

Title: **"Proving that Jesus Was the Christ" (Part 1)**  
Text: **Acts 9:19b-22**  
Date: **August 11, 2024**

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## Big Idea

In our day, it is assumed (falsely) that if you are putting your faith in Jesus it must also mean you are in some ways forfeiting (or "crucifying", if you prefer) your intellect. You are leaping blind in the dark. You are taking steps, not towards the facts, but away from them. But the Bible nowhere tells us to blindly accept Jesus without evidence or good reason. Quite the opposite: much evidence and many good reasons are put forward. Consequently then, what we discover is that real biblical faith isn't opposed to reason . . . it accords with it!

### Proof #1: Scholarly Consensus

Before we can really make the case that Jesus is the Christ, we must actually first establish that Jesus existed in the first place—that he's a real historical person. Such a thing would have been taken for granted in Paul's day. But, in our day, there are some who question this basic fact. Did Jesus of Nazareth even exist at all? How can we know? We're so far removed from the days and times in which it's claimed he lived.

Biblical scholar F.F. Bruce notes: *"Some writers may toy with the fancy of a 'Christ-myth,' but they do not do so on the ground of historical evidence. The historicity of Christ is as axiomatic for an unbiased historian as the historicity of Julius Caesar. It is not historians who propagate the 'Christ-myth' theories."*

### Proof #2: Extrabiblical (Non-Christian) Evidence

One of the reasons scholars have reached near unanimity in their affirmation of Jesus' historical existence is due to the fact that we don't just have evidence for Jesus' existence in the Bible. Other, non-Christians spoke about him as well—people who had nothing to gain from it; people who were even at odds with it.

So Christopher Klein, writing for the History Channel, says this: *"The most detailed record of the life and death of Jesus comes from the four Gospels and other New Testament writings. [Quoting Bart Ehrman:] 'These are all Christian and are obviously and understandably biased in what they report, and have to be evaluated very critically indeed to establish any historically reliable information. . . . But their central claims about Jesus as a historical figure—a Jew, with followers, executed on orders of the Roman governor of Judea, Pontius Pilate, during the reign of the Emperor Tiberius—are borne out by later sources with a completely different set of biases.' Within a few decades of his lifetime, Jesus was mentioned by Jewish and Roman historians in passages that corroborate portions of the New Testament that describe the life and death of Jesus."*

### Proof #3: Clear Literary Form

C.S. Lewis, the late renowned professor of medieval and renaissance literature at Cambridge University, wrote the following: *"If he [the biblical critic] tells me that something in a Gospel is legend or romance, I want to know how many legends and romances he has read, how well his palate is trained in detecting them by the flavour; not how many years he has spent on that Gospel. . . . I have been reading poems, romances, vision literature, legends, and myths all my life. I know what they are like. I know that not one of them is like this. Of this [Gospel] text there are only two possible views. Either this is reportage . . . or else, some unknown [ancient] writer . . . without known predecessors or successors, suddenly anticipated the whole technique of modern novelistic, realistic narrative."*



### Reflection Questions

- Describe your understanding of the relationship between faith and reason. Use Scripture in your response.
- Do you know why you believe Jesus is the Christ? Can you give an account of it to others? Can you, as Paul does here: "prove" it to be so?
- How "earthquake-proof" is your faith? In what ways do you still feel vulnerable to doubt or skepticism? What can you do to strengthen such things?
- Who might you invite to come learn more about all this with us next week?

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## Our Mission & Values

*Mercy Hill Church exists to help restore us to God, neighbor, and city through the good news of Jesus Christ.*

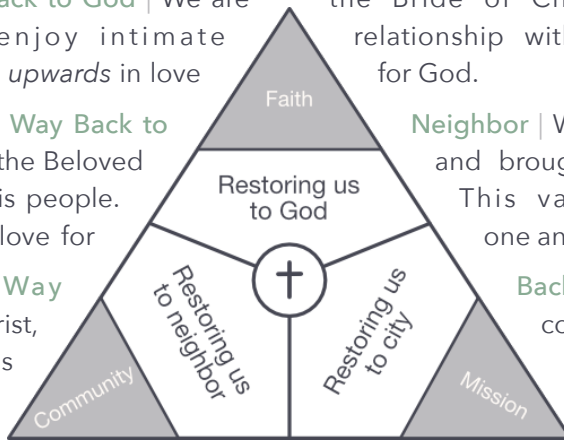
**FAITH:** The Way Back to God | We are redeemed to enjoy intimate presses our church *upwards* in love

the Bride of Christ, created and relationship with him. This value for God.

**COMMUNITY:** The Way Back to Christ, adopted in the Beloved relationship with his people. church *inwards* in love for

**Neighbor** | We are the Family of and brought into covenantal This value presses our one another.

**MISSION:** The Way the Embassy of Christ, Savior to be his value presses our in love for the



**Back to City** | We are commissioned by the ambassadors. This church *outwards* unbelieving.

## Your Next Steps

When approaching the Christian faith and life, it can be confusing to know where to even begin. Come find us at the Next Steps Table after the service—it would be our joy to help you along in the journey! And if you're a visitor, we have a special gift bag for you. Don't miss it!



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Welcome to Mercy Hill Church.  
We are so glad you've joined us today!

## Announcement Spotlight

### Please Pray for the Nicaragua Team!

Last Tuesday, August 6th the Nicaragua team headed out for a week to help with Arms of Love and their ministry to kids and youth. They are still abroad and hard at work! Please remember to keep them in prayer.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Joey at [joey@mercyhillchurch.org](mailto:joey@mercyhillchurch.org).

### Support the Nicaragua Short-Term Missions Team!

#### CityTeam's Grace Village Apartment Renovation!

Scan the QR code below for more info!

For clickable content and more announcements,



scan this code to head to our Communications Hub!

Or find it online at [mercyhillchurch.org/communications-hub](https://mercyhillchurch.org/communications-hub).