

Jesus, the Man, the Myth, the LORD

“For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.” (I Cor. 15.16-19)

Introduction

- ❖ At the very center of Christianity is the Doctrine of Christ. That Christ was and is the second person of the Godhead. That he humbled himself, and became his creation. That he went to the cross and fulfilled the perfect requirements of the law, therefore appeasing the Justice and wrath of God. His death, burial and resurrection marked victory over death and hell and paid the eternal price for all men’s sins.
- ❖ The easiest way to falsify Christianity is prove that Christ did not rise, did not exist, or was not who he said he was. Put simply “No Christ, no Christianity.” If Christ can be shown then to have existed, died and rise again then Christianity has a verified position to stand. So today we will be looking at the life, death and resurrection of this pivotal individual, the LORD Jesus Christ.

The Gospels

- ❖ Christ asked his disciples a seemingly trivial, yet profound question. “Whom do men say that I am?” (mark 8.27b) This was a question to see what they had heard and saw of the general populous’ opinion. Christ would go on to ask their opinion of who he was since they had been traveling with him and hearing his teaching and claims. Their answer was that he was the Christ (messiah). First I would like to survey the Gospels for their claims about Christ and lay out the basic doctrine found in them. This will then lead us into a discussion of the Gospels’ historical accuracy and reliability.
- ❖ Christ in the Gospels (on guard ch 8)
 - Messiah – Anointed One
 - Matt 8.27-33 The messiah or the Christ was supposed to do certain things. He was supposed to reestablish David’s throne, for example. While instead he was crucified with enemies. Why then did his followers believe he was the messiah? And why did he not correct their error in believing he was if in fact he knew he was not?
 - Another example of his messianic awareness is found in (Matt. 11.2-6, Luke 7.19-23) John asks Christ “Art thou he that should come? Or look we for another?” this is in regards to John’s earlier statement found in (Mark 1.1-8 and John 1.15-18,25-27,29) he and the authors of those books clearly thought Jesus was the Christ. So the answer Christ gave Johns question was from different parts of Isaiah ending in

(Isaiah 61.1) these describing the coming of the anointed one who would deliver his people.

- Luke 2.8-14
- Isaiah 9.6 – The mighty God
- Christ as Son of God in the Gospels – Divinity
 - Matt 16.16
 - Mark 14.61-62
 - Luke 1.32
 - Luke 8.28
 - Jesus often was referred to as the Son of God and he also referred to himself this way. He did not claim this as if he were “a” son of God, but “the” Son of God. This was different than that of the Jewish kings, or righteous men being referred to as God’s children. This is very obvious to those studying the gospels closely and for those who don’t, (John 10.27-39) should make it clear he thought himself something more than man.
- God as son of man – Humanity
 - “The son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost”
 - This title is based on the passage in Daniel 7.13-14 – The divine kingdom of Daniel 2 the stone cut without hands.
 - While claiming to be the son of man he claimed divine status yet again as in Mark 14.60-64 this son of man would set up an earthly kingdom and was God.
- Writers claim he was God – Ascribed Divinity
 - John 1.1-3,14 – Was God
 - Matt 1.23 – God with us
 - John 20.28 – “My Lord and my God” Christ never corrects him.
 - Is there any question who Christ thought he was, or the Gospel writers?

Historical Reliability of the scriptures

❖ Historical extra biblical writings

- Besides the Gospels there are many other Jewish, Roman and Christian witnesses to the events found in the New Testament, especially in regards to the life, ministry, death, burial, resurrection, and impact of Christ. Some include
 - Josephus – (AD 37-97) Jewish historian, *Antiquities*
 - Tacitus – (AD 55-120) Roman historian, *Annals*
 - Pliny the Younger – (AD 112) Roman Governor, *Epistles X*
 - Suetonius (ca AD 120) Roman historian, *Life of Claudius*
 - Jewish Talmud (commentary on Jewish Law, completed AD 500)
 - Lucian (second century AD), Greek satirist
- What they say about Christ
 - He was a provocative teacher, a wise and virtuous man from the region of Judea
 - Reported to have preformed miracles and made prophetic claims
 - Jewish leaders condemned him for acts of sorcery and apostasy
 - He was crucified by the Roman procurator Pontius Pilate
 - Christians reported that he had risen from the dead.
 - Roman Christians charged with crimes and met horrific persecution
 - First-century Christians worshiped Jesus Christ as God
 - Disciples were often known for their courage and virtue

The Almighty God or the Almighty Dot

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- The amount of information we know about this Jesus is staggering considering he was some back water preacher from some Podunk country some 2000 yrs ago.
- ❖ Archeology confirmation
 - Archeology also confirms the accuracy of the Gospels and the New Testament accounts of events and places.
 - No, Archeological discovery to date has proven anything in the Bible to be false or inaccurate. Yet we discover more and more that confirm the Biblical account.
- ❖ List of reasons it is not made up
 - Many reasons exist that the Biblical authors did not make up the gospels, besides evidence from secular history and archeological discoveries.
 - These include many embarrassing incidents and oddities that one would not include if they were to make us a story. Some of those elements that are too odd to make up are...
 - Jewish people's continuous unfaithfulness to God
 - Peter denying Christ three times
 - Peter being addressed as Satan
 - Disciples scattering like cowards when Jesus is arrested
 - The Disciples hiding like cowards in the house when he appeared
 - Thomas' unbelief about the resurrection
 - The women finding the empty tomb first
 - Jesus inability to do miracles in his home town
 - The disciples had nothing to gain and everything to lose (family, friends, position in community, freedom and ultimately their lives).
 - Why did they go from cowards to burned at the stake or fed to lions over a lie that he had risen?
 - Paul's change from killing Christians to being a champion of them makes no sense if Christ had not risen.

- Cult teacher's teachings die with them. This point was raised by Paul's mentor Gamaliel, in (Acts 5.29-40) he argued that if this was just some cult for self advancement and a lie, the death of Christ would be sufficient to disperse his followers. Like the People's Temple and the Jim Jones affair. Obviously Christianity is different than other religions and cults. Many religions do in fact outlive their founders but these all have some things in common. They are works based and therefore appeal to our pride, and many are based in some truth, like a creator or eternal state.

Christ's true identity Legend, Liar, lunatic, Lord?

- ❖ C.S. Lewis once said that Christ was either a liar who claimed divinity when he knew he was not, or else he was a lunatic on par with the man who claimed he is a poached egg, or else he was Lord. Another option is that he was completely a legend and not any of those things. So let's weigh the evidence.
 - Legend
 - As we have seen from the historical and Archeological evidence this is not really an option at all. This may be why Lewis never considered it. The historical data concerning Christ and the New Testament as historical entities is overwhelming. Christ was no legend.
 - Liar
 - Some may say that Jesus simply was lying about being God. Yet, many people report that Jesus was a moral and virtuous teacher. Even unbelievers say he was a great moral teacher. How would he be moral if he taught lies? He backed up his claims with many miracles, fulfilled prophecy, and ultimately by rising from the dead. His claims have been substantiated in scripture and secular history.
 - Lunatic
 - This is the idea that Christ was real and really did believe and teach he was God. They say he was just delusional and ultimately and insane man. How does this stack up against the facts of history though? Again he substantiated his claims and does not display the classic earmarks of insanity.
 - Lord
 - All these other explanations of Christ are severely lacking in explanatory power and facts. They clearly are shear desperate moves to not admit the true. That Jesus Christ was who he claimed to be the one and only God of the universe and savior. By him and though his death is the only way to God. Not of our works but his grace though faith. Many want nothing to do with this so again they make up ridiculous stories to try to validate their unbelief.