

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. History is laden with examples of people who have claimed to be “sent from God.” Examples would include Buddha, Confucius, Mohammed and many more. New religions and beliefs are springing up every day, with leaders attempting to convince others that *their way is the right way*.
- B. There must be some way to test these claims. There must be some way to see if these claims are justified. How else will we know which claims are true and which are false?
- C. There are two types of tests that allow us to do this: reason and history.
 - 1. *Reason* tells that us that if God were really sending someone to show the way that He would at least pre-announce that person’s coming. It would be reasonable that God would announce the coming of this messenger, his life, his birthplace, the nature of his visit, his message etc.
 - 2. If this happened we would have a fairly simple way to see if the messenger lined up with all that was pre-announced of him; and therefore have a way validate what the messenger was saying was indeed true.
 - 3. If this didn’t happen, we can be sure that all manner of “messengers” would emerge throughout history claiming to have heard from God and/or angels.

II. JESUS’ COMING WAS FORETOLD

- A. There was no one to foretell the birth of Socrates, Confucius, Buddha, Mohammed...But this is not so with Christ. Christ’s coming was expected; in fact, the entire national history of Israel revolved around an expectancy of Messiah that was foretold even from the Garden of Eden. His coming was not unexpected, it was predicted.
- B. Centuries before the coming of Jesus there were many accounts, through many different prophets that all pointed to Jesus’ coming. Examples would be:
 - 1. God’s promise to bless all the nations through the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob), Jesus came from the lineage of Abraham.

In your [Abraham’s] seed [offspring] all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.” (Gen. 22:18)

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham...(Mt. 1:1)

“I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel... (Num. 24:17)

- a. The Christ would come through the tribe of Judah, through Jesse/David...

There shall come forth a Rod [ruler] from the stem of Jesse [David's father], and a Branch shall grow out of his roots [lineage]...(Is. 11:1)

¹² **“When your [David's] days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be his Father, and he shall be My son... (2 Sam. 7:12, 13)**

2. An unmarried woman would give birth to Jesus; He would be born in Bethlehem...

¹⁴ **Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. (Is. 7:14)**

²³ **“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son [Jesus], and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.” (Mt. 1:23)**

“But you, Bethlehem...out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.” (Mic. 5:2)

3. Isaiah told of a man who would suffer for the sins of others.

⁴ **Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵ But He was wounded for our transgressions (sins), He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him...⁷ He was led as a lamb to the slaughter...⁸ For the transgressions of My people He was stricken...¹² And He was numbered with the transgressors (sinners), and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. (Is. 53:4-5, 7-8, 12)**

4. He would appear in humility, riding on a donkey.

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey. (Zech. 9:9)

5. David told of a man with pierced hands and feet.

¹⁶ **...The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. they pierced My hands and My feet;**
¹⁷ **I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. ¹⁸ They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots. (Ps. 22:16, 17)**

C. These details (and there are many more) are what set Jesus Christ apart from other messengers of faith. Even ancient pagan testimony gives credence to an idea of a God-sent messenger coming from the Jews.

III. WITNESS AMONG OTHER NATIONS

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, (Mt. 2:1)

- A. Tacitus, speaking for the ancient Romans, says, "People were generally persuaded in the faith of the ancient prophecies, that the East was to prevail, and that from Judea was to come the Master and Ruler of the world."
- B. Suetonius, in his account of the life of Vespasian, recounts the Roman tradition thus, "It was an old and constant belief throughout the East, that...the Jews were to attain the highest power."
- C. The Annals of the Celestial Empire contain the statement: *In the 24th year of Tchoo-Wang of the dynasty of the Tcheou, on the 8th day of the 4th moon, a light appeared in the Southwest which illumined the king's palace. The monarch, struck by its splendor, interrogated the sages. They showed him books in which this [star] signified the appearance of the great Saint of the West whose religion was to be introduced into their country.*
- D. Suetonius quoted a contemporary author to the effect that the Romans were so fearful about a king who would rule the world that they ordered all children born that year to be killed – an order that was not fulfilled, except by Herod [the appointed ruler of Judea at the time of Jesus' birth].

IV. CHRIST'S IMPACT AND PURPOSE

- A. Jesus' coming was so notable that it *split history* into two: BC and AD. Even those who deny Him still base their calendars on His birth.
- B. His coming was for the *purpose of death*, not life - another distinguishing feature of His coming. No other religious figure was sent to die, Christ was.
- C. Most begin with life and end in death. However, Christ began with life, suffered death, and ended with life (resurrection) and further, was exalted to the right hand of God (ascended to heaven, physically and bodily).
- D. He was eternally, in the past sense, to be the sacrifice for sin and rebellion against God. Scripture declares that He was the, "**Lamb slain, as it were, before the foundation of the earth.**" In other words, He didn't begin with life and then suffer death because of a rejected message; but His message and purpose was to die, thereby purchasing humanity from sin.
- E. His life was the only life ever lived backward. When contrasted with the temple worship of animal sacrifice, even His name, "Jesus" meaning, "Savior," directed people into the picture of His purpose of sacrificial love.
- F. Many would slander Him with the very reason of His coming – to save what was lost. They accused Him of being a *friend of sinners* and a *Samaritan*.

V. CONCLUSION

- A. The life of Christ is so profound and notable that every person must consider His claims.

VI. QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- A. What did Jesus claim about His identity?
- B. If His claims are true, what is the appropriate response to them?
- C. Am I living with *an appropriate response* to His claims of divinity?
- D. In what areas am I lacking?
- E. What steps need to be taken to align my life with Jesus' teachings?