

Why is Jesus Better than Other Great Leaders?

#504

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Jesus claimed to be the Son of God and said His Words would judge us on the last day. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father but by Me" (John 14:6). Peter said, "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) Is Jesus the only way to heaven?

Just who is this Jesus of the Bible? Is He really the only way to heaven? How is He different from other great religious leaders of our world? Aren't Christians arrogant to think that he is the only way to heaven? It's not politically correct today to say that Jesus is the only way to heaven, but what if that's true? What if Jesus truly is unique and the only way?

Here are some reasons why Jesus is unique:

Jesus is the fulfillment of prophecy throughout the ages of the Old Testament

Luke 18:31-33 Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished. For He will be handed over to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and mistreated and spit upon, and after they have scourged Him, they will kill Him; and the third day He will rise again."

There are more than 300 prophecies about Jesus in the Old Testament. Many prophecies Jesus fulfilled were totally beyond the power of human control, such as:

- (1) place of birth, (Micah 5:2)
- (2) time of birth, (Daniel 2)
- (3) manner of birth of a virgin woman, (Isa. 7:14)
- (4) betrayal, (Psalm 41:9)
- (5) manner of death in crucifixion, (Psalm 22:16)
- (6) people's reactions at his death, (Ps 22:7-8)
- (7) piercing, (Zech. 12:10)
- (8) his burial. (Isa. 53:9)

Concerning these eight prophecies, Peter Stoner in *Science Speaks* estimated the probability of anyone fulfilling all of them is 1 in 1017. That would be 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000. In order to help us comprehend this staggering probability, Stoner illustrates it by supposing we take 1017 silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time, providing they wrote them in their own wisdom.

(Hugo McCord, *Messianic Prophecies*, 44.) "Truly eight centuries ahead Isaiah saw the glory of Jesus and 'spoke of him' (John 12:41). In his 53rd chapter vividness

of detail causes readers to think they are looking at history not prophecy. Unbelievers have searched heaven and earth, the living and the dead, to find anybody but Jesus (cf. Moses, Uzziah, Zerubbabel, Jeremiah, Zedekiah, Isaiah, Jehoiachin, Israel) to fit the chapter's statements; but nobody except Jesus fits. Further, it would be impossible for anybody else purposely to arrange his life so as to make Isaiah 53 tell of him."

Jesus lived a sinless life

- 1 Peter 2:21-22 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth;
- The caliber of His life was such that He was able to challenge His enemies with the question, John 8:46 "Which one of you convicts Me of sin?"
- Men do not live the way Jesus did. They are filled with weaknesses.
- We read of the temptations of Jesus, but we never hear of a confession of sin on His part (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13; Heb. 4:14-16).
- He never asked for forgiveness, though He told His followers to do so. This lack of any sense of moral failure on Jesus' part is astonishing in view of the fact that it is completely contrary to the experience of the saints and mystics in all ages. Jesus is indeed unique

Hebrews 7:26-27 For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the *sins* of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.

Jesus' prophesied, and his prophecies came true

Matt. 16:21 From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.

In all the writings of Buddha, Confucius or Lao-tse, there is not one single predicted prophecy. In the Koran (Islamic writings of Mohammed) there is one instance of a specific prophecy, a self-fulfilling prophecy that Muhammad would return to Mecca. He did; but this is quite different from the prophecy of Jesus that He would return from the grave. Muhammad could easily go back to Mecca on his own ability, but it takes God for one to come back from the grave.

Four tests of prophecy

1. A prophecy must be an unveiling of the future that no mere human foresight could guess.
2. A prophecy must be spoken so long before the event takes place that the lapse of time will preclude the agency of the prophet himself in bringing to pass the fulfillment thereof.
3. Prophecy must contain a sufficient number of details to exclude accident or guesswork.
4. A prophecy is fully accredited only by its historical fulfillment.

Matthew 17:24-27 When they came to Capernaum, those who collected the two-drachma *tax* came to Peter and said, "Does your teacher not pay the two-drachma *tax*?" He said, "Yes." And when he came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth collect customs or poll-tax, from their sons or from strangers?"

When Peter said, "From strangers," Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are exempt. However, so that we do not offend them, go to the sea and throw in a hook, and take the first fish that comes up; and when you open its mouth, you will find a shekel. Take that and give it to them for you and Me."

- What if Peter had not found the shekel?

John 4:46-53 Therefore He came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a royal official whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and was imploring *Him* to come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death. Jesus said to him, "Go; your son lives." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started off.

As he was now going down, *his* slaves met him, saying that his son was living. So he inquired of them the hour when he began to get better. Then they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." So the father knew that *it was* at that hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives"; and he himself believed and his whole household.

- What would have happened had the son not lived?

Jesus arose from the dead. Why I believe:

- Numerous credible witnesses and appearances (1 Cor. 15)
- Numerous contemporary records
- Physical evidence—grave clothes and the heavy stone moved
- They touched the body of Jesus
- Resurrection predicted, and enemies believed, so they had a guard and a seal

Acts 1:1-3 The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when He was taken up *to heaven*, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen. To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a *period* of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.

None of the disciples ever denied the resurrection, but they died preaching it. According to the traditions of history, they were all martyred for their faith except John, who suffered exile for his faith. Would you die preaching something you knew was a lie? It is certainly not in the character or teachings of Jesus that one should lie.

Jesus is unique. He is the only begotten Son of God, the fulfillment of prophecy, the sinless Lamb of God, the resurrected Lord. Where would our world be if Jesus had not come into it? If Jesus is Lord, nothing in this world ought to keep us from listening to Him and following His teaching.

C. S. Lewis said in his classic, *Mere Christianity*: "I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic-- on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg--or else he would be the Devil of Hell.

You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon, or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come away with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

If you are not a Christian, I pray you'll become one. Believe with your heart, repent of your sins, Confess the name of Jesus, and be baptized in the name of the Lord. Your sins will be forgiven and you'll become a child of God.

God's Answers to Life's Questions is a production of Concord Road Church of Christ, 8221 Concord Rd., Brentwood, Tennessee. For further information, you can reach us at 1-877-226-5747 or email us at Phil@God-answers.org. Visit our website at God-answers.org.