

Christian Evidences

Lesson 7:

Jesus Christ, the Son of God
(Part I)



“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”

(Jn. 20:30-31)



Jesus the Christ

- Have shown the Bible to be the inspired Word of God
- Brings us to its central Person – Jesus the Christ

- Who is this Jesus?
 - Who did He claim to be?
 - What evidence supports His claims?

- I believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God
- This is exactly who He claimed to be
- If Jesus is God, then God Is!



Who Is Jesus?

- He cannot be ignored!
- All must acknowledge the fact of His existence
- He demands an attitude on our part
- Modern Bible critics ascribe a place lower than deity
 - 'he is earth's greatest man, its greatest teacher, greatest philosopher, he has revealed God to us as no one else has'
 - 'a good, a great man,' but no more

“... ‘Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?’ ... But who do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

(Mt. 16:13-16)



Jesus the Christ – His Claims

- **Jn. 5:17-23**
 - Equality with God
 - Power to give spiritual life, raise the dead, and act as judge
- **Jn. 10:24-32**
 - He claimed equality with God – the Jews recognized the claim and sought to stone Him
 - He is either the Christ or a Pretender
- **Jn. 8:46**
 - He claimed sinlessness in His challenge to His enemies
- **Lk. 18:9-14**
 - He condemned self-righteousness, but confessed no sin Himself
 - He is either the Christ or a Hypocrite



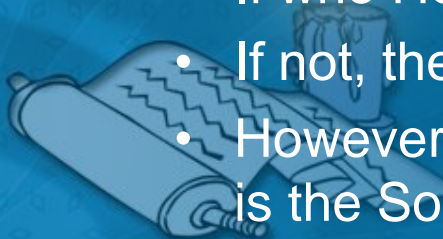
Jesus the Christ – His Claims

- **Jn. 8:58**
 - He claimed to be eternal – existing before Abraham
- **Jn. 8:12; 10:10,11,16; 14:6**
 - He claimed to be “the light,” “the way,” “the good shepherd”
 - If all this, He is the Christ; if not, He is a liar and an imposter
- **Mt. 16:16-18**
 - He allowed the apostles to believe Him to be the Christ
 - In allowing them to believe this, He was the Christ or He was a deceiver
 - Nineteen centuries have confirmed the truth of His claim!
- **Mt. 26:28; 20:28**
 - His blood sealed His teaching and procured remission of sins
 - He died for this belief and cause. Was it true or was it falsehood?
 - Surely He believed it. Believing such, He was the Christ, the Son of God, or a fanatic.



Jesus the Christ – His Claims

- **Mt. 4:10; Jn. 4:23**
 - Jesus taught that only God should be worshipped
 - But during His ministry He accepted worship from:
 - A leper – Mt. 8:2
 - Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue – Mt. 9:18
 - The blind man made who was healed – Jn. 9:35-38
 - After His resurrection:
 - The disciples – Mt. 28:9
 - Thomas – Jn. 20:26-29
- In accepting worship, knowing only God is to be worshipped, He is either a Divine Being or a blasphemer
 - If who He claimed to be, then He was “Immanuel” – God with us
 - If not, then He was not “a good, a great man”
 - However, it should become abundantly clear that Jesus was and is the Son of God.



Was Jesus a Historical Person?

- Bertrand Russell:
 - “Historically it is quite doubtful whether Christ ever existed at all, and if He did we do not know anything about Him.”
- Few today with any knowledge of history that would agree with Russell’s statement
 - “The historicity of Christ is as axiomatic for an unbiased historian as the historicity of Julius Caesar. It is not historians who propagate the ‘Christ-myth’ theories.” (F.F. Bruce)
- The historicity of Jesus of Nazareth is undeniable!
 - There are a number of references by historical writers to the Person of Jesus.



Was Jesus a Historical Person?

Testimony of Secular Writers

- **Cornelius Tacitus**

- A Roman historian ~ A.D. 55-120
- “[Nero] falsely charged ... Christians, who were hated for their enormities. Christus, the founder of the name, was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the reign of Tiberius.”

- **Thallus**

- Wrote a history of the Eastern Mediterranean ~ A.D. 52
- Julius Africanus, referring to this: “Thallus, in the third book of his histories, explains away this darkness as an eclipse of the sun – unreasonably, as it seems to me (unreasonably, of course, because a solar eclipse could not take place at the time of the full moon, and it was at the season of the Paschal full moon that Christ died).”



Was Jesus a Historical Person?

Testimony of Secular Writers

- **Lucian of Samosata**
 - A Greek satirist ~ late 2nd century
 - “The Christians worship a man to this day – the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account.”
- **Suetonius**
 - A Roman court official under Hadrian
 - Wrote of the expulsion of the Jews because they made “constant disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus”



Was Jesus a Historical Person?

Testimony of Secular Writers

- **Pliny the Younger**

- Governor of Bithynia ~ A.D. 112
- He had been killing Christians and “made them curse Christ, which a genuine Christian cannot be induced to do ...they affirmed, however, that the whole of their guilt, was, that they were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verse a hymn to Christ as to a god ...”

- **Mara Bar-Serapion**

- A Syrian, Stoic philosopher ~ A.D. 70
- Compared Jesus to Socrates and Pythagoras and stated, “What advantage did the Jews gain from executing their wise King? It was just after that that their kingdom was abolished.”

- **All of these secular writers speak of Jesus as a real, historical Person!**



Was Jesus a Historical Person?

Testimony of Jewish Writers

- **Babylonian Talmud**
 - “It has been taught: On the eve of Passover they hanged Yeshu [Jesus] ... he practiced sorcery and enticed and led Israel astray ... not having found anything in his favor, they hanged him on the eve of Passover” [hanged is another way of referring to crucifixion – see also Acts 5:30]



Was Jesus a Historical Person?

Testimony of Jewish Writers

- **Josephus ben Mattathias** ~ A.D. 37 – 100
 - A Jewish historian captured by Vespasian in 67 to serve as a mediator and interpreter
 - “Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, *if it be lawful to call him a man*, for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. *He was the Christ*, and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; *for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him*. And the tribe of Christians so named from him are not extinct at this day.”
- **Jewish historians were no friends of Christians, yet they speak of Jesus as a real, historical Person!**



Was Jesus a Historical Person?

Post-apostolic Christian Sources

- **Clement of Rome**

- Bishop of the church at Rome, late 1st century
- “The Apostles received the Gospel for us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ was sent forth from God. So then Christ is from God, and the Apostles are from Christ. Both therefore came of the will of God in the appointed order. Having therefore received a charge, and having been fully assured through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ...”

- **Ignatius**

- Bishop of Antioch
- “Jesus Christ who was of the race of David, who was the Son of Mary, who was truly born and ate and drank, was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate, was truly crucified and died in the sight of those in heaven and on earth and those under the earth; who moreover was truly raised from the dead, His Father having raised Him, who in the like fashion will so raise us also who believe on Him.”



Was Jesus a Historical Person?

Post-apostolic Christian Sources

- **Justin Martyr**
 - One of the greatest early Christian apologists ~ A.D. 100-167
 - “Now there is a village in the land of the Jews, thirty-five stadia from Jerusalem, in which Jesus Christ was born, as you can ascertain also from the registers of the taxing made under Cyrenius, your first procurator in Judea. For when they crucified Him, driving in the nails, they pierced His hands and feet; and those who crucified Him parted His garments among themselves, each casting lots for what he chose to have, and receiving according to the decision of the lot.”
- Other early writers who spoke of Christ
 - **Quadratus** ~ A.D. 125
 - **Aristides** ~ A.D. 138 – 161
 - **Hegesippus** ~ 1st century



Was Jesus a Historical Person?

External Account Summary

- If we had only the external accounts available about Jesus, we would still know quite a lot about Him. As Edwin M. Yamauchi points out, we could construct this outline:
 - Jesus was a Jewish teacher
 - Many people believed that he performed healings and exorcisms
 - Some people believed he was the Messiah
 - He was rejected by the Jewish leaders
 - He was crucified under Pontius Pilate in the reign of Tiberius
 - Despite this shameful death, his followers, who believed that he was still alive, spread beyond Palestine so that there were multitudes of them in Rome by A.D. 64
 - All kinds of people from the cities and countryside – man and women, slave and free – worshiped him as God



“The result of the examination of the sources outside the New Testament that bear directly or indirectly on our knowledge of Jesus is to confirm his historical existence, his unusual powers, the devotion of his followers, the continued existence of the movement after his death at the hands of the Roman governor in Jerusalem, and the penetration of Christianity into the upper strata of society in Rome itself by the later first century.”

Howard Clark Kee

