



## “My Lord and My God!”

The historical fact of the Christ event can be strongly established: that Jesus lived, taught, worked miracles, was executed, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven. From this historical basis we can then avail ourselves of even more motives of credibility for a fervent Christian faith, which proclaims that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the human race, and the Son of God.

To begin with, why would the Jews maintain that his body was stolen by his disciples, if they didn't accept the historical fact of the man, Jesus of Nazareth, and that he was put to death by the Romans? They don't dispute this. According to the silence of these men in this regard, who were extremely hostile to this new movement, it is highly probable that we are dealing with historical fact. They may deny that he was the Messiah, based upon their expectations thereof, but they don't deny that Jesus of Nazareth suffered, died, and was buried, and that his body then disappeared. If his missing body wasn't raised from the dead, and ascended into heaven, then why is there absolutely no record of its final resting place on earth? Wouldn't this have been the ultimate pilgrimage site of what would have simply been a 'great moral teacher'? We still have the record of a Jewish historian named Josephus, writing around AD 70 and following, referring explicitly to Jesus. Josephus was certainly not one to promote this upstart sect that was winning many converts from his own Jewish religion, but yet he even makes casual mention of the veil of the Temple having been torn in two, and never having been repaired from the time of Jesus' crucifixion until the destruction of the Temple in AD 70.

Why would these apostles of Jesus, this rag-tag band of mostly ordinary and uneducated men, after the Lord died and rose from the dead, fan out all over the world preaching and testifying to his resurrection, if it wasn't true? Would they have all been willing to give up their families and homeland to go to foreign nations, endure every imaginable privation, and ultimately die as witnesses to the historical fact that God became man, taught us divine truth, untwisted the curse of sin on mankind through a salvific death, and then rose in Glory and ascended into heaven. The historical fact that the disciples preached the gospel all over the world is indisputable. There is far too much evidence of their travels. It happened. Would these men, who abhorred lies and falsehood, have all been liars? They wrote profoundly. Are these the thoughts of madmen? Ideas that have kept men and women pondering for two millennia? Or, were they simply the writings of men who were disciples of Wisdom incarnate for 3 years? If it was all a fabricated hoax, what were they out to gain? Did they win great worldly fame, or derision and shameful deaths? Wealth and power, or poverty and persecution? If their

doctrine was man-made, and therefore most likely would have been constructed in a manner that would open the way compellingly for the maximum number of converts, why are there so many inherent difficulties in the New Testament writings? Scripture scholars have been puzzling over all sorts of things for centuries. To speak of just a few, if Peter was the prince of the Apostles, and was to be held up as the respected and prestigious leader of this new movement, why was he recorded as being called “Satan” by our Lord himself? Why would he be portrayed as such a bumbling idiot, who would eventually deny that he knew Jesus, backing down to a maid? Why would the Apostles unashamedly hold that the founder of their new religion, Jesus of Nazareth, was a man despised by the highest religious authorities in the very region they would attempt to make their beginning in, unless they were recording historical events? A contrived, or at least ‘doctored up’ man, who was condemned by the highest courts and officials of not only the Jews, but the Procurator of the occupying Roman Empire as well? What kind of credibility would this establish? If it wasn’t a true revelation from God, why would they invent such a problematic theology that ran so totally contrary to both the strict monotheism of the Jews, and the pagan poly-theism of the Greeks, if they expected to recruit new members? How can God be man? How can you formulate an equation which essentially asserts, ‘Infinite = finite’? How can there be three Divine Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in one God? How will that stand up to the scrutiny of the Greek Philosophers, or to the core Jewish faith in the One God, Yahweh? Good luck trying to persuasively explain those two doctrines alone, the Incarnation and the Trinity, to the world at that time. It would take the new religion 5-6 centuries of intense efforts to work out the framework of its explanation of what had been *revealed* to the apostles.

Outside of a vision of Jesus and a miracle of grace, how do we explain the historically evident conversion of Saul, who would become St. Paul? We might as well deny that Julius Caesar was murdered in 44 BC, or that Napoleon was a myth, than reject the historicity of St. Paul. He was the arch-enemy of this upstart religion. How do we explain his converting to this new sect, where he would become arguably its greatest defender and proponent of all time? He, along with the other New Testament writers, and the later generations of brilliant teachers of this new doctrine throughout the immediately following centuries, display the multitude of prophecies and foreshadowings in the Old Testament that pointed to the person and life of Jesus of Nazareth. How did they ‘dream up’ or ‘concoct’ such a beautiful fulfillment that harmonizes, perfects, and grows up organically from the Jewish faith? The Christians didn’t manufacture the Old Testament in order to line up this astounding convergence on Jesus. It already existed for centuries. The prophetic texts weren’t tampered with by the Christians. They read the same Old Testament as those who would remain hostile to them, the Jews. What did St. Paul eventually gain for all his labors, but countless sufferings and a violent death? What about all the many martyrdom’s of the early centuries? How do we explain the historical fact of their ‘fanatically’ stubborn refusal to renounce their faith in the God-man, his death, his resurrection, and his ascension into glory? If we deny the truth of Christianity, how do we explain the manifold miracles that have occurred? Can every single one of them be easily brushed aside?

Historically speaking... isn’t it more likely that this is a true event? Isn’t it more probable? Isn’t there more explanatory power in accepting the truth of the Christian Revelation, given the undeniable Christian phenomenon that has occurred in history, and

continues today? To reject it is to land oneself in a sticky predicament. How does one answer all of the above questions and observations without twisting and turning, and doing all sorts of mental gymnastics?

Christianity is not an invention of man. It is part of the gradual unfolding of God's plan to save mankind from the division caused by sin. Sin is diabolic. The Greek word, *diabolos*, literally means: '*to throw apart*'. God's ultimate plan is to re-unite or re-join all mankind with Himself. Jesus was not a mere founder of "a" religion among others. Christianity is "the" religion. This religion is designed to do exactly what the very word means etymologically, from the Latin *re-ligare*: '*to re-tie, re-fasten, or bind-again*'. This binding together occurs in the very joining of the Divine and human natures in the one Divine Person of the God-man, Jesus Christ. He has taken up our human nature, healed it of sin, restored it to God's image, and glorified it by ascending with it into heaven.

This whole plan is being worked out in a way that has a 'Divine ring' about it. There is a consistency and continuity about the way God has worked in the Old and New Testaments, which perhaps is the most compelling aspect of the truth of Christianity. As St. Paul declares, "God has chosen the weak things of this world to confound the strong". It's as though God has gone out of his way to stack the odds against Himself, in order to demonstrate His power. He raises up a weak and vulnerable people in the Near East. He prepares them over centuries to receive a Messiah. He then comes to them in the humblest of circumstances, a stable. He chooses the weakest of his disciples to be the 'Rock' that he would build His Church on, as if to drive home the point that it is only by the power and protection of God that it would survive, as it still does. He brings the ultimate victory out of what appears to be utter defeat on the cross. He proves out his omnipotence time and time again throughout salvation history by stepping over what appear to be the greatest things according to mere human thinking, and entering into the smallest.

Christianity is provoking. It is radical. It is utterly unique. Other 'religions' hold a relative truth value in relation to it. The claims of Christianity are singularly bold. A man from Palestine, 2000 years ago, was, and is, the Son of God. Not "a" way, truth, or life, **but, "the" Way, "the" Truth, and "the" Life.**

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Spring 2000