

Teen Winter Retreat—Message 4—What About Jesus? Was He Really God? Did He Really Rise From the Dead?

Introduction

- Not one recognized religious leader, not Moses, Paul, Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius, etc., has ever claimed to be God; that is with the exception of Jesus Christ.
- Christ is the only religious leader who has ever claimed to be deity and the only individual ever who has convinced a great portion of the world that He is God.
- Secular history affirms that Jesus lived on earth and that He was worshiped as God. He founded a church which has worshiped Him for some 2,000 years.

Jesus Claims to be God

- Equality With the Father:
 1. John 10:25-33
 2. John 5:17-18
- “I Am”
 1. John 8:58
- Jesus is Due the Same Honor as that Given to God:
 1. John 5:23-24
- “He Who Has Seen Me”
 1. John 14:8-9
- Jesus Received Worship as God and Accepted It
 1. Matthew 8:2, John 9:35-39, Matthew 14:33
- Jesus Contrasted with Others
 1. Acts 10:25-26, Revelation 19:10

Testimony of Other Biblical Figures

- ▶ Paul’s Witness
 - Romans 9:5, Philippians 2:6-11, Colossians 1:15-17, Colossians 2:9, Titus 2:13
- ▶ John the Baptist
 - Luke 3:22
- ▶ Thomas the Apostles

- John 20:28
- ▶ John the Apostle
 - John 1:1, 14

The Trial of Jesus

- Mark 14:61-64
- ▶ Jesus of Nazareth was condemned to death, not upon the statements of His accusers, but upon the admission extorted from Him under oath.
- ▶ It is perfectly clear then that this is the testimony that Jesus wanted to bear of Himself. We also see that the Jews must have understood His reply as a claim to His being God.
- ▶ There were two alternatives to be faced then; that his assertions were pure blasphemy or that He was God.
- ▶ So every person must answer the question: Is His claim to deity true or false?
- ▶ Jesus' claim to be God must be either true or false. If Jesus claims are true, then He is the Lord, and we must either accept or reject his lordship.

Three Important Options

Option 1: Jesus Was a Liar

- ▶ If, when Jesus made His claims, He knew He was not God, then He was lying.
- ▶ But if he was a liar, then He was also a hypocrite, because He told others to honest, whatever the cost, while He, at the same time, was teaching a colossal lie.
- ▶ Last, He would also be a fool, because it was His claims to deity that led to His crucifixion.
- ▶ Someone who lived as Jesus lived, taught as Jesus taught, and died as Jesus died could not have been a liar.

Option 2: Jesus Was a Lunatic

- ▶ If it is inconceivable for Jesus to have been a liar, then could He have though He was God but have been mistaken? It is possible to be both sincere and wrong.
- ▶ For someone to think he was God, especially in a culture that was fiercely monotheistic, and then to tell others that their eternal destiny depends on

believing in him, was no slight of fantasy but the thought of a lunatic in the fullest sense.

- ▶ Was Jesus Christ such a person?

Option 3: Jesus Was God

- ▶ If Jesus of Nazareth is not a liar or a lunatic, the He must be the Lord.
- ▶ Other self-proclaimed gods and saviors have come and gone upon history's stage, but Jesus is still here, standing head-and-shoulders above them all.
- ▶ Who you decide Jesus Christ is must not be an idle intellectual exercise. You cannot put Him on the shelf as a great moral teacher.
- ▶ That is not a valid option. He is either a liar, a lunatic, or the Lord. You must make a choice.
- ▶ Read from page 157 of *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*

Resurrection Hoax or History?

- The options: The resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the most wicked, vicious, heartless hoaxes ever devised by the minds of men, OR it is the most fantastic fact of history.
- Jesus has three basic credentials: 1) The impact of His life, through His miracles and teaching upon history, 2) Fulfilled prophecy in His life, and 3) His resurrection.
- The resurrection of Jesus Christ and Christianity stand or fall together.
- I Corinthians 15:12-19

12 Agreed Upon Facts

- Gary Habermas wrote a book entitled *The Risen Jesus and Future Hope*. The book investigates to date what scholars believe about the resurrection.
- Habermas reports that virtually all scholars from across the ideological spectrum—from ultra-liberals to Bible-thumping conservatives—agree that the following points concerning Jesus and Christianity are actual historical facts.
 1. Jesus died by Roman crucifixion.
 2. He was buried, most likely in a private tomb.

3. Soon afterwards his disciples were discouraged, bereaved, and despondent, having lost hope.
4. Jesus' tomb was found empty very soon after his interment.
5. The disciples had experiences that they believed were actual appearances of the risen Jesus.
6. Due to these experiences, the disciple's lives were transformed. They were even willing to die for their belief.
7. The proclamation of the Resurrection took place very early, from the beginning of church history.
8. The disciples public testimony and preaching of the Resurrection took place in the city of Jerusalem, where Jesus had been crucified and buried.
9. The gospel message centered on the preaching of the death and resurrection of Jesus.
10. Sunday was the primary day for gathering and worship.
11. James, the brother of Jesus and a skeptic before this time, was converted when he believed he also saw the risen Jesus.
12. A few years later, Saul of Tarsus (Paul) became a believer, due to an experience that he also believed was an appearance of the risen Jesus.

Skeptical Theories About the Resurrection

Hallucination Theory

- This theory states that the disciples were all deceived by hallucinations.
- Hallucinations are not experienced by groups but only by individuals.
- Jesus did not appear to just one person—he appeared on a dozen separate occasions, in a variety of settings to different people over a 40 day period.
- Jesus was seen by men and woman, inside and outside, eating and talking.
- Jesus was seen by more than 500 people and they were not all seeing the same hallucination.

The Witnesses Went to the Wrong Tomb

- This theory states that the disciples went to the wrong tomb and then assumed that Jesus had risen.
- Read *I Don't Have Enough Faith* page 302-303

Swoon Or Apparent Death Theory

- This theory states that Jesus didn't really die on the cross. In other words, he was still alive when he was placed in the tomb, but he somehow escaped and escaped and convinced his disciples that he had risen from the dead.

- Read Handout page 305

The Disciples Stool the Body

- This theory states that the disciples stole Jesus' body.
- Read Handout pages 306-307

A Substitute Took Jesus Place on the Cross

- This theory states that Jesus was not crucified, but someone like Judas was killed in his place. Many Muslims offer this theory.
- Read Handout pages 310-311

Conclusion

- There are only two explanations for the empty tomb
 1. A Human Work
 - Removed by Enemies—No Motive
 - Removed by Friends—No Power
 2. A Divine Work
 - Most logical explanation

Jesus Was God and He did rise from the dead.