

Internal Evidences

(Auditorium class - ages; Dec 2020-Feb 2021)

When this series of lessons was used, we had all ages in the auditorium due to the pandemic of 2020-2021. Therefore, you will find throughout suggestions for parents in an effort to encourage parents to study the material with their children. You will also find some questions and exercises especially addressed to young people—this will be more more evident if you choose to listen to the audios of the classes. They are available at [humblechurchofchrist.com/Lessons & Recordings/Internal Evidences](http://humblechurchofchrist.com/Lessons&Recordings/InternalEvidences)

Table of Contents

Four historical documents	3
How old are these documents?	4
Reliability of the copies	5
Human Testimony: Jesus Own Claims	7
Human Testimony: John the Baptist	8
Human Testimony: Disciples	9
Human Testimony: Populace.....	10
Human Testimony: Populace (II).....	11
Miracles	12
Jesus' Miracles.....	14
Jn 9: A Miracle Examined; Jn 11: A Miracle Unchallenged.....	16
Resurrection of Jesus - The Empty Tomb	17
Resurrection of Jesus - The Empty Tomb...?	18
Resurrection of Jesus - The Eyewitnesses.....	19
Resurrection of Jesus - Credibility of the Witnesses?.....	20
Resurrection of Jesus - Do the Witnesses Contradict One Another?	21
Prophecy	23
Moral Glory	27
Reasons for Unbelief	28
What Jesus Demands of Believers.....	30

Four historical documents

Parents - suggestion: Read the verses - or, may better yet, have your children read them - and discuss them in a family Bible study.

What is the book called “Mark” about? **Mk 1:1**

Read **Mt 1:1; 1:18; 2:1; 3:11-13; 4:1** ... as you read early in Matthew’s document, who seems to be his focus?

Why did Luke say he wrote what he did to Theophilus? **Lk 1:1-4**

Why did John say he recorded what he did? **Jn 20:31**

Look up the definition of “faith” in a dictionary.

Parents - suggestion: have your children look up the definition in a dictionary, either a bound volume (I think they still make those ☺), or digitally. This would be a good time to discuss what a dictionary’s definitions are based on, why the various definitions, and how that relates to defining words in your Bible.

Based on the definitions you found, is “faith” as used today based on logical proof from objective evidence? Explain.

Compare **Ac 17:1-3,11-12; Rom 10:17**.

These indicate the kind of “faith“ God wants man to have. Contrast this with the definitions you found above.

A historical issue must be confirmed on the basis of *historical documents* that substantiate it.

Parents - suggestion: be sure your children understand what a “historical issue” is, and what “*objective evidence*” (see below) is versus a *subjective* grounds for believing something.

Before TV, computers, smart phones and the web, how could a person come to believe there was a president named, Abraham Lincoln, and that he was assassinated?

The story of Jesus is a *historical issue*. *It’s credibility must rest on the objective evidence of historical documents*. It will stand or fall right here. The documents in this case are: **Matthew; Mark; Luke; John**.

Q: How old are these books...? (next class)

Note: you will need a hymnbook for the next class. If you do not have one, take one home, but be sure to bring it back— we will need them in worship!

How old are these documents?

Note: you will need a hymnbook for this lesson. If you do not have one, take one home, but be sure to bring it back— we will need them in worship!

How many of the songs in your hymnbook are the *original* document the author wrote? If not, what are they?

Parents - suggestion: Be sure your children understand what is meant by “original document.”

Can we find out how old the *originals* are? **Note: any document is at least as old as a copy of it.**

Parents - suggestion: Do the following exercise with your children. It can be an interesting and valuable exercise.

- Look at page 1, the title page, and note the printing date. Based on this, *at the very least*, how old are the songs?
- Look at page 2 and note who the editors are. Again, at the very least, what does this tell you about the age of the originals?
- Look at your hymnbook itself— it's size, the condition of the cover, the coloration of the pages, the notations above and below the songs ... all these are indicators of the age of the book and thus of the copies it contains.
- Look at page 16, “A Mighty Fortress.” Who is the author of this song? At the very least, how old is the *original*?

Apply the above to the four documents in your Bible that tell the story of Jesus—**Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.**

- While we do not have the originals, we have full and partial *copies* that date to the 1st-4th century (*manuscripts*—e.g., Alexandrian, c. 375-425 AD; Sinaitic, c. 300-350 AD; Vatican, c. 300-350 AD; Bodmer Papyrus, c. 200 AD; Chester Beatty Papyri, c. 150 AD; John Rylands MSS, c. 130 AD; *versions*—Syriac, Egyptian, Latin). These are dated using methods similar to the above.

Parents - suggestion: a good exercise would be to show your children on the web photos of some of these manuscripts and note where they are located.

- There are *quotations* from these books by men who lived in the 1st-4th centuries (19,000 +).
- The *authors* of the four documents are mentioned by men who lived in the 1st-3rd centuries.

Matthew - Papias (c.80-c.155); Irenaeus (c.140-203); Origen (c.185-253)
Mark - Papias (c.80-c.155); Irenaeus (c.140-203); Clement of Alexandria (c.155-c.215); Origen (c.185-253)
Luke - Irenaeus (c.140-203); Clement of Alexandria (c.155-c.215); Muratorian Fragment (c. 170)
John - Theophilus of Antioch (c. 115-188); Irenaeus (c.140-203); Clement of Alexandria (c.155-c.215)
 See original outline for sources documenting this data and additional info.

Writer	Date of Death	Quotes from gospels
Justin Martyr	c. 165	268
Irenaeus	c. 202	1,038
Clement of Alex.	c. 215	1,017
Origen	c. 254	9,231
Tertullian	c. 220	3,822
Hippolytus	c. 235	734
Eusebius	c. 339	3,258
		19,368

Chart - ETDV, p. 55
 The Greek NT, United Bible Societies (Dates of death)
 NOTE: c. 339 (thus all these quotes) within 300 years of Christ' death!

With your Bible, you hold in your hand copies of four ancient documents that date to the 1st century and tell the story of Jesus!

Further indication of when these men wrote can be found within the books themselves. E.g. ...

- Matthew, Mark, and Luke wrote about the destruction of Jerusalem as if it had not happened yet, e.g. **Mt 24:1-2...34** (compare Mk 13 and Lk 21) When did the destruction of Jerusalem occur?
- Read **Ac 1:1**. The “first account” Luke composed is the gospel of Luke. It *predated* the book of Acts. Approximately, when was the book of Acts written?

Parents - suggestion: These two questions are good “memory” questions to work with your children on.

Q: Are these documents accurate, reliable...? (next class)

Reliability of the copies

Since you do not have the *original* of your birth certificate or marriage license, how can you confirm your birthdate and parents, or your marriage date and companion? In these cases, since the *historical events* are confirmed by *copies*, does it make them any less *credible*?

Do you believe the *copies* in your hymn book are reliable representations of the originals? If the originals no longer exist (which in many cases they likely do not), how could you confirm your copies are reliable?

Parents - suggestion: be sure your children know what “credible” means.

Joe Billionaire decided to divide his estate between 20 people. You are one of them. Joe had his secretary hand write his will (this was before type writers and computers). Joe died. The 20 heirs are called together for distribution of the estate. The original will was burned up in a fire. However, Joe had his secretary hand write 20 copies—one for each heir. If one of the heirs says his copy grants him 90% of estate, how could the other heirs check the accuracy of his claim?

Look up the origin of the word, “manuscript.” It comes from Latin, *manu*, plus *scriptus*. What do those two words mean?

Parents - suggestion: This exercise can be useful in equipping your children to understand words and how to tap into the extra benefits a dictionary can provide. This can be useful in Bible study.

Greek manuscripts are handwritten copies in the Greek language. There are over 5,000 MSS dated in the 1st three centuries containing all or part of the four gospels! Besides that, there are over 19,000 quotations from the four gospels by men who lived in the first four centuries!

Compare this with other historical documents.

Parents - suggestion: Ask your children if they have studied any of these authors in school or college. *Was the credibility of their documents ever questioned?*

Author	Book	Date Written	Earliest Copies	Time Gap	No. of Copies
Homer	Iliad	800 B.C.	c. 400 B.C.	c. 400 yrs.	643
Herodotus	History	480-425 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,350 yrs.	8
Thucydides	History	460-400 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,300 yrs.	8
Plato		400 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,300 yrs.	7
Demosthenes		300 B.C.	c. A.D. 1100	c. 1,400 yrs.	200
Caesar	Gallic Wars	100-44 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,000 yrs.	10
Livy	History of Rome	59 B.C.–A.D. 17	4 th cent. (partial) mostly 10 th cent.	c. 400 yrs. c. 1,000 yrs.	1 partial 19 copies
Tacitus	Annals	A.D. 100	c. A.D. 1100	c. 1,000 yrs.	20
Pliny Secundus (Pliny the Elder)	Natural History	A.D. 61-113	c. A.D. 850	c. 750 yrs.	7
New Testament		A.D. 50-100	c. 114 (fragment) c. 200 (books) c. 250 (most of N.T.) c. 325 (complete N.T.)	+50 yrs. 100 yrs. 150 yrs. 225 yrs.	5366

Thus we have four books dating to the first century, three of which were written within forty years of the events they relate (before the destruction of Jerusalem - another criteria of credibility), written by men who were either eye-witnesses or obtained their information from eye-witnesses (the two highest standards of credibility for historical writings), and preserved with remarkable accuracy. They were all written to record the good news about Jesus, and two expressly claimed care and truthfulness for their record.

These four documents contain the testimony of people who lived in the time of Jesus. What did they say and think about him? (next class)

Sinaitic MSS

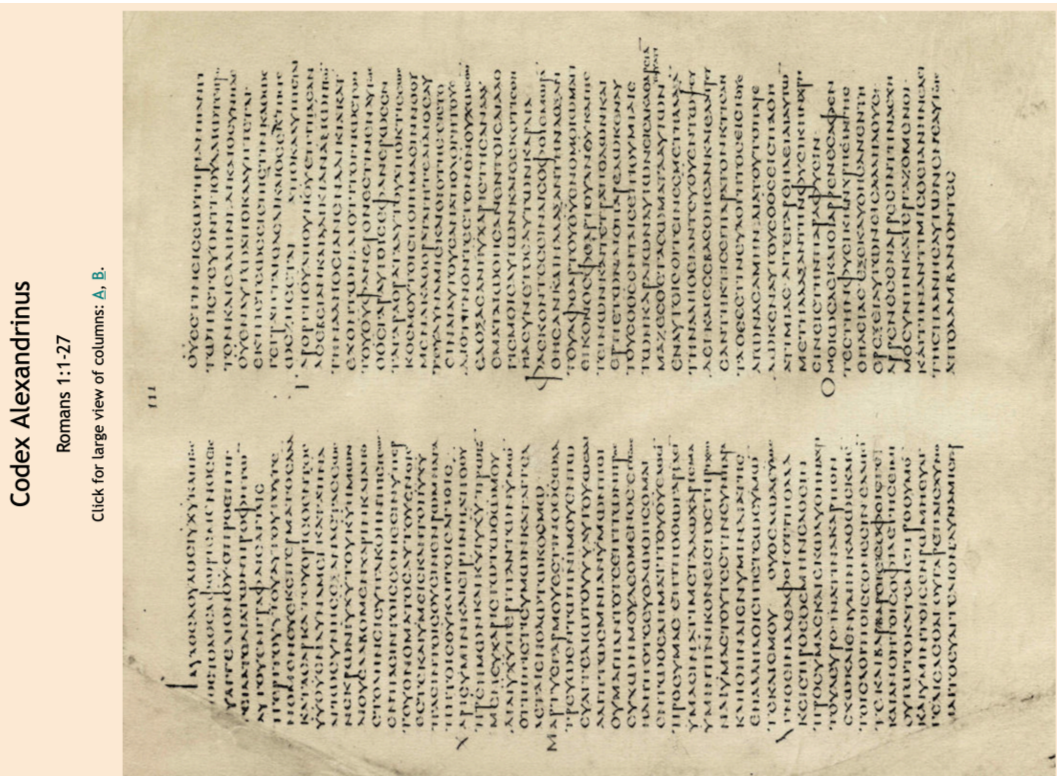
http://codexsinaiticus.org/en/img/Codex_Sinaiticus_open_full.jpg



Alexandrian MSS

<http://www.bible-researcher.com/alexandrinus1.html>

Photo source: E. Maunde Thompson, ed., *Facsimile of the Codex Alexandrinus: New Testament and Clementine Epistles* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1879), published on the internet by [The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts](#).



Codex Alexandrinus

Romans 1:1-27

Click for large view of columns: [A](#), [B](#).

Human Testimony: Jesus Own Claims

In our study, a man is on trial - his name is Jesus. Who is he? Is he innocent or guilty of the charges against him? He makes some pretty extreme claims about himself—are they true? Or, is he a fraud? Or, is he a lunatic? What is the evidence? We are going to depend on the evidence found in four historical documents written by four men: **Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John**. (We have already ascertained in previous lessons that these documents are credible.)

We'll begin the trial by calling human witnesses.

Parents - suggestion: be sure your children understand what “witness,” “testimony,” “deposition,” “affirm” mean.

Why do you believe the persons you call “mom” and “dad” *are* your mom and dad?

In our courts, what do jurors hear to help them decide the innocence or guilt of the person on trial?

What is a written “deposition” as used in law? (If you are not sure, use a dictionary.)

The first witness we call to testify is Jesus himself.

Parents - suggestion: As you study the following with your children, it would be a great opportunity to impress upon them the importance of knowing and believing who Jesus is.

Where did he say he came from? **Jn 6:38,41-42,62; 16:28**

How well did he say he knew God and how did claim to know Him so well? **Mt 11:27; Jn 7:29; 14:7**

Who did he confidently affirm he was?

- **Jn 5:17-19; 8:58; 10:36**
- **Jn 4:25-26 (42); 10:24-25**
- **Mk 15:2; Jn 18:37**
- (see **Ex 4:16; 7:1**) **Jn 8:26,28; 12:48-50**
- **Jn 10:11**
- **Mt 26:63-64**

How did he portray himself in relation to all humanity?

- **Jn 14:6**
- **Jn 3:14-17**
- **Jn 8:12**
- **Jn 6:48-51**
- **Jn 11:25-26**

Parents - suggestion: select a couple of these and discuss with your children what they would think if one of their siblings claimed some of these things about themselves... or even if *you* made such claims about yourself!

Remember the solemnness of your decision: if he IS who He claims to be, it affects YOU and your eternal destiny! Eternity hangs in the balance! If he IS the Savior of the world, we are lost forever without Him! If He IS the King of Kings, who gave Himself for our redemption, we owe him our undying commitment and love!

If he is NOT who he testified to be, he is either a fraud, or a lunatic. Are there any other choices?

You are the jury - it is up to you to decide.

Human Testimony: John the Baptist

In our study, a man named “Jesus” is on trial, and you are on the jury. Who is he? He has made some pretty extreme claims about himself. Are they true? Or, is he a fraud? Or, a lunatic? What is the evidence

We began in our last study by calling the accused—Jesus—to the stand. Now we will hear from a witness named “John,” who, because of the work he was known for, is also called, “the Baptist”—John the Baptist. Jesus himself pointed to John’s testimony as a witness to who he was, **Jn 5:33-35**.

Parents - suggestion: ask your children if they know why John was called, “John the Baptist” e.g. **Mt 3:1**

What are some of the things John testified about this man, Jesus ...?

- **Jn 1:27**
- **Jn 1:29**
- **Jn 1:30**
- **Jn 1:31-32**
- **Jn 1:33; Mt 3:11-12**
- **Jn 1:34**
- **Jn 3:31**
- **Jn 3:36**

With John’s strong testimony in favor of this man, one of the questions a juror might have is about his motives ...

Was he seeking to exalt himself ...? What did he say about himself versus Jesus? **Jn 3:30** (see **vv26-29**)

What shows he was not seeking to gain the favor of powerful people for political ambition? **Mt 3:7; 14:3-4**

What about his dress and lifestyle showed he was not interested in material riches and sensual indulgence? **Mt 3:4; 11:18**

Was he crazy...?

- Here is sample of his teaching, **Lk 3:3-14**. Does it sound reasonable or like a crazy man?
- How did the people who heard him in person view him? **Mt 21:26**

Parents - suggestion: discuss with your children whether a man in a suit with nice, polished shoes is more believable than a man in overalls with boots with dirt on them. Read and discuss **Mt 11:7-11**.

OK, you are on the jury. You have to weigh the value of this man’s (John the Baptist) testimony. He is an unusual and remarkable witness. Is he credible? What ulterior motives might he have for the testimony he gave? Is there any reason to discredit his testimony outside of a predetermined bias against the man on trial being who this witness testifies he is?

And, remember, *if what this witness testifies about this man, Jesus, is true, it affects YOU and your eternal destiny!*

You are the jury - it is up to you to decide.

Human Testimony: Disciples

You are in the jury box. It's your responsibility to weigh the evidence and reach a judgment as to the guilt or innocence of the person on trial—Jesus. Based on the claims he made about himself, he is either a fraud, a lunatic, or ... the Only Begotten Son of God! You can choose to render a “no verdict” or “guilty” verdict, but remember, your verdict affects not only the person on trial, but YOU! **IF he is who he claims to be, it affects who you are, your purpose in this world, and your eternal destiny** ... and YOU will stand trial before him! **Ac 17:31**

We have heard testimony from Jesus and John the Baptist. In this study we will hear from those who were his disciples.

Parents - suggestion: be sure your children understand what a “disciple” is.

- What did **Andrew** say about him? **Jn 1:41**

What are the circumstances that preceded his conclusion? **v39**

- What did **Philip** say about him? **Jn 1:45**

- **Nathanael** was not predisposed to put any confidence in a fellow from Nazareth. Why? **Jn 1:46**

How did Philip meet that challenge? **Jn 1:46**

Then Jesus said something that caused Nathaniel to elevate his testimony about Jesus to the ultimate. What did he say about him? **Jn 1:48**

After that, what was Nathaniel's conclusion? **Jn 1:49**

- **Peter**

On an occasion when many “disciples” rejected Jesus's claims and quit following him (**Jn 6:60-61,66**), what did Peter say? **Jn 6:68-69**

Contrary to popular views, what did Peter believe and confess about him? **Mt 16:13-16**

- **Martha**

What did Martha believe Jesus had the power to do? **Jn 11:21-22**

Who did she say she believed he was? **Jn 11:27**

- **Thomas** refused to believe Jesus' was raised from the dead though his closest companions said they had seen him, **Jn 20:24-25**. He was not credulous. However, later, what was Thomas' view of Jesus? **Jn 20:28**

- **John**, the writer of the “John” document, was what kind of witness? **Jn 19:35-37; 21:24**

- **Generally**, i.e., not one specific disciple, but a number of disciples at the *same time* and relative to the *same events*. What would be their testimony based on what they saw and heard?

Mt 8:27

Mt 14:33

Jn 16:30

People say, “But they were his disciples; you would expect them to speak favorably of him.” If they indeed saw what they said they saw, and heard what they said they heard, and experienced what they said they experienced, would you not *expect* them to become his disciples?! Would a just court rule out the testimony of those whose testimony favors the defendant?

You are the jury - it is up to you to decide

Human Testimony: Populace

People of the jury: We have heard testimony from the man on trial, Jesus, from John the Baptist, a self proclaimed herald, and from Jesus' disciples. In this session of our trial we will bring in people of the city and country who had occasion to interact with this man. You will hear their testimony, and this, along with other evidences presented to this court, will be the basis of your verdict. Let's call our first witnesses ...

(Note in the scriptures below what the people said about Jesus ... For thought: As you read the testimony of people who lived at that time and in that place, consider — would writers put this kind of testimony in their document if their purpose was forging a fake story to cause people to follow the man, Jesus?)

- **Relatives**

Mk 3:21 (“His own people” NASB, NKJV. Relatives? v31. Friends?) -

Jn 7:4

- **Samaritans**

Woman at well - **Jn 4:19, 29 (v18), 39**

People of the city of Sychar - **Jn 4:42 (v 5,28,30,39)**

Note: The Samaritans and Jews hated one another, and that they had their own religion.

- **Gentiles**

Centurion with paralyzed servant - **Mt 8:8-9**

Pilate (three times) - **Jn 18:38; 19:4,6**

Pilate's wife - **Mt 27:19**

Centurion at the cross - **Mt 27:54**

- **Jewish multitude - divided**

Con

Jn 7:12

Jn 7:20

Jn 7:27

Jn 7:41-43

Jn 12:34

Lk 7:39

Pro

Jn 6:14

Jn 7:12

Jn 7:31

Jn 7:40, 41

Jn 10:41

Jn 12:13

Mk 2:12

Mk 7:37

Lk 7:16

Court will resume next class period with additional witnesses from the populace.

Human Testimony: Populace (II)

Who is this man, Jesus? I've never met him; you've never met him. But, we have reliable copies of documents that date to the first century recording testimony of people who had met him, heard him, and had experiences with him. We continue to bring these witnesses before the jury—that's YOU. These witnesses had *different* views. Listen to their testimony ... (look at the following references in these documents and make a note as to their testimony) — it will be your responsibility to sift through the evidence and reach a verdict about this man and his claims.

For thought: Is human testimony less credible as it gets older? E.g., is testimony that was accepted as testimony a week ago less admissible because a month has past? ... a year? ... 100 years? The question is *not* whether you agree with it, but is it any less admissible as evidence of what that person said if nothing has been uncovered to undermine the credible record of that testimony?

- **Jewish rulers, Pharisees, scribes**

Jn 6:42

Jn 7:15

Jn 7:47-49

Jn 7:52

Jn 8:13

Jn 8:48

Jn 9:16

Jn 10:20-21

Jn 10:33

Jn 11:37

Jn 11:47-48 (Note Jn 12:42,43)

Mt 9:3

Mt 9:34 (12:24)

Mt 12:38

Mt 27:63

Jn 3:2

A man with a sense of justice, **Jn 7:50-51**. Note **Jn 19:39**.

- **Officers of the Jews - Jn 7:46**

- **Hometown people - Mt 13:54-56**

- **Others**

Man born blind - **Jn 9:10-11,15,17,30-33,38** (sum up his testimony)

Simeon - **Lk 2:29-32, 34-35**

Anna - **Lk 2:38**

Seventy - **Lk 10:17**

Thief on the cross - **Lk 23:39-42**

So, here are the witnesses. We have heard from his friends and his enemies, from the interested and the unconcerned, his nearest relatives and foreigners, from the powerful and the common man, from those who met him once to those who knew him well, from men and women from all walks of life. *YOU must be the jury*. Remember the solemnness of your decision: if he IS the Son of God, eternity hangs in the balance! If he IS the Savior of the world, we owe him our undying love! If he IS the King of Israel, we owe him our unrestrained allegiance!

Miracles

Jn 6:30 - What did the Jews ask for and why?

Jn 3:2 - How did Nicodemus define the “signs” Jesus performed?

Jn 20:30-31 - Why did John say he recorded the “signs” Jesus performed?

Parents - suggestion: Ask your children some questions to survey their concept of “miracle.” E.g., would it be a miracle if everyone in your family survived your car going over a 300 foot cliff, turning over and over, with every window broken, the roof crushed in, and landing in the ocean? Do you believe miracles happen today? Do you believe miracles ever happened? Why do think so?

- How can you prove $2+2 = 4$?
- How can you prove the cooking top on your stove is hot?
- How can you prove the Declaration of Independence was signed July 4, 1776?

Which of these three types of evidence (demonstration; sense; testimony) would prove whether miracles happened?

Parents - suggestion: A scenario to present to your children - someone denies the two people you call Mom and Dad are your biological parents. Why? 1) It's impossible - you are so different (hair, skin color, weight, height ...). 2) I have never seen and I do not know of anyone else who has ever seen parents with children that look like you. 3) I don't care what you say, your parents say, or your family says, I do not believe you are their biological children. 4) There are children who think the persons they call “Mom” and “Dad” are their biological parents, but they are not. 5) If you really were the biological children of your “parents,” I would believe it and so would everyone else. Would this shake your faith in who were your parents? Or, would you begin to question the *bias, motives, logic and honesty* of the objector? These categories parallel to some degree the reasons miracles are denied... see the lesson.

Reasons Miracles Denied**1. Miracles are impossible**

What is that makes miracles possible? **Gen 18:14; Job 42:2; Lk 1:37; Ac 26:8**. See **Jn 3:2; 9:32-33b**.

2. They are contrary to experience

My experience? Experience of people who are living *today*? *Anyone's* experience? The fact is, miracles were *not designed* to be a common experience, and this facet of miracles is borne out even by those who testified they witnessed them. **Mt 9:33; Mk 2:12; Lk 5:26; Jn 9:32; 15:24**.

> Clock Illustration - see other side of this page.

3. No testimony can prove a miracle

Why not? If miracles are *possible, even probable* in view of their *purpose*, human testimony can certainly render their occurrence credible. What did Jesus, and John, imply the credibility of miracles in future generations would be based on? **Jn 20:29-31**

4. There are fraudulent miracles, and so the miracles of the NT may be fraudulent

Many hypocrites...no sincere people? Counterfeit money...none authentic? Real estate scams... buy no property?

God allowed fraudulent miracles alongside true miracles. **Ex 7:11,22; 8:7** versus **8:18-19; Ac 8:9-11** versus **6-7,13** ; **2Th 2:9-10** versus **1Th 1:5; 5:19-21** What were people able, and expected, to do? **Mt 7:15...21-23**

5. If miracles truly happened, everyone who seen them would have believed in Jesus

Not so. NOTE: *None denied the miracle!* So, what *did* they do...?

- **Mt 12:22-24**
- **Jn 9:15-34**
- **Jn 11:47-48...53; 12:9-11**
- **Ac 4:16-17 (v2)**

Fact is: Some Jews *did* believe because of the miracles - **Jn 6:68-69; 9:36-38; 11:45; 12:10-11**; etc. Failure to believe in the face of such evidence demonstrates the power and blindness of prejudice. **Jn 5:39-40,44; 7:17; 8:45-47; Ac 28:24-27**

Clock Illustration

“Suppose, for instance, a clock so constructed as to strike *only* at the hour of *noon*. A child might suppose, from an observation of several hours, that it was the *nature* of that clock to move silently; and when he heard it strike, he might account this a *departure from its nature*: though it would be, in fact, as much a part of the maker’s original design, as any of the movements; his design having been to announce the hour of noon, and no other.

‘But a similar misapprehension of the nature of the machine would be much more likely to prevail, if a clock could be so constructed as to strike only at the end of a *year*; or at the end of a century; supposing the maker to have kept his design from being generally known. If, at the end of the year, he dispatched, with a message from himself, certain messengers to whom he had made known the construction of the clock, and whom he had authorized to announce the striking, as an attestation of their coming from him, this would be a decisive proof of the genuineness of their message.

‘Now this may serve as an illustration of the view which an intelligent believer may fairly take of miraculous evidence: namely, that the Christian miracles are not—properly speaking—‘violations of the Laws of Nature,’ but departures from the *present* ordinary course of Nature, in conformity with an arrangement originally so made as to let these be *signs* evidencing a divine mission.’” *Paley’s Evidences of Christianity*, William Paley, M.A. [1743-1805], with Annotations by Richard Whately [1787-1863]. Murfreesboro, Tenn.: Dehoff Publications, 1952, p. 19.

Jesus' Miracles

There are many verses in this lesson and we will not have time to get to them all. Suggestion—simply look over the material to get some sense of abundant evidence provided by the miracles of Jesus.

Peculiarity: Mt 9:33; Mk 2:12; Lk 5:26; Jn 9:32; 15:24

Number:

About 38 separately recorded in 3+ yrs. = aver. of about 1 per month! (See other side of this page.)

Many others: Jn 20:30; 21:25; 7:31; 11:47

Variety:

In kind: water to wine (Jn 2); feeding 1000s without preparation or adequate provision (twice - Mt 14:15-21; 15:32-38); walk on sea (Mt 14:23); calm stormy sea (twice - Mt 8:26; 14:32,33); raise dead (three instances: widow's son at Nain, Lk 7:11-17; Jairus' daughter, Lk 8:49-55; Lazarus, Jn 11); blind see (Mt 9:27-31; 12:22; 15:30; 21:14; Mk 8:22-26; 10:46-52; Jn 9); deaf hear, mute speak (Mt 12:22; 15:31; Mk 7:31-37); lame walk (Mt 15:30; Mk 2; Jn 5); restore severed ear (Lk 22:49-51); hemorrhage stopped (Mt 9:20-22); fever removed (Mt 8:14-15); lepers cleansed (Mt 8:2-3; Lk 17:11-19); cast out demons (Mt 8:28-34; ; 12:22-24; 15:21-28; 17:14-21; Lk 8:2)

In place: Jerusalem (Jn 5); Cana in Galilee (Jn 2); Nain in Galilee (Lk 7:11f); scarcely populated places (Mt 14:13f; Lk 9:10-12f); on the sea (Lk 5:1f; Mt 14:25); Bethany (Jn 11); Capernaum (Mt 8:5f); country of the Gadarenes/Gerasenes opposite Galilee (Mt 8:28f; Lk 8:26f); cities and villages (Mt 9:35); in gardens (Lk 22:47f - restore ear); in houses (Mt 8:14); in synagogues (Mt 12:9f)

In means: spoke it done (Mk 2:11-12); clay spittle and water (Jn 9:6-7); touching his clothes (Mt 9:20-22); natural means (Lk 5:1f); touch hand (Mt 8:15); touching the coffin, or bier (Lk 7:14); fingers in ears, spit, touch tongue with saliva (Mk 7:33); using a hook and fishing (Mt 17:27 - coin in fish's mouth); lay hands on (Lk 13:13)

In circumstances: by intention and plan (Jn 11); by intention of others (Mk 5:25-34 - woman with hemorrhage); in private (the child, the parents, Peter, James, and John, Mk 5:40; Lk 8:51); in public, including common people and scribes, Mk 2:2; Mt 12:22-23); before his disciples (Mt 15:12f,22f); before his enemies (Mt 12:9-14)

I.e., not restricted to a particular kind, place, means, or circumstance as might be required by a fraud.

Universality:

Over **natural** world - Mk 4:35-41

Over **spiritual** world (spiritual beings) - Mk 1:21-28

Over **world of humanity**, both as to his physical and spiritual condition

- Over disease - Mk 1:40-45

Note: Not all illnesses result of demon-possession. Mt 4:24; Mt 10:1,8; Mk 16:17-18

He made eyes to see (Jn 9), tongue to talk (Mt 12:22), ears to hear (Mk 7:31f); feet strong (Jn 5:1-9); return withered hands to normal (Mt 12:9-13); flesh cleansed (Lk 17:12-15); fever leave (Mt 8:15); blood flow stopped (Mt 9:20-22); mind restored (Mk 5:1-20); body raised (Jn 11)

- Over death - Jn 11
- Over sin - Mk 2:1-12

Truly, "the works which no one else did"! Jn 15:24

His miracles proved him to be master of the "laws of nature" (Mk 4:35ff), all created beings (Mk 1:21ff), material things (Jn 2:1ff), the human body (Mk 1:40ff), life itself (Jn 11). He demonstrated that space and distance (Jn 4:46ff), time (5:1ff, 38 yrs), quantity (Jn 6:1ff) or precedent (Jn 9) were no obstacles to him.

Other noteworthy facets of Jesus' miracles:

- No effort by Jesus or his disciples to prove a miracle had happened. They were allowed to stand or fall on their own merit.
- Not encourage healed to publicize. Mt 8:4; 9:30; 12:15-19; Mk 5:43
- Instantaneous healing. Mt 8:3,13,15; 9:22. (See however, Mk 8:22-26.)
- No failures.
- No contributions.
- Faith not always required. Jn 5:2-13 (also Jn 9, Jn 11 - study later)

Testimony to - we have heard the testimony from Jesus himself, John the Baptist, his disciples, and the populace. Add to that Luke, a physician, "having investigated everything carefully" 1:3; Matthew, a tax-collector, well accustomed to fraud, deceit, lying. *NOTE: Never did ONE later deny the fact of the miracle!*

JESUS MIRACLES

1. Water made wine, Cana **Jn 2:1-11**
2. Nobleman's son healed, Cana **Jn 4:46-54**
3. First miraculous catch of fish, Sea of Galilee **Lk 5:1-11**
4. Leper healed, Capernaum **Mt 8:2-4; Mark 1:40-45; Lk 5:12-15**
5. Centurion's servant healed, Capernaum **Mt 8:5-13; Lk 7:1-10**
6. Widow's son raised to life, Nain **Lk 7:11-17**
7. Demoniac healed, Capernaum **Mk 1:21-28; Lk 4:31-37**
8. Peter's mother-in-law healed, Capernaum **Mt 8:14-15; Mk 1:29-31; Lk 4:38-39**
9. Paralytic healed, Capernaum **Mt 9:2-8; Mk 2:1-12; Lk 5:17-26**
10. Crippled man healed, Jerusalem **Jn 5:1-16**
11. Man with withered hand healed, Galilee **Mt 12:10-14; Mk 3:1-6; Lk 6:6-11**
12. Seven demons cast out of Mary Magdalene **Mk 16:9; Lk 8:2** (When? Not known)
13. Blind and dumb demoniac healed, Galilee **Mt 12:22-24; Lk 11:14**
14. Storm on the sea stilled, Sea of Galilee **Mt 8:23-27; Mk 4:35-41; Lk 8:22-25**
15. Demoniacs dispossessed, Gadara **Mt 8:28-34; Mk 5:1-20**
16. Jairus' daughter raised to life, Capernaum **Mt 9:18-26; Mk 5:22-24; Lk 8:41-56**
17. Issue of blood healed, Near Capernaum **Mt 9:18-26; Mk 5:22-24; Lk 8:41-56**
18. Two blind men restored to sight, Capernaum **Mt 9:27-31**
19. Dumb demoniac healed, Capernaum **Mt 9:32-34**
20. Five thousand miraculously fed, Decapolis **Mt 14:13-21; Mk 6:31-44; Lk 9:10-17; Jn 6:5-14**
21. Jesus walks on the sea, Sea of Galilee **Mt 14:22-33; Mk 6:45-52; Jn 6:15-21**
22. Syrophœnician's daughter healed, Coasts of Tyre and Sidon **Mt 15:21-28; Mk 7:24-30**
23. Deaf and impediment in speech healed, Decapolis **Mk 7:31-37**
24. Four thousand fed, Decapolis **Mt 15:32-39; Mk 8:1-9**
25. Blind man restored to sight, Bethsaida **Mk 8:22-26**
26. Demoniac and lunatic boy healed, Near Caesarea Philippi **Mt 17:14-21; Mk 9:14-29; Lk 9:37-43**
27. Miraculous provision of tribute, Capernaum **Mt 17:24-27**
28. The eyes of one born blind opened, Jerusalem **Jn 9:1-41**
29. Woman, of eighteen years' infirmity, cured, [Perea.] **Lk 13:10-17**
30. Dropsical man healed, [Perea.] **Lk 14:1-6**
31. Ten lepers cleansed, Borders of Samaria **Lk 17:11-19**
32. Lazarus raised to life, Bethany **Jn 11:1-46**
33. Two blind beggars restored to sight, Jericho **Mt 20:29-34; Mk 10:46-52; Lk 18:35-43**
34. Barren fig tree blighted, Bethany **Mt 21:12, 13, 18, 19; Mk 11:12-24**
35. Malchus' ear healed, Gethsemane **Mt 26:51-54; Mk 14:47-49; Lk 22:50-51; Jn 18:10-11**
36. His resurrection **Jn 2:18-21; 10:18; Jn 20:1-29**
37. Entrance through shut doors **Jn 20:19**. See also **Jn 20:26**.
38. Second draught of fishes, Sea of Galilee **Jn 21:1-14**

Jn 9: A Miracle Examined; Jn 11: A Miracle Unchallenged**Jn 9: A Miracle Examined**

Parents - suggestion: Discuss with your children - how could this have been a scam, a fraud? Modern magicians have stages, curtains, props, accomplices, etc. - Jesus had *none* of these.

Was the man who now sees the *same* man who was blind? (note **v8-9,18**)

What did the man say? **v9-11,15,25**

What did his parents say? **vv18-21**

How did he do it? (Note the word “how...?” **vv9-1,15,19,21,26**)

If one can not explain how something happens, does it invalidate that it *did* happen? Eg., how can a brown cow eat green grass and produce white milk?

The “blind” man was the one who could “see” the only logical answer as to “how.” What was it? **vv30-33**.

Is it the man named, “Jesus,” who did it? **v11**

While the Jewish leaders could not invalidate what happened, they definitely did not want to attribute it to Jesus! Why did they say Jesus could not be the one responsible for healing the blind man? **vv16,24,29**

Note: No one ever wanted more to prove Jesus a fraud than these men. And they had the power to perform whatever investigations they deemed necessary, and even to exert pressure by excommunication upon those who they felt were lying.

While the man did not know Jesus was the Son of God, what was his logical conclusion about Jesus? **vv17,25,30-33**. What did this miracle eventually lead this man to? **vv35-38**. Compare **Jn 20:29-31**. Note: Jesus said only the “blind” could not see the implications! **v39**

Note: the man told the same story every time, to different parties, at different times, under threat of persecution, under examination and cross-examination. Also observe he was a man of clear logic (**vv30-33**) and simply honesty (**vv12,17,25,27,36**).

Jn 11: A Miracle Unchallenged

There may have been many men named, “Lazarus,” but the identity of this Lazarus is *unchallenged*. How is this “Lazarus” identified? **11:1-2**.

The fact Lazarus was dead was *not challenged*. How long had he been dead and in the tomb? **vv17,39,44**.

This event did not take place in a secret place, with a select handful of disciples, and what Jesus supposedly said only revealed after the event. This would not change the fact of it, but it would open the door to being *challenged*. Rather ... *Where* did it take place, *who was present* (**vv31,38,42,45; 12:17**), and what did Jesus say loud enough for all to hear *before* it happened (**11:41-43**)?.

This miracle was *not challenged* by Jesus’ most hardcore enemies. In fact, what did they say, and contemplate doing? **vv45-48; 12:9-11**.

What was happening when people were convinced of the veracity of the miracle? **11:45** (note **v48**); **12:11**. This was, in fact, the *purpose* of the miracle, **11:4,9,15,40,42**.

Others, who were not present when the miracle was performed, came to believe — based on what? **12:17-18**.

NOTE: No evidence the Pharisees examined this as they did in the case of the man born blind. WHY? Surely, if there was any chance of fraud or even manufacturing a story to take the glory away from Jesus, they would have been favorable to it (compare **Jn 9:24; Mt 28:12-15**). The resurrection of Lazarus *WAS NOT CHALLENGED!*

You are in the jury box - if you do not believe either one of these, on what basis will you reject the evidence presented?

Resurrection of Jesus - The Empty Tomb

IF Jesus' body was raised from the dead, so what ...?

- **Ro 1:4**
- **1Pt 1:3-4**
- **Rom 6:4**
- **Ac 17:30-31**

If Jesus was NOT raised from the dead, so what ... ?

1Co 15:14-19 (six consequences)

While these are tremendous consequences, it does not mean it is true. Did it really happen? *You are the jury.* Let's begin to look at the evidence.

Parents - suggestion: Be sure your children understand the "resurrection" is a resurrection of the human *body*, the same body they are living in today. The very idea may seem amazing...and it is! But, *is it true?*

The empty tomb itself

Mt 27:62-66 - What did the Jews do to insure the body of Jesus would be in the tomb "the third day"?

Why was this so important to them?

The grave clothes

Jn 20:6-7 What did John and Peter discover when they got to the tomb? Note the details John recorded about what they observed.

The "large stone" at the entrance to the tomb

Mt 27:60; Mk 16:4 - How is the stone described?

When the women arrived at the tomb early on the first day of the week, they found the stone had been rolled away (**Mk 16:4; Lk 24:2; Jn 20:1**).

The question: *WHO moved the stone?*

- Could a brutally beaten, crucified, pierced, allegedly dead man move it?
- The women could not. **Mk 16:3**
- Male disciples would have had to overpower the guard, which if they did, the guards would have told this story rather than the incredible one they did. Moreover, they had no motive.
- The Jews nor the Romans wanted the stone removed, but on the contrary. Moreover, had they removed it and removed the body, they would have told this instead of the story the soldiers told, and certainly produced the body on Pentecost.
- Who did Matthew say removed it? **Mt 28:2**

Second question: *WHY was the removed?*

- Was it so Jesus could get out? **Jn 20:19,26; Lk 24:31; Ac 1:9-11**
- So MEN could see the empty tomb!
 - The Romans and Jews. **Mt 28:13**
 - The disciples. **Mt 28:6; Mk 16:6; Lk 24:3; Jn 20:2-10**
 - ALL knew the body had been laid there three days ago, the tomb sealed, a guard stationed. Now, the body is gone...The point is: **WHERE'S THE BODY?!**

Efforts to account for the empty tomb

We will discuss these in our next class.

1. The disciples stole the body - **Mt 28:11-15**
2. Joseph of Arimathea removed the body to another place.
3. The women found the wrong tomb.
4. The swoon theory: Jesus fainted and did not die.
5. If Jesus was raised from the dead, why didn't the Jews search for Jesus to kill him again?

Resurrection of Jesus - The Empty Tomb...?

The empty tomb shouts loudly through the centuries ... “*Where’s the body?*”! The Jews understood the importance of NOT having an empty tomb, thus their measures to secure it, **Mt 27:62-66**. If they could present the body of Jesus on Sunday, it would prove he was a “deceiver”! But, the tomb *was* empty Sunday morning...and it is *still* empty! So, efforts have been made by unbelievers to account for the empty tomb. We will look at some of these. As the jury, *you* weigh the evidence.

1. The disciples stole the body - Mt 28:11-15

You are on the jury. You hear this story by the soldiers. What problems do you find with it?

Consider: The Roman guards, and likely those known to be the best (“make it as secure as you know how” **Mt 27:65**), fell asleep on duty, and while they were asleep some discouraged fishermen, a tax collector, and some others, who had proved to be cowards only a couple days earlier, came, dared to break the Roman seal to fabricate a lie, rolled away the large stone, removed the linen wrappings from the corpse and carefully rolled them up, stole the body, all this without waking the guards—ALL of whom were asleep. The Roman guards then told on themselves, that they were asleep on duty, and moreover, based their testimony on what had happened to the body on events that transpired, by their own testimony, while they were asleep. No effort was made to interrogate the thieves and recover the body, nor was any punishment meted out, and this by those who had successfully had an innocent and popular man falsely tried and put to death and had taken special measures to insure the security of the tomb. Then this bunch of cowardly thieves began to proclaim boldly, at the expense of their very lives, that Jesus was risen from the dead! *Can YOU believe such a story?*

2. Joseph of Arimathea removed the body to another place.

If Joseph moved the body, who would have certainly known about it, and how would it have affected their story?

If this is a correct portrayal of Joseph’s character (**Lk 23:50**), what would he have done when it began to be reported Jesus rose from the dead and began to reign on David’s throne (**Ac 2**)?

3. The women found the wrong tomb.

What did these do when the body of Jesus was put in the tomb? **Mt 27:59-61; Lk 23:55; Mk 15:47**

What did they intend to do the next day? **Lk 23:54 ... 24:1**

This was not an ordinary tomb. What was different about it? **Mt 27:57-60**

What would the Jews have done when it began to be spread that Jesus had risen from the dead? **Mt 27:64**

4. The swoon theory: Jesus fainted and did not die.

What did the soldiers who were there and who had the responsibility to be sure the the three men on the crosses were dead, conclude? **Jn 19:32-33**

What did one of the soldiers do to Jesus? **Jn 19:34**

If Jesus could have survived and revived, what would he have had to do to exit the tomb?

How would this have affected the story the soldiers told about what happened?

After being beaten through the night, no sleep, scourged the next morning, made to carry his cross, nailed to the cross, hung there six hours, spear thrust in his side, buried in a sealed tomb, no food or medical attention,...now, without any help or medical attention, he revives, removes the grave clothes and folds them neatly, pushes away the large stone at the mouth of the tomb, overcomes the soldiers, and in this condition, weakened, battered, and bleeding, persuades his disciples he is the victorious Savior risen from the dead, can give them life, and imbues them with moral power to confront their enemies and lay down their lives for him! *Can YOU believe it?*

5. If Jesus was raised from the dead, why didn’t the Jews search for Jesus to kill him again?

Did the Jews believe he was raised from the dead?

What would such a search be an admission of?

However one tries to deal with the empty tomb, the question continues remains —Where’s the Body?!

Resurrection of Jesus - The Eyewitnesses

Jury, in our last session we looked at the *objective* evidence of the empty tomb. In this session we will hear from and about eyewitnesses who saw Jesus alive after he was crucified.

1. Who said she saw him on Sunday, the very day he said he would be raised? Was she *expecting* to see him? **Mk 16:9-11; Jn 20:11-18**

What did she do at the tomb? **Jn 20:11** (Note **Mt 27:61; Mk 15:47; Lk 23:55**.)

What three human senses were involved in her testimony that Jesus was alive? **Jn 20:16-18**

2. On the same day, other women also told the apostles they saw Jesus alive. **Mt 28:9-10; Lk 24:1-11**

What shows they were not expecting to see Jesus alive? **Lk 23:55-56...24:1**

What did they do at the tomb? **Mt 28:6; Mk 16:5-6; Lk 24:3**

Did the apostles believe their testimony?

What three human senses were in involved in their testimony that Jesus was alive?

3. According to two disciples and according to an apostle, to whom did Jesus appear on this “third day” (**Lk 24:21**) since these things happened (i.e. his crucifixion, **v20**)? **Lk 24:34; 1Co 15:5**

4. Testimony of two men, **Lk 24:13-35; Mk 16:12-13**. It was seven miles from Emmaus to Jerusalem; walking three miles per hour, how long would this trip take?

When they arrived at Emmaus, what did Jesus do with them?

Were they *expecting* to see Jesus alive?

How did the apostles react to their testimony?

5. To whom did Jesus appear on Sunday evening of the day he was raised? **Mk 16:14; Lk 24:36-43; Jn 20:19-25**

Note they were not credulous. What did Jesus do to overcome their doubt? **Lk 24:37-42; Jn 20:20**

What did they tell their co-worker, Thomas? **Jn 20:24-25**

6. To whom did Jesus appear one week later? **Jn 20:26-28**? What was Thomas’ testimony?

7. To whom and where did appear? **Jn 21:1-14**. What objective evidences support the fact this was not imagination or hallucinations?

8. To whom and where did Jesus’ appear on this occasion? **Mt 28:16,17**

9. According to the apostle Paul, to whom did Jesus appear? **1Co 15:7**

10. His last appearance on earth was to who and on what occasion? **Mk 16:19-20; Lk 24:44-53; Ac 1:2-11,22**

You are the jury. Are ALL these witnesses deceived? Are they dishonest? How many would you have to believe are telling the truth before YOU would be convinced? Note **Ac 1:3**.

Resurrection of Jesus - Credibility of the Witnesses?

In our last court session, we heard from and about eyewitnesses who saw Jesus alive after he was crucified. But, the opposition has some questions; we will consider these and some potential responses (R:).

Parents - suggestion: Discuss with your children — have you or they ever told about something that happened (school, work, home, etc.) and the people you told it to had reservations about it and asked some questions about things that did not seem to fit? Did the fact they had questions invalidate the fact of what you witnessed and testified to?

Matthew's account (Mt 27:62-66; 28:11-15) about the guard at the tomb is questioned. Why? ...

- That the priests remembered and acted upon the claim of Jesus to rise from the dead, but the disciples did not.
R: What was the disciples' view about Jesus being raised from the dead? **Lk 24:1,11,21-26; Mk 16:13**

- That Pilate, at the priests' request, would grant a guard.
R: What motives did Pilate have for wanting the body secure? (Consider the implications and consequences if it was missing Sunday morning.) **Lk 23:1-5; Mt 27:23-24; Jn 19:6-8**

- That the soldiers would report to the priests rather than to Pilate.
R: Who did Pilate put in charge of the soldiers who were to guard the tomb? **Mt 27:65-66**

- That the guard would tell a story that would risk their lives for the sake of money (asleep on duty).
R: What did the Jews do to remove this fear? **Mt 28:14**

Since Mary knew Jesus, why did she not recognize him at once? Jn 20:11-17

R: What did Mary *expect* to find at the tomb? **Jn 20:1-2,11-13**

R: What was Mary's emotional and physical (her eyes) state (note: stated three times)? **Jn 20:11,13,15**

R: If this story is a fabrication, what would be the more likely response of Mary?

Actions testified to are impossible of human body, i.e. if Jesus bodily raised, how could he vanish, **Lk 24:31**, and enter rooms through closed doors, **Jn 20:19,26**?

R: Obviously these are miracles. If the resurrection be true, then these supernatural appearances and disappearances are certainly no problem. If there is a God, and all things are possible! **Gen 18:14; Lk 1:37**

R: The testimony includes evidences of a *flesh and bone* body. What are some of these? **Jn 20:20,27-28; Lk 24:36-43**

Not one witness of the actual resurrection

R: True! Instead of undermining the testimony, how does this in fact serve to corroborate the witnesses were testifying to actual events?

R: What this proves is, there was not one witness of the actual resurrection. So...? Must God do things as *we* think they ought to be done? We would not have had him crucified in the first place! Deal with the witnesses' testimony who saw him after he was raised (previous class)!

Witnesses contradict one another

R: We will deal with these in our next session.

OK, Jury, you must decide ... do these questions invalidate the fact of the resurrection?

Resurrection of Jesus - Do the Witnesses Contradict One Another?

We have heard from a number of witnesses who testify Jesus was raised from the dead. But, there are some discrepancies in the accounts of these witnesses—are these differences *contradictory*? Do they invalidate the credibility of their witness?

WHEN the women came to the tomb.

Mt 28:1, “as it began to dawn”; **Jn 20:1**, “while it was still dark” --- versus --- **Mk 16:2**, “when the sun had risen.” Are these discrepancies? Can they be harmonized...? Compare ...

Let’s say sunrise is at 7:15 am. Mary, Bill’s wife, told Suzy on the phone that Bill “went to work before sunrise.” Bill, in describing his ride to work, said, “when I went to work the sun was in my eyes.” These are discrepancies. Assuming both Mary and Bill are truthful and correct, how can you harmonize their “witness”?

Who went to the tomb

Mt 28:1 = Mary Magdalene and “the other Mary” (two women); **Mk 16:1** = Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, & Salome (3 women); **Lk 24:10** = Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Joanna, and “other women” (3 women +); **Jn 20:1** = Mary Magdalene (1 woman).

Did any writer say the woman or women they mentioned were the *only* ones who went to the tomb?

If you told someone, “I went to the rodeo,” should they conclude you meant that you were the *only* one who went?

Number of angels at the tomb

Matthew (**28:2,5**) and Mark (**16:5**) mention one (Mk, “young man...wearing a white robe”) while Luke (**24:4**) and John (**20:12**) mention two.

Did any writer the angel or angels they mentioned were the *only* ones at the tomb?

If you tell someone, “I saw Mary at the mall today,” should anyone think you meant Mary was the *only* person at the mall?

Conduct of the women immediately after they left the tomb

Matthew and Mark say they were to go the disciples and report the resurrection and that Jesus would meet them in Galilee, **Mt 28:7**; **Mk 16:7**. Luke says they did, **Lk 24:9,10**. But Mark says “trembling and astonishment gripped them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.” **Mk 16:8**.

Mark connects their fear with their saying nothing to anyone; did they have reason to fear the disciples Jesus told them to tell (v7)?

What is “synecdoche”?

Compare: “We went to Mt. St. Helens.” (where the volcanic eruption occurred in 1980). “What did you see?” “Nothing! It was fogged in.” Did not see the ground? The visitor building? Other visitors?

First appearance of Jesus to the male disciples

Matthew - on a mountain in Galilee **Mt 28:16-17**; Mark and John - in Jerusalem on Sunday after the resurrection **Mk 16:12-14** (Lk 24:33-34 - Jerusalem); **Jn 20:19**; Luke and Paul (**Lk 24:34, 1Co 15:5**) - to Peter

Do any of these writers say the appearance they chose to record was the *first* of all the appearances in order of time, or that it was the *only* appearance?

Illustration: If two people describe a wreck and one mentions a passenger in the front seat, but the other didn’t, does that mean the passenger didn’t exist? Or, that the witnesses can’t be trusted - the wreck probably didn’t happen?

Continued on back ...

Jerusalem or Galilee?

Matthew has the disciples meeting Jesus in Galilee (**Mt 28:16-17**), whereas Luke has him meeting them in Jerusalem, and telling them to remain there, which they did, **Lk 24:33-36,49-52**.

This supposed contradiction depends on the assumption what is recorded in **Lk 24:36-49** all took place at one time, that being the Sunday evening following the resurrection. If **vv44ff** could refer to a *later* conversation, then the supposed difficulty disappears. Note the “Now” in **v44** (“And” KJV, ASV; “Then” NKJV, ESV). This word is sometimes used to indicate a transition, and here points to a transition between Luke’s record of the Sunday evening of the resurrection to his record of the last appearance to them before his ascension.

In Luke’s second account (see **Ac 1:1**), where he backs up to pick up where he left off in the first account (**Lk 24:44-53**), he made it clear a span of time occurred between his resurrection and ascension—how long? **Ac 1:1-4**.

The “forty days” of Ac 1:3 versus Lk 24:36-53

Ac 1:3 simply provides additional information about the period he had previously written about. There (Lk 24) he concentrated on describing an appearance and certain teaching he left the apostles. Here (Ac 1) he skips that to add information about that period and to include some additional instructions, **vv4-8**, that prepare the way for his present treatise (the book of Acts). *There is no contradiction.*

Illustration: If you describe to someone some things discussed with corporate office, must it be concluded you discussed ALL these things AT ONE TIME? If you later mentioned that this interaction transpired over several weeks (email, phone, or personal visit), would anyone find it strange, much less to say *contradictory*, that the things you mentioned as having discussed may have been separated by intervals of days, maybe weeks, and other events?

What do you think, members of the jury? Do you think there are reasonable explanations for the differences in the witnesses testimony? **Mt 7:2**. In fact, if all the witnesses said the exact same thing, how would you feel about their testimony? Remember this warning: *“in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you”!*

Prophecy

While a “prophet” is a person God used to reveal His will, whether commands, warnings, instruction, etc., sometimes God used a prophet to foretell things in the distant future—things which no man could know unaided by Divine guidance. One special field of such “prophecy” was that which foretold a coming “Messiah,” his nature, his work, his glory, his suffering, death, and resurrection, and his glorious kingdom. It is this kind of “prophecy” we are introducing as evidence in court relative to the identity of this man called, “Jesus.” You are the jury—it is your responsibility to weigh the evidence.

The value of prophecy depends on (1) being delivered *prior* to the event, (2) *corresponding precisely* with the event, (3) being *beyond mere human ability to predict*, and (4) being such that *does not cause its own fulfillment*. Weigh the evidence you hear in the light of this criteria.

Parents - suggestion: Discuss with your children the difference in “prophecy” and “prediction.” While prophecy may be prediction, not all prediction is prophecy. What is the difference?

There are many prophecies relating to this “Messiah.” We will consider in this session eight of them:

1. Where was this person to be born? **Mic 5:2**. (Micah, c. 700 B.C.) See **Mt 2:5-6**
2. A unique individual with a special work relative to the Messiah was to come before him - what kind of person would he be and what was his work? **Isa 40:3-5** (Isaiah, c. 700 B.C.) **Mal 3:1, 4:5-6** (Malachi, c. 425 B.C.)

In the time Jesus lived, who fit that description? **Lk 1:17; 3:1-9; Mt 11:7-11**

3. The Messiah king would enter Jerusalem in a very unusual way for a “king” - what was it? **Zech 9:9** (Zechariah, c. 500 B.C.). See **Mt 21:4-5**
4. The Messiah would be betrayed by whom? **Ps 41:9** (David, c. 1000 B.C.) See **Jn 13:18**.
5. The reward for the betrayal was prophesied as to the kind of funds and the specific amount. What was it? **Zech 11:12** (Zechariah, c. 500 B.C.) See **Mt 27:9**.
6. A very usual thing was prophesied about what would be done with this betrayal reward. **Zech 11:13** (Zechariah, c. 500 B.C.) See **Mt 27:10**. What was it?
7. When accused in trials by his enemies, how would the Messiah respond? **Isa 53:7** (Isaiah, c. 700 B.C.) See **Mk 14:61; Mt 27:12-14; Lk 23:9-10; Jn 19:9-10**.
8. How would the Messiah die? **Ps 22:16** (David, c. 1000 B.C.) See **Jn 20:25**.

By comparison, supposed you printed in 1700 and in it it purported to identify a man yet to be born with the following traits:

1. Came from large family
2. Father US ambassador to England
3. Oldest brother killed in WW II
4. Pilot P.T. boat in U.S. Navy
5. Senator from Massachusetts
6. First Catholic president
7. Assassinated in Dallas
8. Wife named Jacqueline

Is there any doubt who the identity of the man described in the book is? Is it possible that someone could write such a “prophecy” 300 years before the fact?! Multiply the years between the prophecy and fulfillment from 300 years to as much as 1500, the authors from one to over 30, and the prophecies from 8 to several hundred, AND THIS IS WHAT WE HAVE IN THE MESSIANIC PROPHECIES!

See the accompanying handout for the mathematical probability of something like this happening.

There were many more than eight prophecies of the Messiah. Following are some examples - *How do these fit Jesus?*

Lineage

- Abraham - **Gen 22:18...Mt 1:1**
- Isaac - **Gen 21:12...Lk 3:23,34**. Note: descendants of Ishmael eliminated.
- Jacob - **Gen 28:14...Lk 3:23,34**. Note: eliminates Esau and his descendants.
- Tribe of Judah - **Gen 49:10...Lk 3:33, Heb 7:14**. Eliminates 11 other tribes.
- Jesse - **Isa 11:1...Lk 3:23,32**. Note **Num 1:26,27** - how many eliminated. Story of Ruth.
- David - **2Sam 7:12ff...Mt 1:1**

Birth

- Place: Bethlehem - **Micah 5:2...Mt 2:4-6**
- Time:
 - After 400 BC - **Mal 4:4-6**
 - Before end of Roman empire - **Dan 2:44**. Divided 395 AD. Overrun in 400's.
 - Before destruction of Jerusalem - **Dan 9:24-27**. AD 70.

Ministry

- Forerunner - **Mal 3:1, 4:5,6...Lk 1:17**
- Rejected by own people - **Isa 53:1-3...Jn 1:11**
- Enter Jerusalem on a donkey - **Zech 9:9...Mt 21:4,5**

Death

- Oppressive, unjust judgment led to death - **Isa 53:7-8**. Unlawful arrest, false witnesses, self-indictment, four times declared innocent!
- Silent before accusers - **Isa 53:7**.
Four times he silent: Once in 2nd stage of Jewish trial, Mk 14:61; all three stages of Roman trial, **Mt 27:12-14; Lk 23:9-10; Jn 19:9-10**.
- Death as a criminal - **Isa 53:9a,12...Lk 22:37; Mt 26:65; Lk 23:32**
- Grave with rich - **Isa 53:9 ...Mt 27:57-60**
Whereas the Jews intended for Jesus to have a dishonorable burial, he had an honorable one.
- Cast lots for garments - **Ps 22:18...Jn 19:24**
- Pierced hands and feet - **Ps 22:16...Jn 20:25**.
- Cries on cross - **Ps 22:1...Mt 27:46**
- Mockery and insults - **Ps 22:7,8...Mt 27:39-43**
- RAISED FROM DEAD! **Ps 16:7-11...Ac 2:25-31**

Members of the jury — *can there be any doubt that this man named “Jesus” is the fulfillment of these prophecies?* If he IS, what does this say about his identity? **YOU render the verdict!**

See **Jn 1:45; 5:39,45-46; Lk 24:25-27,44-47; Ac 17:2-3**.

What is the mathematical probability that one man the world over would fulfill all eight prophecies from the day they were made down to the present time? The quotes that follow are taken from *Science Speaks* by Peter Stoner. An introduction to Mr. Stoner and his mathematical qualifications are given below and then the quotes from his book follow.

From Title Page:

Peter W. Stoner: Chairman of the Departments of Mathematics and Astronomy at Pasadena College until 1953; Chairman of the Science Division, Westmont College, 1953-1957; now Professor Emeritus of Science, Westmont College."

Science Speaks, p. 4, "Foreword":

The manuscript for *Science Speaks* has been carefully reviewed by a committee of the American Scientific Affiliation members and by the Executive Council of the same group and has been found, in general, to be dependable and accurate in regard to the scientific material presented. The mathematical analysis included is based upon principles of probability which are thoroughly sound and Professor Stoner has applied these principles in a proper and convincing way.

American Scientific Affiliation
H. Harold Hartzler, Ph.D.,
Secretary-Treasurer
Goshen College, Ind.

If these estimates [estimates on the probability of each of the individual eight prophecies considered, srf] are considered fair, one man in how many men, the world over, will fulfill all eight prophecies? This question can be answered by applying our principles of probability. In other words, by multiplying all of our estimates together, or 1 in $2.8 \times 10^5 \times 10^3 \times 10^2 \times 10^3 \times 10^3 \times 10^5 \times 10^3 \times 10^4$. This gives 1 in 2.8×10^{28} , where 28 means that we have 28 ciphers following the 2.8. Let us simplify and reduce the number by calling it 1 in 10^{28} . Written out this number is 1 in 10,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000.

This is the answer to the question: One man in how many men has fulfilled these eight prophecies? But we are really concerned with the answer to the question: What is the chance that any man might have lived from the day of these prophecies down to the present time and have fulfilled all of the eight prophecies? We can answer this question by dividing our 10^{28} by the total number of people who have lived since the time of these prophecies. The best information available indicates the number to be about 88 billion or 8.8×10^{10} . To simplify the computation let us call the number 10^{11} . By dividing these two numbers we find that the chance that any man might have lived, down to the present time, and fulfilled all eight prophecies is 1 in 10^{17} .

Let us try to visualize this chance. If you mark one of ten tickets, and place all of the tickets in a hat, and thoroughly stir them, and then ask a blindfolded man to draw one, his chance of getting the right ticket is 1 in 10. Suppose that we take 10^{17} silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state 2 feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time, providing they wrote them in their own wisdom.

Now these prophecies were either given by inspiration of God or the prophets just wrote them as they thought they should be. In such a case the prophets had just one chance in 10^{17} of having them come true in any man, but they all came true in Christ.

This means that the fulfillment of these eight prophecies alone proves that God inspired the writing of those prophecies to a definiteness which lacks only one chance in 10^{17} of being absolute.

Sometimes we weigh our chances in the business world, and say if an investment has nine chances in ten of being profitable, and only one chance in ten of being a failure, it is safe enough for us to make the investment. Whoever heard of an investment that had only one chance in 10^{17} of failure? The business world has no conception of such an investment. Yet we are offered this investment by God. By the acceptance of Jesus Christ as our Savior we know, from only these eight prophecies which lack only 1 chance in 10^{17} of being an absolute proof, that that investment will yield the wonderful dividend of eternal life with Christ. Can anyone be so unreasonable as to reject Jesus Christ and pin his hope of eternal life on such a slim chance as finding the right silver dollar among this great mass, covering the whole state of Texas 2 feet deep? It does not seem possible, yet every man who rejects Christ is doing just that.

More than 300 prophecies, from the Old Testament, which deal with the first advent of Christ, have been listed. Every one of them was completely fulfilled by Jesus Christ. Let us see what happens when we take more than eight prophecies.

Suppose we add eight more prophecies to our list, and assume that their chance of fulfillment is the same as the eight just considered. The chance that one man would fulfill all sixteen is 1 in $10^{28} \times 10^{17}$ or 1 in 10^{45} .

Let us try to visualize this as we did before. Take this number of silver dollars. If you make these into a solid ball, you will have a great sphere with a center at the earth, and extending in all directions more than 30 times as far as from the earth to the sun. (If a train had started from the earth at the time the Declaration of Independence was signed, and had traveled steadily toward the sun at the rate of 60 miles per hour, day and night, it would be about reaching its destination today. But remember that our ball of silver dollars extends 30 times that far in all directions.) If you can imagine the marking of one silver dollar, and then thoroughly stirring it into this great ball, and blindfolding a man and telling him to pick out one dollar, and expect it to be the marked one, you have somewhat of a picture of how absolutely the fulfillment of sixteen prophecies referring to Jesus Christ prove both that He is the Son of God and that our Bible is inspired. Certainly God directed the writing of His Word.

In order to extend this consideration beyond all bounds of human comprehension, let us consider forty-eight prophecies, similar in their human chance of fulfillment to the eight which we originally considered. Using the same principle of probability which we have used so far, we find the chance that any one man fulfilled all forty-eight prophecies to be 1 in 10^{157} .

This is really a large number and it represents an extremely small chance. Let us try to visualize it. The silver dollar, which we have been using, is entirely too large. We must select a smaller object. The electron is about as small an object as we know of. It is so small that it will take 2.5×10^{15} of them laid side by side to make a line, single file, one inch long. If we were going to count the electrons in this line, one inch long, and counted 250 each minute, and if we counted day and night, it would take us 19,000,000 years to count just the one-inch line of electrons. If we had a cubic inch of these electrons and we tried to count them it would take us, counting steadily 250 each minute, $19,000,000 \times 19,000,000 \times 19,000,000$ years or 6.9×10^{21} years.

With this introduction, let us go back to our chance of 1 in 10^{157} . Let us suppose that we are taking this number of electrons, marking one, and thoroughly stirring it into the whole mass, then blindfolding a man and letting him try to find the right one. What chance has he of finding the right one? What kind of a pile will this number of electrons make? They make an inconceivable large volume. ...

No man could in any way look over this mass of electrons, blindfolded or not blindfolded, and pick out any one electron, let alone the one that had been marked. (The electron, in fact, is so small that it cannot be seen with a powerful microscope.)

To the extent, then, that we know this blindfolded man cannot pick out the marked electron, we know that the Bible is inspired. This is not merely evidence. It is proof of the Bible's inspiration by God—proof so definite that the universe is not large enough to hold the evidence.

Some will say that our estimates of the probability of the fulfillment of these prophecies are too large and the numbers should be reduced. Ask a man to submit his own estimates, and if they are smaller than these we have used, we shall add a few more prophecies to be evaluated and this same number will be reestablished or perhaps exceeded.

Our Bible students claim that there are more than 300 prophecies dealing with Christ's first advent. If this number is correct, and it no doubt is, you could set your estimates ridiculously low on the whole 300 prophecies and still obtain tremendous evidence of inspiration.

For example you may place all of your estimates at 1 in 4. You may say that 1 man in 4 has been born in Bethlehem; that 1 of these children in 4 was taken to Egypt, to avoid slaughter; that 1 in 4 of these came back and made his home in Nazareth; that 1 in 4 of these was a carpenter; that 1 in 4 of these was betrayed for 30 pieces of silver; that 1 in 4 of these has been crucified on a cross; that 1 in 4 were then buried in a rich man's tomb; yes, even that 1 in 4 rises from the dead on the third day; and so on for all of the 300 prophecies and from them I will build a number much larger than the one we obtained from the 48 prophecies.

Any man who rejects Christ as the Son of God is rejecting a fact proved perhaps more absolutely than any other fact in the world.

Moral Glory

This man, Jesus — was his life consistent with his teaching and his claims? Obviously, if this man claimed to be the Son of God, the Messiah, the Light of the world, but his teaching and life was not consistent with such claims, it would cast doubt on his credibility and our respect for him.

Obedience to Divine law

What did he teach about obeying God? **Mt 5:17-20**

What does he imply in his challenge in **Jn 8:46**?

What did Peter, one of his closest associates say about him? **1Pe 2:22**

Another close disciple, John, testified what about him? **1Jn 3:5**.

Even the man who betrayed called him what kind of man? **Mt 27:3-4**

Nature of his rule — through the truth, not force

Who would follow him as the light of the world? **Jn 3:21**. See **vv16-20**.

When an effort was made to force him to be king like kings of the earth, what did he do? **Jn 6:15**

What did he claim his rule (note **Jn 8:12**, “follows me” and **Jn 8:31**, “disciples of mine”) was based on? **Jn 8:32**

What did he then tell Pilate about the nature of his rule? **Jn 18:36-37** (Note **18:10-11**.)

Even his enemies recognized him as a man who spoke what he believed to be truth, and was not intimidated to deter from it, and used that very fact to attempt to ensnare him, **Mt 22:15-16**. This focus on truth witnessed at his “trial,” even when it meant death! **Mt 26:63-67**

Love of God

What did he say was the “great and foremost commandment”? **Mt 22:36-38** (See **1Jn 5:3**.)

A repeated theme of his preaching was that he came for what purpose? **Jn 4:34; 5:30; 6:38**

Love of man

What did he say was the second greatest law? **Mt 22:39**

How did he demonstrate this love to the ultimate? **Jn 15:12-13**

Motives

What evidenced he was not motivated by earthly power, **Jn 6:15**?

Wealth? **Lk 9:57-58**

Popularity, applause? **Jn 6:60-66**.

Mental acuity

He was able to answer any question, and detect any trap laid for him. His responses were sharp, to the point, sometimes indicting, and sometimes revealing hitherto unknown facts. E.g., **Mt 22:15...22; 22:23...29-30...33; 22:34; 22:41...46**.

Insight of men

He responded to men according to their true character with unerring insight. E.g., **Jn 3:1-3...10-12; 6:25-26; 8:1-11; Mt 22:15-22**. See **Jn 2:24-25**.

Moral code

He taught the highest moral code known to man. E.g., **Matthew, chapters 5-7; 22:36-39**.

Truly, “Never did a man speak the way this man speaks,” (**Jn 7:46**), *nor did ever a man LIVE like this man lived!* John said, “We beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father..!” **Jn 1:14**. *What is YOUR verdict...?*

Reasons for Unbelief

Well, jury, it might seem that in view of all the evidence that's been presented, *everyone* would be convinced that he is who he claimed to be. But, that was not the case in the 1st century, nor is it now. Why? We have seen it is *certainly not due to a lack of evidence*. What other factors, then, are reasons people persist in unbelief?

Ignorance of the evidence

How could one remain ignorant of the abundant evidence of Jesus being the Son of God?
Jn 20:30-31; Lk 1:3-4

What could you do to help others possibly overcome this problem? **Ac 17:2-3,11-13**

Parents - suggestion: What can YOU do to avoid this pitfall in your children?

Attitude toward the evidence

What attitude did Jesus say is essential to the evidence creating belief? **Jn 7:17**. Compare **Mt 5:6; Jn 5:39-40; 18:37**.

Why do people either purposely ignore the evidence, or, interpret with bias that prohibits fair examination and treatment of it? The following scriptures allude to some of the reasons—what are they?

- **Jn 7:48; 8:33,39,41; 9:34**. See **Mt 18:3**.
- **Jn 5:41-44; 12:42,43**
- **Jn 9:18-22**
- **Mk 10:21,22; Lk 16:14ff**
- **Mt 15:1-14; Lk 24:25,26; Ac 28:23ff**
- **Mt 10:34-37; Lk 14:25ff**
- **2Th 2:10-12**
- **Mk 4:19**

Method (approach to the evidence)**Weigh all in the light of the unknowable**

Is this reasonable? “I don’t know how one bomb can do the damage claimed at Hiroshima, so I can’t believe it happened.” What key word occurs in all these verses? **Jn 9:10,15,19,21,26**

Unbalanced consideration to objections

What happens to a marriage (or any relationship) if one dwells only on the shortcomings of the other and never on their good qualities?

Parents - suggestion: Discuss with your children how they would feel if all you ever talked to them about was the times they did not please you.

Jn 20:30-31 - A valid and important question for an unbeliever, or someone struggling with their faith, *how much time and effort have they expended in studying the evidences in the four gospels?*

Shun examination of the evidence

Mk 9:24 What reflects the honesty of this man? (For the context, read **vv15-23**.)

Rom 10:17 What will create and sustain faith?

Continued on back ...

Demand repeatability of the evidence of miracles

“No one can demonstrate a miracle today, therefore I do not believe they can happen.”

Some things can be proven by *demonstration* ($2+2=4$), some by *personal experience* (the stove is hot), and some by *credible human testimony* (Declaration of Independence signed July 4, 1776). Listening to *credible testimony* is how we learn (math, history, geography, etc.), and is the basis on which we act (whom your parents). Miracles by their nature and intent are not events that can or will be repeated throughout the centuries. Whether they occurred can be established by credible human testimony. **Jn 20:29-31**. See **Mk 16:14**. See the previous lesson on “Miracles.”

Parents - suggestion: Encourage open discussion of questions and doubts children may have so that positive evidence can be presented and the child will not dwell only on the negatives.

Mk 16:15-16 *What difference does it make if we believe or do not believe?*

What Jesus Demands of Believers

What He demands

What does Jesus say is the work God demands? **Jn 6:28-29**

What does Jesus expect one to recognize? **Lk 18:9-14**

What kind of change in attitude is required to serve him? **Mt 21:28-32**

Where must he rank in priorities? **Mt 10:34-39**

What did say is a requisite of friendship? **Jn 15:10,14**

What kind of service does he expect? **Mt 25:15-30**

What must be our attitude toward our fellow man? **Lk 10:25-37**

If he is the person he claimed to be, does he have the right to make such demands?

So what? What will believing in Him and serving Him provide? What if we don't...?

What will following him provide? **Jn 8:12**

What can he do for us that only God can do? **Mk 2:7,10**

Through him we can have a gracious relationship with who? **Jn 14:6; Eph 2:16-18; 3:11-12**

What will he give his faithful followers at all times in every way (ESV)? **2Th 3:16**

By his grace we can have hope of what?

- **Tit 3:5-6**

- **1Co 15:22-23,54-58**

Believing the gospel about him provides freedom from what? **Mk 16:16**

If he is the person the gospels portray him to be, do you believe he can provide these things?

Where does one begin if he believes Jesus is the Son of God?

- Repent **Ac 2:38**
- Confess your faith **Ac 8:35-37; Rom 10:9-10**
- Be baptized **Ac 2:38; 8:38; Mk 16:16; Mt 28:18-19**