

WHY I BELIEVE

Jesus is the Son of God

Jesus of Nazareth was not a mythical, fictional character created by men's imagination. He was a real person like you and me. He was born about 4 B.C. and died about A.D. 29, according to the Gregorian calendar, which is widely used today.

Was He merely an outstanding man? Or was He more than a man? Consider the abundant evidence that Jesus was — and is — the Christ, the Son of God.

1. I believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, because of the **PROPHECIES**.

All of the Old Testament was written hundreds of years before Jesus was born. It contains more than 300 prophecies about the coming “Messiah” (Hebrew language) or “Christ” (Greek language), which means “anointed One.” It foretold things He would do and things His enemies would do to Him.

When Jesus was on earth, there were *copies* of the Old Testament books in synagogues throughout the land of Israel. For example, the synagogue in Nazareth had a copy of Isaiah (Lk. 4:16-21; see Acts 8:28). Also, on a remote plateau near the Dead Sea, devout Jews at Qumran were busy *preserving copies*, and *making more copies*, of Old Testament books and other documents. Israel was *literally full* of copies of the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah. So, when Jesus came to earth, He did not need to carry a “passport.” The documents to show His identity had been sent on ahead!

Between A.D. 1946 and 1956, hundreds of Old Testament scrolls were found in caves near Qumran. Many of these copies were written before Jesus was born. So, people can now see *some of the very documents* which were in Israel when Jesus was fulfilling the prophecies written in them!

The Great Isaiah Scroll

Partly shown at the right is a copy of the entire book of Isaiah. This copy, known as *The Great Isaiah Scroll*, was written about 125 B.C. It was found in a cave near Qumran in 1947 and is now on display in The Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

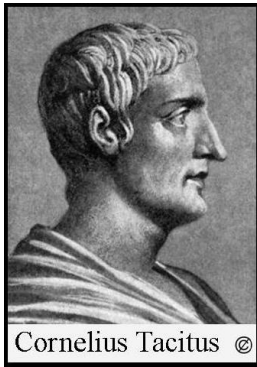
The center section in this photo shows all twelve verses of Isaiah 53.

From a photo by Ardon Bar Hama, via Wikimedia Commons. Original Source: Website of The Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

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Isaiah prophesied around **700 B.C.** He foretold that: the Saviour would come from the family of Jesse (Isa. 11:1-5); He would be born of a virgin (7:14); His forerunner would preach in the wilderness (40:3); He would preach in Galilee (9:1-2); His people would reject Him (53:3); He would not speak in His own defense during His trials (53:7); He would be whipped and killed for our sins (53:5-6, 8); He would intercede (mediate) for the sinners (53:12); and, His grave and death would be with the wicked and the rich (53:9).



Cornelius Tacitus ©

Now notice that human historians mention Christ and His death. The Roman historian **Cornelius Tacitus**, born about A.D. 53, was not a follower of Christ. Yet he recorded that Christ was executed by the Roman governor Pontius Pilate during the reign of emperor Tiberius (*The Annals and the Histories*, 15:44; from *Britannica Great Books*, Vol. 15, p. 168).

The historian **Flavius Josephus** was a Jew, born in Jerusalem about A.D. 37. He was not a follower of Jesus, but he wrote that Jesus taught men, worked marvelous deeds, and was killed on a cross by Pilate at the urging of Jewish leaders (Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, 18, 3.3). The death of Christ for us is the central message of the Bible. His death was foretold by prophets, recorded by New Testament writers, and verified by historians.



Flavius Josephus ©

About **700 B.C.**, **Micah** wrote that the ruler of God's people would come out of Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2). Before Jesus was born, His mother lived in Nazareth of Galilee, about 100 kilometers (65 miles) from Bethlehem. However, at the right time, the Roman emperor Caesar Augustus decreed that all the world should be taxed. For this, all families had to go to the city of their ancestors. So, Joseph and Mary went to the small town of Bethlehem, where their ancestors had lived. While there, Mary gave birth to Jesus, fulfilling Micah's prophecy from 700 years earlier.

About **1,000 years** before Jesus was born, **king David** wrote many Psalms. Some of them foretold: His betrayal by a friend (41:9); the vinegar and gall, which was given to Jesus to drink (69:21); the piercing of His hands and feet, which happened when Jesus was nailed to the cross (22:16); the dividing of His garments among several people, which soldiers did at the cross (22:18); the mocking by the people (22:7-8); His bones remaining unbroken (34:20); and His rising from death (16:10).

About **500 B.C.**, **Zechariah** foretold: His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on a donkey colt (Zech. 9:9); His betrayal for thirty pieces of silver (11:12-13); the scattering of His disciples (13:7); and His piercing, which was fulfilled when a soldier thrust a spear into the side of His body (12:10).

These are just a few examples. In the life of Jesus, all of the prophecies were fulfilled (happened exactly as foretold). Mere humans could not have known these facts about His life hundreds of years before He was born. The *fulfillment* of the prophecies reveals their *cause* and *effect*: **God** is the *cause* of the prophecies; the *effect* is the **verifying of Jesus** as His Son. No other person's life has been foretold like the life of Jesus!

2. I believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, because of the **VIRGIN BIRTH**.

While Mary was a virgin, the angel Gabriel told her, “ ‘...you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest...and of His kingdom there will be no end.’ Then Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I do not know [have not been with] a man?’ And the angel answered and said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God’ ” (Lk. 1:31-35). Mary had been promised to Joseph. When he learned that she was carrying a child, he was very troubled. But after an angel

explained it to him in a dream, he “...took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus” (Matt. 1:24-25). The human life of Jesus was conceived within Mary by the power of God’s Spirit. There is no other like Jesus who was human *and* the Son of God!

3. I believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, because of the VOICE of GOD.

Two times, human ears heard God declare that Jesus is His Son. At the start of His work, “...a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased’” (Matt. 3:17). Near the end of His life, “...a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!’” (Matt. 17:5). God acknowledged no other like Jesus!

4. I believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, because of His MIRACLES.

He fed five thousand people with five loaves of bread and two fish (Matt. 14:15-21). He stopped a storm (Matt. 8:26). He healed leprosy, blindness, and all kinds of diseases (Matt. 8:1-4; 9:27-31, 35; 4:23-24). He even raised the dead (Lk. 7:11-14; Jn. 11:39-44). Jesus worked many more miracles than the New Testament writers could record (Jn. 20:30-31).

Enemies of Jesus could not deny that He worked miracles (see Jn. 9:16; 11:47). Instead, some accused Him of using an evil power to do them (Matt. 12:24). Others said some of His miracles were unlawful (sinful) because He did them on a Holy day (Matt. 12:9-14). When He healed a woman who had not been able to stand up straight for eighteen years, “...the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, ‘There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day’” (Lk. 13:14). The ruler could not deny the miracle. He could only express anger about its *timing*.

The ultimate goal of the miracles was not money or fame. Their purposes were:

(1) To show God’s love. “So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight...” (Matt. 20:34).

(2) To verify His identity as the Christ: “...many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did” (Jn. 2:23); “...many of the people believed in Him...,” and they challenged doubters by asking, “When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this Man has done?” (Jn. 7:31).

(3) To certify His teachings as being from God. Even a Jewish ruler said, “...we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him” (Jn. 3:2).

(4) To lead us to heaven. He came “...to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk. 19:10).

Thousands of people saw and felt the miracles of Jesus. In Acts 2, Peter reminded the large crowd that *they* were eyewitnesses of the miracles of Jesus. He said Jesus was “...a man attested by God **to you** by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him **in your midst, as you yourselves also know**” (Acts 2:22). That day, three thousand people obeyed the gospel (2:36-41). Their obedience *confirmed* that Peter was telling the truth. They *were* eyewitnesses of His miracles.

The miracles are powerful evidence that Jesus is God’s Son. No other has worked so many marvelous miracles like Jesus!

5. I believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, because of His TEACHINGS.

He taught the highest standards of life and worship, and He moved people to make eternal choices. There was authority in His message and manner: “...*the people were astonished at His teaching. For He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes*” (Matt. 7:28-29). One time, some religious leaders sent officers to arrest Jesus. The officers found Him, listened to Him, then returned without Him. When the leaders asked, “*Why have you not brought Him?*”, the officers answered, “*No man ever spoke like this Man!*” (Jn. 7:45-46).

Jesus teaches us how to love God and others. He says the purpose of our worship and work should not be to glorify ourselves, but to glorify God and help people (Jn. 4:24; Matt. 5:16; 6:1-18; 23:1-12; 25:31-46). He instructs us in moral purity, honesty, unselfish service, fairness, compassion, and forgiveness. He tells us, “...*love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you*” (Matt. 5:44).

Using powerful parables, Jesus wrapped heavenly food in stories of the earth and nourished the hearts of men. The common people heard Him gladly, but many “wise” men did not (Mk. 12:37; Matt. 11:25-26; 13:10-12). He exposed error, rebuked sin, and warned of eternal condemnation upon all who do not obey God (Matt. 15:1-14; 23:1-39; Jn. 5:28-29). When enemies tried to trap Him with questions, they always failed, and they were often caught in their own traps (Matt. 19:3-9; 22:15-46).

Some of His teachings foretold details of future events, such as His death and resurrection (Matt. 16:21; 20:17-19). He also foretold the destruction of Jerusalem (Matt. 24:1-35), which occurred at the hands of the Roman army in A.D. 70.

The teachings of Jesus show that He is the Son of God. There is no other teacher like Jesus!

6. I believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, because of His LIFE.

He “...*did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many*” (Matt. 20:28). He lived a life of unselfish service. He did not own land, cattle, or even a house, and would not let men make Him an earthly king (Lk. 9:58; Jn. 6:15). He came to seek sinners, not treasures or pleasures (Lk. 19:10).

When He saw a family’s sorrow at the loss of a loved one, He groaned and wept (Jn. 11:32-38). His compassion moved Him to feed the hungry, heal the sick, and raise the dead. And, He invites all the poor of every nation to *come live with Him in His home forever* (Matt. 5:3; 11:5; 28:19-20; Jn. 14:2; 1 Jn. 5:11-13).

Satan tried to lure Jesus into sin (Matt. 4:1-11). Jesus “...*was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin*” (Heb. 4:15). Even when He was abused, Jesus did not take revenge. He told the Roman governor Pilate, “*My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here*” (Jn. 18:36). He “*committed no sin*” and “...*when He was reviled [insulted], did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten...*” (1 Pet. 2:22-23). Instead, He said, “*Father, forgive them...*” (Lk. 23:34). No other person ever lived a perfect, sinless life like Jesus!

7. I believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, because of His DEATH.

All of us sin, which makes us unclean (Rom. 3:23; Isa. 64:6). Sin breaks our fellowship with our pure, sinless Father. The result is “death” — separation from Him, the

source of all life (Isa. 59:2; Rom. 6:23; Acts 17:25-28). There are no deeds we can do which can *remove* our sins or *earn* a place in heaven (Eph. 2:8-9).

God does not want anyone to perish (2 Pet. 3:9). So, before creation, He planned to send His Son to be “*the Lamb of God,*” the perfect sacrifice for our sins (1 Pet. 1:18-25; Jn. 1:29). “*For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just [righteous] for the unjust, that He might bring us to God...*” (1 Pet. 3:18; see 1 Jn. 1:3; Rom. 5:8-11). Jesus left heaven to suffer at the hands of *His own creation* — men whom God had made through Him (Col. 1:14-17; Phil. 2:5-8). He let them slap Him, mock Him, spit in His face, whip Him, “crown” Him with thorns, hit Him on the head with a reed, drive nails through His hands and feet, and leave Him to die on the cross. He took the death penalty for us.

Amazing grace! The greatest expression of the love of God and His Son was the death of Jesus for our sins (Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 3:16). In earth and heaven’s darkest hour, God’s love beamed brightest from the cross! There is no other sacrifice like Jesus!

8. I believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, because of His **RESURRECTION.**

Three days after He died, Jesus arose from death! During forty days, He appeared to His disciples many times (Acts 1:3; 1 Cor. 15:1-7). He showed them the nail marks in His hands and feet, then ate some food to show that they were seeing the same body which had died (Lk. 24:36-43). At one time, more than 500 people saw the risen Jesus (1 Cor. 15:6). He was “*...declared to be the Son of God with power...by the resurrection from the dead*” (Rom. 1:4). After the forty days, He ascended to the right side of God (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Pet. 3:22). Now, from heaven, He is ruling over His kingdom, the church (Eph. 1:20-23; Col. 1:13, 18). There is no other like Jesus who arose from death to never die again!

After Jesus was killed, there were *no riots* by His followers. Instead, the apostles waited, then boldly testified that they had seen the risen Jesus — and they offered salvation to those who had murdered Him (Acts 2)! By declaring that Jesus arose and is reigning in heaven, they risked persecution at the hands of those who had killed Him. But none of them ever renounced their testimony. They were willing to suffer and die, rather than abandon their testimony (Acts 4:18-22, 33; 5:17-42; 12:2). Their courage shows that they *did* see the risen Jesus!

The abundant evidence confirms it. Jesus *is* the Christ, the Son of God! There is *no other* like Jesus!

Jesus came to save us by grace through the gift of His death. He invites us to believe in Him, repent of our sins, confess our faith that He is the Christ, the Son of God, and be “*baptized into Christ...into His death*” for the forgiveness of sins (Rom. 6:3-4, 23; 8:1; Gal. 3:26-27; Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:36-47; 8:36-39; 22:16).

When Jesus returns to take the saved to heaven, He wants *you* to be among them! Are you ready?

We invite you to unite in prayer and study with us and many others around the world as we learn to follow Christ and be the church of Christ, by the grace and help of God.