

IS JESUS CHRIST GOD?

Intro.

What would you say to someone who says they don't believe Jesus is God?

(Why do you say that? What evidence brought you to that conclusion? Have you ever looked at the evidence that points to Jesus being God?)

I. Historical Evidence that Jesus was a real person.

A. There are approximately 20 sources of the historical Jesus in literature outside of the Bible.

B. Probably the most influential are the accounts of Josephus, a Jewish historian, who was born in AD. 37.

C. There are also Roman Historians, Conelius Tacitus, to name just one that wrote of Jesus in their writings.

D. Almost no serious scholars deny that Jesus of Nazareth was a real person.

E. Of course, we have extensive record of the life and teachings of Jesus in the Bible.

1. Luke was an associate of the Apostle Paul and he made it a point to write a carefully investigated account about the life of Christ (Luke 1:1-4)

2. Luke was very concerned about history and gives us specific information so we know exactly when these events took place. (Luke 3:1-2)

II. Who Did Jesus claim to be? (John 5:16-18, Matthew 27:31-43, John 10:30-33)

III. Confession of others concerning who Jesus was:

A. Peter: John 6:69 "You are the Holy One of God"

B. Martha: John 11:27 "I believe you are the Christ, the Son of God"

C. Thomas: John 20:26-29 "My Lord and My God"

D. Demons Mark 5:7 "Jesus, Son of the Most High God"

IV. Actions that Jesus is God

A. Forgave sins committed against God: Mark 2:5-7

B. Miracles: Matthew 15:29-31

C. Power over nature

(1) Wind: Mark 4:41

(2) Feeding the 5,000 (Matthew 15:29-31)

(3) Walk on the water (Mark 6:45-51)

D. Sinless: 1 Peter 2:22, 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 3:5

V. Three Options: Liar, Lunatic, Lord

A. Introduction: Since Jesus claimed to be God, we cannot consider Him as just a good teacher. If He's not God, then He is a liar, and if He is God, then He's

much more than just a good teacher.

B. Option #1: Jesus was a liar

- (1) If He was a liar, He knew He was not God and deliberately was deceiving everyone.
- (2) If He was lying, He was also a hypocrite, because He taught his followers to not lie.
- (3) If He was a liar, He was also evil, because He told people to follow Him for their eternal destiny.
- (4) If He was a liar, He was also a fool, for He was willing to die for His lie.
- (5) Jesus being a liar is not consistent with what we know about Him.

"How could an imposter that is deceitful, selfish, and depraved, have invented and consistently maintained, from the beginning to end, the purest and noblest character known in history, with the most perfect air of truth and reality?"

C. Option #2: Jesus was a lunatic (He was self-deceived and really believed He was God).

- (1) We do not see the abnormal deluded behavior in Jesus that you would in someone who was crazy.
- (2) His followers did not think He was crazy.

D. Option #3: Jesus is Lord

- (1) Jesus is who He claimed to be
- (2) Which of the three choices is most probable?
- (3) Jesus' disciples were willing to die for Jesus and all but John were martyred to death for their belief. People die for a lie all the time, but the disciples would have known if Jesus really didn't resurrect from the dead. At first, they didn't believe it until they were convinced. Therefore, they would have had to die for a lie and know it was a lie. (1 John 1:1-3; 2 Peter 1:16).

VI. Evidence for the Resurrection

A. Jesus really died

1. The Romans were masters at killing people.
2. The soldiers checked the body of Jesus to see if He was dead. They pierced his side just to be sure. (John 19:32-35)
3. He was buried in a tomb (John 19:38-42)

B. Some theories to refute the resurrection

1. Jesus swooned- he just passed out but wasn't really dead.
2. All the people who saw the resurrected Jesus were hallucinating.
 - a. In I Cor. 15:6 it says that Jesus appeared to 500 all at the same time. One or two may hallucinate but not 500 all at once.

b. the disciples didn't believe at first

in Luke 24:43 after the resurrection Jesus ate a piece of fish with them which would indicate that He wasn't just a spirit but had a physical body.

In Luke 24:38-39 Thomas doesn't believe until he physically touched the resurrected Jesus.

3. The body was stolen by the Romans

To refute the resurrection all that would have been needed was to produce the body (Matt. 28:11-15)

4. Body stolen by the disciples

The disciples would have had to overtake the Roman guards.

They would have had nothing to gain by making up the resurrection.

C. The people named who were still alive who saw the resurrected Jesus could be talked to in Jerusalem.

D. These witnesses had Jesus appear to them because they couldn't find Jesus. (John 20:10-18)

E. The changed lives of the disciples and the world

1. the lives of the disciples

a. The day Jesus died they all ran away in fear of the Jewish authorities. Later 11 out of the 12 would die as martyrs testifying to the risen Christ.

b. How do you explain the transformation? What would they have gained from their deception? Nothing but rejection, contempt, torture, and ultimately death.

2. Change in the World

a. the birth of the Christian church that is worldwide.

In Acts 5:33-39 the Pharisee Gamaliel argues, if this isn't from God it will die.

b. the Sabbath day was switched from Saturday to Sunday.

Religious habits are hard to change. What else would account for this sudden first century change if not the resurrection? The observance of the Sabbath is a huge deal to the Jews.

c. The calendar eventually changed.

d. Christianity has spread around the world and has profoundly changed lives.

Conclusion

In Matt. 16:13 Jesus asks the disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

They respond with a number of positive answers about who Jesus is. But in the passage Jesus responds in a tone of dissatisfaction with this popular consensus. He turned to his disciples and asked the most important question He could have asked, "But what about you? Who do you say that I am?"

That's the question that confronts each of us. If Jesus is the Son of God, that makes Him the Lord of All and our response to Him should be to submit our lives to Him, follow Him, and bow down and worship Him. (Rom. 12:1).

Small group questions

1. In your experience in our culture, who do people say that Jesus is?
2. Why did Jesus earliest followers come to believe that Jesus was the Messiah? How might this help you in talking to others?
3. What is the most compelling evidence for you that Jesus is God?
4. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, what is the best alternative explanation for the belief that He did? What facts of the resurrection are most difficult for a person to address that believes that it didn't occur?
5. Do you think that historical arguments really convince people that Jesus is the Son of God? Why/why not? What kinds of arguments do convince people of that?