

One thing that holds people back from accepting Christianity is their belief that miracles are impossible. To them the idea that Jesus Christ was virgin born, that He performed miracles and that He came back from the dead is completely unscientific and therefore to be rejected on rational and reasonable grounds.

However, it is not scientific to close one's mind to the possibility that something is true simply because one doesn't think something is possible. That is a prejudiced mind, not a scientific mind.

The famous heart surgeon, Dr. Michael DeBakey was once asked if he believed in miracles. "If by miracles," he said, "you mean that a person could stop breathing for seven minutes and then start breathing again and have no brain damage, then yes, I believe in miracles."

Medically speaking, if the brain is deprived of oxygen for four minutes, under normal circumstances, brain damage is inevitable. Yet Dr. DeBakey witnessed an exception with his own eyes and was forced to believe something that was considered impossible; hence, he himself labeled it a miracle.

It is not unreasonable to believe something that can be shown to be true, no matter how improbable it may seem to be. It may seem improbable to you that God has performed miracles, but it would be unreasonable to deny the possibility that He has. Of course a vast difference exists between something possibly being true and something proven to be true. But if you are at least open to the possibility that God could and has performed miracles, then please read on.

Since a miracle is something that can't be explained by natural causes, the very existence of the Bible can be considered a miracle. The Bible not only claims to come from the hand of God but it is unique from any other holy book in that it alone can be proven to be of Divine origin.

What authenticates the Bible as being a revelation from God is fulfilled prophecy. God alone has the ability to perfectly foretell the future. Since man does not have this ability, God exercised this quality to prove to mankind that the book known as the Bible could not be simply the product of man.

The Bible is divided into two sections, the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament was completed 400 years before Christ and was written over an 1100 year period by approximately 30 to 35 different writers, yet these writers are in perfect agreement, without contradiction.

Contained within the pages of the Old Testament there are literally hundreds of prophecies, some of which were fulfilled

within the lifetimes of the prophets who wrote them. The vast majority of these prophecies however, were to have their fulfillment after the prophets' time.

The prophecies that were fulfilled within the lifetime of the prophet were meant to authenticate the prophet as a bona-fide spokesman for God. In fact, if a man claimed to be a prophet and his prophecies were wrong, then that person was put to death (Deuteronomy 18:20-22).

The prophecies in the Old Testament have to do primarily with the rise and fall of nations and their leaders, the destiny of the Jewish people, and the coming of the Messiah. ("Messiah" and "Christ" are translations from the same word. "Messiah" is from the Hebrew and "Christ" is from the Greek. In both languages the word means "Anointed One.") It is the prophecies concerning the coming of Christ that we will be dealing with.

In order for something to be a prophecy, it of course has to be spoken or written before the event prophesied takes place. Since the New Testament, which records the life of Jesus, was written in the first century, and it claims that He is the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament, it is important to know as a fact the Old Testament was in existence before the time of Jesus.

Although scholars may disagree exactly when the Old Testament was completed, they all agree that it was completed before the time of Jesus. One proof that it was completed before the time of Christ is a translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek. This translation is known as the Septuagint, and it was done by a group of scholars in Alexandria about the middle of the third century B.C. "The New Encyclopedia Britannica" Vol. 2, p. 887, 1983 ed. Another proof that the Old Testament was completed before Christ is the testimony of the Jewish historian Josephus. Writing at the end of the first century, he claimed that the Old Testament was complete at the time of Artaxerxes, which would mean it was completed four hundred years before Christ.

"Contra Apion" I,8

So with the assurance that the prophecies we will be looking at do in fact date before the Christian era, let us now look at some of them. As will be seen, the prophecies concerning the coming Messiah are not couched in vague and ambiguous language, but rather are simple, direct and unmistakable. This Person was to come from a specific family line, at a specific place, at a specific time period.

HIS GENEALOGY

In Genesis, the very first book of the Bible, it is recorded that God made a promise to Abraham that through one of his descendants the entire world would be blessed (Genesis 22:18). This promise was reiterated to Abraham's son, Isaac (Genesis 26:4) and to Isaac's son, Jacob (Genesis 28:13,14). Jacob, whose name was changed to "Israel", had twelve sons. The descendants of these twelve sons are known as the twelve tribes of Israel. It was prophesied that the Messiah would be a descendant of Jacob's fourth son, Judah (Genesis 49:10).

One of Judah's descendants, a king who lived 700 years after Judah, was told that the Messiah would come through him (II Samuel 7:12,13). So the Christ was to be from the tribe of Judah and even more specifically, from the royal line of King David.

Below is a diagram of the family line of the Messiah.

Abraham

Isaac

Jacob (Israel)

Judah

Jesse

David

Solomon

Messiah

Now what is absolutely amazing is that no Jewish person today can prove that he has descended from the tribe of Judah and more importantly, from the royal line of King David. This is because in 70 A.D., Titus came against Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple in which the genealogical records were kept.

"The Jewish Encyclopedia" Vol. 5, p. 597, 1901 ed.

Therefore, for the Scriptures to be fulfilled, the Messiah had to come before the year 70 A.D. Otherwise He could not have proved He was indeed from the royal line of David. The only genealogies preserved are those in the New Testament which were written while the Temple was still standing and were never disputed. These show that Jesus was of the royal line of David. (Matthew 1:1-16; Luke

3:23-38).

HIS BIRTHPLACE

According to the prophet Micah, the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.

"And thou, BETHLEHEM EPHRATAH too small to be among the thousands of Judah, OUT OF THEE will He come forth to Me who will be Ruler over Israel; and His goings forth are from the olden time, from the days of eternity" (Micah 5:2, or Micah 5:1 in some translations).

Notice that Micah also reveals that the Messiah would be no ordinary man. The One Who was to be born in Bethlehem has existed from eternity past. And even though He was to be David's son, David called Him his Lord.

"The Lord said unto my Lord "sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool" (Psalm 110:1).

And Isaiah called Him "the Mighty God".

"Even unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government rests upon His shoulder: and they shall call His name, Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal-Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6, or Isaiah 9:5 in some translations).

The One who was to be born in Bethlehem was to be God in the flesh.

THE TIME OF HIS COMING

According to the prophet Daniel, the Messiah would manifest Himself 483 years after a decree was issued to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.

"So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem UNTIL MESSIAH THE PRINCE there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;" (meaning 483 years) "it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the sixty-two weeks the MESSIAH WILL BE CUT OFF" (or die) "and have nothing" (in other words,

nothing that was rightly His, no kingdom) "and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary..." (meaning, the rebuilt Temple) (Daniel 9:25,26).

At the time this prophecy was written, Jerusalem, the home-land of the Jews, had been besieged by the Babylonians and lay in ruins. The Temple, the place of their worship of God, had been destroyed and the Jewish people had been taken off their land and led captive to Babylon.

While in captivity in Babylon, it was revealed to the prophet Daniel that a decree was going to be issued to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. Now there were four decrees concerning Jerusalem issued by Persian kings. Three are mentioned in the book of Ezra and one in the book of Nehemiah.

The first one was issued in 536 B.C. by Cyrus, King of Persia. He allowed those who wanted to return to Jerusalem to do so and rebuild the Temple.

Under Darius I, a second decree was given around 519 B.C. that confirmed the original decree made by Cyrus. Under Darius' reign the Temple was completed.

Around 60 years after the Temple had been completed, which was approximately 458 B.C., Artaxerxes I issued a decree on the behalf of Ezra the priest concerning the needs of the Temple.

But none of these could be considered the decree about Jerusalem spoken of by the prophet Daniel because all of them relate to the Temple and its worship, while the city itself remained almost empty; its walls were breached and its gates were burned down. Without walls, Jerusalem could not, according to ancient ideas, have ranked as a place of importance. "The Jewish Encyclopedia" Vol.9, p.210, 1901 ed.

In 445 B.C. Nehemiah, an official at the court of King Artaxerxes, because of the reports that he heard of the miserable conditions that existed at Jerusalem, requested permission to go to Jerusalem. He was appointed governor of Judah and was mainly responsible for the rebuilding of the city.

"Encyclopedia Judaica" Vol. 9, p.1389 He restored the walls to provide protection and erected houses for the population. Thus the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem was the one issued in 445 B.C. by Artaxerxes I.

According to Daniel, 69 weeks of time would pass from the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem to the coming of Messiah the Prince. According to Hebrew usage the word "weeks" means "seven," thus 69 sevens of time would pass from the decree to the coming of Christ, meaning 483 years. This would take us to the year 30 A.D., which was the year in which Jesus began His public ministry. (This calculation is based on the Jewish year which consists of 360 days. Therefore the prophecy in

Daniel which speaks of 483 years is equal to 476 years on our calendar.)

DANIEL'S PROPHECY

Decree Given
to Rebuild
Jerusalem

MESSIAH
THE PRINCE

483 Jewish years

445 B.C.

30 A.D.

It should also be realized that not only was it revealed to the prophet Daniel that the Messiah would appear at a specified time but also that He would come while the rebuilt Temple was still standing. It was expressly stated in the prophecy that after the death of the Messiah "the people of the prince who is to come" (referring to the Romans) "will destroy the city and the sanctuary" (Daniel 9:26). Since the Romans, under the leadership of Titus, destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 A.D. "Encyclopedia International" Vol.17, p. 573, 1979 ed. The Messiah had to have come before that date in order for this prophecy to be accurate.

HIS RECEPTION

As strange as it may seem, it was even prophesied that the Jewish people would reject their own Messiah and that He would be accepted by the Gentiles (non-Jews).

"He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we (the Jews) hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not" (Isaiah 53:3).

This same prophet writing approximately 700 years before Christ, while foretelling of His rejection by His own people the Jews, also foretold of His ministry to the Gentiles.

"...I will also give Thee for a light to the

Gentiles, that Thou may be My salvation unto the ends of the earth" (Isaiah 49:6).

It is noteworthy that no one but Jesus has ever been accepted by the Gentiles as the Jewish Messiah.

THE PURPOSE FOR HIS COMING

Messiah was prophesied to come for two different reasons at two different times. The first time would be in order to die for sins and the second time would be for the purpose of establishing peace on earth.

The Jews were told to be looking for a King Who would ride into Jerusalem upon a donkey.

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; Behold thy King will come unto thee: He is just and endowed with salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass" (Zechariah 9:9).

How different is this in comparison with prophecies concerning the Reigning King. For example Jeremiah 23:5,6 says:

"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a Righteous Shoot, and He shall reign as King and prosper, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

There is even a prophecy concerning Christ's coming in His glory as the Reigning King that plainly states that He had come previously and had died. The prophet Zechariah, writing in approximately 500 B.C., quotes the Lord as saying,

"And I will pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they will look upon Me, whom they have pierced..." (Zechariah 12:10).

The word "pierced," translated from the Hebrew word "daqar" does not mean to ridicule, or scoff at, but only "to pierce, thrust through, and to slay by any kind of death whatever."

The purpose for His death was explained by the prophet Isaiah:

"Whereas He was pierced for our sins, bruised for our iniquities: the punishment was laid upon Him for our peace; and through His stripes we were healed. All we like sheep went astray; we had turned every one to his own way; and the LORD caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him" (Isaiah 53:5,6).

Messiah had to die so that the iniquity, or sin, of us all could be placed upon Him. The punishment that deserved to fall upon mankind for their wrongdoing was to be paid by a Substitute. It says:

"...For He was cut off out of the land of the living, FOR THE TRANSGRESSION OF MY PEOPLE to whom the stroke was due" (Isaiah 53:8).

Therefore people are accepted by God not because of what they do but because of what the Messiah did for them. He took the penalty for sin upon Himself so that we wouldn't have to face the eternal consequences for our sins, which would be an eternity separated from God. Jesus, Who claimed to be the Messiah, said, "He who believes in Me has eternal life" (John 6:47).

Even though most churches teach that a person has to earn Heaven by his good works, it is a concept totally alien to the teaching of the Bible. To go to heaven is not a reward a person can earn by doing good deeds but rather it is a gift freely given to those who believe in Christ. Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

But if going to heaven is unearned and undeserved, then why did God give the Ten Commandments? According to the Bible, the Ten Commandments were given so that God's children could know what God expected from them. Whether one complied with these laws or not affected the quality and even the quantity of his life here on earth, but it had nothing to do with his eternal destiny. Those who obeyed were rewarded and those who disobeyed were punished. So if a person wanted a long and blessed life, he had to obey the commandments.

An example of this is Exodus 20:12, which says, "Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land the

LORD thy God giveth thee." One is rewarded according to his actions, but since heaven is a gift, there is no work to be done to attain it. The one and only condition to go to heaven is to believe in Jesus. He said, "He who believes in Me has eternal life" (John 6:47). Notice He didn't say a person had to feel sorry for his sins, or turn from his sins. He said simply to believe. There is no prayer to be said, no work to be done, no asking Him into your heart. These things will not pay for sin. Only Christ could pay for sins and only by believing in Him can a person be assured of going to heaven.

QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIONS COMMONLY RAISED

Question:

How do you know Jesus didn't deliberately go about to fulfill the prophecies concerning the coming Messiah?

Answer:

The facts are that Jesus did deliberately go about to fulfill the prophecies concerning the Messiah. The New Testament makes that very clear. The Apostle John in his Gospel account relates how Jesus, while on the cross, entrusted the care of His mother to John (John 19:26). Then John goes on in his narrative to say, "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, said, I thirst" (John 19:28). It was because Jesus said He was thirsty that He was given vinegar to drink (John 19:29), which was the fulfillment of a thousand year old prophecy concerning the Messiah, which says, "They gave Me also gall for my meat; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink" (Psalm 69:21). Because Jesus knew He was the Messiah, He purposely fulfilled the prophecies written concerning Himself. But to suggest that an ordinary mortal could read the prophecies concerning the coming Christ and for the purpose of deceiving people, go about to fulfill them is to suggest the impossible because no one less than God in the flesh could fulfill those prophecies.

For instance,

1. He had to be virgin born (Isaiah 7:14);
2. He had to pre-exist (Micah 5:2);
3. He had to perform miracles (Isaiah 32:3,4);
4. He had to be absolutely perfect (Isaiah 53:9); and
5. He had to come back from the dead (Psalm

16:10).

Also there were prophecies concerning the Messiah over which He could possibly have no control. For instance King David, 1,000 years before Christ foretold how the Messiah would die. He wrote, "they pierced My hands and My feet" (Psalm 22:16). It is important to realize that crucifixion was unknown as a means of execution until 500 years after the writing of this prophecy.

Also, the Jewish method of execution was by stoning, but 23 years before the death of Jesus the Jews lost their power to pass the death sentence. Consequently, all who were put to death died by Roman means, one of which was crucifixion, but never stoning.

John also relates other prophecies that were fulfilled by Jesus over which He could have no control. One had to do with the guards who divided His clothing among themselves while Jesus was on the cross. It says, in John 19:23,24, "The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also the coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore one to another, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted My garments among them, And upon My vesture did they cast lots."

Two other prophecies that John claims Jesus fulfilled were fulfilled after Jesus had died. Because the crucifixion of Jesus took place on Friday and the Jewish Sabbath began on Friday at sunset, the Jews asked Pilate that the legs of Jesus and the two thieves crucified with Him might be broken, in order to hasten their death so their bodies could be removed from the crosses. Breaking the legs of a crucified person would result in his not being able to lift his body with his legs. Without being able to raise His body slightly it would be impossible to be able to breathe. The person would therefore die quickly of asphyxiation. But since Jesus was already dead, the soldiers didn't have to break His legs. But one soldier did pierce His side and John, commenting on these events, said, "For these things came to pass, that the scripture might be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on Him whom they pierced" (John 19:36,37).

Question:

How do you know that the Bible hasn't been tampered with so that Old Testament prophecies conform to the life of Jesus

Christ?

Answer:

I'd like to quote from "The World Book Encyclopedia" "The biblical manuscript of the Dead Sea Scrolls, written sometime after 100 B.C., show the text of the Old Testament two thousand years ago was essentially the same as it is today".

The World Book Encyclopedia, Vol. 14, p. 560, 1985 ed.

Question:

If Christianity is true, then how do you account for all the atrocities committed by the Christian church, such as the persecution of the Jews?

Answer:

Unfortunately many churches and religious people have given Christianity a bad name. History is replete with examples of persecution, wars and injustice at the hands of those claiming to represent God. However, the Christianity taught in the Bible condemns anyone who would use force against those who do not share its views. In fact, much of the New Testament is addressed to Christians who themselves were in the midst of persecution because of their beliefs.

Jesus told His followers to be as "...harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:16); therefore the world has nothing to fear from true followers of Christ.

Another difference between those who actually represent Christianity and those who claim to represent it is brought out in the command of Christ to His disciples. He said, "...freely you received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8). When a person is getting rich by means of his "service for God" then that person is an impostor.

But what is of much more importance is the message that is being presented by those claiming to represent God. The concept that one must earn his way to heaven is not found in the Bible, yet it is taught by many who claim to represent Christianity. The message of the Bible is that you are saved from hell "by faith and that NOT OF YOURSELVES, it is the gift of God; NOT OF WORKS, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8,9). So the idea that going to heaven is dependent upon good behavior is completely foreign to the Bible.

There are other groups who claim to represent Christianity who appeal to the emotional part of man rather than the rational part of man. Some of these groups claim they have the truth and their proof is based on experiences they have had, rather than

the written revelation of God. The God Who reveals Himself through the Bible though, is a God Who appeals to man's reasoning ability. He said, "Come now, and let us reason together" (Isaiah 1:18). God expects us to use our minds, not our emotions, to validate truth. If biblical Christianity cannot be proven to be true, then God wouldn't want anyone to accept it. But it is not fair to reject Christianity because of the people who misrepresent it.

Question:

If there really is enough evidence to substantiate Christianity, then where does faith come in?

Answer:

Even though "The New American Webster Handy College Diction-ary" may define faith as "belief without proof," the faith spoken of in the Bible is belief BECAUSE of proof.

If someone who you considered trustworthy were to promise to give you \$10 tomorrow, you would believe him because he has proven himself reliable. You have faith in that person because he has shown himself trustworthy. God asks us to have the same type of faith in Him. Because of the facts presented in the Bible, we can have a confidence that the Bible really is the written revelation of God to man. And to have such faith is not a blind faith, but rather one that is based on a solid foundation.

QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIONS CONCERNING CHRISTIAN TEACHINGS

Objection:

If God is merciful and forgiving then He shouldn't send people to hell simply because they haven't believed in Jesus Christ.

Answer:

If a friend were to offer to pay a debt you owed and you were to refuse to accept it that would not mean your friend was not generous but rather that you chose not to avail yourself of his generosity.

People will not be in hell because God is not merciful and forgiving but rather because they did not avail themselves of His mercy and forgiveness.

When Jesus Christ died upon the cross, He paid the penalty for our sins so that God could freely offer all mankind forgiveness for their sins. Acts 10:43 says, "To Him bear all the

prophets witness, that through His name every one who BELIEVES on Him shall receive remission" (forgiveness) "of sins."

Question:

Would a person go to heaven who was believing in Jesus Christ and also being good to go to heaven?

Answer:

According to the Bible if a person is doing anything more than believing in Jesus Christ to get to heaven, he won't make it. Romans 4:5 says, "But to him that WORKS NOT, but believes on Him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness." When a person thinks he has his part in getting himself to heaven, instead of trusting Jesus Christ as a Savior, he is trusting Christ as a Helper. Instead of recognizing that Christ paid the total price for heaven that person is trying to help pay his own way. This comes down to a rejection of the gift of eternal life. John 3:36 says, "He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God remains on him."

Question:

Could a person believe in Jesus and never let anyone know?

Answer:

Yes, a good example of this is found in John 12:42,43, which says, "Even of the rulers many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees" (religious leaders) "they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."

Question:

What if a person were to believe in Jesus and then at some future date stop believing in Him, would he still go to heaven?

Answer:

Yes, because a person has to believe in Jesus only once to have the gift of everlasting life. Jesus said, "he who believes in Me HAS eternal life" (John 6:47). And "the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out" (John 6:37). A person has to believe only once to be saved from ever going to hell.

Question:

Would a person who believed in Christ but committed suicide

go to heaven?

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Answer:

Yes, because when a person believes in Christ, he is forgiven for ALL his sins - past, present, AND future. The way someone who believes in Christ lives his life determines the rewards he will receive from God on earth and in heaven but cannot affect where he will spend eternity.

Question:

What if a person simply believed Jesus was a good man or a prophet, would that be sufficient?

Answer:

If Jesus is not Who He claimed to be, then Jesus would be neither a good man nor a prophet of God; He would be a liar.

HIS CLAIMS

Listed are just a few claims Jesus made concerning Himself -

1.) Claimed He came down from heaven:

"For I have come down from heaven" (John 6:38);

"I came forth from the Father, and have come into the world; I am leaving the world again, and going to the Father" (John 16:28).

2.) Claimed His ability to foretell the future perfectly proved that He was the Christ:

"Now I tell you before it comes to pass, so that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am He" (John 13:19).

3.) Claimed equality with the Father:

"In order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father Who sent Him" (John 5:23).

4.) Claimed He existed before Abraham:

"Before Abraham was born, I am" (John 8:58).

5.) Claimed He was going to raise His body from the dead:

"For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again"
(John 10:17,18).

6.) Claimed people's eternal destiny rested on whether they believed in Him.

"He who believes in Him is not condemned; he who believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18).

7.) Claimed that He was the only way to the Father:

"I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man comes to the Father, but through Me" (John 14:6).

8.) Claimed that He answered prayer:

"And whatsoever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it" (John 14:13,14).

9.) Claimed He was sinless:

"Which of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?" (John 8:46).

10.) Claimed He had power to forgive sins:

"But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"
(Mark 2:10).

11.) Claimed that someday He would be the judge of all men:

"For just as the Father has life in Himself,

even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man" (John 5:26, 27).

12.) Claimed that none of His words would fail to be established:

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

CONCLUSION

What evidence did Jesus Himself give that He was the Messiah? He appealed to Scripture as proof. He said, "For if you believe Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me" (John 5:46). Also, in reference to this He said, "Think not that I come to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17).

He also pointed to His miracles as evidence He was the Messiah. In fact He told those who were skeptical of His being the Messiah not to believe in Him if His works didn't bear witness He was from God. He said, "If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not" (John 10:37). And "the works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me" (John 5:36).

Matthew 11:5 explains what kind of works Jesus was performing. It says, "the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them." These works were a direct fulfillment of the Scriptures. Isaiah 35:5,6 says, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing."

However the greatest evidence that Jesus gave that He was the Messiah is found in John 2:19 where it is recorded He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The writer explains what He meant by this statement. It says, "But He spake of the temple of His body." Jesus was saying to those who were rejecting Him as Messiah that if they were to put Him to death, in three days He would raise His own body from the dead. If Jesus did not literally come back from the dead three days after He was crucified, then He was not the Messiah.

However, the resurrection of Jesus can be proven to be an historical fact. Consider this!

One of the reasons Harvard Law School is so famous is because of a Jewish man named Simon Greenleaf, who held the Royal Professorship of Law. His book, "A Treatise on the Law of Evidence" (1842) is still considered the greatest single authority on evidence in the entire literature of legal procedure.

After he had written this book and while still Professor of Law at Harvard he was challenged by his students to apply his laws of legal evidence to the accounts of the resurrection given by the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. This challenge came about because Simon Greenleaf was a skeptic and had often mocked the Christians in his classes. After much persuasion he took the challenge and in the process of his research and investigation came to the conclusion that the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth is the best attested fact of ancient history.

In 1846 he wrote a book entitled "An Examination of the Testimony of the Four Evangelists by the Rules of Evidence Administered in the Courts of Justice."

Listed are just a few quotes from this work.

"If any ancient document concerning our public rights were lost, copies which had been as universally received and acted upon as the Four Gospels have been, would have been received in evidence in any of our courts of justice, without the slightest hesitation."

"An Examination of the Testimony of the Four Evangelists by the Rules of Evidence Administered in the Courts of Justice" (Baker Book House, 1965, reprinted from the 1847 edition). pp.9, 10

"And it is worthy of remark, that of all the investigations and discoveries of travelers and men of letters, since the overthrow of the Roman empire, not a vestige of antiquity has been found, impeaching, in the slightest degree, the credibility of the sacred writers; but, on the contrary, every result has tended to confirm it." Ibid.,p.47

"Either the men of Galilee were men of superlative wisdom, and extensive knowledge and experience, and of deeper still in the arts of deception, than any and all other, before or after them, or they have truly stated the astonishing things which they saw and heard." Ibid. p.53

"It was therefore impossible that they could have persisted in affirming the truths they have narrated, had not Jesus actually risen from the dead, and had they not known this fact as

certainly as they knew any other fact." Ibid.,p.29

"All that Christianity asks of men on this subject is that they would be consistent with themselves; that they would treat its evidences as they treat the evidence of other things; and that they would try and judge its actors and witnesses, as they deal with their fellow men, when testifying to human affairs and actions, in human tribunals. Let the witnesses be compared with themselves, with each other, and with surrounding facts and circumstances; and let their testimony be sifted, as if it were given in a court of justice, on the side of the adverse party, the witness being subjected to a rigorous cross examination. The result, it is confidently believed, will be an undoubting conviction of their integrity, ability and truth." Ibid p.46

Jesus said, "Search the Scriptures for in them you think you have eternal life; and they are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39).