

## Establishing the Case For Jesus' Claim To Be God



[www.meeknessandtruth.org](http://www.meeknessandtruth.org)

### 12 Points in Establishing the Case for Christianity

1. Truth about reality is knowable.
2. The opposite of true is false.
3. It is true that the theistic God exists.
4. If God exists then miracles are possible.
5. Miracles can be used to confirm a message from God.
6. The New Testament is historically reliable.
7. **The New Testament says Jesus claimed to be God.**
8. Jesus' claim to be God was miraculously confirmed by:
  - a. His fulfillment of many prophecies about Himself;
  - b. His sinless and miraculous life;
  - c. His prediction and accomplishment of His resurrection
9. Therefore, Jesus is God.
10. Whatever Jesus (who is God) teaches is true.
11. Jesus taught that the Bible is the Word of God.
12. Therefore, it is true that the Bible is the Word of God (and anything opposed to it is false).

## *Jesus claimed to be God!*



### Jesus Asserted He was God By Claiming to be:

1. The great "I Am." Ex. 3:14 – Jn. 8:58
2. Yahweh (LORD). Shepherd, First & Last, Judge, Bridegroom, Light, Savior, God's Glory, Giver of Life
3. Equal with God. – To forgive sins Mk 2:5-7
4. One with the Father. (Jn. 10:30)
5. The Messiah-God. (Claimed to be the Messiah Jn. 4:25)
6. Worthy of honor due only God (Jn 5:22-23)
7. Worthy of worship (and accepted it from)
8. Equal in authority with God (Mt 24:35; 28:18)
9. The object of prayer like God (Jn 14:13-14)

### Jesus' Disciples Acknowledged His Claim to be God

1. By Calling Jesus "God"
 

Jn. 20:28 – "My Lord and my God."

Phil. 2:5 "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who being in very nature God..."
2. By considering Jesus the Messiah (Jn. 19:36-37)

"These things happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled; "Not one of his bones will be broken," and, as another Scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced." (NIV)

C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* pp. 55-56

**I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would rather be a lunatic - on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg - or else he would be the Devil of Hell. . . .**

C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* pp. 55-56

... You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.

## Objections to the Deity of Christ

Why wasn't Jesus more overt in his claim to be God?

- To accomplish his mission of sacrificial atonement.

- \* If he displayed too much power, they never would have killed Him.

- \* If he displayed too little there would be little proof that he was really God.

- He didn't want interference from the Jews who already had the misconception that the Messiah would free them from Roman oppression.

- To prevent people from thinking that he was God the Father.

- To allow people to draw their own conclusions (as he did with parables).

## Establishing The Case For Christianity

4. Jesus' claim to be God was miraculously confirmed by:

A. His fulfillment of many prophecies about Himself;

## Prophecy (Messianic)

J. Barton Payne in his *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecies* (P. 665-670) lists 191 Prophecies that were literally fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ:

1. Place of birth (Mic. 5:2)
2. Time of birth (Dan. 9:25)
3. Manner of birth (Is. 7:14)
4. Sold for 30 pieces of silver (Zech. 11:12)
5. Manner of death (Ps. 22:16)
6. People's reactions (mocking, spitting, staring, etc.) (Ps. 22:7,8, 17)
7. His side pierced (Zech. 12:10)
8. Burial in a rich man's tomb (Is 53:9)

## Test For A False prophet

*Deuteronomy 18:21-22*  
"You may say to yourselves, 'How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the Lord?' If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message the Lord has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him."



## Human Race

Woman, Gen 3:15

## Ethnic Group

Abraham,

Gen 12:1

## Tribe

Judah,

Gen 49:10

## Dynasty

David,

2 Sam 7:12

## How

Virgin,

Isa 7:14

## Where

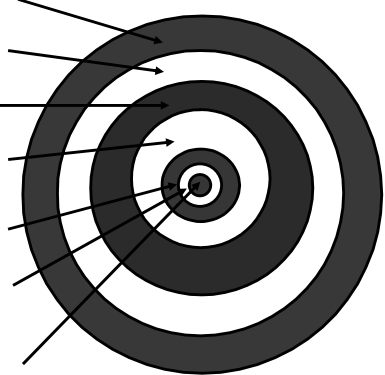
Bethlehem,

Mic 5:2

## When

33 A.D.,

Dan 9:24



### Statistical Probability

- 8 prophecies all being fulfilled in the life of Christ:

$1 \times 10$  to the 17 power

Taken from Peter Stoner, *Science Speaks*

### Statistical Probability

- 48 Prophecies:  
 $1 \times 10$  to the 157 power  
(more atoms than there are in the Universe)

Taken from Peter Stoner, *Science Speaks*

### Statistical Probability Affirmed

H. Harold Hartzler, of the American Scientific Affiliation writes,

"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."

In Forward to *Science Speaks* by Peter Stoner

### Establishing The Case For Christianity

4. Jesus' claim to be God was miraculously confirmed by:
  - A. His fulfillment of many prophecies about Himself;
  - B. His sinless and miraculous life**

### Jesus was sinless as evidenced by:

- His challenging of others to show otherwise
  - Jn. 8:46 "Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me?"
- His disciples believed it (They spent three years with Him day and night)
  - 1 Pet. 2:21-22 "For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth."
  - 1 Jn. 3:3-5 "And everyone who has this hope (fixed) on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure... And you know that he appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin."
- His enemies who could find no evil in him
  - Mark 14:55 "Now the Chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain testimony against Jesus to put Him to death; and they were not finding any."
  - Luke 23:22 "And he said to them the third time, 'Why, what evil has this man done? I have found in Him no guilt (demanding) death; I will therefore punish Him and release Him.'"

### Jesus was without sin.

- Pilate said I find no fault in him (Luke 23:14-15)
- Judas admitted that he had "sinned" and that he had betrayed innocent blood." (Matt. 27: 4)
- Even the Koran states that Jesus was without sin. (See Sura 3:45-46;19:19-21)
  - \* Mohammed was told to ask for forgiveness (Sura 40:55;48:1-2)

### Establishing The Case For Christianity

4. Jesus' claim to be God was miraculously confirmed by:
  - A. His fulfillment of many prophecies about Himself;
  - B. His sinless and miraculous life;
  - C. His prediction and accomplishment of His resurrection

### Jesus Predicted His Resurrection

"He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again." Mark 8:31(NIV)

"Because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed in to the hands of men. They will kill him and after three days he will rise." Mark 9:31

### Jesus Predicted His Resurrection

"For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Matt. 12:40 (NIV)

"Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days....After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.'" John 2:19, 22

What is the Evidence that Jesus really did die?

### Fact # 1 Jesus' Death By Crucifixion\*

Accepted by almost all scholars of the N.T.

1. It is reported by both Christians and non-Christian ancient sources.

- A. All Four Gospels Report it (Matt. 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; Jn. 19)

- B. Several non-Biblical sources report it:

Josephus, Tacitus, Lucian, Thallus, Phelgon, Mara Bar-Serapion, The Jewish Talmud

\* For a detailed discuss of these first three key facts supporting the resurrection see Gary Habermas and Michael Licona, *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2004.

### Fact # 1 Jesus' Death By Crucifixion

2. The chances of surviving crucifixion were bleak even under the best of conditions.

\* The nature of his wounds

(Scourging , crucifixion and spear in side) ensured death - Mel Gibson's movie)

Fact # 1 Jesus' Death By Crucifixion

3. Others observed his death.
  - A. His mother, friends and closest disciple witnessed his death. (Jn. 19: 25-27; Luke 23:49; Mark 15:40; Matt. 27:55-56)
  - B. Romans, who were professional executioners, pronounced him dead.
  - C. Pilate double-checked to make sure Jesus was dead.
  - D. The Jews never denied the account of Jesus being buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea (a member of the Sanhedrin)

Fact # 1 Jesus' Death By Crucifixion

4. **Modern medical authorities have verified his death.**
  - A. Nearly universal in concluding that Jesus died as a result of being crucified.
  - B. Most attribute cause of death to asphyxiation.

JAMA March 21, 1986, p. 1463

**"Clearly, the weight of historical and medical evidence indicates that Jesus was dead before the wound to his side was inflicted and supports the traditional view that the spear, thrust between his right rib, probably perforated not only the right lung but also the pericardium and heart and thereby ensured his death. Accordingly, interpretations based on the assumption that Jesus did not die on the cross appear to be at odds with modern medical knowledge."**

Fact # 1 Jesus' Death By Crucifixion

5. 19<sup>th</sup> Century Liberal Scholar David Strauss' famous critique.

"Even if Jesus had survived he could not have convinced his followers in his horrible state that he was the risen Lord."

Would this have convinced the Apostle Peter that he really did arise miraculously from the dead?

**Scholars by in large accept Jesus' Death**

John Dominic Crossan says:  
(He is a former co-chair of the Jesus Seminar)

"That Jesus was crucified is as sure as anything historical can ever be."

Fact #2 The Empty Tomb?

Accepted by 75% of all scholars

1. Jerusalem Factor
  - Jesus was executed buried and then his resurrection was proclaimed in Jerusalem.
    - Therefore it would have be impossible for Christianity to get off the ground if Jesus' body were still in the tomb.
  - Why?
    - Because Christianity is not based on a religious ideology but on an actual historical event.

## Christianity Is Based On A Historical Event

"And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men."

I Corinthians 15:14 -19(NIV)

- \* Remember you can have Buddhism without Buddha...but you can not have Christianity without Christ and specifically you cannot have Christianity without the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

## Fact #2 The Empty Tomb?

### 1. Jerusalem Factor

- All the Romans or Jews would have to do is show the body of Christ and Christianity would not have survived.

### 2. Jesus' enemies attested to the empty tomb

- Justin and Tertullian both report that the Jewish leaders claimed that the disciples stole Jesus' body.

## Fact #2 The Empty Tomb?

"When the chief priest had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, telling them, 'you are to say, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were sleeping.' If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble. So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day."

Matt. 28:12-14 (NIV)

- You would not claim that the body was stolen if the body was still in the tomb.
  - Little boy, homework, and dog

## Support for the empty tomb

Paul Maier Ph.D. Distinguished Prof. on Ancient History, Western Michigan Univ.

"Jewish Polemic shared with Christians the conviction that the sepulcher was empty, but gave natural explanations for it. And such positive evidence within a hostile source is the strongest kind of evidence and becomes self-authenticating."

- If your enemies says something nice about you that your mom is likely to say, then there is good evidence for that being true.
- So if not only the disciples believed in the empty tomb but that the earliest Jewish polemic share the same view that the tomb was empty, there is good evidence to believe that the tomb was empty.

## Support for the empty tomb

- Furthermore, no competing burial story exists.

"If the burial of Jesus in the tomb by Joseph of Arimathea is legendary, then it is strange that conflicting traditions nowhere appear, even in Jewish polemic. That no remnant of the true story or even a conflicting false one should remain is hard to explain unless the Gospel account is substantially the true account."

William Lane Craig, "Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?" in Wilkins and Moreland, Jesus Under Fire, p. 149

## Fact #2 The Empty Tomb?

### 1. Jerusalem Factor

### 2. Jesus' enemies attested to the empty tomb

Geza Vermes, Prof. Jewish Studies Oxford Univ.

"When every argument has been considered and weighed, the only conclusion acceptable to the historian must be that ...the woman who set out to pay their last respects to Jesus found to their consternation, not a body, but a empty tomb."

### Where does that leave us?

- Jesus died due to crucifixion
- History records that his tomb was empty

Fact #3      Something occurred that convinced a number of people both friend and foe of Jesus that he had been resurrected and had appeared to them.

\*      Almost all scholars agree on this point

### Fact #3      **Something occurred that convinced others that he had been resurrected and had appeared to them.**

- Friends of Christianity who knew the disciples of Christ
  - Clement of Rome (Clement was a Disciple of Peter) - Martyred
  - Polycarp (He was known to be disciples of John) – Martyred
- Earliest Tradition traceable to disciples
  - 1 Cor. 15:3-8
  - “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as one abnormally born.”

### The Significance of the referral to the 500 witnesses

“The great New Testament scholar of Cambridge University, C.H. Dodd, replies, ‘There can hardly be any purpose in mentioning the fact that most of the 500 are still alive, unless Paul is saying, in effect, ‘The witnesses are there to be questioned.’”

As cited in William Lane Craig, *Contemporary Scholarship and the Historical Evidence for the Resurrection*  
<http://www.leaderu.com/truth/1truth22.html>

### The Significance of Jesus appearing to Paul

“According to Galatians 1: 18 Paul was in Jerusalem three years after his conversion on a fact-finding mission, during which he conferred with Peter and James over a two week period, and he probably received the formula at this time, if not before. Since Paul was converted in AD 33, this means that the list of witnesses goes back to within the first five years after Jesus' death. Thus, it is idle to dismiss these appearances as legendary”

William Lane Craig, *Contemporary Scholarship and the Historical Evidence for the Resurrection*  
<http://www.leaderu.com/truth/1truth22.html>

### Fact #3      **Something occurred that convinced others that he had been resurrected and had appeared to them.**

- People who knew disciples
- Earliest Tradition traceable to disciples
  - **Most scholars date this to within a few years of Jesus' crucifixion.**
  - Robert Funk (founder of the Jesus Seminar and author of *A Credible Jesus and Honest to Jesus*)

“Within two or three years at most.”

### Fact #3      **Something occurred that convinced others that he had been resurrected and had appeared to them.**

- Earliest Tradition traceable to disciples
  - Gerd Ludeman (Former Professor of History and Literature of Early Christian at Georg-August-University Göttingen, Germany)
  - **“We can assume that all the elements of the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus.”**
  - James D. G. Dunn (Emeritus Lightfoot Professor of Divinity at the University of Durham)
  - **“This tradition we can be entirely confident was formulated as tradition within months of Jesus' death.”**

**Fact #3**      **Something occurred that convinced others that he had been resurrected and had appeared to them.**

- Earliest Tradition traceable to disciples
- Seven sources in antiquity attest to their willingness to suffer and die for this convictions.
  - Luke
  - Ignatius
  - Clement of Roman
  - Polycarp
  - Dionysius
  - Tertullian
  - Origen

**Fact #3**      **Something occurred that convinced others that he had been resurrected and had appeared to them.**

- Seven sources in antiquity attest to their willingness to suffer and die for this convictions.
  - Their willingness to die for their conviction means that they sincerely believed that it happened.
- **So if the disciples died for what they believed about Jesus, they died for what they knew was either true or false.**
- **Yet history has yet to record a case of someone dying for something they know to be false.**

**Fact #3**      **Something occurred that convinced others that he had been resurrected and had appeared to them.**

- Friends of Christianity who knew disciples like Clement of Rome
- Foes of Christianity
  - Paul
    - Paul himself
    - Acts
    - Early Oral Tradition
  - James

He was an unbeliever through Jesus' crucifixion. (neither James, nor any of Jesus' younger brothers, apparently believed in Jesus during his lifetime (see Mark 3:21, 31-35; John 7:1 - 10). Yet he became a leader in the early church.

**Fact #3**      **Something occurred that convinced others that he had been resurrected and had appeared to them.**

- Foes of Christianity
  - James (Josephus; Hegesippus – He was the earliest of the Church's chroniclers; Clement of Alexandria)
    - In Gal. 1:19 Paul tells of his two week visit to Jerusalem about three years after his Damascus Road experience. He says that besides Peter, he saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.
    - Paul at least implies that James was now being reckoned as an apostle. When Paul visited Jerusalem again 14 years later, he says there were three "pillars" of the church in Jerusalem: Peter, John, and James (Gal. 2:9).
    - By Acts 21:18, James is the sole head of the Jerusalem church and of the council of elders.
    - James believed so strongly that he died for that belief as a Martyr (stoned).

**Fact #3**      **Something occurred that convinced others that he had been resurrected and had appeared to them.**

Paula Fredriksen, Ph.D. (Historian of ancient Christianity at Boston University.

"I know in their own terms what they saw was the raised Jesus. That's what they say and then all the historical evidence we have afterward attests to their conviction that that's why they saw. I'm not saying that they really did see the raised Jesus. I wasn't there. I don't know what they saw. But I do know that as a historian that they must have seen something."

**Fact #3**      **Something occurred that convinced others that he had been resurrected and had appeared to them.**

- That something happened even convinced a Jewish New Testament Scholar Pinchas Lapide, who is not a Christian, that Jesus must have rose from the dead.

– "In fact in 1979 Time Magazine did an interview with him. Notice what Pinchas says about the disciples.

"He says, **"If the Disciples were totally disappointed and on the verge of desperate flight because of the very real reason of the crucifixion, it took another very real reason in order to transform them from a band of disheartened and dejected Jews into the most self-confident missionary society in world history."** Time, May 7th, 1979

He concludes that "a bodily resurrection could possibly have been that reason."

**Fact #4      The Burial of Jesus**

(1) The historical reliability of the burial story supports the empty tomb. Jesus' burial is described in the earliest gospel in the following way:

"And when evening had already come, because it was the preparation day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea came, a prominent member of the Council, who himself was waiting for the kingdom of God; and he gathered up courage and went before Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. And Pilate wondered if he was dead by this time, and summoning the centurion, he questioned him as to whether He was already dead. And ascertaining this from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. And Joseph brought a linen cloth, took Him down, wrapped Him in the linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out in the rock; and He rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus were looking on to see where He was laid. (Mark 15:42-47)

**Fact #4      The Burial of Jesus**

If the burial account is accurate, then the site of Jesus' grave was known to Jew and Christian alike. In that case, it is a very short inference to historicity of the empty tomb. For if Jesus had not risen and the burial site were known:

- (a) The disciples could never have believed in the resurrection of Jesus. For a first century Jew the idea that a man might be raised from the dead while his body remained in the tomb was simply a contradiction in terms.
- (b) Even if the disciples had believed in the resurrection of Jesus, it is doubtful they would have generated any following as the body was in the tomb.
- (c) The Jewish authorities would have exposed the whole affair. The quickest and surest answer to the proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus would have been simply to point to his grave on the hillside.

Therefore the accuracy of the burial story supports the historicity of the empty tomb.

Taken from William Lane Craig, Contemporary Scholarship and the Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ  
<http://www.leaderu.com/truth/1truth22.html>

**The Burial of Jesus**

"The late liberal scholar John A. T. Robinson of Cambridge conceded that the burial of Christ "is one of the earliest and best-attested facts about Jesus."

John A. T. Robinson, *The Human Face of God* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1973), 131, as quoted by William Lane Craig in Paul Copan, ed., *Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up? A Debate between William Lane Craig and John Dominic Crossan* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 27.

**Other Evidence Jesus Rose for the Dead**

- 1. **The tomb was empty with grave clothes in it**
- 2. **Over 500 witnesses saw Him at one time**
- 3. **They touched His physical body**
- 4. **They saw His crucifixion scars**
- 5. **They ate with Him four times**
- 6. **He taught them for 40 days**
- 7. **He did miracles for them**
- 8. **He transformed them**

**From cowards to martyrs overnight!**

**Establishing The Case For Christianity**

- 4. Jesus' claim to be God was miraculously confirmed by:
  - a. His fulfillment of many prophecies about Himself;
  - b. His sinless and miraculous life;
  - c. His prediction and accomplishment of His resurrection
- 5. Therefore, Jesus is God.

**Establishing The Case For Christianity**

- 5. Therefore, Jesus is God.
- 6. Whatever Jesus (who is God) teaches is true.

\* How do we know God cannot error or deceive us from knowing the Truth?

Answer: Evil is privation of good. Since we have already established that God is an infinite, all powerful, all moral, all intelligent being, He cannot do anything less than that which is perfectly good. Therefore it is contrary to God's very nature to desire to deceive us and it is not in his capacity to be deceived Himself.

### Establishing The Case For Christianity

5. Therefore, Jesus is God.
6. Whatever Jesus (who is God) teaches is true.
7. Jesus taught that the Bible is the Word of God

### Seven Things Jesus Taught About the Bible

1. It is divinely authoritative (Mt. 4:4, 7, 10).
2. It is imperishable (Mt. 5:17-18).
3. It is infallible (Jn. 10:35).
4. It is inerrant (without error) (Mt. 22:29).
5. It is historically reliable (Mt. 12:40; Mt. 24:37-38).
6. It is scientifically accurate (Mt. 19:4-5).
7. It has ultimate supremacy (Mt. 15:3, 6).

### Jesus Determines Which Books To Accept As Part of Sacred Scripture

1. Jesus defended himself from Satan's attacks three times with the phrase, "It is Written" (referring to the Old Testament, Matt. 4:4ff).

### Jesus Affirmed the Old Testament

2. Jesus said "it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of the letter of the Law to fail." (Luke 16:17)
3. Beginning at Moses, he expounded to them all the scriptures the things concerning himself (Lk. 24:17)
4. Jesus said "The Scriptures . . . testify of Me." (Jn. 5:39)
5. Jesus said, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets . . ." (Mt. 5:17-18)
6. Jesus said, "It is Written . . ." The authority of the OT is cited that way 92 times in the NT

### Jesus Promised the New Testament

1. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit would teach the apostles "all things" and lead them into "all truth"

*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you (Jn. 14:26).*

*However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come (Jn. 16:13).*

### The Holy Spirit will guide...

2. Jesus promised that the Apostles that the Holy Spirit would guide what they wrote.

"Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." 2 Peter 1:20-21

## Jesus Promised the New Testament

3. The Apostles claimed to continue in Christ's teaching, being directed by the Holy Spirit.
4. The qualification for being a member of the twelve apostles was that they must be an eyewitness of the ministry and resurrection of Christ (Acts 1:21-22)
5. The New Testament church itself is said to be "built upon the foundation of the apostles and New Testament prophets." (Eph. 2:20; cf. 3:5).
6. The Apostle's claimed the divine authority for their words (JN. 20:31; I JN. 1:1; 4:1, 5-6).

## Jesus Promised the New Testament

7. Peter acknowledged all Paul's writings as "scriptures" (2 Peter 3:15-16).
8. Paul says in 1 Thes. 2:4 that "we" are entrusted with the gospel.
9. Paul quoted from the Gospel of Luke (Luke 10:7) and refers to it as scripture. (1 Tim. 5:18)
10. Luke claims to give an accurate account of what "Jesus began to do and teach."
11. Therefore only books and letters that were associated with an apostle or associate were considered acceptable into the New Testament Cannon.

### Even Those Considered "Heretics" Use The Four Gospels

- Ebionites used a shorten form of Matthew (2<sup>nd</sup> Cent)
- Marcion used Luke (A.D. 140)
- Certain Gnostics used Luke (2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> cent.)
- Valentius used John (A.D. 110)
- Titian (Gnostic) combined Matthew, Mark, Luke, John into the Diatessaron. (A.D. 172)

(This was the first attempt to combine the four into one continuous Gospel. Yet none of the other Gospels were included)

- \* All of these predated the Council of Nicaea by 153 – 215 years

### Certain Gospels Were Rejected By The Church Prior to Nicaea

Origen (A.D. 185-254) wrote:

"I know a certain gospel which is called the Gospel according to Thomas and a Gospel according to Matthias, and many others have we read...never the less among all these we have approved solely what the church has recognized, which is that only the four gospels should be accepted."

### Was the Bible tampered with?

Tatian (110-172 A.D.) an Encratite (ascetic) Gnostic made his own scripture called the Diatessaron (meaning 'The Four') where he combined the four gospels into one. It was tampering because he left out the parts that show Jesus' humanity. He did not add anything we do not have today, he only left out parts. However, the heretic still quoted verbatim about 79% of the gospels. Here is a rundown of what he left out.

Details: Here are the verses absent from each chapter of the Diatessaron. These numbers were computed from Ante-Nicene Fathers volume 9 p.34-138.

Chapter	TOTAL VERSES	IN THE DIAT.	ABSENT FROM PERCENTAGE INCLUDED THE DIAT.	
Gospels	3779	2995	784	79.3 %
Matthew	1071	819	252	76.5 %
Mark	678	402	276	59.3 %
Luke	1151	919	232	79.8 %
John	879	855	24	97.3 % of the verses are in the Diatessaron

### Who wrote what in the N.T.?

- Matthew = Matthew the apostle
- Mark = John Mark, (Acts 15:37, 2 Tim 4:11) and Peter's interpreter
- Luke & Acts = Paul's companion
- John & Revelation = John the apostle
- 1, 2, & 3 John = John the apostle
- Romans - Philemon = Paul the apostle
- Hebrews Æ unknown today, (knew Timothy Heb 13:23)
- James = the Lord's ½-brother
- 1 & 2 Peter = Peter the apostle
- Jude = the Lord's ½-brother

### What about James?

- James was not James the disciple but Jesus' half-brother. He was an apostle based on these verses:
  - Called an apostle by Paul: Galatians 1:19
  - Like Paul, Jesus appeared just to him: 1 Cor 15:7
  - Pillar of the Church: Galatians 2:9

### What About Jude?

- We do not know as much about Jude the Lord's brother as James. While it is easy to prove Jude was an apostle, because an apostle's teachings are God's direct word, and Jude is in the Bible, that is a circular argument. He was certainly an eyewitness, but we rely on the judgment of the early church Fathers to recognize that it belonged in the Bible.

### What about the books they questioned?

- There were only seven books eventually accepted into the New Testament canon by the church at large (which make up our New Testament Bible) that were ever even questioned whether they should be including in the Canon. These books were considered (antilegomena) or disputed because these books possessed neither uniform nor universal recognition in the early church. Yet these books were never given an anti-canonical status. The seven books were: Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 Jn., Jude, and Revelation.

### Establishing The Case For Christianity

5. Therefore, Jesus is God.
6. Whatever Jesus (who is God) teaches is true.
7. Jesus taught that the Bible is the Word of God.
8. Therefore, it is true that the Bible is the Word of God (and anything opposed to it is false).

### Why Does the Catholic Bible Have Some Books That The Protestant Bible Does Not Have?

- They included those books called the Apocrypha (Hidden)
- These were Jewish Apocrypha and listed between the Old Testament and the New Testament.
- These documents were respected by Jews for historical significance but never considered by them to be inspired.
- When the Hebrew O.T. was translated into Greek in Alexandria Egypt, the Apocrypha was translated and included into the Greek OT (Septuagint)
- When the Catholic Church translated the Old Testament into Latin (Vulgate), they use the Greek Septuagint rather than the Hebrew O.T. As a result the Apocrypha was also included
- Protestants believe that since the O.T. was originally written in Hebrew it is probably more reliable than the Greek O.T. since it was the original language and since the Jews would have a much better idea as to what books were considered authoritative in the O.T.
- This is why the English translation does not include the Apocrypha

### What about the Apocrypha?

- There are books that were not considered canonical (by a large majority of the church) yet were a part of the religious literature quoted by the Fathers and sometimes appeared in local ecclesiastical canons and bible translations. At best they had local canonicity or books that had canonicity of something very like it in a particular church for a particular period but were afterward dropped. Final canonical decisions reveal however that their partial and local judgment was faulty.

### What Should We Conclude About The "Other" Books That Were Not Included?

The Gospel of Thomas  
The Gospel of Peter  
Apocalypse of Peter  
The Gospel of Hebrews  
The Gospel of Barnabas  
The Gospel of Phillip  
The Gospel of Mary  
And many others...

### What Should We Conclude About The "Other" Books That Were Not Included?

- The only book thought to exist prior to the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century is the Gospel of Thomas. (All the others were written at least 100 years after Jesus)
- Their Teachings differ from the four gospels.
- They were never read in Christian assemblies.
- Not included in the list of accepted books and letters.
- Not the subject of commentaries.
- Some were specifically rejected by the church from being in the New Testament Canon.

### Principles for Discovering Canonicity

Canonicity is determined by God and discovered by man (Principles taken from Norman Geisler, *From God to Us*, p.67-71)

#### Criteria:

1. Is the book authoritative - does it claim to be of God?
  - Does it say "Thus says the Lord"
  - Unless they were convinced of Divine authorship, the book was rejected

### Principles for Discovering Canonicity

Canonicity is determined by God and discovered by man

#### Criteria:

2. Is it prophetic- was it written by a servant of God? (2 Pet. 1:20-21; Heb. 1:1)
  - Inspired books came only through Spirit-moved men known as prophets
  - Paul argued in Galatians that his book should be accepted because he was in fact an apostle "not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father." (Gal. 1:1)
  - 2 Peter was questioned because it was written in a different style than 1 Peter until it was accepted that he dictated his letter to someone else who recorded what he said. All 2 Peter was claimed to have been written by Simon Peter (2 Pet. 1:1)

### Principles for Discovering Canonicity

Canonicity is determined by God and discovered by man

#### Criteria:

3. Is it authentic-does it tell the truth about God, man, etc.? (Acts 17:11)
  - The Apostle Paul considered the Bereans more noble because they searched the Scripture to see whether what Paul taught them was consistent with God's revelation in the Old Testament. (Acts 17:11)
  - The letter of James was questioned because it seemed to contradict Paul's teaching on justification by faith not by works.
  - Others questioned Jude because of its citation of an Pseudepigraphal book which was rejected by virtually all (Vv. 9, 14)

### Principles for Discovering Canonicity

4. Is the book dynamic-does it possess the life-transforming power of God? (Heb. 4:12; 2 Tim. 3:16-17)
5. Is this book received or accepted by the people of God for whom it was originally written - is it recognized as being from God?
  - Since communication and transportation was what it was in ancient times, sometime it took much time and effort on the part of the later church fathers to determine this.