



HIGHER GROUND
CALVARY CHAPEL

SCHOOL OF MINISTRY

Apologetics

Class 6

The Case for Christ

Welcome to the last class of
our Modular on Apologetics
“Why do we believe what we
believe?”

Tonight:

The Case for Christ

We have been looking at why
we believe what we believe
concerning:

1. Truth
2. The Bible
3. God
4. Creation

Tonight we will close out by looking at why we believe what we believe concerning Jesus Christ

So let's identify the key beliefs about Jesus...

He is God the Son

He is the Messiah

He is born of a virgin

He lived a sinless life

He died on the cross to redeem us

He rose from the dead

There are many more beliefs concerning Jesus, but I believe that these are the key beliefs

All of these beliefs are essential to Jesus being the

What does that mean?

It means that Jesus is how
God is going to redeem us
from sin

As I've mentioned before, God
uses prophecy to prove that
He exists and that He is God

For this class I want to use
prophecy to prove that Jesus
is the Messiah

In order to be the Messiah God
is going to send, Jesus will
have to fulfill all of these
prophecies

Now there is over 300
prophecies relating to the
coming, life, death and
resurrection of the Messiah

We don't have time for all of
them

So I will pick the main ones

We have been teaching throughout the School of Ministry that the Bible is a legal contract between God and His Creation

A contract provides goods or services

In the case of the Bible, God is going to provide a service
He is going to redeem us from our sins

All those who become a party to this contract will have their sins forgiven

We are also approaching these lessons from an evidence-based format

We look for the evidence

We test the evidence

We make our decision based upon the evidence

This is how Christianity can be proven to be true
Let us go back to our definition of Forensic Faith...

Forensic Faith: This is when we believe in something because of the evidence.

FORENSIC FAITH:
“We hold a forensic belief when we believe something because it is the most reasonable inference from evidence even though we may still have some unanswered questions.”
(J. Warner Wallace,
Forensic Faith page 60)

So there were three things that God promised to do in the Bible that are related to redemption

1. Send the Messiah
2. Offer the Messiah as sacrifice
3. Bring the Messiah back to life

All three of these are historical events that took place in our world

So let's look at these historical events and see what evidence we have concerning them

Genesis 3:15:

“I will put [hostility] between you [Satan] and the woman, between your seed [sin and death] and her seed [the Messiah] [He] shall [wound] your head and you shall [wound] His heel.”

This is the first prophecy concerning the Messiah
It was given by God in the Garden of Eden
Right after Adam and Eve sinned
And now they needed redemption.

It is the first prophecy of the Virgin Birth
God is speaking of the "Seed of the Woman."
Throughout the Bible, the "seed" is referring to the man's genetic material

The seed of Abraham
The seed of Isaac
The seed of Jacob
The seed of David
It is always the man's genetic material
The woman provides the egg

But here a woman is going to have her own “seed.”
This seed will be her own genetic material
She will produce both the seed and the egg
It will be a virgin birth

This Seed of the Woman will be of the line of:
Abraham
Isaac
Jacob
Judah
David

God identified this line in the Old Testament
Joseph, the step-father of Jesus, was of the line of David through Solomon
Mary was of David’s line through Nathan

He was to be born in Bethlehem. Micah 5:2:
“But you, Bethlehem Ephratah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall He come forth unto me who is to be ruler in Israel...”

We will find that apart from the Biblical account, there are two Roman historians who mention Jesus:
Josephus in his *Antiquities of the Jews*, Books 18 and 20 written around 93 – 94 A. D.

There is also Tacitus and his works *Annals*, Book 15 Chapter 44 written around 115 A. D. references Jesus and His execution
So we know that there was a person from that time named Jesus who was executed

The Talmud also mentions
Jesus
Again, the references appear
to be to discredit His claims
Not to deny His existence

There are references of Jesus
in the Jewish Mishna
This reference depicts Jesus
as a sorcerer or magician
Possibly seeking to discredit
His miracles

We also have what are called
“prophecies.”
These are pieces of
information concerning the
Messiah
Who He would be and what He
would do

These were written BEFORE
Jesus was born and they list
important events in His life
Each of these prophecies
came true exactly like God
described

Betrayed by a close friend
[Psalm 41:9]
Betrayed for 30 pieces of silver
[Zech. 11:12]
Silver used to buy a Potter's
Field
[Zech. 11:13]

His hands and feet are pierced
[Psalm 22:16]
His shoulders are dislocated
[Psalm 22:14]
His garments were gambled for
by His executioners
[Psalm 22:18]

No bones were broken
[Psalm 34:20]
Must be Begotten Son of God
[Psalm 2:7]
Must be of line of Jesse
[Isaiah 11:1]

Must be of House of David
[Matthew 22:42]
Born in Bethlehem
[Micah 5:2]
Cannot be of the line of
Solomon
[Jeremiah 22:30]

Arrested but innocent
[Isaiah 53:8]
Beaten [Isaiah 53:5]
Accused but makes no
defense [Isaiah 53:7]
Dies among thieves
[Isaiah 53:9]
Buried with the rich
[Isaiah 53:9]

Dies 173,884 days after the signing of decree to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem

[Daniel 9:25]

Reveals Himself by riding into Jerusalem on a donkey

[Zechariah 9:9]

Why is this so important?

It is important because God gave the Law of Moses, the Tabernacles, the Feasts and the sacrifices as pictures of the Messiah to the Jews

It was to fall to them to identify the Messiah and present Him to the world when He appeared and revealed Himself

These prophecies are part of the picture of the Messiah

It is through prophecy
fulfillment that the Jews would
be able to test His claim to be
the Messiah and authenticate
His claim

Jesus revealed Himself as the
Messiah on Palm Sunday

Rather than putting the claim of
Jesus to the test,
The religious leaders rejected
His claim without testing it

Now as we are doing an
evidence-based investigation,
We need to consider direct
evidence

This would be eye witness
accounts

Jesus prepare His eye
witnesses

Luke 6:12 – 16:

“And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

And when it was day, He called unto Him His disciples: and of them He chose twelve, whom also He named apostles...

“...Simon, (whom He also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zealot...

“...And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.”

[It is believed that both Thaddeus and Nathaniel are other names and titles that applied to Bartholomew]

[Thaddeus would be a nickname as it means “courageous”
Bartholomew literally means the “son of Tolmai”]

Notice that Jesus spent the night in prayer before making His selection
Why was that?

He had to be sure of His selection because He was literally sending these men to their deaths
Each one – except for John – would die for his faith
Why would Jesus do that?

There was no other way to confirm the truth of their statements 2,000 years later, than to have them die rather than change their testimony

Jesus selected twelve men and began an intensive day-by-day training program for them
He taught them
He included them in healings and exorcisms
They saw Him do all of this
They would testify of Him

We now have the Crucifixion
This was very public
God's Law required all the Jewish males to be in Jerusalem at this time
Everyone was there
Everyone could see

Now most of the Jews would come for the Passover Meal
Many would stay through the Feast of Unleavened Bread
This means that they would be there three days later for the Feast of First Fruits...

Resurrection Day
The miracles of Jesus were hard to believe
Rather than attribute these miracles to God, the Pharisees claimed they were of the devil
They did not claim they did not happen

They did not claim that they were faked
They acknowledged that they took place
They just claimed it was from a different source

When it came to the Resurrection, the Pharisees knew what Jesus taught
They are the ones who went to Pilate and warned him of this teaching
They are the ones who secured the tomb

When Jesus did resurrect, He went to His Disciples
He went to those who knew Him best
He submitted to any test they asked of Him
He needed them to be 100% convinced

If they were not convinced, then they would not be willing to die to confirm it was true
Paul noted that over 500 people saw Him after He had come back from the grave
So what were some of the arguments?

It was someone else on the cross and not Jesus
Who would do that?
Consider Thomas...
Thomas was nicknamed Didymus – the twin
Whose twin was he?

There is no reference to any twin brother
So scholars suggest that he was a twin or closely resembled Jesus
This is why Judas had to identify Jesus to the guards

Point: Judas went in and kissed Jesus to identify Him for those making the arrest
This way they would not make the mistake
Point: Thomas was alive after the crucifixion

Point: Thomas is the one who refused to believe unless he saw Jesus for himself

Jesus met with Thomas when they were gathered and gave him permission to touch and exam Him

The Swoon Theory: Jesus was not dead when He came off the cross

This one keeps making the rounds

The execution was carried out by Rome

If a Roman guard lost a prisoner, that guard could be put to death

They made sure Jesus was dead by piercing His side so that blood and water flowed out

Add to this that before He was crucified He was beaten
He was scourged with 39 lashes
He would have been in serious medical distress even without the crucifixion

He was laid in a stone tomb
He was sealed for three days
He would have been bleeding and dehydrated
Without proper medical care – which was not available back then – He would die

After all the torture, all the beating and all the abuse, He was available for inspection three days later
He was up and around
Walking and talking...
Not physically possible

Add to this that the priests had to bribe the guards to get them to report the body had been stolen while they slept
Roman soldiers did not sleep while on duty.
They would be put to death for this

The Disciples were not looking for Jesus to return from the dead
They were terrified
They were frightened
They were in hiding

The women did not believe Jesus would come back from the dead
They were going forth to complete the preparation of preparing the body for burial
None of the Disciples were expecting Him to come back

Of the Twelve, Judas
committed suicide
John was boiled in oil and
survived
All the others were killed for
what they taught

Any one of them could have
saved his life if he recanted of
his testimony that Jesus had
come back from the dead
Not one of them did
Why?
Because it was true

We also have the Gospel of
Luke
Matthew was an eye witness
John was an eye witness
Mark documented Peter's
testimony
Peter was an eye witness

But Luke was not an eye witness
He was not even Jewish
He was not there
He joined Paul on his Second Missionary Journey
So what was Luke?

He was a physician
He was well-educated
He was a man of science
And he set out to track down the truth of Jesus for himself
He went to eye witnesses and interviewed them

He tested the evidence
He documented his findings
His Gospel and the Book of Acts would be treated like an investigator's report
It would be allowed into evidence

Just as a final note on Luke:
He did not die a martyr's death
It appears that he died of old
age when he was 84

So the three events God
promised to fulfill were fulfilled
by Jesus
There is evidence that there
was an historic Jesus
There is evidence of His
miracles

There is evidence of His
execution
There is evidence of His
Resurrection
We now apply Forensic Faith

Forensic Faith: This is when we believe in something because of the evidence.

FORENSIC FAITH:

“We hold a forensic belief when we believe something because it is the most reasonable inference from evidence even though we may still have some unanswered questions.”

(J. Warner Wallace,
Forensic Faith page 60)

Given this evidence, it is the most reasonable inference that Jesus was the Messiah
It is the most reasonable inference that He worked miracles

It is the most reasonable inference that He died by crucifixion
It is the most reasonable inference that He came back from the dead

“When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, *however improbable*, must be the truth”
Sherlock Holmes
[Sir Arthur Conan Doyle]
Sign of the Four

We have come to the end of our Modular on Apologetic –
Why do we believe what we believe
We have used Forensic Faith as our basis
This has been an evidence-based investigation

We have looked at evidence relating to:

1. Truth
2. The Bible
3. God
4. Creation; and
5. Jesus

We have used Deductive Reasoning

We have considered evidence

We have used logic

We have follow the logic of various statements

We have presented our case

It now falls to you, the student, to pick up where we have left off

Is the investigation complete?

If not it falls to you to complete it

Do not stop investigating just because you found the answer you want
Do not stop investigating until you have found the truth

We have looked at the evidence
We have used Deductive Reasoning
We have reached our conclusion
It is the most reasonable inference

But, Christianity is not a religion
It is not our search to find God
It is not our efforts to make ourselves presentable unto God
It is a personal relationship with God

Jesus claimed that He was God
He made direct and indirect statements to this affect
He accepted worship reserved only for God
He forgave sins

C. S. Lewis put it this way...
Once Jesus claimed to be God, we have three – and only three – options concerning Him

1. He is a LIAR
He knew He was not God and yet He claimed to be God
As a LIAR we cannot believe what He said
All His statements must be called into question

2. He is a LUNATIC

He was crazy

He was out of touch with reality to the point that He thought He was God

All of His teachings must, therefore, be called into question

3. He was LORD

He was who He claimed to be

He was God

And as God He must be obeyed

Which conclusion do you believe?

QUESTIONS


