

By What Evidence Did Christ Prove His Divine Station?

...Christ, solitary and alone, without a helper or protector, without armies and legions, and under the greatest oppression, uplifted the standard of God before all the people of the world, and withstood them, and finally conquered all, although outwardly He was crucified. Now this is a veritable miracle which can never be denied. There is no need of any other proof of the truth of Christ.¹ 'Abdu'l-Bahá

The following piece, widely quoted in Christian publications, expresses the two most significant evidences for Christ—***Himself*** and ***His profound influence on humankind***:

Who was Christ?

Here is a man
who was born of Jewish parents,
the child of a peasant woman...
He never wrote a book.
He never held an office.
He never owned a home.
He never had a family.
He never went to college.
He never put foot inside a big city.
He never traveled two hundred miles from the place where he was born.
He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness.
He had no credentials but himself...

What difference did He make?

Twenty wide centuries
have come and gone,
and he is the centerpiece
of the human race and the
leader of the column of progress.
I am far within the mark
when I say that all the armies
that ever marched,
and all the navies
that were ever built,
have not affected the life of man
upon earth
as powerfully as has that
One Solitary Life.

The statement was written by a Christian author about Christ, but the fundamental principle it contains—a humble person shaping lives for thousands of years—applies to all the great Messengers, for they are, indeed, one: They draw their power from a single Source. Consider this example: Does not the statement—who was Christ, and what difference did He make?—apply equally to Muhammad, the One who came after Christ? American historian Michael Hart has published a book specifically about the hundred most influential figures in history.² He puts Muhammad's name—the misrepresented Messenger in the West—at the top of his list. His main reason is that Muhammad not only exerted spiritual power over the lives of His followers, but also established a political system based on His teachings. How is it possible for such a Figure who, as testified by historians, could hardly read and write to exert

such a power without God's aid, to establish such a vast civilization without His blessings?

Let us consider one prominent Christian and see why He believes in Christ. Dr. James Kennedy is among the most highly respected Christian scholars and orators of our time. He has expressed special interest in reason as a means of understanding and proving religion. He states:

The Bible never calls us to blind faith but always to a faith in those things that have been established by evidence.³

Dr. Kennedy has published a book titled *Why I Believe*, which is widely distributed. In the book he has a chapter titled, "Why I Believe in Christ" in which he demonstrates that the life and character of Christ clearly point to His divine station and mission. In another chapter called, "Why I Believe in Christianity," he considers the transforming power of Christ over the lives of countless millions as sufficient evidence of the faith He established. Dr. Kennedy considers the most essential evidence for Christ to be ***His life and character*** and ***His transforming influence over the destiny of our planet***. In his other works, he adds the fulfillment of prophecies as another critical evidence.

If we put all the words of Jesus together, it would make only a small book, but what a power that small book has exerted on humankind.

The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever. Isaiah 40:8

Just by looking at Christ's words and deeds, we can clearly discern His distinction. His words were powerful yet gentle. They expressed supreme love, courage, wisdom, compassion, forgiveness, and self-sacrifice. Then, by His deeds, He proved what He meant. His enduring influence came from both His words and His deeds:

He [Christ] was a prophet, **powerful in word and deed** before God and all the people. Luke 24:19

How could a seemingly ordinary person from a poor family make so much difference?

That mighty Jewish nation toppled and crumbled away, but those few souls who sought shelter beneath the Messianic Tree [Christianity] transformed all human life.⁴

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Those who regard Jesus Himself as the essential evidence can never be disappointed, for His thoughts, His words, and His deeds are clearly distinct and distinguished. An ordinary person can in no way compete with His excellence. Is the proof of the sun in its light and glory, or in some records left by previous observers? Which is more reliable?

In his classic work *Caesar and Christ*, historian Will Durant states:

That a few simple men should in one generation have invented so

powerful and appealing a personality, so lofty an ethic and so inspiring a vision of human brotherhood, would be a miracle far more incredible than any recorded in the Gospels. After two centuries of Higher Criticism the outlines of the life, character, and teaching of Christ, remain reasonably clear, and constitute the most fascinating feature in the history of Western man.⁵

In our search for truth, instead of following our own fantasies, illusions, and assumptions, we should submit to God's standards:

O friend! It behooveth us not to waive the injunction of God, but rather acquiesce and submit to that which He hath ordained as His divine Testimony.⁶ Bahá'u'lláh

Say: The first and foremost testimony establishing His truth is His own Self. Next to this testimony is His Revelation.⁷ Bahá'u'lláh

Christ never said "Ye shall know God's Messengers by their miracles," yet that is what most people do. He *did* say, "Ye shall know them by their fruits," yet that is what most people do not do.

What constitutes the evidence of truth? What are the proofs of the One who claims that His Word is the Word of God? Discovering the answers to these questions should be the first and foremost concern of every seeker of truth.

Bahá'u'lláh proclaims repeatedly, as did Christ and other great Messengers,

that He speaks only the Word of God, that He teaches nothing from Himself. Should we accept His claim without seeking evidence?

When God sends a Messenger, He endows Him with distinctions that no other human being can copy. He makes Him shine as brightly as the sun with peerless glory and splendor. Otherwise, how could anyone be accountable for denying Him? How could anyone be accountable for following falsehood, for choosing an impostor?

1. *Some Answered Questions*, p. 101.
2. Hart, Michael H. *The 100, A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History*, New York: Citadel Press Book, 1989.
3. Kennedy, James. *Why I Believe*, Waco, TX: Word Books, 1980, p. 96.
4. *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, pp. 82-83.
5. *The Watchtower*, June 15, 1986, p. 13.
6. *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 205-206.
7. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 105.



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