymnology; it became one of the most vital themes of the great apologetic writings of

the first four centuries; it was the theme constantly dwelt upon in the preaching of the ante-Nicene and post-Nicene period. It entered at once into the credal formulae of the church; it is in our Apostles' Creed; it is in all the great creeds that followed.

"All evidence of the New Testament goes to show that the burden of the good news or gospel was not 'Follow this Teacher and do your best,' but, 'Jesus and the Resurrection.' You cannot take that away from Christianity without radically altering its character and destroying its very identity."

*Professor Milligan* says: "It thus appears that from the dawn of her history the Christian Church not only believed in the Resurrection of her LORD, but that her belief upon the point was interwoven with her whole existence."

*W. Robertson Nicoll* quotes *Pressense* as saying: "The empty tomb of Christ has been the cradle of the Church..."

*W. J. Sparrow-Simpson* says: "If the Resurrection is not historic fact, then the power of death remains unbroken, and with it the effect of sin; and the significance of Christ's Death remains uncertified, and accordingly believers are yet in their sins, precisely where they were before they heard of Jesus' name."

*R. M'Cheyne Edgar*, in his work, *The Gospel of a Risen Saviour*, has said:

"Here is a teacher of religion and He calmly professes to stake His entire claims upon His ability, after having been done to death, to rise again from the grave. We may safely assume that there never was, before or since, such a proposal made. To talk of this extraordinary test being *invented* by mystic students of the prophecies, and inserted in the way it has been into the gospel narratives, is to lay too great a burden on our credulity. He who was ready to stake everything on His ability to come back from the tomb stands before us as the most original of all teachers, one who shines in His own self-evidencing life!"

The following is found in the *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*:

"D. F. Strauss, e.g., the most trenchant and remorseless of her critics in dealing with the Resurrection, acknowledges that it is the 'touchstone not of lives of Jesus only, but of Christianity itself,' that it 'touches all Christianity to the quick,' and is 'decisive for the whole view of Christianity' (*New Life of Jesus*, Eng. tr., 2 vols., London, 1865, i. 41,397). If this goes, all that is vital and essential in Christianity goes; if this remains, all else remains. And so through the centuries, from Celsus onwards, the Resurrection has been the storm centre of the attack upon the Christian faith."

"Christ Himself," as *B. B. Warfield* puts it, "deliberately staked His whole claim to the credit of men upon His resurrection. When asked for a sign He pointed to this sign as His single and sufficient credential."

*Ernest Devan* says of the famous Swiss theologian, *Frederick Godet*: "In his *Lectures in Defense of the Christian Faith* [1883, p. 41], [he] speaks of the importance of the resurrection of Christ, and points out that it was this miracle, and this alone, to which Christ referred s the attestation of His claims and authority."



*Michael Green* makes the point well: "Christianity does not hold the resurrection to be one among many tenets of belief. Without faith in the resurrection *there would be no Christianity at all*. The Christian church would never have begun; the Jesus-movement would have fizzled out like a damp squib with His execution. Christianity stands or falls with the truth of the resurrection. Once disprove it, and you have disposed of Christianity.

"Christianity is a historical religion. It claims that GOD has taken the risk of involving Himself in human history, and the facts are there for you to examine with the utmost rigour. They will stand any amount of critical investigation..."

*John Locke*, the famous British philosopher, said concerning Christ's resurrection: "Our Saviour's resurrection...is truly of great importance in Christianity; so great that His being or not being the Messiah stands or falls with it: so that these two important articles are inseparable and in effect make one. For since that time, believe one and you believe both; deny one of them, and you can believe neither."

As *Philip Schaff*, the church historian, concludes: "The resurrection of Christ is therefore emphatically a test question upon which depends the truth or falsehood of the Christian religion. It is either the greatest miracle or the greatest delusion which history records."

*Wilbur M. Smith*, noted scholar and teacher, says: "No weapon has ever been forged, and...noe ever will be, to destroy rational confidence in the historical records of this epochal and predicted event. The resurrection of Christ is the very citadel of the Christian faith. This is the doctrine that turned the world upside down in the first century, that lifted Christianity preeminently above Judaism and the pagan religions of the Mediterranean world. If this goes, so must almost everything else that is vital and unique in the Gospel of the LORD Jesus Christ: 'If Christ be not risen, then is your faith vain' " (I Cor. 15:17).



## THE CLAIMS OF CHRIST THAT HE WOULD BE RAISED FROM THE DEAD

### The Importance of the Claims

*Wilbur M. Smith* asserts:

"It was this same Jesus, the Christ who, among many other remarkable things, said and repeated something which, proceeding from any other being would have condemned him at once as either a bloated egotist or a dangerously unbalanced person. That Jesus said He was going up to Jerusalem to die is not so remarkable, though all the details He gave about that death, weeks and months before He died, are together a prophetic phenomenon. But when He said that He himself *would rise again from the dead*, the third day after He was crucified, He said something that only a fool would dare say, if he expected longer the devotion of any disciples,



unless - He was sure He was going to rise. No founder of any world religion known to men ever dared say a thing like that!"

Christ predicted His resurrection in an unmistakable and straightforward manner. While His disciples simply couldn't understand it, the Jews took His assertions quite seriously.

Concerning the above point, *J. N. D. Anderson* makes the following observation:

"Not so very long ago there was in England a young man barrister, or what you would call a trial lawyer, by the name of Frank Morison. He was an unbeliever. For years he promised himself that one day he would write a book to disprove the resurrection finally and forever. At last he got the leisure. He was an honest man and he did the necessary study.

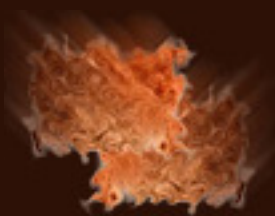
Eventually [after accepting Christ] he wrote a book that you can buy as a paperback, *Who MOved the Stone?* Starting from the most critical possible approach to the New Testament documents he concludes *inter alia* that you can explain the trial and the conviction of Jesus only on the basis that He Himself had foretold His death and resurrection."

*Smith* says further: "If you or I should say to any group of friends that we expected to die, either by violence or naturally, at a certain time, but that, three days after death, we would rise again, we would be quietly taken away by friends, and confined to an institution, until our minds became clear and sound again. This would be right, for only a foolish man would go around talking about rising from the dead on the third day, only a foolish man, *unless* he knew that this was going to take place, and no one in the world has ever known that about himself except One Christ, the Son of GOD."

*Bernard Ramm* remarks: "Taking the Gospel record as faithful history there can be no doubt that Christ Himself anticipated His death and resurrection, and plainly declared it to His disciples...The gospel writers are quite frank to admit that such predictions really did not penetrate their minds till the resurrection was a fact (John 20:9). But the evidence is there from the mouth of our LORD that He would be put to death violently, through the cause of hatred, and would rise the third day. All this came to pass."

*John R. W. Stott* writes:

"Jesus Himself never predicted His death without adding that He would rise, and described His coming resurrection as a 'sign'. Paul, at the beginning of his letter to the Romans, wrote that Jesus was 'designated Son of GOD in power...by His resurrection from the dead,' and the earliest sermons of the apostles recorded in the Acts repeatedly assert that by the resurrection GOD has reversed man's sentence and vindicated His Son."



**The Claims as Given by Jesus:**

Jesus not only predicted His resurrection but also emphasized His rising from the dead would be the "sign" to authenticate His claims to be the Messiah (Matthew 12; John 2).

Matthew 12:38-40; 16:21; 17:9; 17:22,23; 20:18,19; 26:32; 27:63

Mark 8:31-9:1; 9:10; 9:31; 10:32-34; 14:28,58

Luke 9:22-27

John 2:18-22; 12:34; Chps. 14-16

**Matthew 16:21** - "From that time Jesus Christ began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day."

**Matthew 17:9** - "And as they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, 'Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead.' "

**Matthew 17:22,23** - "And while they were gathering together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, 'The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; and they will kill Him, and He will be raised again on the third day.' And they were deeply grieved."

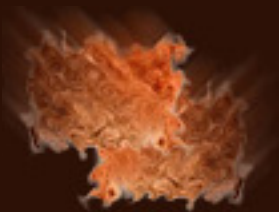
**Matthew 20:18,19** - "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered up to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, and will deliver Him up to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him, and on the third day He will be raised up."

**Matthew 26:32** - "But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."

**Mark 9:10** - "And they seized upon that statement, discussing with one another what rising from the dead might mean."

**Luke 9:22-27** - "...The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.' And He was saying to them all, 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. But I tell you truly, there are some of those standing here who shall not taste of death until they see the kingdom of GOD.' "

**John 2:18-22** - "The Jews therefore answered and said to Him, 'What sign do You show to us, seeing that You do these things?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews therefore said, 'It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?' But He was speaking of the temple of His body. When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had spoken."



## THE HISTORICAL APPROACH

### The Resurrection of Christ as a Time-Space Dimension Event in History

The resurrection of Christ is an event in history wherein GOD acted in a definite time-space dimension. Concerning this, Wilbur Smith says, "The *meaning* of the resurrection is a theological matter, but the fact of the resurrection is a historical matter; the nature of the resurrection body of Jesus may be a mystery, but the fact that the body disappeared from the tomb is a matter to be decided upon by historical evidence.

"The place is of geographical definiteness, the man who owned the tomb was a man living in the first half of the first century; that tomb was made out of rock in a hillside near Jerusalem, and was not composed of some mythological gossamer, or cloud-dust, but is something which has geographical significance. The guards put before that tomb were not aerial beings from Mt. Olympus; the Sanhedrin was a body of men meeting frequently in Jerusalem. As a vast mass of literature tells us, this person, Jesus, was a living person, a man among men, whatever else He was, and the disciples who went out to preach the risen LORD were men among men, men who ate, drank, slept, suffered, worked, died. What is there 'doctrinal' about this? This is a historical problem."

*Ignatius* (ca. 50-115 A.D.), Bishop of Antioch, a native of Syria, a pupil of the apostle John, is said to have "been thrown to the wild beasts in the colosseum at Rome. His *Epistles* were written during his journey from Antioch to his martyrdom." At a time when he would undoubtedly have been very sober of mind, he says of Christ: "He was crucified and died under Pontius Pilate. He really, and not merely in appearance, as crucified, and died, in the sight of beings in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth.

"He also rose again in three days...On the day of the preparation, then, at the third hour, He received the sentence from Pilate, the Father permitting that to happen; at the sixth hour He was crucified; at the ninth hour He gave up the ghost; and before sunset He was buried. During the Sabbath He continued under the earth in the tomb in which Joseph of Arimathaea had laid Him.

"He was carried in the womb, even as we are, for the usual period of time; and was really born, as we also are; and was in reality nourished with milk, and partook of common meat and drink, even as we do. And when He had lived among men for thirty years, He was baptized by John, really and not in appearance; and when He had preached the gospel three years, and done signs and wonders, He who was Himself the Judge was judged by the Jews, falsely so called, and by Pilate the governor; was scourged, was smitten on the cheek, was spit upon; He wore a crown of thorns and a purple robe; He was condemned: He was crucified in reality, and not in appearance, not in imagination, not in deceit. He really died, and was buried, and rose from the dead..."



The brilliant historian *Alfred Edersheim* speaks of the particular time of Christ's death and resurrection:

"The brief spring-day was verging towards the 'evening of the Sabbath.' In general, the Law ordered that the body of a criminal should not be left hanging unburied over night. Perhaps in ordinary circumstances the Jews might not have appealed so confidently to Pilate as actually to ask him to shorten the sufferings of those on the Cross, since the punishment of crucifixion often lasted not only for hours but days, ere death ensured. But here was a special occasion. The Sabbath about to open was a 'high-day' - it was both a Sabbath and the second Paschal Day, which was regarded as in every respect equally sacred with the first - nay, more so, since the so-called Wavesheaf was then offered to the LORD."

As *Wilbur Smith* put it: "Let it simply be said that we know more about the details of the hours immediately before and the actual death of Jesus, in and near Jerusalem, than we know about the death of any other one man in all the ancient world."

"*Justin Martyr* (ca. 100-165) philosopher, martyr, apologist...Being an eager seeker for truth, knocked successively at the doors of Stoicism, Aristotelianism, Pythagoreanism and Platonism, but hated Epicureanism...This zealous Platonist became a believing Christian. He said, 'I found this philosophy alone to be safe and profitable.' "

Indeed, Justin Martyr came to realize that while the philosophical systems of the world offered intellectual propositions, Christianity alone offered GOD Himself intervening in time and space through Jesus Christ. In a very straight-forward manner he asserts: "...Christ was born one hundred and fifty years ago under Cyrenius, and subsequently, in the time of Pontius Pilate..."

*Tertullian* (ca. 160-220) of Carthage, North Africa, says: "But the Jews were so exasperated by His teaching, by which their rulers and chiefs were convicted of the truth, chiefly because so many turned aside to Him, that at last they brought Him before Pontius Pilate, at the time Roman governor of Syria, and, by the violence of their outcries against Him, extorted a sentence giving Him up to them to be crucified."

Of Christ' ascension Tertullian asserts: It is "a fact more certain far than the assertions of your Proculi concerning Romulus" (Proculus was a Roman senator, who affirmed that Romulus had appeared to him after his death).

All these things Pilate did to Christ: and now "in fact a Christian in his own convictions, he sent word of Him to the reigning Caesar, who was at the time Tiberius. Yes, and the Caesars too would have believed on Christ, if either the Caesars had not been necessary for the world, or if Christians could have been Caesars. His disciples also spreading over the world, did as their Divine Master bade them; and after suffering greatly themselves from the persecutions of the Jews, and with no unwilling heart, as having faith undoubting in the truth, at last by Nero's cruel sword sowed the seed of Christian blood at Rome."

*Josephus*, a Jewish historian, writing at the end of the first century A.D., has this fascinating passage in *Antiquities*, 18:2:2: "Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the

truth with pleasure. He drew over to him many Jews, and also many of the Greeks. This man was the Christ. And when Pilate had condemned him to the cross, upon his impeachment by the principal man among us, those who had loved from the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive on the third day, the divine prophets having spoken these and thousands of other wonderful things about him. And even now, the race of Christians, so named from him, has not died out."

Attempts have been made to show that Josephus could not have written this. However, "this passage," writes Michael Green in *Man Alive*, "was in the text of Josephus used by Eusebius in the fourth century." Also, it is "reiterated by the most recent Loeb edition of his works. And it is all the more remarkable when we remember that, so far from being sympathetic to Christians, Josephus was a Jew writing to please the Romans. This story would not have pleased them in the slightest. He would hardly have included it if it were not true."

*Professor Leaney* says concerning the historical nature of the faith of the early Church: "The New Testament itself allows absolutely no escape from putting the matter as follows: Jesus was crucified and buried. His followers were utterly dejected. A very short time afterwards they were extremely elated and showed such reassurance as carried them by a sustained life of devotion through to a martyr's death. If we ask them through the proxy of writings dependent upon them, what caused this change, they do not answer, 'the gradual conviction that we were marked out by death but the crucified and buried one was alive' but 'Jesus who was dead appeared to some of us alive after his death and the rest of us believed their witness.' It may be worth noting that this way of putting the matter is a historical statement, like the historical statement, 'The LORD is risen indeed,' which has influenced men and women toward belief."

Speaking of the forensic nature of the New Testament narratives, *Bernard Ramm* says: "In Acts 1, Luke tells us that Jesus showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs (*en pollois tekmeriois*), an expression indicating the strongest type of legal evidence."

*Clark Pinnock* also states: "The certainty of the apostles was founded on their experiences in the factual realm. To them Jesus showed Himself alive 'by many infallible proofs' (Acts 1:3). The term Luke uses is *tekmerion*, which indicates a demonstrable proof. The disciples came to their Easter faith through inescapable empirical evidence available to them, and available to us through their written testimony. It is important for us, in an age that calls for evidence to sustain the Christian claim, to answer the call with appropriate historical considerations. For the resurrection stands within the realm of historical factuality, and constitutes excellent motivation for a person to trust Christ as Saviour."

*Professor Ernest Kevan* further establishes the evidential quality of these witnesses: "The Book of the *Acts of the Apostles* was written by Luke sometime between A.D. 63 and the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. He explains in the preface to his Gospel that he gathered his information from eye-witnesses, and this, it may be concluded, was also the way in which he prepared the Book of the Acts. Further as certain sections in the history show, by the use of the pronoun 'we,' Luke was himself a participator in some of the events which he narrates. He was in the midst of the early preaching, and took a share in the great happenings of the early days. Luke is, therefore, a contemporary and first-hand witness. ...It is impossible to suppose that the Early Church did not know its own history; and the very fact of the acceptance by the Church of this book is evidence of its accuracy."



quoting a noted Christian scholar, Kevan points out: "As the Church is too holy for a foundation of rottenness, so she is too real for a foundation of myth."

"For the establishment of an alleged historical fact no documents are esteemed to be more valuable than contemporary letters."

Professor Kevan says of the epistles of the New Testament, "...There is the unimpeachable evidence of the contemporary letters of Paul the Apostle. These epistles constitute historical evidence of the highest kind. The letters addressed to the *Galatians*, the *Corinthians*, and the *Romans*, about the authenticity and date of which there is very little dispute, belong to the time of Paul's missionary journeys, and may be dated in the period A.D. 55-58. This brings the evidence of the resurrection of Christ still nearer to the event: the interval is the short span of twenty-five years. Since Paul himself makes it plain that the subject of his letter was the same as that about which he had spoken to them when he was with them, this really brings back the evidence to a still earlier time."

*Bernard Ramm* says that even "the most cursory reading of the Gospels reveals the fact that the Gospels deal with the death and resurrection of Christ in far greater detail than any other part of the ministry of Christ. The details of the resurrection must not be artificially severed from the passion account."

Christ made many appearances after His resurrection. These appearances occurred at specific times in the lives of individuals and were further restricted to specific places.

*Wolfhart Pannenberg*, "professor of systematic theology at the University of Munich, Germany, studied under Barth and Jaspers, and has been concerned primarily with questions of the relation between faith and history. With a small group of dynamic theologians at Heidelberg, he has been forging a theology that considers its primary task the scrutiny of the historical data of the origins of Christianity."

The brilliant scholar says, "Whether the resurrection of Jesus took place or not is a historical question, and the historical question at this point is inescapable. And so the question has to be decided on the level of historical argument."

The New Testament scholar, *C. H. Dodd*, writes, "The resurrection remains an event within history..."

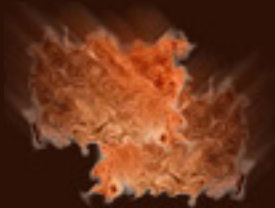
*J. N. D. Anderson*, citing Cambridge professor *C. F. D. Moule*, asserts, "From the very first the conviction that Jesus had been raised from death has been that by which their very existence has stood or fallen. There was no other motive to account for them, to explain them...At no point within the New Testament is there any evidence that the Christians stood for an original philosophy of life or an original ethic. Their sole function is to bear witness to what they claim as an event - the raising of Jesus from among the dead...The one really distinctive thing for which the Christians stood was their declaration that Jesus had been raised from the dead according to GOD's design, and the consequent estimate of Him as in a unique sense Son of GOD and representative man, and the resulting conception of the way to reconciliation."



W. J. Sparrow-Simpson says: "The Resurrection of Christ is *the foundation of Apostolic Christianity*, and this for dogmatic just as truly as for evidential reasons...Their consciousness of its basal character is shown in the position it occupies in their witness. An Apostle is ordained to be a witness of the Resurrection (Acts 1:22). The content of St. Paul's Christianity is though at Athens to be 'Jesus and the resurrection' (17:18). The early sections in the Acts reiterate the statement, 'This Jesus hath GOD raised up, whereof we all are witnesses' (2:32).

"As a historic fact, it has been His Resurrection which has enabled men to believe in His official exaltation over humanity. It is not a mere question of the moral influence of His character, example, and teaching. It is that their present surrender to Him as their Redeemer has been promoted by this belief, and could not be justified without it. Indeed, those who deny His Resurrection consistently deny as a rule His Divinity and His redemptive work in any sense that St. Paul would have acknowledged."

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## Introduction p2

### EYEWITNESSES

I John 1:1-3

"What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what he have seen with out eyes, what we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of Life - and the lie was manifested, and we have seen and ear witness and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us - what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ".

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Luke 1:1-3

"Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the Word have handed them down to us, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus".

*The Cambridge Ancient History*, writing about Luke's concern for accuracy, says:

"He is naturally concerned to state a good case for the religion he professes - and that not merely because he believed it to be true )and there was no inducement in those days to profess Christianity unless one was passionately convinced of its truth)..." 4/258

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Acts 1:1-3

"The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when He was taken up, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen. To these He also presented Himself alive, after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days, and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of GOD."

I Corinthians 15:6-8

"After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as it were to one untimely born, He appeared to me also".

John 20:30,31

"Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not

written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of GOD; and that believing you may have life in His name".

Acts 10:39-42

"And we are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. And they also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross. GOD raised Him up on the third day, and granted that He should become visible, not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by GOD, that is, to us, who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by GOD as Judge of the living and the dead."

I Peter 5:1

"Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow-elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed".

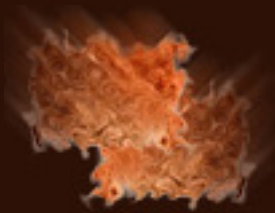
Acts 1:9

"And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight."

John Montgomery writes that "the inability to distinguish Jesus' claim for Himself from the New Testament writers' claim for Him should cause no dismay, since (1) the situation exactly parallels that for all historical personages who have not themselves chosen to write (e.g., Alexander the Great, Augustus Caesar, Charlemagne). We would hardly claim that in these cases we can achieve no adequate historical portraits. Also, (2) the New Testament writers...record eyewitness testimony concerning Jesus, and can therefore be trusted to convey an accurate historical picture of Him." 11/48

The apostles were witnesses of His resurrected life:

Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8; 2:32; 3:15; 4:33; 5:32; 10:39; 10:41; 13:31; 22:15; 23:11; 26:16; I Corinthians 15:4-9; 15:15; I John 1:2



**YES, YOU DID - YOU KNEW THAT...**

### **Firsthand Knowledge**

The writers of the New Testament appealed to the firsthand knowledge of their readers or listeners concerning the facts and the evidence about the person of Jesus Christ.

The writers not only said, "Look, we saw this or we heard that...", but they turned the tables



around and right in front of their most adverse critics said, "You also know about these things...You saw them; you yourselves know about it."

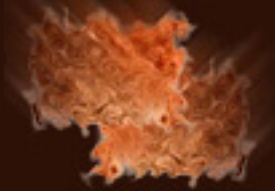
One had better be careful when he says to his opposition, "You *know* this also," because if he is not right in the details, it will be "shoved right back down his throat."

Acts 2:22

"Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by GOD with miracles and wonders and signs which GOD performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know..."

Acts 26:24-28

"And while Paul was saying this in his defense, Festus said in a loud voice, 'Paul, you are out of your mind! Your great learning is driving you mad.' But Paul said, 'I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I utter words of sober truth. For the king knows about these matters, and I speak to him also with confidence, since I am persuaded that none of these things escape his notice; for this has not been done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets? I know that you do.' And Agrippa replied to Paul, 'In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian.'"



## A CIVIL RIGHTS ISSUE

### The Historical Prejudices

"If one were to study historically the life of Jesus of Nazareth, he would find a very remarkable man, not the Son of GOD". It is sometimes stated to me this way: "Following the 'modern historical' approach one would never discover the resurrection." Do you know, it is true. Before you jump to a conclusion, let me explain. For many today, the study of history is incorporated with the ideas that there is no GOD, miracles are not possible, we live in a closed system and there is no supernatural. With these presuppositions they begin their "critical, open and honest" investigation of history. When they study the life of Christ and read about His miracles or resurrection, they conclude that it was not a miracle or a resurrection because we know (not historically, but philosophically) that there is no supernatural. Therefore, these things cannot be. What men have done is to rule out the resurrection of Christ even before they start an historical investigation of the resurrection.

These presuppositions are not so much historical biases but, rather, *philosophical prejudices*.

Their approach to history rests on the "rationalistic presuppositions" that Christ could not have been raised from the dead. Instead of beginning with the historical data, they preclude it by "metaphysical speculation."

John W. Montgomery writes:

"The fact of the resurrection cannot be discounted on *a priori*, philosophical grounds; miracles are impossible only if one so defines them - but such definition rules out proper historical investigation." 12/139-144

I quote Montgomery quite extensively on this issue because he is the one who has stimulated my thinking about history.

Montgomery says:

"Kant conclusively showed that all arguments and systems begin with presuppositions; but this does not mean that all presuppositions are equally desirable. It is better to begin, as we have, with presuppositions of method (which will yield truth) rather than with presuppositions of substantive content (which assume a body of truth already). In our modern world we have found that the presuppositions of empirical method best fulfill this condition; but note that we are operating only with the presuppositions of scientific method, not with the rationalistic assumptions of Scientism ('the Religion of Science')." 12/144

Huizenga's comments are cited by Montgomery concerning historical skepticism ("De Historische Idee", in his *Verzamelde Werken*, VII [Haarlem, 1950], 134ff.: quoted in translation in Fritz Stern [ed], *The Varieties of History* [New York: Meridian Books, 1956], p.302).

Huizenga states:

"The strongest argument against historical skepticism...is this: the man who doubts the possibility of correct historical evidence and tradition cannot then accept his own evidence, judgment, combination and interpretation. He cannot limit his doubt to his historical criticism, but is required to let it operate on his own life. He discovers at once that he not only lacks conclusive evidence in all sorts of aspects of his own life that he had quite taken for granted, but also that there is no evidence whatever. In short, he finds himself forced to accept a general philosophical skepticism along with his historical skepticism. And general philosophical skepticism is a nice intellectual game, but one cannot live by it." 12/139,140

Millar Burrows of Yale, the American expert on the Dead Sea Scrolls cited also by Montgomery, writes:

There is a type of Christian faith...rather strongly represented today, [that] regards the affirmations of Christian faith as confessional statements which the individual accepts as a member of the believing community, and which are not dependent on reason or evidence. Those who hold this positions will not admit that historical investigation can have anything to say about the uniqueness of Christ. They are often skeptical as to the possibility of knowing anything about the historical Jesus, and seem content to dispense with such knowledge. I cannot share this point of view. I am profoundly convinced that the historic revelation of GOD in Jesus of Nazareth must be the cornerstone of any faith that is really Christian. Any historical question about the real Jesus who lived in Palestine nineteen centuries ago is therefore fundamentally

important." 11/15,16

Montgomery adds:

Historical events are "unique, and the test of their factual character can be only the accepted documentary approach that we have followed here. No historian has a right to a closed system of causation, for, as the Cornell logician Max Black has shown in a recent essay ["Models and Metaphors" (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962), p.16], the very concept of cause is 'a peculiar, unsystematic, and erratic notion,' and therefore 'any attempt to state a "universal law of causation" must prove futile.' " 11/76

The historian Ethelbert Stauffer can give us some suggestions on how to approach history:

"What do we [as historians] do when we experience surprises which run counter to all our expectations, perhaps ll our convictions and even our period's whole understanding of truth? We say as one great historian used to say in such instances: "It is surely possible." And why not? For the critical historian nothing is impossible." 11/76

The historian Philip Schaff adds to the above:

"The purpose of the historian is not to construct a history from preconceived notions and to adjust it to his own liking, but to reproduce it from the best evidence and to let it speak for itself." 17/175

Robert M. Horn is very helpful in understanding people's biases in approaching history:

"To put it at its most obvious, a person who denies GOD's existence will not subscribe to belief in the Bible.

"A Muslim, convinced that GOD cannot beget, will not accept as the Word of GOD, a book that teaches that Christ is the only begotten Son of GOD.

"Some believe that GOD is not personal, but rather the Ultimate, the Ground of Being. Such will be predisposed to reject the Bible as GOD's personal self-revelation. On their premise, the Bible cannot be the personal word of 'I AM WHO I AM' (Exodus 3:14).

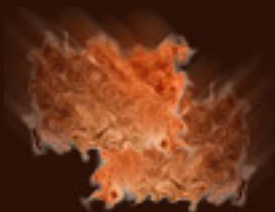
"Others rule out the supernatural. They will not be likely to give credence to the book which teaches that Christ rose from the dead.

"Still others hold that GOD cannot communicate His truth undistorted through sinful men; hence they regard the Bible as, at least in parts, no more than human." 8/10

A *basic* definition of history for me is "a knowledge of the past based on testimony." Some immediately say, "I don't agree." Then I ask, "Do you believe Lincoln lived and was President of the United States?" "Yes," is usually their reply. However, no one I've met has personally seen and observed Lincoln. The only way one knows is by testimony.



Precaution: When you give history this definition, you have to determine the trustworthiness of your witnesses. This will be dealt with in chapter four.



## I MUST BE BLIND

### Which Leap?

Often the Christian is accused of taking a blind "leap into the dark." This idea often finds itself rooted in Kierkegaard.

For me, Christianity was not a "leap into the dark," but rather "a step into the light". I took the evidence that I could gather and put it on the scales. The scales tipped the way of Christ being the Son of GOD and resurrected from the dead. It was so overwhelmingly leaning to Christ that when I became a Christian, it was a "step into the light" rather than a "leap into the darkness".

If I had exercised "blind faith", I would have rejected Jesus Christ and turned my back on all the evidence.

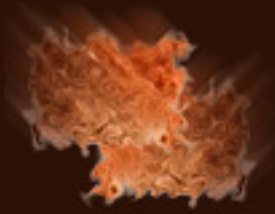
Be careful. I did not prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus was the Son of GOD. What I did was investigate the evidence and weight the pros and cons. The results showed that Christ must be who He claimed to be, and I had to make a decision, which I did. The immediate reaction of many is, "You found what you wanted to find". That is not the case. I confirmed through investigation what I wanted to refute. I set out to disprove Christianity. I had biases and prejudices not for Christ but contrary to Him.

Hume would say historic evidence is invalid because one cannot establish "absolute truth". I was not looking for absolute truth but rather "historical probability."

"Without an objective criterion," says John W. Montgomery, "one is at a loss to make a meaningful choice among *a priori*s. The resurrection provides a basis in historical probability for trying the Christian faith. Granted, the basis is only one of probability, not of certainty, but probability is the sole ground on which finite human beings can make any decisions. Only deductive logic and pure mathematics provide 'apodictic certainty,' and they do so because they stem from self-evident formal axioms (e.g., the tautology, if A then A) involving no matter of fact. The moment we enter the realm of fact, we must depend on probability; this may be unfortunate, but it is unavoidable." 12/141

At the conclusion of his four articles in *His* magazine, John W. Montgomery says, concerning history and Christianity, that he has "...tried to show that the weight of historical probability lies on the side of the validity of Jesus' claim to be GOD incarnate, the Savior of man, and the

coming Judge of the world. If probability does in fact support these claims (and can we really deny it, having studied the evidence?), then we must act in behalf of them." 11/19



## WILL THE REAL MR. EXCUSE PLEASE STAND UP?

### Intellectual Excuses

The rejection of Christ is often not so much of the "mind," but of the "will"; not so much "I can't," but "I won't".

I have met many people with intellectual excuses, but few with intellectual problems (however, I have met some).

Excuses can cover a multitude of reasons. I greatly respect a man who has taken time to investigate the claims of Christ and concludes he just can't believe. I have a rapport with a man who knows why he doesn't believe (factually and historically), for I know why I believe (factually and historically). This gives us a common ground (though different conclusions).

I have found that most people reject Christ for one or more of the following reasons:

1. Ignorance - Romans 1:18-23 (often self-imposed), Matthew 22:29
2. Pride - John 5:40-44
3. Moral problem - John 3:19,20

I was counseling a person who was fed up with Christianity because she believed it was not historical and there was just nothing to it factually. She had convinced everyone that she had searched and found profound intellectual problems as the result of her university studies. One after another would try to persuade her intellectually and to answer her many accusations.

I listened and then asked several questions. Within 30 minutes she admitted she had fooled everyone and that she developed these intellectual doubts in order to excuse her moral life.

One needs to answer the basic problem or real question and not the surface detour that often manifests itself.

A student in a New England university said he had an intellectual problem with Christianity and just could not therefore accept Christ as Savior. "Why can't you believe?" I asked. He replied, "The New Testament is not reliable." I then asked, "If I demonstrate to you that the New Testament is one of the most reliable pieces of literature of antiquity, will you believe?" He retorted, "NO!" "You don't have a problem with your mind, but with your will," I answered.

A graduate student at the same university, after a lecture on "The Resurrection: Hoax or History?", was bombarding me with questions intermingled with accusations (later I found out he did it to most Christian speakers). Finally, after 45 minutes of dialogue, I asked him, "If I prove to you beyond a shadow of a doubt that Christ was raised from the dead and is the Son of GOD, will you consider Him?" The immediate and emphatic reply was, "NO!"

Michael Green cites Aldous Huxley, the atheist, who has destroyed the beliefs of many and has been hailed as a great intellect. Huxley admits his own biases (*Ends and Means*, pp. 270ff.) when he says:

"I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning; consequently assumed that it had none, and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption. The philosopher who finds no meaning in the world is not concerned exclusively with a problem in pure metaphysics, he is also concerned to prove that there is no valid reason why he personally should not do as he wants to do, or why his friends should not seize political power and govern in the way that they find most advantageous to themselves...For myself, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation, sexual and political." 8/36

Bertrand Russel is an example of an intelligent atheist who did not give careful examination to the evidence for Christianity. In his essay, *Why I Am Not a Christian*, it is obvious that he has not even considered the evidence of and for the resurrection of Jesus and, by his remarks, it is doubtful as to whether he has even glanced at the New Testament. It seems incongruous that a man would not deal with the resurrection in great detail since it is *the* foundation of Christianity. 8/36

John 7:17 assures one:

"If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of GOD, or whether I speak from Myself."

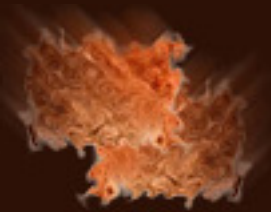
If any man comes to the claims of Jesus Christ wanting to know if they are true, willing to follow His teachings if they are true, he will know. But one cannot come unwilling to accept and expect to find out.

Pascal, the French philosopher, writes:

"The evidence of GOD's existence and His gift is more than compelling, but those who insist that they have no need of Him or it will always find ways to discount the offer." 13/n.p.







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