

How do You Know that God Exists

That the Bible is the inspired Word of God?

That Jesus Christ is eternally God the Son and was manifested on earth as a human?

These are crucial questions. Before a person can accept the Lord Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour, he must believe in the existence of God, and the authority of the Bible as God's word to mankind.

We must wholeheartedly believe and accept personally these foundational facts -

- That God had no beginning, nor has an end. He is eternally "**God Almighty**."
- That Jesus Christ shares God's divinity and eternal existence.
- That Jesus Christ left His divine equality with God to become man, and be God's representative on earth -
 - that He 'stood in' for man in bearing the responsibility and punishment for the sins of mankind
 - that to all who believe Jesus has already borne the punishment for their sins, their sins are forgiven, and they are declared to be righteous (or have a right standing) before God
 - that when they accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour they are eternally saved, and are accepted by God as His children.
- Because all of these facts are recorded in the bible, it is necessary to accept that the bible was inspired by the Holy Spirit, and is God's word to mankind.

Because belief in these facts is necessary for salvation, it is common for Satan to sow seeds of doubt in the mind of a person who is entertaining salvation, and he begins to ask, '***How do you know?***'

Some people dismiss these doubts with a certain amount of abruptness. They say, 'You have been given a free will. You must choose to accept the truth by faith.' Whilst this is substantially true, God in His grace has provided us with many proofs of His divinity, and that of Jesus Christ.

THE DIVINITY OF GOD

- ***Historical Evidence*** What constitutes historical evidence? To be accepted as historical evidence, events must have been witnessed by a substantial number of people and faithfully recorded. The recorded facts have to be accepted as a truthful account of the witnessed events, and finally, their authenticity has to pass the test of time.

The bible is in fact an historical book, recording the events surrounding the Jewish nation and their relationship with God. The hand of God as seen in the many miraculous

signs and wonders, was witnessed by huge audiences—in some cases by hundreds of thousands. E.g.

The miraculous plagues in Egypt.

The crossing of the Red Sea.

The accompanying pillar of fire and cloud.

Water flowing from the smitten rock.

Miraculous provision, as in the manna and quail.

The earth ‘opening its mouth’ and swallowing Dathan, Abiram, and all their possessions

The crossing of the river Jordan on dry land.

The slaying of 180,000 Syrians by the angel of the Lord

These are but a few of the many examples. They were faithfully recorded by Moses and other prophets of God. Their accounts were accepted by the whole Jewish nation, and canonised as sacred Scripture. In fact there were often more witnesses to the miracles of God than there were to many worldly events that have been accepted as historical.

- ***By God Detailing Events in Advance*** God chose to prove His divinity to the children of Israel by detailing events beforehand that eventually occurred in the distant future—in some cases hundreds of years later. Only God could do this without a hint of failure.

"I have declared the former things from the beginning; they went forth from My mouth, and I caused them to hear it. Suddenly I did them, and they came to pass." Isa 48:3

"Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure...'" Isa 46:9-11

An example of God showing the Israelites what was to happen in the future is His prophecy concerning Cyrus, king of Persia.

"Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and He who formed you from the womb: "I am the LORD, who makes all things, who stretches out the heavens all alone, who spreads abroad the earth by Myself.... *Who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd, and he shall perform all My pleasure, saying to Jerusalem, "You shall be built," and to the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid."*" Isa 44:24,28

This prophecy was written in 725 BC, 125 years before Cyrus, king of Persia, was born.

History records that in 606 BC, Israel was taken captive and exiled to Babylon.

Babylon was defeated by Medo Persia, and in 537 BC king Cyrus released the Israelites from their captivity, and instructed them to return to their homeland and rebuild Jerusalem and the temple.

This happening is documented in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

THE DIVINITY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

Prophetic Revelation

From the first book (Genesis) to the last book (Malachi) of the Old Testament, God's prophets set forth forty three accounts of the future coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every one of their predictions came to pass. E.g.

He would be conceived by a virgin - *"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel."* Isa 7:14.

Fulfilment -

"Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ... the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; ..." Luke 1:26-32.

He would be born in Bethlehem - *"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting."* Micah 5:2.

Fulfilment -

"Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son..." Luke 2:4-7.

He would be beaten by Roman soldiers - *"I gave My back to those who struck Me, And My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting."* Isa 50:6.

Fulfilment -

"Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, saying, "Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?" Matt 26:67-68.

They would cast lots for His garments - *"They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture."* Psalm 22:18.

Fulfilment -

"Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet:

"They divided My garments among them,

And for My clothing they cast lots.” Matt 27:35-36.

He would be buried in a rich man’s tomb - *“They made His grave with the wicked-- but with the rich at His death”* Isa 53:9.

Fulfilment -

“Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed.” Matt 27:57-61

He would enter Jerusalem on a donkey - *“... 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.

Fulfilment -

“Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it. ...And Jesus went into Jerusalem...” Mark 11:7-11.

The price of His betrayal would be thirty pieces of silver-- *“And the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter"-- that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD for the potter.”* Zech 11:12-13.

Fulfilment -

“Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?" And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.” Matt 26:14-16

Jesus Demonstrated the Power of God

When John the Baptist enquired whether or not Jesus was the promised Messiah, Jesus referred those who asked Him to the works done in the power of God. *“And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.”* Matt 11:2-5. As well as these miracles were proving Christ’s divinity, they fulfilled Isaiah’s prophecies of His Messiahship. E.g.

"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; he has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound (as in sickness and disease)..." Isa 61:1-3.

"I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house.” Isa 42:7.

The Writings of Josephus

Josephus was a Jewish non-Christian—an army officer turned historian. This is his account of Jesus.

“And there arose about this time, AD 26-30 Jesus, a wise man if indeed one should call him a man. For he was the performer of astonishing deeds, a teacher of those who are happy to receive the truth, He won over many Jews and also many Greeks. He was the Christ. And when Pilate had condemned him to the cross at the instigation of our own leaders, those who had loved him at first did not give up. For he appeared to them on the third day alive again, as the holy prophets had foretold, and had said many other wonderful things about him. And still to this day the race of Christians, so called after him, has not died out.”

His Resurrection

The fact that Jesus was crucified, pronounced dead, and then was resurrected to the throne of God, was considered by Paul to be irrefutable proof that He was the divine Son of God. He said that Jesus was “..declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” Rom 1:4.

Christ’s death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, were verified by many witnesses.

“This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.” Acts 2:32.

“For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas (Peter), then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once...” 1 Cor 15:3-6.

THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD

Proven by Archaeology

Archaeological discoveries have played an important part in proving the authenticity of the bible - both generally and specifically. For instance, an intensive study of more than 3,000 New Testament Greek manuscripts dating from the second century A. D. has shown that the New Testament text has been preserved remarkably free from any major errors, or perversion of its doctrines.

Archaeology has exploded many false assumptions that have been put forth in scholarly circles as higher criticism of the bible. E.g. The Hebrew patriarchs were dismissed as mere legendary figures. Abraham and Moses were said to be illiterate. The city of Ur did not exist. These and many other assumptions have been shown to be completely false by archaeological research.

Ur was an important city of ancient Babylonia situated on the Euphrates River but it was suddenly destroyed about 1960 B. C., and lay buried in oblivion until it was excavated in modern times by archaeologists. Excavations have shown that it was a thriving metropolis - a centre of religion and industry. The Babylonians worshiped many gods, and Abraham's father, Terah, probably worshiped at the altar of Sin, the moon god. Abraham lived in the city of Ur at the height of its splendour, until he was called out of its idolatrous atmosphere to become separated to God, and eventually the father of the Hebrew nation.

By the Accuracy of its Prophecies

All of the bible's prophecies have been fulfilled, or are awaiting fulfilment. Take for instance, Joshua's predictive curse on the one who would rebuild Jericho. ***"Then Joshua charged them at that time, saying, "Cursed be the man before the LORD who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with (the death of) his firstborn, and with (the death of) his youngest he shall set up its gates."*** Josh 6:26.

This prophecy was fulfilled some five hundred years later. ***"In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation with (the death of) Abiram his firstborn, and with (the death of) his youngest son Segub he set up its gates, according to the word of the LORD, which He had spoken through Joshua the son of Nun."*** IKing 16:34.

THE PERSONAL REVELATION OF HIMSELF

This is God's promise: ***"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. None of them shall teach his neighbour, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them."*** Heb 8:10-11

To those who accept Him, and Jesus Christ His Saviour, God has promised that they will know Him - that He will reveal Himself to them. It should be considered normal for a Christian to know God personally. Jesus said, ***"By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit."*** I Jn 4:13. God has given us His Spirit to be our guide and teacher, our comforter, to the end that we might know Him. Through the Holy Spirit we may hear the Lord's voice and receive His instruction - His guidance, His warnings. We should experience God's loving care and protection.

This is the ultimate proof of the existence of God - that we experience Him personally.

For those who are genuinely seeking to know the validity of God and Jesus Christ we have a definite assurance that those who seek shall find.

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened..." Matt 7:7-8.

It should be understood that this seeking should be undertaken with earnestness, diligence and a sincere love of the truth.

"... they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved." 2 Thess 2:9-11.