



10 Reasons To Believe God Became A Man

10 Reasons To Believe

1 A VIRGIN CONCEIVED.

If Mary was telling the truth, her baby had no human father. She claimed an angel appeared to her and told her she would conceive a son by God's Spirit. Then he said that this child, whom she was to name Jesus, would be the Son of God. If Mary was lying, the night of Jesus' birth was not holy, and the only thing that was silent was the truth. But how can we know? How can we take seriously the kind of story that usually deserves laughs of disbelief? The answer is in what followed. If there were no witnesses and no evidence, we could ignore Mary's claims. If her son's life was the same as any other life, her claim of a virgin birth would be the easiest of all stories to dismiss.

2 AN OLD TESTAMENT PROPHET PREDICTED A GOD-MAN.

What we do know is that in the seventh century BC, the prophet Isaiah made predictions about a Servant of the Lord who would rule the earth in the last days. He described a day in which all of the earth would be at peace and all the nations would go up to Jerusalem to worship God (Isaiah 2). Isaiah announced, "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (9:6). Isaiah also gave a mysterious prophecy that was only partially fulfilled in his lifetime. He wrote, "The Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (7:14). Immanuel means "God with us."

3 ANGELS ANNOUNCED THE BIRTH.

In the shepherds' fields outside of Bethlehem, a group of witnesses formed a bridge between Isaiah and Mary. According to New Testament records (Luke 2:8-14), terrified Jewish shepherds were visited by an angel who announced the birth of Israel's long-awaited Messiah. The angel said, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger" (vv.10-12). As the shepherds told it, the sky was filled with angels praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom He is well pleased" (v.14 ASV).

4 A SIGN APPEARED IN THE SKY.

According to the New Testament, a light in the sky gave additional credibility to Mary. A group of Magi from the East followed a "starlike sign" to the Jewish town of Bethlehem. What they found was a child they believed to be the long-awaited Jewish Messiah. For hundreds of years Old Testament prophets had been speaking of "a Star" and "a Scepter" that would come out of Israel (Numbers 24:17). The Old Testament also predicted a ruler of Israel who would come out of Bethlehem, a ruler "whose goings forth are from old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2).

5 THE TIME WAS RIGHT.

Many believe that the Magi who worshiped Jesus after His birth came from the region of Babylon. If so, they could have had access to the prophecy of a Jewish prophet named Daniel. While in exile in Babylon 400 years earlier, Daniel had a vision that allows for the calculation of the arrival of the Jewish Messiah. According to Daniel's vision, from the command to rebuild the temple (458 BC or 444 BC), 69 "sevens" would be followed by the arrival and death of Messiah (Daniel 7:13-14; 9:24-27). Some believe this prophecy predicted the exact number of days until Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. (For more details see the RBC publication *The Daniel Papers*, Q1207).

6 JESUS CLAIMED TO BE EQUAL WITH GOD.

Some have suggested that Jesus never claimed for Himself what His followers claimed for Him. Yet the commotion that surrounded His life can be best explained by His repeated claim to be one with God. John, one of the Gospel writers, quoted Jesus as saying, "Before Abraham was, I am" (8:58). (In Exodus 3:14, the name I AM was used by God to identify Himself to Moses.) John also quoted Jesus as saying, "I and My Father are One" (10:30) and "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him" (14:7). According to the Gospels, Jesus said that to love or hate Him, or to receive or reject Him, was to love or hate, receive or reject His Father in heaven.

7 HIS FRIENDS WORSHIPED HIM. When Thomas, one of Jesus' disciples, saw the resurrected Christ, he declared, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28). Years later, Jesus' close friend and follower John wrote, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:1-3,14). Another friend, Peter, in one of his letters to the early church, addressed his readers as "those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:1).

8 JESUS' ENEMIES ACCUSED HIM OF BLASPHEMY. Jesus' friends may have wanted to believe He was more than a man, but His enemies did not. The religious leaders of Israel were outraged to think that the same man who accused them of being hypocritical, blind leaders of the blind, would also claim to forgive sins, would speak of God as His Father, and would even say that He was one with God. On more than one occasion the leaders of Israel picked up stones to kill Jesus, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God" (John 10:33).

9 JESUS' MIRACLES SUPPORTED HIS CLAIMS. Jesus' miracles recorded in the New Testament were more than wonders. They were signs. He did them to encourage men and women to believe in Him for everlasting life. He healed a

crippled man to affirm His right to forgive sins. He fed thousands of people with a little boy's lunch, setting the stage for His claim to be the "bread of life." He walked on water, stilled angry seas, healed the sick, restored paralyzed limbs, gave sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf, and even raised from the dead an embalmed man by the name of Lazarus. One reason Jesus performed miracles was to support His claim to be God. The apostle John wrote, "Truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:30-31).

10 HIS DEPARTURE WAS GREATER THAN HIS ARRIVAL. Many people down through history have claimed to be gods. Yet only one man has been willing to die for the sins of others. Only one has risen from the dead to prove that He is the Son of God. According to the New Testament, after Jesus voluntarily gave His life on an executioner's cross, He appeared to His closest disciples and more than 500 other followers for a period of 40 days (1 Corinthians 15:5-8). The eyewitnesses were so convinced of His resurrection that they were willing to suffer and die for their claims. His disciples said that He showed them His scarred hands and feet, walked and talked with them, and even ate with them. Then while they met with Him on the Mount of Olives, He gave them His last words and ascended into the clouds. With a departure more spectacular than His arrival, Jesus left us with a better understanding of the announcement of the angel who said, "There is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11).

YOU'RE NOT ALONE if you have mixed feelings when you think about the evidence surrounding the life of Jesus. You may feel compelled to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, but you're not sure of your relationship to Him. If that's the case, be assured of this: If you accept Him, He will accept you. If you will receive His offer of forgiveness, everlasting life, and adoption into the family of God, He will become your Savior, Teacher, and Lord.

If you've never received Jesus in this way, we encourage you to carefully read the New Testament verses of Romans 3:23 (which says that all have sinned), Romans 6:23 (which says that the wages of sin is spiritual death, separation from God), and Romans 10:13 (which assures us that all who call on the name of the Lord Jesus will be saved). To accept God's gift, you can pray something like this: "God, I know I'm a sinner. I know I can't save myself. I believe Jesus died on the cross for my sins. I believe He rose from the dead to live His life through all who believe in Him. I now receive Him as my Savior. I accept Your offer of forgiveness and everlasting life. Thank You, Father. In Jesus name I pray. Amen."

If you made a decision to receive God's gift, let us know by letter or e-mail (rbc@rbc.org) and you will receive, without cost or obligation, devotional and Bible-study materials designed to help you grow in your new life as a child of God. Also, pray for God to lead you to a church that faithfully teaches the Bible in a spirit of love and Christlikeness. You have received the greatest gift of all. The gift bought by God Himself—for you.

For more information, or for a catalog of our resources (which includes other 10 Reasons To Believe brochures), write to RBC Ministries at:

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