

## *Jesus, the Son of God*

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At the heart of Christianity lies the truth that Jesus the Christ is the Son of God. Christ is the center of our religion. He is the foundation of our faith (1 Corinthians 3:11), the subject of our preaching (Acts 8:35; 1 Corinthians 1:23), the object of our confession (Matthew 10:32), and the basis of our hope (1 Timothy 1:1). Therefore, a strong faith in Him is essential (John 8:24). We have plenty of good reasons for believing in the deity of Christ. God has not asked us to believe anything which He did not give us abundant evidence for believing (John 20:31). The evidence is strong, and it has caused thousands through the centuries to believe. This lesson presents some reasons for believing that Jesus is God's Son. Examine them carefully. If you already have strong faith, silently pray as did the disciples, "Lord, increase my faith." If you are burdened by doubts, pray as did the father of the demon-possessed child in Mark 9:24a, "I do believe; help my unbelief."

## BECAUSE HE FULFILLS OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY

Consider some of the prophecies made hundreds of years prior to the birth of Jesus. His birth was prophesied. His genealogy involved Abraham, Judah, and David (Genesis 12:3/Matthew 1:2; Genesis 49:10/Matthew 1:2, 6). Abraham had many descendants, yet even the family was specified in prophecy (Jeremiah 23:5; Isaiah 11:1/Matthew 1:6). His virgin birth was predicted in Isaiah 7:14 and fulfilled in Matthew 1:18–25. Bethlehem was chosen as the place of His birth (Micah 5:2). It was also prophesied that His birth would be accompanied by the killing of many children (Jeremiah 31:15/Matthew 2:16–18).

The prophets foretold His flight into Egypt (Hosea 11:1/Matthew 2:13–15), His life in Galilee (Isaiah 9:1, 2/Matthew 4:12–16), and His victorious entry into Jerusalem (Zechariah 9:9/Matthew 21:1–11). His work was also predicted. The prophets said that a forerunner would go before Him (Malachi 3:1; Isaiah 40:3/Matthew 3:1–3). They spoke of His ministry of healing (Isaiah 53:4/Matthew 8:16, 17), His teaching by parables (Isaiah 6:9, 10/Matthew 13:10–17), His mission among the Gentiles (Isaiah 42:1–4/Matthew 12:15–21), and His rejection by the rulers (Psalm 118:22/John 1:11).

Jesus' death was pictured in prophecy in great detail. The Old Testament portrayed His betrayal by a friend (Psalm 41:9/Matthew 26:47–50) for thirty pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12/Matthew 26:14–16). Ancient Scriptures foretold how He would behave before His enemies (Isaiah 53:7/Matthew 27:12, 14), how He would die (Psalm 22:16/Matthew

27:35a), and how His clothing would be divided by the casting of lots (Psalm 22:18 / Matthew 27:35b, c). Also predicted were His dying words (Psalm 22:1 / Matthew 27:46), His bones not being broken (Psalm 34:20 / John 19:33), His side being pierced (Zechariah 12:10 / John 19:37), His burial (Isaiah 53:9 / Matthew 27:57–60), His resurrection (Psalm 16:10 / Luke 24:1–9; Acts 2:25–32), and His ascension (Psalm 68:18 / Luke 24:50–53).

It was comparatively simple for the prophets to say that a Savior would come. However, when they added over three hundred specific details, they built up a framework of certainty which cannot be denied.

Think of what the fulfillment of these prophecies means. Human foresight and wisdom cannot peer even twenty-four hours into the future to predict future events with absolute certainty. Political pollsters, by the use of agents scattered throughout the country, can predict an election's outcome—sometimes! These prophecies about Jesus would be like someone predicting who will be the president four hundred years from now, his place of birth, his lineage, his schooling, the length of his tenure, and the place and manner of his death.

True prophecy can be tested, for it reveals future events. It contains details that cannot be fulfilled accidentally. A prophecy is seen as accurate only after its historical fulfillment. No evidence, either written or oral, can set aside the strength of this argument from the fulfillment of prophecy. It proves on the one hand that Jesus was divine and on the other hand that the men who penned the prophecies were inspired.

## **BECAUSE HIS CLAIMS OF DEITY ARE IN HARMONY WITH HIS WORKS**

Jesus made bold, fantastic claims for Himself. He said that He existed before Abraham (John 8:58), that He was with God before the world was (John 17:5, 24), that He came down from heaven (John 6:38, 62), that He had all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). Many who deny His deity speak of Him simply as a “good” man. However, if He was not what He claimed to be, He was a liar and a fraud—definitely not a “good” man!

His works showed that His claims were true. Jesus performed many miracles. Biblical historians testified to His miraculous works (Matthew 11:4, 5; John 20:30, 31). Even secular historians testified that He worked miracles.

His works were one with His words. He said, “I am the Light of the world” (John 8:12a); then He made the blind to see light (John 9:6, 7). He said, “I am the bread of life” (John 6:35a), and He fed five thousand men with a few loaves and two fish. He said, “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25a); then He raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:43, 44).

## **BECAUSE HE LIVED A SINLESS LIFE**

Those who knew Jesus claimed that He lived a sinless life. These men were inspired by God!

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15).

Who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth (1 Peter 2:22).

Those who studied His life considered Him *good* (Luke 18:18). Even His enemies, who constantly sought to find fault with Him, knew of His goodness. He did a most unusual thing—He challenged them to examine Him and see if they could find anything wrong with Him (John 8:46a).

His goodness was acknowledged at His death. Consider the comments of Pilate's wife (Matthew 27:19), Pilate (Matthew 27:23), Herod (Luke 23:14), the thief on the cross (Luke 23:41), the centurion (Matthew 27:54), and even Judas (Matthew 27:4).

### **BECAUSE OF THE CONTINUING EFFECT HIS LIFE HAS ON THE WORLD**

Many memorials honor His life: the Lord's Day (Revelation 1:10), the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:20–29; Matthew 26:26–28), baptism (Romans 6:3–5), and even the dating of our calendars (B.C. and A.D.). He is, without question, the world's greatest man—and without a single mark of greatness as man counts greatness. He had no great heritage, no formal education (John 7:15), no wealth, no political or military power, and no athletic prowess; yet no one would question the influence He has had on mankind for the last twenty centuries. If He were a mere man, could not the world produce a greater one today? The world has two thousand years of advancements to draw from. In the midst of our advanced learning, the world is hungry for real leadership. Everyone can look to Jesus Christ; He is the Way. He has been and is all things to all men. "His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6b).

## CONCLUSION

Surely, Jesus is the Son of God. Further examine these reasons for believing that He is God's Son. Believe that He is, and give your life to God through Him.

## STUDY QUESTIONS

*(answers on page 261)*

1. What truth lies at the heart of Christianity?
2. Jesus' birth, life, and death were prophesied in great detail. Give a few examples.
3. What do the fulfilled prophecies about Jesus prove?
4. Jesus made bold, fantastic claims for Himself. What are some of them?
5. How did Jesus' works harmonize with His words?
6. Give some examples of how Jesus' goodness was acknowledged.
7. How does Jesus' life continue to affect our world?

## WORD HELPS

**ascension**—going up, being lifted up. The Ascension was the event when Christ, after being resurrected from death, was taken back into heaven to be with God.

**deity**—God; the nature of God; being God.

**genealogy**—a listing of ancestors. Jesus' genealogy (Matthew 1:1–16) showed that He was the fulfillment of prophecies about the Promised One of God.

**Lord's Day**—the first day of the week (Sunday) was set aside for worship by the New Testament church (Acts 20:7).

**Lord's Supper**—a memorial instituted by Jesus which consists of eating unleavened bread and drinking the fruit of the vine (grape juice). (See 1 Corinthians 11:20, 23–26.) The New Testament church observes this supper every first day of the week.

**resurrection**—the raising of a dead person back to life. The Resurrection (of Jesus) is the proof that Jesus has power over death and that those who follow Him will be able to live forever with Him in heaven after their life on earth.