

SKEPTICS WANTED



Skeptics Wanted
Jesus is God
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Discussion Notes
The Crossing Church
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OPENING

We are continuing our series this week called Skeptics Wanted. This series is for anyone who has ever had questions about God. Maybe you haven't been in an environment where you could ask questions about faith or maybe you have friends who are skeptical about Christianity and you just don't know what to say to them. Our goal for this series is building a foundation for our faith

SCRIPTURE¹

John 1:1-5 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 21:24 (NLT) This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written."

John 1:18 No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being.

John 14:6-7 (NLT) Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but by me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

2 Peter 1:16 For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

1 John 1:1 (NLT) We proclaim to you the one who existed from the beginning, whom we have heard and seen. We saw him with our own eyes and touched him with our own hands. He is the Word of Life.

Micah 5:2 (NLT) But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel will come from you, one whose origins are from the distant past.

Ephesians 1:4 (MSG) Long before he laid down earth's foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love.

OBSERVATION

We all have had questions about who Jesus is at one time or another, but if we want to know what God is like, if we want to know the truth about God's character, we need to take a look at Jesus. Jesus is the Messiah God promised the world throughout the Old Testament, who would die on the cross to save us from our sins and reconcile us to His Father. So let's look at the reasons we believe this to be true.

Question: Do you know people who still have questions about Jesus' identity. How do you answer them?

APPLICATION

The Historical Bibliographical Evidence.

The bibliographical test assesses how accurate our modern copies are compared to original writings. It compares them against other manuscripts and quotations of those manuscripts existing outside of them.

¹ All scripture is NIV unless otherwise noted.

SKEPTICS

W A N T E D



Interestingly, there are only seven copies of the ancient manuscripts of Plato to study, and only five copies of ancient manuscripts of Aristotle to study and to compare, to determine their accuracy and transmission quality throughout the years. Yet they are just accepted at face value and no one questions their authenticity. Would you believe that the Bible has no equal with respect to passing the historical tests that confirm the reliability of the story of Jesus? There are 13,000 ancient manuscripts of the New Testament.

Question: What is your reaction to this information? How many copies of ancient manuscripts would you need to convince you that the New Testament is accurate? What is the level of your convincing now?

The Eyewitness Testimony:

The testimonies of the Apostles and other disciples tell us that they lived with Jesus for three years as He ministered the Gospel throughout Judea. They observed, or were personally involved in, His miracles such as feeding the 5000, healing blind eyes and crippled legs, walking on water, raising people from the dead, and rising from the dead Himself. These people were so convinced that Jesus was Who He said He was, that they died horrific martyrs' deaths refusing to deny Him. No one dies willingly for what they know to be a lie! C'mon, people – would you?

Question: When you imagine yourself being arrested by Roman soldiers and facing death by crucifixion, what emotions are you experiencing? Knowing the level of your faith in Jesus today, would you deny Him to save your life?

The Fingerprint Evidence:

God longs for a relationship with broken people like us. People violated their relationship with Him beginning with Adam and Eve so God moved throughout history to restore His relationship with us. He sent His Messiah to make this possible. But what are the odds that one person named Jesus could make the claims He made and fulfill well over three hundred detailed predictions about Himself written hundreds and thousands years before? Let's start with Micah 5:2 who predicted Jesus' birth will be in Bethlehem. Or how about Isaiah 4:3 and Malachi 3:1 who wrote that a voice (John the Baptist) calling in the wilderness would prepare the way of the Lord. Or Zechariah who told us that a friend of Jesus would betray Him for thirty pieces of silver. Or what about the prediction in Psalm 22 that said Jesus' hands and feet would be pierced at death. (Capital punishment in Israel was stoning while so how could they have predicted that the Romans would use crucifixion?) And then there is Isaiah 53, written seven hundred years before Jesus' birth. The detail about the Messiah is endless and overwhelming in this prophetic chapter. So we need to take time to study it if we haven't already.

Question: What are the odds that Jesus could have read the Old Testament prophecies and planned to fulfill them? Consider each one listed above together in your group. Now what is your answer?

Question: But do you really need all of this proof of who Jesus is when all you have to do is look at the transformed lives all around you? Discuss with us the people in your life or family history who have become Christians and experienced miraculous changes in their lives. What are the changes in your life?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we believe. The evidence is undeniable. We no longer want to play God – we want to do things Your way and surrender the controls of our lives to You. You are the mighty God of the Bible Who worked through history to redeem our souls for eternity. Thank you, Lord. In Jesus' name. Amen.