

If Jesus Christ is Truly God, What Does This Mean for Me?

Christ Promised an Eternal Life of Perfect Happiness in Heaven for All Who Live According to His Teaching

- Jesus is the Son of God from all eternity and had taken on human nature in addition to his divine nature;
- As God He is believable in all he says;
- With God the Father, He participated in bringing each of us into existence;
- In His life He taught us by sermons, parables and example how we should live;
- His suffering and death on Calvary is the means of our attaining His promised perfect happiness in heaven;
- His command to us is to love Him with all our hearts, souls, minds and strength;
- It is He who is offended by our failures in keeping his commandments;
- Yet Jesus is willing to forgive these offenses if we are truly sorry and resolved to reform;
- Jesus brings us helps beyond our nature so we can achieve the salvation he promises;
- Jesus comes to us personally in the sacrament of Holy Eucharist that he instituted;
- Jesus will be the judge of whether during our lives we have merited salvation;
- The happiness of heaven consists in a loving relationship with Him for all eternity.

What Does Jesus Require From Us?

The commitment of our lives

- “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:27).

That we follow him in spite of all difficulties:

- “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and

whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life?” (Matt 16:24-26).

It's worth it, because of God's love for us:

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

Questions for Those Who Give Another Explanation

What is their evidence?

- Who makes the claim?
- How many people? Twelve, as for the apostles?
- Were they eyewitnesses or companions?
- Was the claim made at a time when other eyewitnesses would have an opportunity to disprove the claim?
- Did they maintain the claim in face of persecution, torture, even death?
- Is there a claim to be God?
- Are there true miracles in support of any claims? Don't take our word for it —but don't take their word for it either, do your own research.
- Use original documents (The Four Gospels, and Acts of the Apostles).
- Use a translation from the original language (e.g., Revised Standard Version (RSV))

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Who is Jesus Christ?

In making a decision to acquire anything, or to accept anything as true, we normally ask ourselves three questions:

- How can I know the claims are true? -What does it mean for me? -What will it cost me?

We must apply these same questions to Christ.

First of all, Jesus claimed that he was God and gave proof of this truth by performing miracles.

How Can We Know the Truth?

Jesus Christ claimed to be God:

- Here we use the Gospels as evidence, not as books inspired by God, but simply as human history.
- Jesus claimed identity with the one God who had revealed himself to the Jewish people: “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30).
- Jesus applied to himself the Hebrew name for God that implies eternal existence: “Before Abraham was, *I am*” (John 8:58).
- Jesus claimed the authority to forgive sins, which are offenses against God, and which only God can forgive: “But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins’ - he said to the paralytic, ‘rise, take up your pallet and go home.’ And he rose...and went out before them all (Mark 2:10-12).
- Jesus told the high priest, “You will see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven” (Mark 14:62).

His enemies understood His claim:

- Twice they tried to stone Him; once they tried to throw Him off a cliff;
- Christ used the healing of the paralytic as a direct refutation of the crowd's suspicion that He had committed blasphemy by claiming to forgive sin;
- The Sanhedrin called the last instance blasphemy and condemned Him to death.

Christ proved His claim by means of miracles

Perceivable acts contrary to the ordinary laws of nature, and workable only by the author of the laws of nature (God).

Christ worked miracles on more than three dozen occasions:

Not capricious acts or magical tricks, but usually miracles of healing:

-“The blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up” (Matt 11:5);

-Often, a town brought all their sick and disabled (Mark 7:56);

-He did healing at a distance - the Roman centurion's servant (Luke 7:1-10);

-Jesus expelled demons from possessed persons (Matt 8:28-34);

-His healings were instantaneous;

-Jesus exercised other powers over nature:

-changing water into wine (John 2:1-11);

-calming a storm at sea (Mark 5:35-41);

-walking on water (Matt 15:22-33);

-multiplying loaves and fish (John 6:1-15).

He restored three dead to life:

-A widow's son at Naim (Luke 7:11-17);

-The daughter of Jairus, a synagogue official (Mark 5:35-43);

-Lazarus, whose body had been in the grave four days (John 11:1-44).

Christ appealed to his miracles as proof of his divinity:

"...these very works which I am doing, bear me witness that the Father has sent me" (John 5:36);

"...even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father" (John 10:38).

Christ was also truly human:

Jesus took on human nature while remaining truly God (CCC 464);

-The angel told Joseph, “that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit” (Matt 1:20);

-“God sent forth his Son, born of woman” (Gal 4:4);

-As a youth, “Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature” (Luke 2:52);

-Jesus suffered hunger (Matt 4:2); thirst (John 19:28); fatigue (Mark 4:38); temptation (Matt 4:3-11); and death (Mark 15:37);

-Jesus “has been tempted as we are, but without sinning” (Heb 4:15).

Christ truly died and rose from the dead on Easter Sunday:

-The effects of the scourging;

-it's easy to tell when a crucified man dies, as he would have stopped raising himself up in order to breathe;

-the soldiers did not bother to break His legs because they realized He was dead;

-one of them plunged a spear into His side;

-He was buried in a tomb.

Only a miracle could have brought him forth:

-A stone blocked the entrance to the tomb;

-a guard had been set at the tomb;

-the apostles were in a fearful, devastated state and could not have stolen his body.

But he was seen by groups of followers on Easter Sunday and for forty days thereafter

The Apostles were not gullible about believing the resurrection:

-They feared that they would be sought out:

-they all ran away (Mark 14:50-52);

-Peter three times denied knowing Christ (Matt 27:69-75);

-only John came to the crucifixion (John 19:25-27);

-they locked the doors because of fear (John 20:19, 26);

-they did not believe the women who said they had seen Him alive (Mark 16:11).

The apostles definitely verified that it was really Christ:

-the wounds in His hands, feet, and side (John 20:24-29);

-They conversed with Him (John 20:19-29);

-they ate with Him (Luke 24:41-43);

-they touched Him (Luke 24:39);

-He worked another miracle, similar to one in the past - a miraculous catch of fish (John 21:4-11).

His body, though recognizable as His, was changed:

-He could appear inside a locked room (John 20:19, 26);

-he could disappear (Luke 24:31);

Although no one witnessed Christ's leaving the tomb, and only his chosen followers saw Him afterward, those apostles are reliable witnesses to the risen Christ.

The Apostles are Reliable Witnesses to all of Christ's Public Life.

They have the credentials required for witnesses:

-ability to know the facts;

-they lived with Christ for almost three years, from His baptism by John until his ascension into heaven (Acts 1:21-22);

-they were eyewitnesses to the *risen Christ*;

-telling the truth;

-all twelve remained consistent in their story despite persecution, torture, death;

-if even one recanted, the story would have collapsed;

-the enemies of Christ could never disprove their claim, by producing the body of Christ (Matt 28:11-15).

The converts of the Early Centuries are Another Proof.

In an age when Christians were persecuted, tortured, killed, no one would have accepted the Apostles' claims without solid evidence.