

***Bible Correspondence
Course***

06 - Jesus the Christ

Truth For The World 

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In this lesson:

1. Who is Jesus?

2. Evidences for Jesus

3. Sacrifices for Sin

4. Jesus: The Perfect Sacrifice

Jesus the Christ

In the last lesson we looked at the main problem for man, sin. In this lesson we will look at God's solution for saving lost man. That solution is Jesus the Christ. We will first look at who Jesus is and evidences for His claim to deity. Then, we will look at different sacrifices that have been made for sin. Finally, we will look at Jesus as the perfect sacrifice for sin.

Who is Jesus?

Did a man named Jesus really exist, or is the idea of a Christ a myth? Even though the Bible contains eyewitness evidence of Jesus, we also have historical evidence apart from the Bible that Jesus really did exist. Tacitus was a Roman historian who lived in the first century. He wrote, "But not all the relief that could come from man, not all the bounties that the prince could bestow, nor all the atonements which could be presented to the gods, availed to relieve Nero from the infamy of being believed to have ordered the conflagration, the fire of Rome. Hence to suppress the rumor, he falsely charged with the guilt, and punished with the most exquisite tortures, the persons commonly called Christians, who were hated for their enormities. Christus, the founder of the name, was put to death by Pontius Pilate..." (Tacitus. Annals. In Great Books of the Western World, ed. By Robert Maynard Hutchins. Vol. 15, The Annals and the Histories

by Cornelius Tacitus, Chicago: William Benton, 1952.) The name “Christus” is the Latin spelling of “Christ.” But, we can see it is the man named Jesus from the Bible, because Tacitus says that Christus was the founder of “Christians” and put to death by “Pontius Pilate.” This matches the Bible’s history. F. F. Bruce was the Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis at the University of Manchester. He wrote, “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.” (Bruce, F. F. *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1964.) In short, the history of a man named Jesus is well-documented.

But who was the man named Jesus?

If you remember when we looked at evidences for the Bible, we stated that we did not want to believe that the Bible came from God if it did not even make that claim itself. Similarly, we do not want to make the claim that the man named Jesus is God, if He did not even make that claim Himself.

Jesus did make the claim to be the Christ, the Anointed One sent by God, the Son of God. He did so in multiple ways.

First, Jesus claimed to be the Christ directly. ***“But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” (Mark 14:61-62)*** He also claimed to be alive before Abraham, which would only make sense if He was eternal, as God is. ***“Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.” (John 8:58)***

Second, Jesus claimed to be God indirectly. In other words, Jesus did things that only God was allowed to do. One thing He did was accept worship. While His disciples were on a ship, the wind was blowing. Jesus came to them walking on the water. Peter also got out of the ship and walked on the water for a while. ***“And when they were come into the ship, the wind***

ceased. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.” (Matthew 14:32-33) Jesus also forgave sins, which only God can do.



Only God is to be worshiped. By accepting worship, Jesus claimed to be God.

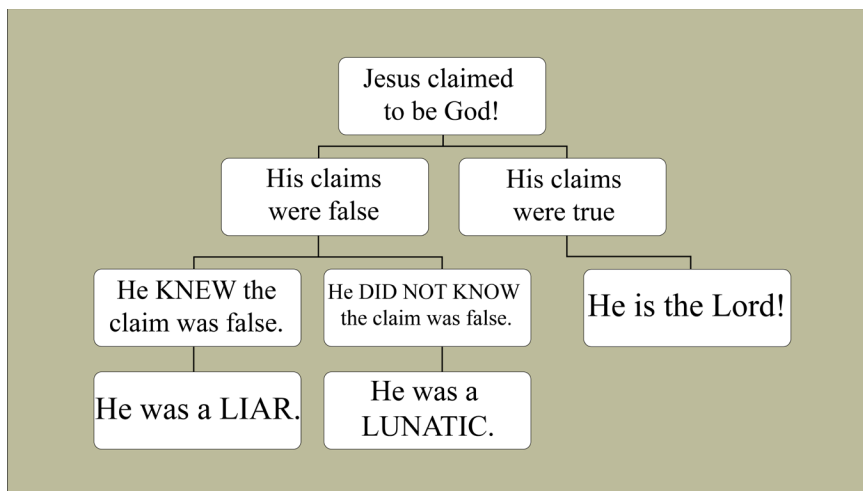
“When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?” (Mark 2:5-7)

Jesus clearly claimed to be deity. He did not claim to be just a good teacher, a prophet of God, or just a good guy. He claimed to be on the level of deity, and the Messiah, and Savior of the world foretold in prophecy.

Since Jesus made the claim to be deity, we must answer that claim as either being true or false. The implications of the answer are extremely important.

Take a moment to follow the chart from top to bottom to see

all three possible outcomes of Jesus' claim to deity.



As you can see, since Jesus claimed to be God, there are only three possible outcomes to the claim. 1) He knew the claim was false and He is a **Liar**, 2) He did not know the claim was false and He is a **Lunatic**, or 3) He really is the **Lord**. Liar, Lunatic, or Lord are the three options.

One thing about liars is that they have to keep lying in order to make you believe the first lie. Eventually, someone usually realizes that at least one of the things said was a lie. Was Jesus caught in lies? No! No matter what He said, He was found to be telling the truth. Also, when Jesus was arrested He could face the penalty of death for blaspheming and saying He was God. When confronted with that possibility, all Jesus had to say was that He had been telling a lie. He may have been punished for lying, but He probably would not have been put to death. So, why did Jesus not state He was lying and avoid the death penalty? The answer would seem to be He believed that He was God!

If Jesus really believed He was God, but He was not, then He was severely deluded. His grasp on reality was not complete. Did Jesus talk and act like someone who was mentally unstable? No! Time and again people tried to trick him and He eluded their traps. He gave the highest moral code known to man. ***“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and***

with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” (Matthew 22:37-39) Jesus did not talk or act like someone who was mentally unstable!

That only leaves the third conclusion. Since Jesus claimed to be God, He was not found to be a liar, and He was not found to be a lunatic, then He must really be the Lord!

Notice that this is not only the proper conclusion, but it also eliminates other false ideas of Jesus. Some people claim Jesus was not really deity, but He was “just a good man,” or “just a good prophet.” If Jesus was not really deity, then He was a liar or a lunatic. Neither of these options make for a “good man” or a “good prophet!” The moment Jesus claimed to be deity, the ideas that Jesus is “just a good man” or “just a good prophet,” became false! A good man does not lie and/or be deluded and tell you that He is God! A good prophet does not lie and/or be deluded and tell you that He is God! Jesus is not “just a good man,” nor “just a good prophet.” Jesus is Lord!

Since Jesus claimed to be God, He cannot be “just a good man,” or “just a good prophet”!

Evidences for Jesus

There are plenty of evidences to back up the claim that Jesus is really God. We will look at a few.

Miracles

The miracles confirmed the words Jesus taught were approved of by God, including His claim to deity. God would not allow someone to claim to be God who was not, and then give him miraculous power to convince everyone. ***“There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.” (John 3:1-2)***

Prophecies

In the Bible, we saw that prophecies that came true were strong evidence that it was God communicating to man. In Jesus, we also see through His prophecies that came true, that it is strong evidence to back up His claim that He is God.

Jesus predicted His own death and resurrection. *“And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.”* (**Mark 8:31**) He predicted that Judas would betray Him. *“And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.”* (**Matthew 26:23-25**) He predicted the destruction of Jerusalem. *“And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”* (**Matthew 24:1-2**)



*Jerusalem was destroyed
by the Romans in AD 70,
as Jesus had predicted.*

Virgin Birth

In the Garden of Eden when man sinned, God made the prophecy that the one to come and deliver the crushing blow to Satan would be from the seed of a woman. ***“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”*** (**Genesis 3:15**) Normally, genealogies were written as the man “begetting” or producing the offspring. But, in the case of the Messiah, it would not come from a man, but from a woman.

The prophet Isaiah wrote, ***“Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”*** (**Isaiah 7:14**) The word “Immanuel” means “God with us.” Jesus was God living with men in the flesh. (**John 1:14**) Jesus fulfilled this prophecy of Isaiah. ***“But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”*** (**Matthew 1:20-23**)

His Resurrection

There are numerous eyewitness accounts of seeing Jesus alive after He had been buried. Some of the books in the Bible include those eyewitness accounts. The grave of Jesus was one that could be easily found. It was the grave of Joseph of Arimathea. All anyone had to do to disprove people’s claims that Jesus was alive, was to go to the tomb and look at the body. But they couldn’t, because it was empty.

Some may try to dismiss the resurrection and claim it was a hoax carried out by the disciples of Jesus. They may go further and claim that the disciples stole the body. But this is ridiculous! If the disciples were intent on carrying out a lie about Jesus, all

they had to do was claim that Jesus “spiritually” rose from the dead. No one would be able to disprove their claim. Instead, the disciples claimed the resurrection that would be the easiest to disprove, a bodily resurrection! Why? Because it wasn’t a hoax. The disciples really saw the living, breathing Jesus alive and outside the tomb.

The idea of Christianity starting out as a hoax is ludicrous. Christians were the enemy of the ruling Jews and also became the enemy of Roman emperors. Their focus was not on gaining world possessions but sharing them with others and abstaining from sinful, earthly pleasures. Christians gave up their possessions, they were not allowed to buy food from those that persecuted them, they were arrested, and they went to the cross or were burned at the stake because they would not forsake their belief that Jesus was God! Do people really think that Christians were laughing under their breath while being hung on the cross or burned at the stake, knowing the whole time that the resurrection of Jesus from the dead was just a joke? All they had to do was deny the deity of Christ and they could go free. But they didn’t! Why? Because it wasn’t a hoax and Jesus really did come out of the tomb alive!

If Christianity started as a hoax, it was the worst idea for a hoax in the history of the world!

Jesus not only arose from the dead, but He had predicted that He would. His resurrection proves that His prophecy was true.

His resurrection also proves that He is the “holy one” prophesied about in the Old Testament. ***“For thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol; Neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption.” (Psalm 16:10 ASV)*** “Sheol” is the dwelling place of the dead. Jesus would not be left in that place, but would rise to live again.

The resurrection of Jesus shows that Jesus really was God by having the power to predict the future and the power to overcome death. That is what gives Christians their hope in their own resurrection. Our leader can overcome death itself!

Sacrifices for Sin

Have you heard of a scapegoat? We usually use that term to refer to someone who takes the blame for something that wasn't his fault. Did you know that term is used in the Bible when it comes to sin? ***“And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD'S lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness.”*** (Leviticus 16:8-10)

So, what's really going on in this picture? What does a goat have to do with sin?



*A scapegoat would take the blame
for the sins of the people*

In the Old Testament people rebelled against God's commandments, like we do today. That is sin. God told the Jews in the Old Testament what He wanted done by the people when this happened. It involved a sacrifice. It's really no different than what we do today. If I drive recklessly and crash into your car, you might ask for payment to cover the damages to your car. I would

then have to sacrifice my money to make up for the damage I caused. God told the Jews in the Old Testament to sacrifice part of what they had after they had rebelled against Him and sinned.

Those sacrifices could involve animals. So, the goat that would be sacrificed would be the one to pay for the sins of man. It wasn't the goat's fault, but it had to take the blame. It was a scapegoat!

The animal was not the sin, but it was an offering, a sacrifice, to pay the penalty for sins. The problem, however, was that these sacrifices couldn't really take away the sin completely. The sins were only "rolled back" for a time. In fact, the blood of bulls and goats could not fully take away sin. The writer of Hebrews makes reference to these sacrifices from the Old Testament. ***"But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."*** (**Hebrews 10:3-4**) The reason is because the sacrifices made were not equivalent to the debt owed.

Imagine you owed a debt of \$1,000 to a bank. The bank will charge interest on the debt for the service of offering you the loan. That means you really have to pay more than \$1,000 to pay back the loan. If you go into the bank and pay just the interest, the bank may happily accept that payment and state that you don't have to pay anything else for a while. But, the loan is still there. You still owe the money, you just postponed paying it back. **The amount you paid is not equivalent to the amount owed!**

The same is true with animal sacrifices. They did offer a form of payment to God, but what was owed was a perfect man, not a perfect goat. God created man perfect, but when man sinned, God lost a perfect man. Only a perfect man could restore back to God what He had lost.

Jesus: The Perfect Sacrifice

This is where Jesus comes in. God told the Jews in the Old Testament to offer sacrifices, but the Jews knew that the sacrifices could never fully take away sins because they had to keep offering sacrifices year after year. With Jesus, however, the sacrifice was perfect and only had to be offered once. ***"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once***

for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;” (Hebrews 10:10-12)

Jesus is God as we have already seen. He came to Earth to live as a man. (**John 1:14**) The difference between His life and ours was that He lived perfectly, without sin. He did that to be an example and show us how to live, and also to offer Himself as the sacrifice of a perfect man. This was the exact sacrifice that man needed to repay God what He had lost. Man could then be at peace with God, even though he had rebelled against God.

Let’s notice some different aspects about the sacrifice of Jesus.

Priesthood

In the Old Testament, when man sinned, he had to go to a priest. The priest would then make the sacrifice to God for the individual who sinned. In other words, the priest acted as a mediator, or a go-between. A mediator works between two parties, in this case God and man, and tries to make peace between them.

Once-a-year, the high priest went into a special place called the “Holy of Holies” to make a sacrifice for all the people. But, as we have seen, the next year he had to do it again because the blood of bulls and goats was not sufficient.

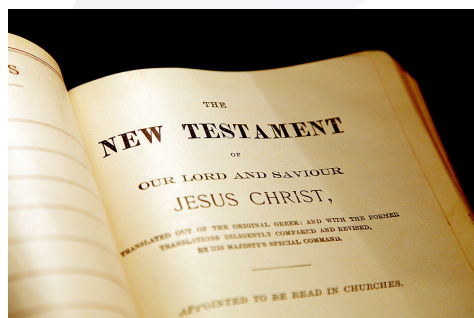
When Jesus arrived, He became our High Priest. He was able to make a sacrifice on behalf of all the people. Jesus died for all men to have a chance at salvation. *“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.” (2 Corinthians 5:14-15)* Therefore, God wants all men to repent and take advantage of his merciful gift of the sacrifice of Jesus. *“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.” (Acts 17:30)*

Since Jesus is our High Priest, that makes all Christians the priests. *“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth*

the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:” (1 Peter 2:9) Peter says that Christians are a priesthood. We no longer need to go to a specific tribe of men or group of men to mediate between us and God. Jesus is our High Priest and mediator. *“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;” (1 Timothy 2:5)* We can go to God directly **through** Jesus Christ. The death of Jesus established this new priesthood. *“For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.” (Hebrews 7:12)*

New Testament

You notice from **Hebrews 7:12** that not only was the priesthood changed, but the law was changed as well. The death of Jesus brought in the New Testament.



The New Testament covenant was sealed with the blood of Jesus and put into effect with His death.

A testament is like a covenant or agreement between two parties. In the New Testament Jesus would establish, there would no longer be a continual reminder of past sins like in the Old Testament. *“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I*

remember no more.” (Hebrews 10:16-17) God is omniscient (all-knowing) so He knows that we sinned. The word translated “remember” really means to “bear in mind” or “bear against.” In the Old Testament, God held past sins against the Jews and they had to offer their yearly sacrifices. Under the New Covenant, Christians have had their sins washed away through the perfect sacrifice of Jesus. Now, when a person repents of sin and has it

washed away, it will no longer be held against them. **The debt is wiped out!** The blood of Jesus would be shed in order to wipe out sins. ***“For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” (Matthew 26:28)***

Blood is also used to seal an agreement. You may have seen a Western movie where two Native Americans make a promise. They state what they agree to, then they cut their hands and clasp them together. They have sealed the agreement in blood. In the Old Testament, Moses used blood to seal the agreement the people made to obey the will of God. ***“And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.” (Exodus 24:7-8)*** As Jesus said, His blood would be for a new testament and would seal the agreement between God and man. Any man willing to obey God’s laws would get the sin-cleansing benefit of the blood of Jesus.

A testament is sometimes called a “Last Will and Testament.” It is something that goes into effect after the person who wrote it dies. The death of Jesus made the New Testament go into effect. ***“And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.” (Hebrews 9:15-17)***

Perfect Man Offered

As we know, Jesus lived a perfect life. ***“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” (Hebrews 4:15)*** Jesus then offered Himself as a perfect sacrifice for the penalty of our sins. Since it was a perfect sacrifice, it only needed to be offered once. ***“For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from***

sinner, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.” (Hebrews 7:26-27) “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” (Hebrews 9:28) Under the New Covenant, God would not hold our sins against us. There would be no more need for a yearly sacrifice because the sacrifice of Jesus would be perfect! A perfect man was offered to God for the loss of a perfect man. **Finally, the sacrifice made was equivalent to the debt owed!**

What about the people in the Old Testament who were faithful to God but only had animal sacrifices? The blood of Jesus not only went forward to cover people in the future, but it went backward to cover people in the past. *“And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.” (Hebrews 9:15)* Notice it says that the death of Jesus was *“for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament.”* Those that followed God under the Old Covenant were promised eternal life and God did not forget that promise! The blood of Jesus made it possible for them to be cleansed of their sins. *“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.” (Hebrews 11:13-16)* They obeyed God because they were looking for a heavenly city to come later. God did not forget them because *“he hath prepared for them a city.”* The faithful ones of the Old Testament were able to share in the perfect sacrifice of Jesus and will go to be at home with God in Heaven forever!

TFTW-BCC-06-Review Questions

(Select the letter of the correct answer)

- 1. Jesus claimed to be God by:**
 - a. claiming to be older than Abraham
 - b. accepting worship
 - c. forgiving sins
 - d. all of the above
- 2. Since Jesus claimed to be God, He cannot be:**
 - a. just a good man or a good prophet
 - b. sent from Heaven
 - c. a man in the flesh
- 3. Miracles showed everyone that Jesus was:**
 - a. great at performing tricks
 - b. approved of by God
 - c. turning into God
- 4. The resurrection of Jesus showed that:**
 - a. He was the “holy one” prophesied about (**Psalm 16:10**)
 - b. He really was truthful and God because He predicted it
 - c. He had power over death
 - d. all of the above
- 5. Jesus was not a sinner but He was our:**
 - a. scapegoat
 - b. sin offering
 - c. both A and B
- 6. Jesus was a perfect sacrifice because:**
 - a. a perfect man was lost and a perfect man was offered back
 - b. He was a human and not an animal
 - c. He was sincere and good

- 7. The death of Jesus changed the:**
- a. priesthood
 - b. testament
 - c. both A and B
- 8. Those that were faithful to God under the Old Testament:**
- a. are eternally lost without the blood of Jesus
 - b. are excused from sin because they did not know Jesus
 - c. are cleansed from sin by the blood of Jesus
- 9. The blood of Jesus was used to seal:**
- a. the New Testament or agreement between God and man
 - b. the tomb of Jesus, like the Passover doorposts
- 10. The difference in the New Testament compared to the Old Testament is:**
- a. we are now required to follow the laws without sin
 - b. sins would not be held against us anymore

After selecting all the letters for your answers, fill out the information below. Then save this PDF file and email it to your teacher for correction and credit toward your certificate.

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