

Preparing to Give an Answer: Part 3

Confidence in Christ

Room For Doubt Seminar – Lowell, IN Church of Christ

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Introduction

- A. Christian claims about Jesus.
- B. Skeptic claims about Jesus.

I. The Identity of Jesus Christ.

A. Jesus' words.

1. John 10:30 "I and the Father are one."
2. John 14:7-9 "He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say 'Show us the Father?'"
3. John 5:22 "The Father ... has entrusted all judgment to the Son."
4. John 8:58 "Before Abraham was I am." (> Jews want to stone Him.)
5. **"Son of Man"**
 - a. Used 80x in the Gospels for Jesus.
 - b. e.g. Matthew 12:8 The Son of Man is "Lord of the Sabbath."
 - c. e.g. Mark 14:53-65.

⁶¹ ... Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" ⁶² And Jesus said, "I am, and you will see the **Son of Man** seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." (ESV) (Jesus is immediately accused of blasphemy and deserving of death. He is referring to Daniel 7:13-14, noted below.)

- d. Stephen sees heaven opened and the "Son of Man" standing at the right hand of God" (Acts 7:56; cf. Rev. 1:13; 14:14).
- e. Daniel 7:13-14.

¹³ "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a **son of man**, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. ¹⁴ And **to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him**; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed." (ESV; emphasis added)

B. Jesus' works (at least 37 recorded miracles, 20 of which are in more than one Gospel).

1. On **PEOPLE** (e.g. official's son; Leper; paralytic; widow's son; two blind men; man born blind; woman in the crowd; 10 lepers; blind Bartimaeus).
2. Over **NATURE** .
 - a. E.g. Turned water into wine; feeds multitudes; walks on water; etc.
 - b. E.g. Raised the dead: Jairus's daughter (Matt. 8; Mk. 5; Lk. 8) and Lazarus (Jn. 11).
3. John 20:30-31 "Many other signs"

Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

C. Jesus' **OPPOSITION.**

1. **Mk 14:61-64** Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" ⁶² And Jesus said, "I am; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." ⁶³ Tearing his clothes, the high priest *said, "What further need do we have of witnesses? ⁶⁴ You have heard the blasphemy; how does it seem to you?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death. (cf. Matt 26:59-65).
2. **John 8:48-59** (cf. Ex 3:14) ⁵⁷ So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" ⁵⁸ Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." ⁵⁹ Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple."
3. **Matt 12:8-14** {Lord of the Sabbath}: ¹⁴ But the Pharisees went out and conspired against Him, *as to how they might destroy Him.*
4. **John 10:30-39** {"I and the Father are One"}: ³⁰ I and the Father are one." ³¹ The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him.

D. Jesus' **FOLLOWERS.**

1. "Sons of God" VS. "**THE Son of God**"
 - a. "Sons of God" refers to Christians (Gal. 3:26; Matt. 5:9).
 - b. "The Son of God" (with the definite article): Used 48x in the New Testament in 11 different books and in all 4 Gospels to refer uniquely to Jesus.
2. **Acts 2:22-36** [sermon preached just 50 days after Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection]
 - a. vs 34 The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, ³⁵ Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."
 - b. Cf. Matt 22:41-46 "...⁴⁵ If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his son?" ⁴⁶ No one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question.
 - c. vs 36 ³⁶ Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified."
3. **John 1:1-2, 14** "... the Word was with God and **the Word was God** And the Word **became flesh** and dwelt among us"
4. **John 3:16** ¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that He gave His **only begotten Son**, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.
5. **Colossians 1:15** "And He [Christ] is the **image** [*icon*] of the invisible God ..."
6. **Hebrews 1:3** God "in these last days spoken unto us by His Son whom He appointed heir of all things . . . [the Son is] the image of His glory and the **exact representation** [*charakter*] of his nature"
7. **2 Peter 1:16** "For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were **eyewitnesses** of His majesty."
8. **1 John 1:1-4** What we have "heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the **Word of life** ... we proclaim to you ... and these things we write"
9. **John 20:30-31** "Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, **the Son of God**; and that believing you may have life in His name."

E. The appealing nature of Jesus.

1. His compassionate relationship with _____ **SINNERS** (Mark 2:14-16; cf. Matt. 9:9-13).
2. His confirming relationship with _____ **WOMEN**.
 - a. He broke social and religious rules to engage them (John 4).
 - b. He included women disciples during his travel ministry (Luke 8:1-3).
 - c. He would not allow women to be singled out for condemnation (John 8:1-11).
 - d. Jesus encouraged women to “sit as His feet” to learn (Luke 10:38-42 story of Mary and Martha).
3. His caring relationship with the _____ **POOR** and _____ **IMPAIRED**.
4. His condemnation of many _____ **RELIGIOUS** leaders.

II. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

A. The centrality and necessity of Christ’s resurrection.

1. It was the basis to believe “the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken” (Jn. 2:22).
2. It was a necessary event for “apostleship” (Acts 1:21-23). (They elected an apostle to take Judas’s place to “become a witness with us of His resurrection.”)
3. It was the cornerstone of their public preaching (Acts 2:29-32; 4:2, 33; 17:18-32; 23:6-8; 24:21-23). (The Acts 2 sermon preached in Jerusalem on Pentecost came just 50 days after the Passover when Jesus was crucified.)
4. It is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy (e.g. Luke 24:13-27; Acts 2:29-32).
5. It is the core of the Gospel (1 Cor. 15:1,3-8).
6. It is the basis for Christian baptism (Rom. 6:4-6; 1 Pet. 3:21).
7. It is the basis for our own resurrection from the dead (1 Cor. 15; Phil. 3:7-11).
8. It is the basis for our “living hope” (1 Peter 1:3).
9. If it did NOT occur, our faith is “worthless” (1 Cor. 15:12-19).

B. What needs to be explained?

1. Jesus was dead due to crucifixion.
2. The disciples were confused and in fear after the crucifixion.
3. Jesus’ tomb was empty after His burial (and it had been secured by Jewish/Roman authorities).
4. A variety of people testified that Jesus appeared in bodily form after His death.
5. The disciples experienced radical transformation and made bold proclamation.
6. The church suddenly began and rapidly expanded.

C. The disciples did not expect Jesus’ resurrection.

1. The Jewish doctrine of resurrection did not foresee it.
 - a. Only resurrection *at the end* of the world.
 - b. Only a general resurrection of *everyone*, not resurrection of an individual (e.g. Martha talking about Lazarus in John 11:24).
2. The disciples did not yet understand the Scripture about the resurrection (Jn. 20:9).

D. The disciples reported numerous **post-mortem appearances** of Jesus.

1. Appearance to Mary Magdalene (Jn. 20:11-18; Mk. 16:9) and the women (Matt. 28:8-10).
2. Appearance to Peter (cf. Lk. 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5).
3. Appearance to the two on the way to Emmaus (Lk. 24:13-32; Mk. 16:12-13).
4. Appearance to the Eleven [minus Judas] (Lk. 24:36-48; Jn. 20:19-22; Mk. 16:14).
5. Appearance to the Twelve [including Thomas, minus Judas] (Jn. 20:24-29).
6. Appearance at the Lake of Tiberias (Jn. 21).
7. Implied appearance in Galilee (based on Jesus' and angels' prediction and Mark's inclusion of these predictions).
8. Appearance to the 500 believers (which Paul mentions in 1 Cor. 15:6).
9. Appearance to James, the brother of Jesus (note James's radical conversion; cf. Mk. 3:21,31-32; Jn. 7:1-5; Acts 15:13-ff; Gal 1:19; 2:9).
10. Appearance at Jesus' ascension (Acts 1:9-11).
11. Appearance to Paul (Acts 9:1-9; 22:1-11; 26:9-19).

E. Jesus' disciples were _____ **TRANSFORMED** _____ and opponents were **converted**.

1. **Peter** (and the other apostles).
2. **Saul** (Acts 9).
3. **James**, a brother of Jesus (Matt. 13:55; Mk. 6:3).
 - a. James once did not believe (Jn. 7:5; Mk. 3:21,31-32).
 - b. James became a key leader in the early church (Acts 12:17; Acts 15:12-21).
 - c. Paul, when a Christian, visits with James (Acts 21:17-18; Gal. 1:19).

F. The resurrection message:

1. Was **publicly** proclaimed.
2. Was publicly proclaimed **in Jerusalem** (Acts 2).
3. Was publicly proclaimed in Jerusalem **within 50 days of Jesus' resurrection**.
4. Was publicly proclaimed in Jerusalem within 50 days of Jesus' resurrection **in spite of severe opposition and persecution**.

G. The **earliest N.T. books** about the resurrection are from _____ **PAUL** _____.

1. Galatians (Gal. 1:1, 11-12) [written 48-53 AD]
2. 1 Thessalonians (1:9-10; 4:14) [written 51 AD]
3. 1 Corinthians (15:1-4) [written 55 AD]

H. The **Four Gospels** present a powerful case for Christ's resurrection.

1. They were written within the *required timeframe*.
2. They were based on *eyewitness testimony* (1 John 1:1-4; 2 Pet. 1:16-21)
3. They provide remarkable *historical details* that could have been checked (and falsified, but were not).
 - a. e.g. Jesus buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea who was a rich man and member of the council (Matt. 27:57; Mk. 15:43; Lk. 23:50; Jn. 19:38).
 - b. e.g. Specific names given of multiple people.
4. They are *unanimous* in their testimony about the **BIG CLAIM**: Jesus Christ was raised from the dead (Matt. 28:1; Mk. 16:1; Lk. 24:1-5; Jn. 20:18).