

Christian Apologetics

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Summary of Week 1 - 4

- We are commanded in scripture to always be ready to give a “defense” of why we believe in Jesus.
- We can know truth through observation and reason.
- God has revealed himself to us in “general” revelation.
 - Creation
 - Design
 - Moral Law

Summary Weeks 5-6: The Bible

- The history of the Bible (how we got it)
 - God's inspiration
 - Discovering the Canon
 - From Septuagint to Vulgate to King James to NIV
- Unless the New Testament is reliable, our faith is worthless since Christianity stands or falls based on a single event in history – the resurrection.
- Tests for reliability
 - Biographical Test
 - Internal Evidence
 - External Evidence
- **Conclusion – the Old and New Testaments are reliable reproductions of the original manuscripts that have been passed down through the ages**

Summary – Week 7: The Resurrection

1. The story of Jesus is not a **legend**.
2. The story of Jesus is not a **lie**.
3. The story of Jesus is not an **embellishment**.
4. Jesus' resurrection cannot be explained by **alternative** theories (Swoon, Stolen Body, Substitute, Zealot, Copy Cat)
5. We have a reasonable belief in a real historical event. It is more reasonable than the alternatives!

Week 8: The Deity of Christ

- “But who do you say that I am?” (Matthew 16:15)
- This is still the greatest question of all time!
- ***The answer is what separates Christianity from every other religion***
 - Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” – Matthew 16:16

Objections to the Deity of Christ

- That's crazy!
 - Mormons, Jehovah's witnesses, Oneness Pentecostals
- That's not what the Bible says!
- That's not what Jesus claimed to be!
- That's not what the disciples understood!
- Jesus was just a good moral teacher or something else (Liar, Lunatic, Guru)

“That’s Crazy”

- “In the beginning was The Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” – John 1:1
- “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel“ — which means, “God with us.” – Matthew 1:23
- The Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, ... which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man. – *Westminster Confession of Faith 8.2*
- Jesus is not God in the sense that He is the same person as God (modalism)
- Jesus is not of a different essence from God (tritheism)
- Jesus is of the same substance as God, yet a different Person (trinitarianism)

What does the Bible and His disciples say?

- **His disciples thought he was God**

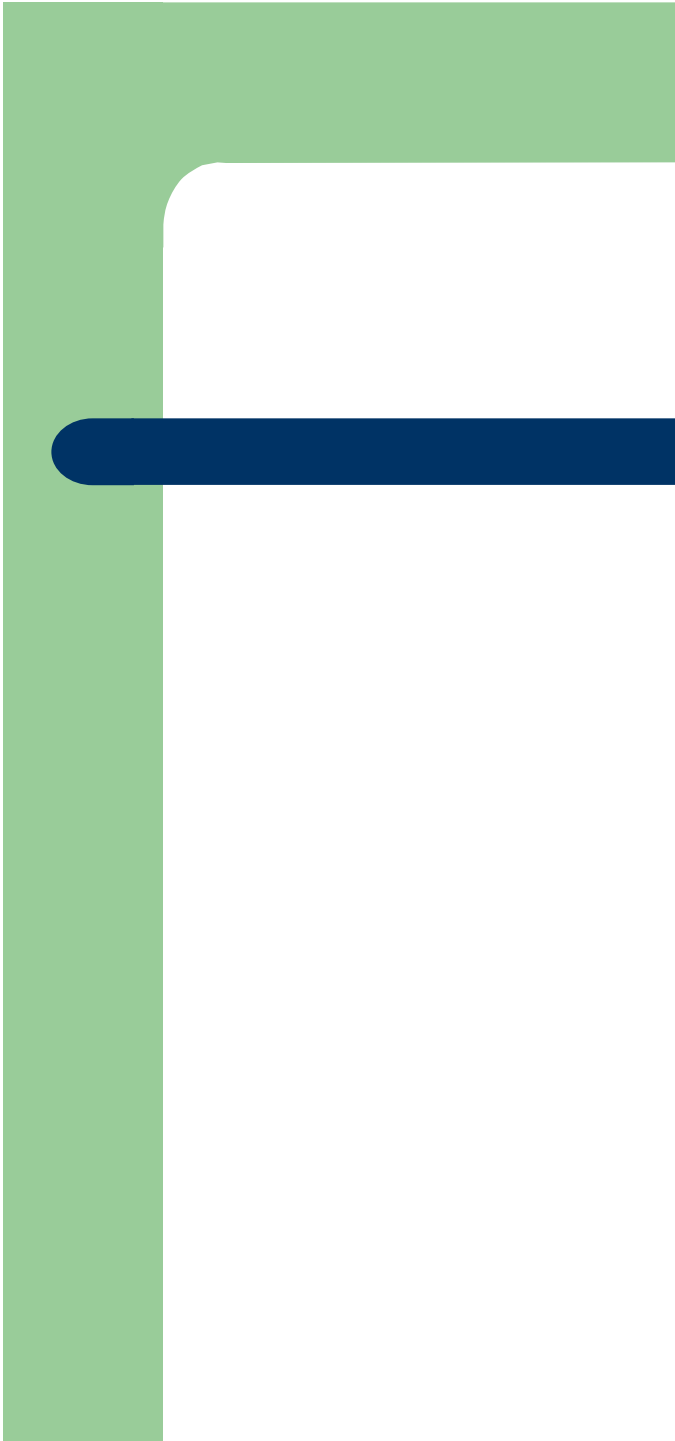
- John 1:1 – “the Word was God” and “the Word became flesh”
- Paul
 - Rom 9:5 - Christ is “God over all”
 - Col 2:9 – “in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form”
 - Phil 2:11 – “Jesus is Lord”
- 2 Pet 1:1 – believers receive righteousness from “**our God and Savior** Jesus Christ”
- Matt 1:23 – “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” which means “**God with us**”.
- Matt 8:29 – Even the demons acknowledged that Jesus was God (Also Luke 4:34, 41)

Did Jesus Claim to be God?

- Direct claims to be God
 - Mark 14:61-64 – “I am,” said Jesus. “And you will see the **Son of Man** sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.” (Daniel 7:13)
 - John 8:56-59 – “before Abraham, I am” (Ex 3:13-14).
 - John 13:14 – “Your Lord and teacher”.
- Indirect claims to be God
 - “I am the first and the last” (Rev 1:17) – Isaiah 44:6.
 - “I am the good Shepherd” (John 10:11) – Psalm 23
 - “The judge of all people” (Matt 25:31, John 5:27) – Joel 3:12
 - “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life (John 8:12, Psalm 27:1)
 - “No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6)

Did Jesus Claim to be God?

- Jesus acted as if he were God
 - **He forgave sins** (Mark 2:5-11, Luke 24:45-47). “Who can forgive sins but God alone”
 - **He gave new commandments**
 - John 13:34 & Matt 28:18-19)– Love one another and make disciples of all nations.
 - “You have heard it said... but I say” (Matthew 5)
 - **He requested prayer in His name** (John 14:13-14 & John 15:7).
 - “You may ask for anything in my name and I will do it.”
 - **He claimed authority over the law**
 - He healed on the Sabbath (Mark 2:28)
 - He proclaimed Himself exempt from the Temple tax (Matthew 17:27)
 - **He accepted worship**
 - A healed leper (Matt 8:2)
 - A ruler whose daughter Jesus would heal (Matt 9:18)
 - The disciples after a storm (Matt 14:33)
 - A Canaanite woman (Matt 15:25)
 - The mother of James and John (Matt 20:20)
 - A healed blind man (John 9:38)
 - All the disciples (Matt 28:17)
 - Thomas said, “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28)
 - **He said he would come at the end of time to judge the world** (Matt 25:31-33)



Lord, Liar, or Lunatic?... or a Great Moral Teacher?

- Jesus was not a “poached egg” – C.S. Lewis
 - A great moral teacher is not going to mislead one’s subjects on the most critical point of his message!
- Suppose He was lying and knew it?
 - He was the best (worst), most satanic, wicked liar the world has ever known... but Jesus’ character didn’t contain a trace of these qualities
 - No motivation personally for His lies. He and 11 of His disciples were killed!
 - It’s a pretty bad lie to pick, considering the audience. Jews didn’t worship men or images
- Suppose He was lying and didn’t know it?
 - He had the wrong psychological profile. He was wise, loving, and creative
 - When people meet lunatics, they feel uncomfortable for feeling superior to them. People were not comfortable around Jesus for the opposite reason
 - “A lunatic was like a man asleep; Jesus was the most wide awake of all men.” – Peter Kreeft

“Jesus was a New Age Guru”

- Judaism is exoteric religion involving the observance of a public law and belief in a public book
 - Mystics believe in inner, esoteric, inner experiences
- Mystics believe that God is only immanent
 - Jews believe that God is separate from His creation
 - “I am God” is natural for a mystic, blasphemy for a Jew
- The Jewish God is personal, the great “I AM.”
 - The mystical God is not
- The Jewish God is a moralist; the mystical God is morally neutral
- The Mystical experience never includes Hell!
- If Jesus really meant to teach this:
 - No one got His teaching for about 1,900 years!
 - He was never exposed to this doctrine as a youth.
 - If He had been, Jews would not have been tolerant of it

Conclusion

- The Deity of Christ is an understandable doctrine
- The Bible proclaims Jesus to be God
- Jesus claimed to be God
- Jesus' disciples proclaimed Him to be God
- Jesus was *not* a good moral teacher or something else

For next week...



Is the Bible
really the
Word of
God?