

What in the world would possess anyone to believe that Jesus of Nazareth was actually “God in the Flesh”? Well, it might surprise you to find that God has left us a trail of evidence which is rather compelling. Many directions of thought could be followed; but, because of limited time, this Bible Talk will deal with only four.

First of all, some people have been impressed by the tremendous teachings of Jesus and the effect they had on people. Years ago, a prominent physician named John T. Fisher highly praised the teachings of Christ when he wrote: “If you were to take the sum total of all the authoritative articles ever written by the most qualified of psychologists and psychiatrists on the subject of mental hygiene - if you were to take the whole of the meat and none of the parsley, and if you were to have these unadulterated bits of pure scientific knowledge concisely expressed by the most capable of living poets, you would have an awkward and incomplete summation of the Sermon on the Mount. And it would suffer immeasurably by comparison.” When Jesus finished this great declaration, “the multitudes were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.” (Matthew 7:28-29) Some people are impressed and even believe in Jesus’ deity simply because of the “goodness” of His teachings. Even the enemies of Jesus had to admit, “Never did a man speak the way this man speaks.” (John 7:46) But, does this prove that Jesus was a divine visitor to this world?

The apostle Paul considered the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead to be the ultimate proof of His identity. In Romans 1:4, Paul asserted that Jesus “was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead” The Resurrection of Christ was indeed the focal issue in all of Paul’s writings. He said that the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus was “the gospel which I preached to you” (I Cor 15:1). In the verses which followed, Paul claimed that he had actually seen the resurrected Jesus, and so had over 500 others, including all the apostles. The apostle Peter boldly proclaimed, “This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses” (Acts 2:32). He emphatically demanded that “we did not follow cleverly devised tales ... but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty” (II Peter 1:16). He powerfully challenged the people of His day with their own recollection of Jesus’ deeds. He reminded them that Jesus of Nazareth was “a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know” (Acts 2:22). Truly, as Paul observed in Acts 26:26, these things were done in the open for everyone to see.

You know, if Jesus actually did all the things these witnesses claimed He did, then He was surely who He claimed to be. A quick scan through the four gospels provides a variety of evidence. The gospel of Matthew emphasizes numerous Old Testament prophecies which were fulfilled in Jesus. The gospel of Mark presents Jesus as a powerful individual who could order a storm to cease, make evil spirits beg for mercy & could even bring people back from the dead. Luke’s gospel was intended to verify all the stories about Jesus that people told. Luke said that he had “investigated everything carefully from the beginning,” and that he had written in “consecutive order ... the exact truth about the things you have been taught” (Luke 1:3-4). John’s gospel ends with the staggering concept that only a few of Jesus’ mighty deeds had been recorded (John 21:25). But he said, “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.” (Jn 20:31)

If we could only believe the witnesses, then we could accept the deity of Jesus. But, were they telling the truth? Did Jesus really fulfill those prophecies? Did He really do those Miracles and teach those truths? Did they really witness His death and resurrection? Or was it all just a grand conspiracy -- all just made up and carried out simply for fun and profit? We shall explore the credibility of the witnesses in Bible Talk # 105.

1. Please number in order (from 1 to 4), which of these evidences for the deity of Jesus has most impressed you:

Jesus' Teachings _____

Prophecies Fulfilled _____

Jesus' Miracles _____

Jesus' Resurrection _____

2. Do you think that Matthew and Paul and Peter and Mark and Luke and John actually believed that Jesus did the things they claimed He did?

(Matthew 1:22; 7:28-29; Romans 1:4; I Corinthians 15:1-8; Acts 2:32;

II Peter 1:16; Acts 2:22; Mark 4:35 -- 5:43; Luke 1:3-4; John 21:25; 20:31)

3. Do you believe they were telling the truth?

4. What reasons would you give to explain why you believe in the deity of Jesus?