

How We Know...

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1. HOW WE KNOW GOD EXISTS

Everyone at one time or another wonders, is there really a God? How can I be sure? We've all heard people say man just made up the idea of a God to be a crutch for emotional cripples. What if they are right? Some even say the idea of a 'god' is harmful because it takes away a person's personal responsibility. They say we have outgrown the need of God in this enlightened, scientific era. How are we to answer these claims? How are we to teach our children? Paul says we must "Be ready always to give an answer to any man who asks you the reason of the hope that is in you." (1 Peter 3:15) What is our answer to those who say we cannot prove the existence of God?

First, we must admit we cannot prove God by the scientific method. But neither can anyone prove Napoleon. There is nothing of either of them to handle, to put under a microscope, but there is plenty of evidence to prove the existence of each one. We're only concerned with God, not Napoleon. There is logical, rational proof that there is a God. These are some of the main arguments:

1. THE COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT is based on cause and effect. There must be an uncaused **cause** for every effect. No **effect** can be produced without a cause that is outside it and greater than it. That book on your table proves there was someone who made it, for it wouldn't have been able to make itself. The same is true of the world around us. This is also true of our subjective emotions like love and hate. There must have been someone beyond and greater than them to create them.

Part of this argument is based on **motion** in the universe. Nothing can move itself. An external agent or force is required. There must be a Being who is the ultimate source of all motion in the universe or it couldn't have gone from non motion to motion by itself.

Everything in nature is **interrelated** and absolutely dependent on the other. There must be a Being who is totally independent of and above this to start it all.

Everything is moving away from **perfection**, breaking down. The second law of thermodynamics states this. This winding down (entropy) points back to a starting time and shows things moving away from perfection. This, too, points back to God.

2. THE TELEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT is based on order and design. No one would ever think a wristwatch could come into being on its own. We assume there was an intelligent designer behind it. For this world to just 'happen' would be like the Gettysburg Address resulting from an explosion in a print shop! The fact that there is **order** in the universe points back to Someone causing that order (Hebrews 11:3). Evolution says it took billions of years for it to just 'happen,' recognizing the unlikelihood of it. **Design**, too, shows there is a God. Whatever is composed of parts requires a designer (Romans 1:20). Creation is stamped with beauty and design to show us God (Psalm 19:1).

3. THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT uses the existence of our **moral nature** to point to a God. Where did our moral nature come from? Surely our possession of it argues for the existence of a moral governor to whom man feels accountable and responsible. All people everywhere at all times have had moral standards and enforced them. Mankind has always known there is a right and wrong (Romans 2:14-15), even if they don't always see the same things as right and wrong. In addition, the moral values we hold inside are not always rewarded in this life. Something inside man demands that

there must be a reward for good and a punishment for evil. All men long for justice. Where did this desire come from? Even more, when will it be fulfilled?

This, and the basic belief in the afterlife point to a power beyond man that will reward good and punish evil. We all know there must be something more to life than the years on earth. Where does this restlessness come from if there is not more to this life?

Man everywhere in all time has naturally known there is a **power greater than and outside** himself that he has worshipped. Satan counterfeits this but it is natural in man to look for that which is outside himself and greater than himself.

4. THE SUBJECTIVE INNER AWARENESS ARGUMENT isn't of the same rational basis as the arguments mentioned above, but those who are God's children know inside there is a God. It can't be put under a microscope, or even described, but there is a confident inner awareness that there is a God (Galatians 4:6). Deep within us is an assurance beyond the need of external proof that there is a God who loves and cares. Where does this come from if not from God Himself?

If there is this strong, conclusive proof of God, then **WHY DO SO MANY PEOPLE REJECT THE IDEA OF GOD?** I think the basic reason is that man doesn't want to believe in God today because if he admits there is a power greater than and outside himself then it only stands to reason that man is accountable to that power. If there is a God man is responsible to find what God desires of him and then obey it. Man doesn't want that, He wants to be his own god and not submit to anyone. Thus it isn't for lack of evidence that man rejects the idea of God, but purely because of self-centered presuppositions. In order to live life for himself and continue in his own prideful and selfish existence, man must deny the fact of a God. To admit to a God means man then must obey His will and direction or face the consequences. Modern man doesn't want to do either. He thinks by denying there is a God he exempts himself from accountability to that God. However just saying God doesn't exist doesn't make it so. Even convincing yourself completely He doesn't exist does nothing to remove Him from existence. In doing so man is gambling with his own eternal existence, exchanging it for a few short years of self-centered indulgence.

How should we approach those who deny the existence of God? Don't bring up these rational, intellectual arguments unless they are open enough to consider them. Belief starts in the heart, not the head. Pray for them to be open to the truth. Share with them how Jesus meets your needs, gives you meaning and satisfaction, purpose and peace. They can't argue with this nor disprove it. God will use it in His time to convict and convince them of their need. He will fan the flames you start. Keep off intellectual arguments. You'll never force anyone to believe something they don't want to believe. Biblical arguments only work with those who are open to finding the truth. We must always be ready to give a person the reason of the hope that is in us!

2. HOW WE KNOW THE BIBLE IS TRUE

Has anyone ever challenged you about whether you know the Bible is true? What can you say when it's claimed that the Bible was written by men but inspired by God? No one doubts that the Bible claims to be inspired by God, but so do other 'holy' books. How do we know the Bible is the one true book from God to man? This is the way I explain it:

Starting with the acceptance that there is a God (article 1 in this series), then it is reasonable that God would reveal Himself to man. If he didn't man could never know anything about Him. God has revealed some things about Himself in creation, but that is just the beginning. For man to really know God, **it is necessary for God to reveal Himself to man**, for man could never find God without God making the first move. If God has truth to reveal, if man is accountable, and if God wants a relationship with man that must start from God's side. Not only is this necessary, **it is also possible for God to reveal Himself to man**. Were He really God it would be totally within His possibility to communicate truth to us and keep it accurate down through the ages. That would not be too hard for Him at all. Thus we accept that a revelation from God to man is both possible and necessary. But is the Bible that revelation? I say it is.

18 REASONS FROM OUTSIDE THE BIBLE PROVING IT IS GOD'S WORD

1. The Bible is **theocentric** (God-centered), not anthropocentric (man-centered). If man wrote the Bible, he would be the leading character. In the Bible God is sovereign and the absolute authority (I Chronicles 29:11; Isaiah 43:7). Man's highest good is submission to His will. The purpose of all we do is for His glory (Revelation 4:11). All other 'holy' books focus on man and build up man, not God.

2. The Bible is **monotheistic** (one God), not polytheistic (more than one god). 'Scholars' say that man started with many gods and eventually evolved to having just one. The Bible, at the beginning of man, says there was just one. If man were writing the Bible he would have one god evolve out of many. Even the fact that the Jews were worshipping the golden calf and other gods at the time the first commandment was written (saying God was the only god, Exodus 20:1-6) show that even they believed there was more than one god.

3. The fact of the **Trinity** helps prove man didn't write the Bible. Would natural man write about something that he could not understand, something with no parallel or analogy in nature? No finite mind has ever comprehended how 3 separate persons could form one essence/substance. If man wrote the Bible he would NOT write about a Triune God.

4. If man wrote the Bible, would he say that the world was **created** from nothing (Hebrews 11:3)? Nothing is a state man has never known. He would come up with some rational explanation, as evolution tries to do today.

5. If man wrote the Bible would he say his basic nature is evil and **sinful** (Romans 3:23)? Would man say there was nothing he could do but accept God's cure for sin (Ephesians 2:8-9). Every religion man has developed or 'holy' book man has written has something man must do to earn/deserve removal of sin, but not the Bible.

6. The **extent of revelation** in the Bible shows it is beyond what man could or would write. How could man write of things beyond his own senses and experiences? Yet the Bible speaks authoritatively about heaven, hell and eternity without hesitation (I Corinthians 2:9-12; II Corinthians 5:8; Luke 16:19-26; Revelation 19:20-21).

7. If man wrote the Bible, its **ethics** would be based on individual, relative decisions (Judges 17:6) rather than absolutes. Because man is a child of wrath (Ephesians 2:3) by nature his ethics would be corrupt (as they are today apart from the Bible) and would end in chaos. One example: the Bible

tells us to use things (I Corinthians 7:31) and love people (Romans 12:10). Man's ethics are the opposite.

8. It is humanly impossible for 44 authors over a period of 1500 years unknown to each other and from vastly different backgrounds and cultures to arrive at 66 books so internally systematic and consistent as the Bible. It would be like 44 men each tossing a stone on a pile over 1500 years and the finished product being a modern hospital. There must have been one Author behind it all.

9. The fantastic number of **fulfilled prophecies** in the Bible show that it is no book authored by mere man. Experts in probability mathematics have come up with these statistics concerning the following prophecies:

7 prophecies against Tyre in Ezekiel 26:3-4,7-8,12,14,21 coming true: 1 in 7.5×10^7

5 prophecies against Samaria in Hosea 13:16 & Micah 1:6 coming true: 1 in 4×10^4

5 prophecies against Gaza & Ashkelon in Amos 1:8, Jer 47:5, Zeph 2:4-7: 1 in 1.2×10^4

3 prophecies against Moab & Ammon in Ezek 25:3-4, Jer 48:47; 49:6: 1 in 10^3

9 prophecies against Edom in Isa 34:6-15, Jer 49:17-18; Ezek 25:13-14; 35:5-7: 1 in 10^4

8 prophecies against Babylon in Isa 13:19-22; 14:23; Jer 51:26,43: 1 in 5×10^9

9 prophecies about Jerusalem in Jeremiah 31:38-40: 1 in 8×10^{10}

7 prophecies about Palestine in Lev 26:31-33; Ezek 36:33-35: 1 in 2×10^5

9 prophecies about Petra & Edom in Isa 34:6-18; Ezek 25:13-14; 35:5-7:1 in 2×10^5

4 prophecies about Thebes & Memphis in Ezek 30:13-15: 1 in 10^3

4 prophecies about Nineveh in Nahum 1:8,10; 2:6; 3:10,13,19: 1 in 10^2

The probability of these above 11 prophecies of places coming true is 1 in 5.76×10^{59} ! This is almost impossible to visualize. Suppose this number were silver dollars. There would be enough of them to fill 10^{28} suns! Or think of it like this. In the universe there are about 2 trillion galaxies, each containing about 100 million stars. From our 5.76×10^{59} we have enough silver dollars to fill all of the stars in all of the galaxies 2×10^5 times! Imagine that many silver dollars, yet only one silver dollar in all of these is marked. What are the chances of reaching into the galaxy and choosing that one marked one? The chance of that happening show the chance for someone to guess all these prophecies correctly! Even more astounding is the fact that these are only 11 prophecies. There are literally hundreds and hundreds of others which have already come true. (For more information about this see "Evidence That Demands A Verdict" by Josh McDowell).

10. The exceptional **literary value** of the Bible cannot be attributed to the natural ability of human writers. How could such unlearned men write such a surpassing piece of literary genius beyond their own ability? The Bible far exceeds the intellectual and moral qualifications of other books being written in its time such as the Talmud (Jewish), Apocrypha (Christian) and Koran (Islamic). The living quality of the words, reaching to all ages and social positions of people for century after century show its uniqueness. The Bible is deep enough for the most gifted scholar to spend a lifetime in one small part of it and never understand all that is there, but also simple enough for a young child to read and understand. One of the greatest truths expressed is just 7 monosyllables, each 3 letters or less: "You in me and I in you" (John 14:20). The Bible stories are never hurried or cramped, neither are they drawn out and boring. The Bible does not gloss over the sins of its heroes, neither does it overemphasize them. The values and opinions of the individual writers are not the focus, just the story they are telling.

11. Another proof for the Bible not being written by man is its **enduring freshness**. Voltaire said 150 years ago: "Within 100 years the Bible will be obsolete." It has not happened. In fact his home now houses a Bible society! The Bible never grows old. No other book in the world not only invites but sustains a ceaseless re-reading. Other books come and go, but the Bible has remained for thousands of years. It remains a fresh, up-to-date book, not an old book.

12. If man wrote the Bible would propose to further spiritual ends by love & reliance on divine **power** or by political force? The Inquisition and Crusades in Christianity as well as the history of Islam, Shintoism, Nazism, etc., all show man used political force to spread their beliefs. The Bible commands believers to spread faith in a way that is not natural for man, by sharing truth and showing love.

13. No human **scientist** has been able to avoid becoming obsolete eventually. Science is always changing but the Bible is scientifically infallible in all ages. The Bible spoke accurately of scientific truth thousands of years before man 'discovered' them, while the very writers often believed the opposite of what they were writing. For example, the Bible says the life of the flesh is in the blood (Leviticus 17:11) yet until recent times doctors bled people to cure them. The Bible says the physical world is basically non-physical in its ultimate essence (Hebrews 11:3; Colossians 1:16-17), something no human writer could or would have guessed at. The Bible has always said the earth was round (Isaiah 40:22), rotates (Job 38:12,14 – wrong verses), has gravity (Job 26:7- Does this prove gravity?), and the whole solar system orbits in the universe (Psalm 19:16- There is no verse 16 in chapter 19). Man believed the moon was greater than the earth for many centuries but the Bible says opposite (Genesis 1:16 – This says the sun is greater than the moon, not that the earth is greater than the moon). Even atomic energy and its results is found in II Peter 3:10-12 (the Greek word means to "loose" or "set free" as what happens when atoms are released). The laws of thermodynamics are there, too: #1 (Genesis 2:1-2; Hebrews 4:3,10- Law of Conservation of Energy – how do these verse show this?) and #2 (Psalm 102:25-27; Hebrews 1:10-12; Romans 8:20-22 - Entropy). There are also hundreds of other examples.

14. The number and accuracy of the **ancient manuscripts** of the Bible that have come down to us today show God's work in giving and keeping the Bible for us. Of Caesar's "Gallic Wars" we have only 9 manuscripts, the oldest 900 years after the original. Of the "History of Thucydides" and "History of Herodotus" we have only 8 manuscripts each, from 1300 years after they happened. Yet of the Old Testament we have 1,700 manuscripts, the oldest 100 years after the original. The variation percentage between them is one minor difference every 2,000 words! Evidence for the New Testament is even greater: 13,000 manuscripts with the oldest portion 10 years after the original and the variation percentage being only one minor difference every 200,000 words! Manuscripts have come down in many different languages and large portions come to us quoted in the works of hundreds of authors. The recent discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls pushed back the date of the earliest Old Testament manuscripts 1,000 years, yet there was no difference between them and what we had before they were discovered!

15. The study of **archaeology** continues to prove there are no historical inaccuracies in the Bible. William F. Albright, one of the greatest archaeologists ever, said, "The Bible's incredible historical memory has been many times validated by the process of discovery. No archaeological discovery has contradicted a Biblical reference." For many years scholars thought the Bible in error about the Hittites for no trace of that vast and great civilization had ever been found. In recent years, though, much has been found about them, again validating the truth of the Bible.

16. The preservation and regathering of the **nation Israel** after 2,000 years is proof of the greatness of the Bible. It has never happened, nor was it ever thought possible to happen, for a group of people to survive 2,000 years without a homeland and yet stay a separate cultural unity. That has happened with the Jews. Where are the Ammonites? Philistines? Hittites? Not only that, but the Jews are now back in their homeland. Truly a sociological miracle!

17. The **inner testimony of the Holy Spirit** inside His people gives us assurance that the Bible is true. He gives us peace and assurance within that the Bible indeed is God's book.

18. The **life and resurrection of Jesus** also give validity to the Bible. If everything about Him, His deity and His resurrection is true, then the Bible is true. If it is not true the Bible cannot be from God. This will be considered in the next article about the deity of Jesus.

If there is this great body of evidence, why do so many deny the Bible as being God's Word? Let me answer that with a story. Many years ago, while on a visit to England, a wealthy man was fascinated by a powerful microscope. Looking through its lens to study crystals and the and the petals of flowers, he was amazed at their beauty and detail. He bought a microscope and took it home. He thoroughly enjoyed using it until one day he examined some food he was planning to eat for dinner. He discovered tiny living creatures were crawling in it. He was especially fond of this food and didn't know what to do. Finally he concluded there was only one way out of this dilemma: he smashed the microscope to pieces. That is what man tries to do to the Bible when it shows up his sin. Like bugs under a rock run from the light when the rock is turned over, so man in sin runs from the light of God's truth about him.

3. HOW WE KNOW JESUS IS REALLY GOD

Did a man named Jesus really live in Palestine 2,000 years ago? Certainly, there is no doubt or question about that. No secular historian disbelieves that, for it is a proven fact of history. Many historians of Jesus' day wrote about Him. What is of much debate, however, is if He was God or not. Was He just a man like everyone else, or was He really and truly God? Did He just say He was? Or did His followers later write in such a way to make Him seem to be God when He had no such claims? The implications of these answers are great. How can we as Christians be sure? Let's look at some proofs of His deity from within and without the Bible.

LORD, LUNATIC or LIAR

First, there is no doubt that **Jesus claimed to be God**. The whole tenor of His life points to that. He verbally claimed to be God many, many times (John 8:58; 10:30; 17:5; etc.). He accepted worship as if He were God. He claimed to be able to forgive sin (Mark 2:5). Now, what are we to make of someone who claims to be God? What would you say if your neighbor started claiming to be God? There are three options or possibilities about such a person. He is crazy, a **lunatic**, for he truly thinks he is God but is wrong. He knows he isn't God but tries to convince everyone he is anyway, thus he is a **liar**. Or he really is God and **Lord** of all! Lord, lunatic or liar are our options. Just a good man, a fine teacher, a moral example -- these are not options for one who claims to be God! If He is a lunatic or liar He doesn't qualify as a good, fine person. If He is Lord He is overqualified and far more than just a good, fine person. Thus He is either God to be worshipped and obeyed or an impostor to be forgotten and ignored.

FULFILLED PROPHECIES

To prove Jesus is Lord we turn to the Bible, not to passages about miracles and claims that could possibly have been made up by writers after His death, but to Old Testament Prophecies whose fulfillment could not have been faked. Listed below are 61 Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah with their fulfillment in the New Testament also recorded:

1. Born of the seed of woman: Gen 3:15; Gal 4:4, Matt. 1:20
2. Born of a virgin: Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18,24,25; Lk 1:26-35
3. Son of God: Ps 2:7 (I Chron 17:11-14; II Sam 7:12-16), Mt 3:17; 16:16 (Mk 9:7; Lk 9:35)
4. Seed of Abraham Genesis 22:18 (12:2-3); Matthew 1:1; Gal 3:16
5. Son of Isaac: Genesis 21:12; Lk 3:23,34 (Mt 1:2)
6. Son of Jacob: (Num. 24:17 (Gen 35:10-12); Lk 3:23,34 (Mt 1:2; Lk 1:33)
7. Tribe of Judah: Genesis 49:10; Lk 3:23,33 (Mt 1:2; Heb 7:14)
8. Family line of Jesse: Isaiah 11:1, 10; Luke 3:23,32 (Mt 1:6)

9. House of David: Jeremiah 23:5 (II Sam 7:12-16; Ps 132:11); Lk 3:23,31 (Mt 1:1; 9:27)
10. Born at Bethlehem: Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1 (Jn 7:42, Mt 2:4-8; Lk 2:4-7)
11. Presented with gifts: Psalm 72:10 (Isaiah 60:6); Matthew 2:1,11
12. Herod kills children: Jeremiah 31:15; Matthew 2:16
13. His pre-existence: Micah 5:2 (Isa 9:6-7; Ps 102:25); Col 1:17 (Jn 1:1-2; 8:58; Rev 1:17)
14. He shall be called Lord: Psalm 110:1 (Jere 23:6); Luke 2:11; 20:41-44
15. Shall be Immanuel (God With Us): Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; Luke 7:16
16. Shall be a prophet: Deut 18:18; Matthew 21:11 (Luke 7:16; Jn 4:19; 6:14; 7:40)
17. He shall be a priest: Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 3:1; 5:5-6
18. He shall be a judge: Isaiah 33:22; John 5:30; II Timothy 4:1
19. He shall be a king: Psalm 2:6 (Zech. 9:9; Jer 23:5); Matthew 27:37; 21:5 (John 18:33-38)
20. Special anointing of the Holy Spirit: Isaiah 11:2; Matthew 3:16-17; 12:17-21 (Mk 1:10-11)
21. His zeal for God: Psalm 69:9; John 2:15-17
22. Preceded by messenger: Isaiah 40:3; Matthew 3:1-2; 3:3; 11:10
23. Ministry to begin in Galilee: Isaiah 9:1; Matthew 4:12,13,17
24. Ministry of miracles: Isaiah 35:5, 6a; 32:3,4; Matthew 9:32,33,35; 11:4-6 (John 5:5-9)
25. Teacher of parables: Psalm 78:2; Matthew 13:34
26. He was to enter the temple: Malachi 3:1; Matthew 21:12
27. He was to enter Jerusalem on a donkey: Zechariah 9:9; Luke 19:35,36,37a (Mt 21:6-11)
28. "Stone of Stumbling" to the Jews: Psalm 118:22 (Isa 8:14; 28:16); I Peter 2:7 (Rom 9:32-33)
29. "Light" to Gentiles: Isaiah 60:3; 49:6; Acts 13:47,48a; 26:23; 28:28
30. Betrayed by a friend: Psalm 41:9; 55:12-14; Matthew 10:4; 26:49-50; Jn 13:21
31. Sold for 30 pieces of silver: Zechariah 11:12; Matthew 26:15; 27:3
32. Money to be thrown in God's house: Zechariah 11:13b; Matthew 27:5a
33. Price given for potter's field: Zechariah 11:13b; Matthew 27:7
34. Forsaken by His disciples: Zechariah 13:7; Mark 14:50 (Mt 26:31; Mk 14:27)
35. Accused by false witnesses: Psalm 35:11; Matthew 26:59-61
36. Dumb before accusers: Isaiah 53:7; Matthew 27:12-19
37. Wounded and bruised: Isaiah 53:5 (Zech 13:6); Matthew 27:26
38. Smitten and spit upon: Isaiah 50:6 (Micah 5:1); Matthew 26:67 (Luke 22:63)
39. Mocked: Psalm 22: 7,8; Matthew 27:31
40. Fell under the cross: Psalm 109:24-25; John 19:17; Luke 23:26; Mt 27:31-32
41. Hands and feet pierced: Psalm 22:16 (Zech 12:10); Luke 23:33 (John 20:25)
42. Crucified with thieves: Isaiah 53:12; Matthew 27:38 (Mk 15:27,28)
43. Made intercession for His persecutors: Isaiah 53:12; Luke 23:34
44. Rejected by His own people: Isaiah 53:3 (Ps 69:8; 118:22); John 7:5,48; 1:11 (Mt 21:42,43)
45. Hated without a cause: Psalm 69:4 (Isa 49:7); John 15:25
46. Friends stood afar off: Psalm 38:11; Luke 23:49 (Mk 15:40; Mt 27:55-56)
47. People shook their heads: Psalm 109:25; 22:7; Matthew 27:39
48. Stared upon: Psalm 22:17; Luke 23:35
49. Garments parted and lots cast: Psalm 22:18; John 19:23-24
50. To suffer thirst: Psalm 69:21; 22:15; John 19:28
51. Gall and vinegar offered Him: Psalm 69:21; Matthew 27:34
52. His forsaken cry: Psalm 22:1; Matthew 26:46
53. Committed Himself to God: Psalm 31:5; Luke 23:46
54. Bones not broken: Psalm 34:20; John 19:33
55. Heart broken: Psalm 22:14; John 19:34
56. His side pierced: Zech 12:10; John 19:34
57. Darkness over the land: Amos 8:9; Matthew 27:45
58. Buried in rich man's tomb: Isaiah 53:9; Matthew 27:57-60

59. Resurrection: Psalm 16:10; 30:3; 41:10; 118:17 (Hosea 6:2); Acts 2:31(Lk 24:46; Mk 16:16)

60. Ascension: Psalm 68:18a; Acts 1:9

61. Seated at right hand of God: Psalm 110:1; Heb. 1:3 (Mk 16:19; Acts 2:34,35)

No one else in history ever came near to fulfilling these, and no one ever can since the birth records and tribal records of all Jews were destroyed in Jerusalem in 70 AD. The fulfillment of these prove the authenticity of the Bible as God's Word as well as the fact that Jesus is God.

The probability of just 1 through 8 coming true would be 1 in 10 with 16 0's. (If each chance is a silver dollar and they were laid down side-by-side on state of Texas they would cover whole state 2' deep! One is marked, all others not. Blindfold a man and let him walk anywhere. The chance that he'd pick the marked one is the same as the first 8 prophecies just happening by chance!

THE RESURRECTION

In actuality the proof of the deity of Jesus raises and falls on truth of His **resurrection**. He said He would come back to life, then claimed to have done so. His followers clearly claimed to believe the same thing for them. Were they right? First, it stands to reason that something like resurrection from dead to an eternal body isn't something a person would just make up! It would be too unbelievable, too unproveable, too far out for someone to have just made it up.

If Jesus didn't come back to life, what else could have happened to his body? Some say the disciples stole His body, but how would they gain the courage to preach that they didn't have before? Why would they give up their lives for something they knew was a lie? So, others say, enemies stole the body. Then they would have said so and showed it to disprove the resurrection when that was first claimed. Neither theory explains the eye-witness accounts of over 500 people who saw Jesus alive after the crucifixion. More common is the swoon theory, that Jesus never really died but swooned then 'came to' later. But he was pronounced dead by experienced Roman executioners after having a spear run through His heart. He spent 3 days wrapped totally in cloth and covered with 100 pounds of spices, with no food or water. He would have had to come to, get out of the wrappings while leaving them there in the shape of a cocoon as if He were still in them, with hands pierced by nails move the monstrous rock from inside with no handholds, overpower the Roman soldiers, walk many miles on feet pierced by nails, and then prove to those He met that He had a superior, eternal body! That takes more faith than believing in the resurrection!

There is **additional proof of the resurrection**. Jesus appeared 10 times to over 500 people. If there was no resurrection how do we explain the change in the disciples, the spread of the early church, the conversion of Paul, the start of the Lord's Supper and baptism, the switch of the day of worship from Saturday (below it states from Friday to Sunday – should this be Friday?) to Sunday and the impact His life has had even to today? Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "The name of Jesus is not so much written as plowed into the history of the world." A liar or lunatic can't do that!

The spread of the early church, Paul's conversion and the willingness of so many to die for their faith also proves Jesus must be alive for a dead person couldn't command such a loyal following. The Lord's Supper wouldn't have any significance if the cross killed Jesus, nor would there be any symbolism of death and life in baptism. Why would the Jewish Christians have moved from Friday to Sunday as their day of worship if it wasn't because Jesus came back to life on that day? Why would Easter have been celebrated if He stayed dead? Ancient historians of the day wrote about the wide-spread belief in Jesus' resurrection: Pliny the Younger, Tacitus, Thallus and Josephus.

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

One more line of reasoning is to ask yourself, "If God became man, what would we expect of Him?" Jesus fulfilled all we'd ask!

1. **Have an unusual entrance into life.** The virgin birth is the most unusual entrance ever. It, too, is not something someone would choose were they making the whole thing up. How would the idea of a virgin birth ever be considered if it weren't true?

2. **Be without sin.** Jesus claimed to be sinless (John 8:46) as do those who lived with Him 24 hours a day believe about Him (Peter, John and Matthew). So did His brothers who grew up in His family, seeing His whole life up close (James and Jude). Even enemies witnessed to His sinlessness (The thief on the cross, Pilate and the Centurion at the crucifixion).

3. **Manifest the supernatural in the form of miracles.** Jesus claimed to do miracles, and they were attested to by Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, Jude and James.

4. **Have an acute sense of difference from others.** Jesus saw Himself as different, unique, and others saw Him that way, too. Even Jewish and Roman historians saw Him as not the same as other men, as does the Koran and many scholars today.

5. **Speak the greatest words ever spoken.** Jesus said His words would never pass away and they haven't! Others said that no one spoke as He did, and that is still true. Jesus is the person most quoted by religious and secular historians, teachers and philosophers.

6. **Have a lasting and universal influence.** Historians agree that Jesus is the most influential life ever lived on this planet.

7. **Satisfy the spiritual hunger in man.** Jesus met the inner needs in Matthew, Peter, Nicodemus, Zachaeus, the woman at the well, and countless others then and through the ages up to today. Truly Jesus satisfies!

8. **Exercise power over death.** Jesus claimed to have power over death and proved it by His own resurrection. He brought the dead back to life: widow of Nain's son, Centurion's servant, Lazarus and Dorcas (through Peter). (For more information along these lines see "Evidence That Demands A Verdict," by Josh McDowell.)

Was Jesus God? You'll have to decide for yourself. However if He wasn't then no one will ever be. If Jesus were not God, then He deserved an Oscar!

CHRIST'S CLAIMS OF DEITY

Claimed Equality With God Matt. 28:19; John 5:17-18; 12:45; 13:20; 14:1, 9

Claimed Oneness With God Matt 4:7; Luke 4:12; 8:39; John 10:30, 36-38; 17:11, 21-22; 20:28

Claimed To Be Sent By God John 4:34; 5:37; 7:16, 28-29; 8:16; 9:4; 11:42; 14:24; 16:28; 17:18, 23

Claimed To Be The Son of God Matt 16:17; 22:42-45; Mark 12:35-37; 14:61-62; Luke 20:41; John 9:35-37; 22:69-70

Claimed To Be From Heaven John 6:33, 35, 51

Claimed Attributes of God John 8:42; 16:15

Omniscience Matt 11:21-22; Luke 10:13

Omnipresence Matt 18:20; 28:20

Omnipotence Mark 14:61-63; Luke 22:69-70; John 2:19, 10:18; 11:25-27

Forgive sin Mark 2:5,9,10; Luke 5:20-21; 7:48-49

Divine Authority Matt 7:21-23; 28:18 **Honor** John 5:22-23 **Pre-Existence** John 8:58; 17:5