

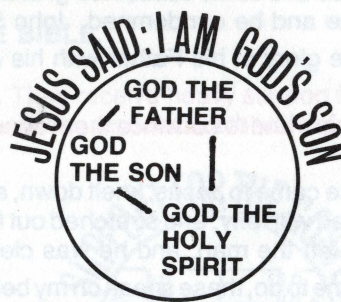
LIVE A NEW LIFE WITH JESUS

- *An interdenominational Christian Outreach paper.
- *Evidence that Jesus is the Son of God — Divine as well as human.
- *Reasons why we can trust the Bible.

EVIDENCE THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD

The Christian faith rests secure upon an unshakeable rock — the fact that Jesus is the Son of God. As well as the Old Testament prophecies of his deity (Godhood) we have the combined evidence of his claims, his character, and that greatest sign of all — his resurrection (coming alive again) from the dead.

ALONE AMONG THE RELIGIOUS TEACHERS OF THE WORLD, JESUS CLAIMED TO BE THE SON OF GOD, AND MADE HIMSELF EQUAL WITH GOD.



He said, God is my Father.

They said to Jesus. . . Abraham died, and the prophets died, yet you say that whoever obeys your teaching will never die. Our father Abraham died; you do not claim to be greater than Abraham, do you? And the prophets also died. Who do you think you are? Jesus answered, If I were to honour myself, that honour would be worth nothing. The one who honours me is my Father — the very one you say is your God. . . Your father Abraham rejoiced that he was to see the time of my coming; he saw it and was glad. They said to him, You are not even fifty years old — and you have seen Abraham? I am telling you the truth, Jesus replied. Before Abraham was born, I Am (I Am is God's name). Then they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and left the Temple. John 8.52-59

How long are you going to keep us in suspense? Tell us the plain truth: are you the Messiah (the One the prophets foretold was coming)? Jesus answered, I have already told you, but you would not believe me. The things I do by my Father's authority speak on my behalf. . . The Father and I are one. Then the people again picked up stones to throw at him. Jesus said to them, I have done many good deeds in your presence which the Father gave me to do; for which one of these do you want to stone me? They replied, We do not want to stone you because of any good deeds, but because of your blasphemy! You are only a man, but you are trying to make yourself God! Jesus answered. . . As for me, the Father chose me and sent me into the world. How, then, can you say that I blaspheme because I said that I am the Son of God? Do not believe me, then, if I am not doing the things my Father wants me to do. But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, you should at least believe my deeds, in order that you may know once and for all that the Father is in me and that I am in the Father. Once more they tried to seize Jesus, but he slipped out of their hands. John 10.24-39

The High Priest questioned him, Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed God? I am, answered Jesus, and you will all see the Son of Man seated on the right of the Almighty and coming with the clouds of heaven! Mark 14.61-62.

His teaching centred on himself.

I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will have the light of life and will never walk in darkness. John 8.12

I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one goes to the Father except by me. John 14.6

If anyone wants to come with me, he must forget self, take up his cross every day, and follow me. For whoever wants to save his own life will lose it, but whoever loses (spends) his life for my sake will save it. Will a person gain anything if he wins the whole world but is himself lost or defeated? Of course not! If a person is ashamed of me and of my teaching, then the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. Luke 9.23-26

When I am lifted up from the earth (crucified), I will draw everyone to me. John 12.32

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. Mark 13.31

He claimed what belongs to God — to give life, to accept worship, to forgive sin and to judge the world.

I am the bread of life, Jesus told them. He who comes to me will never be hungry; he who believes in me will never be thirsty. John 6.35

I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. John 11.25-26

Jesus looked up to heaven and said, Father, the hour has come. Give glory to your Son, so that the Son may give glory to you. For you gave him authority over all mankind, so that he might give eternal life to all those you gave him. And eternal life means knowing you, the only true God, and knowing Jesus Christ, whom you sent. John 17.1-3

Just as the Father is himself the source of life, in the same way he has made his Son to be the source of life. John 5.26

Jesus said to Simon, Push the boat out further to the deep water, and you and your partners let down your nets for a catch. Master, Simon answered, we worked hard all night long and caught nothing. But if you say so, I will let down the nets. They let them down and caught such a large number of fish that the nets were about to break. . . When Simon Peter saw what had happened, he fell on his knees before Jesus and said, Go away from me, Lord! I am a sinful man! . . . Jesus said to Simon, Don't be afraid; from now on you will be catching men. Luke 5.4-10.

Jesus said to Thomas, Put your finger here, and look at my hands; then stretch out your hand and put it in my side. Stop your doubting, and believe! Thomas answered him, My Lord and my God! Jesus said to him, Do you believe because you see me? How happy are those who believe without seeing me! John 20.27-29

Jesus said to the paralysed man, My son, your sins are forgiven. Some teachers of the Law who were sitting there thought to themselves, How does he dare to talk like this? This is blasphemy! God is the only one who can forgive sins! At once Jesus knew what they were thinking, so he said to them, Why do you think such things? Is it easier to say to this paralysed man, Your sins are forgiven, or to say, Get up, pick up your mat, and walk? I will prove to you, then, that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. So he said to the paralysed man, I tell you, get up, pick up your mat, and go home! While they all watched, the man got up, picked up his mat, and hurried away. They were all completely amazed and praised God, saying, We have never seen anything like this! Mark 2.5-12

Nor does the Father himself judge anyone. He has given his Son the full right to judge, so that all will honour the Son in the same way as they honour the Father. Whoever does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him. . . And he has given the Son the right to judge, because he is the Son of Man. Do not be surprised at this; the time is coming when all the dead will hear his voice and come out of their graves: those who have done good will rise and live, and those who have done evil will rise and be condemned. John 5.22-29

For the Son of Man is about to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will repay everyone according to his deeds. Matthew 16.27

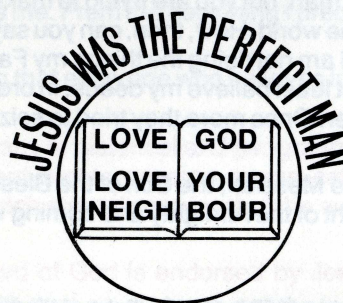
His miracles, done out of compassion for others and to convince them about himself, are as would be expected from God.

A man suffering from a dreaded skin-disease came to Jesus, knelt down, and begged him for help. If you want to, he said, you can make me clean. Jesus was filled with pity, and stretched out his hand and touched him. I do want to, he answered. Be clean! At once the disease left the man, and he was clean. Mark 1.40-42

What I do, that is, the deeds my Father gave me to do, these speak on my behalf and show that the Father has sent me. John 5.36

Jesus saw her weeping, and he saw how the people who were with her were weeping also; his heart was touched, and he was deeply moved. Where have you buried him? he asked them. Come and see, Lord, they answered. Jesus wept. Deeply moved once more, Jesus went to the tomb, which was a cave with a stone placed at the entrance. Take the stone away! Jesus ordered. Martha, the dead man's sister, answered, There will be a bad smell, Lord. He has been buried four days! Jesus said to her, Didn't I tell you that you would see God's glory if you believed? They took the stone away. Jesus looked up and said, I thank you, Father, that you listen to me. I know that you always listen to me, but I say this for the sake of the people here, so that they will believe that you sent me. After he had said this, he called out in a loud voice, Lazarus, come out! He came out, his hands and feet wrapped in grave clothes, and with a cloth round his face. Untie him, Jesus told them, and let him go. John 11.33-44

ALONE AMONG THE RELIGIOUS TEACHERS OF THE WORLD, JESUS WAS MORALLY PERFECT.



The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life to redeem many people. Matthew 20.28

The Father loves me because I am willing to give up my life, in order that I may receive it back again. No one takes my life away from me. I give it up of my own free will. I have the right to give it up, and I have the right to take it back. This is what my Father has commanded me to do. John 10.17-18

Jesus answered, What I teach is not my own teaching, but it comes from God, who sent me. Whoever is willing to do what God wants will know whether what I teach comes from God or whether I speak on my own authority. A person who speaks on his own authority is trying to gain glory for himself. But he who wants glory for the one who sent him is honest and there is nothing false in him. John 7.16-18

I have come down from heaven to do not my own will but the will of him who sent me. . . What my Father wants is that all who see the Son and believe in him should have eternal life. And I will raise them to life on the last day. John 6.38-40.

He who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, because I always do what pleases him. John 8.29

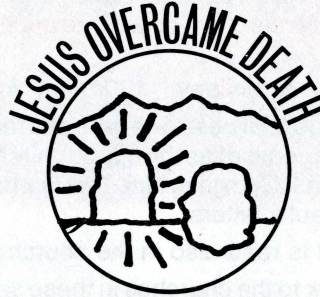
Which one of you can prove that I am guilty of sin? John 8.46

Jesus committed no sin, and no one ever heard a lie come from his lips. When he was insulted, he did not answer back with an insult; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but placed his hopes in God, the righteous Judge. 1 Peter 2.22-23

You know that Christ appeared in order to take away sins (to pay for our sins) and that there is no sin in him. 1 John 3.5
Our High Priest is not one who cannot feel sympathy for our weaknesses. On the contrary, we have a High Priest who was tempted in every way that we are, but did not sin. Hebrews 4.15

Jesus was sinless because he was selfless. Unselfishness is love. God is love.

ALONE AMONG THE RELIGIOUS TEACHERS OF THE WORLD, JESUS OVERCAME DEATH.



1. Jesus was dead.

It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. Mark 15.25

At noon the whole country was covered with darkness, which lasted for three hours. At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud shout, Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani? which means, My God, my God, why did you abandon me? Mark 15.33-34

Jesus cried out in a loud voice, Father! In your hands I place my spirit! He said this and died. Luke 23.46

He looked dead.

The army officer saw what had happened, and he praised God, saying, Certainly he was a good man! When the people who had gathered there to watch the spectacle saw what happened, they all went back home, beating their breasts in sorrow. All those who knew Jesus personally, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance to watch. Luke 23.47-49

A soldier made sure.

Then the Jewish authorities asked Pilate to allow them to break the legs of the men who had been crucified, and to take the bodies down from the crosses. They requested this because it was Friday, and they did not want the bodies to stay on the crosses on the Sabbath, since the coming Sabbath was especially holy. So the soldiers went and broke the legs of the first man and then of the other man who had been crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so they did not break his legs. One of the soldiers, however, plunged his spear into Jesus' side, and at once blood and water poured out. John 19.31-34

Those who buried him had no doubt.

It was towards evening when Joseph of Arimathea arrived. He was a respected member of the Council, who was waiting for the coming of the Kingdom of God. It was Preparation day (that is, the day before the Sabbath), so Joseph went boldly into the presence of Pilate and asked him for the body of Jesus. Pilate was surprised to hear that Jesus was already dead. He called the army officer and asked him if Jesus had been dead a long time. After hearing the officer's report, Pilate told Joseph he could have the body. Joseph bought a linen sheet, took the body down, wrapped it in the sheet, and placed it in a tomb which had been dug out of solid rock. Then he rolled a large stone across the entrance to the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph were watching and saw where the body of Jesus was placed. Mark 15.42-47

2. His tomb was found empty. The grave clothes were lying there empty.

The women who had followed Jesus from Galilee went with Joseph and saw the tomb and how Jesus' body was placed in it. Then they went back home and prepared the spices and perfumes for the body. On the Sabbath they rested, as the Law commanded. Very early on Sunday morning the women went to the tomb carrying the spices they had prepared. Luke 23.55-24.1

Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been taken away from the entrance. She went running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and told them, They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him! Then Peter and the other disciple went to the tomb. The two of them were running, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and saw the linen wrappings, but he did not go in. Behind him came Simon Peter, and he went straight into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there and the cloth which had been round Jesus' head. It was not lying with the linen wrappings but was rolled up by itself. Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in; he saw and believed. (They still did not understand the Old Testament scripture which said that he must rise from death.) Then the disciples went back home. John 20.1-10

His enemies did not know where the body was.

The next day, which was a Sabbath, the chief priests and the Pharisees met with Pilate and said, Sir, we remember that while that liar was still alive he said, I will be raised to life three days later. Give orders, then, for his tomb to be carefully guarded until the third day, so that his disciples will not be able to go and steal the body, and then tell the people that he was raised from death. This last lie would be even worse than the first one. Take a guard, Pilate told them; go and make the tomb as secure as you can. So they left and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and leaving the guard on watch. . . Suddenly there was a violent earthquake; an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled the stone away, and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid that they trembled and became like dead men. . . some of the soldiers guarding the tomb went back to the city and told the chief priests everything that had happened. The chief priests met with the elders and made their plan; they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers and said, You are to say that his disciples came during the night and stole his body while you were asleep. And if the Governor should hear of this, we will convince him that you are innocent, and that you will have nothing to worry about. The guards took the money and did what they were told to do. Matthew 27.62-28.15

The disciples did not know where the body was.

On that same day two of Jesus' followers were going to a village named Emmaus, about eleven kilometres from Jerusalem, and they were talking to each other about all the things that had happened. As they talked and discussed, Jesus himself drew near and walked along with them; they saw him, but somehow did not recognise him. Jesus said to them, What are you talking about to each other, as you walk along? They stood still, with sad faces. One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem who doesn't know the things that have been happening there these last few days? What things? he asked. The things that happened to Jesus of Nazareth, they answered. This man was a prophet and was considered by God and by all the people to be powerful in everything he said and did. Our chief priests and rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and he was crucified. And we had hoped that he would be the one who was going to set Israel free (from the Romans)! Besides all that, this is now the third day since it happened. Some of the women of our group surprised us; they went at dawn to the tomb, but could not find his body. They came back saying they had seen a vision of angels who told them that he is alive. Some of our group went to the tomb and found it exactly as the women had said, but they did not see him. Luke 24.13-24

We know that no one took the body because. . .

3. He was seen again alive

For forty days after his death Jesus appeared to his apostles many times in ways that proved beyond doubt that he was alive. They saw him, and he talked with them about the Kingdom of God. Acts 1.3

Mary stood crying outside the tomb. While she was still crying, she bent over and looked in the tomb and saw two angels there dressed in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head and the other at the feet. Woman, why are you crying? they asked her. She answered, They have taken my Lord away, and I do not know where they have put him! Then she turned round and saw Jesus standing there; but she did not know that it was Jesus. Woman, why are you crying? Jesus asked her. Who is it that you are looking for? She thought he was the gardener, so she said to him, If you took him away, sir, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him. Jesus said to her, Mary! She turned towards him and said in Hebrew, Rabboni! (This means Teacher). Do not hold on to me, Jesus told her, because I have not yet gone back up to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them that I am returning to him who is my Father and their Father, my God and their God. So Mary Magdalene went and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and related to them what he had told her. John 20.11-18

Then Jesus said to them, How foolish you are, how slow you are to believe everything the prophets said! Was it not necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and then to enter his glory? And Jesus explained to them what was said about himself in all the Scriptures, beginning with the books of Moses and the writings of all the prophets. As they came near the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther; but they held him back, saying, Stay with us; the day is almost over and it is getting dark. So he went in to stay with them. He sat down to eat with them, took the bread, and said the blessing; then he broke the bread and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognised him, but he disappeared from their sight. They said to each other, Wasn't it like a fire burning in us when he talked to us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us? They got up at once and went back to Jerusalem, where they found the eleven disciples gathered together with the others and saying, The Lord is risen indeed! He has appeared to Simon! The two then explained to them what had happened on the road, and how they had recognised the Lord when he broke the bread. Luke 24.25-35.

There is no question of hallucination. . .

While the two were telling them this, suddenly the Lord himself stood among them and said to them, Peace be with you. They were terrified, thinking that they were seeing a ghost. But he said to them, Why are you alarmed? Why are these doubts coming up in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet, and see that it is I myself. Feel me, and you will know, for a ghost doesn't have flesh and bones, as you can see I have. He said this and showed them his hands and his feet. They still could not believe, they were so full of joy and wonder; so he asked them, Have you anything here to eat? They gave him a piece of cooked fish, which he took and ate in their presence. Luke 24.36-43

Jesus returned to his mutilated human body and instantly it was changed into his deathless spiritual body, never to age or die again. It was real (he could prove it by eating) but different (he could disappear). Because of this he was not immediately recognised, but was known by his talk and his manner (his ways). His followers will someday have a body like his.

In his disciples' presence Jesus performed many other miracles which are not written down in this book. But these have been written in order that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through your faith in him you may have life. John 20.30-31

What convinced the apostles and Paul beyond any shadow of doubt was the empty tomb followed by seeing Jesus alive. History traces the Church to around 30 A.D. and its earliest documents, contemporary (written within living memory of Jesus) and unembroidered (unexaggerated), say it started from its Founder rising from the dead.

There is no question about the truthfulness of the disciples' accounts because they stood up to severe persecution. They were demoralised by Jesus' death and then were joyous, risking death to say that he was alive again.

God has raised this very Jesus from death, and we are all witnesses to this fact. . . we cannot stop speaking of what we ourselves have seen and heard. Acts 2.32 and 4.20

They called the apostles in, had them whipped, and ordered them never again to speak in the name of Jesus; and then they set them free. As the apostles left the Council, they were happy, because God had considered them worthy to suffer disgrace for the sake of Jesus. And every day in the Temple and in people's homes they continued to teach and preach the Good News about Jesus the Messiah. Acts 5.40-42

They kept on stoning Stephen as he called out to the Lord, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit! He knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, Lord! Do not remember this sin against them! He said this and died. And Saul approved of his murder. That very day the church in Jerusalem began to suffer cruel persecution. All the believers, except the apostles, were scattered throughout the provinces of Judaea and Samaria. Some devout men buried Stephen, mourning for him with loud cries. But Saul tried to destroy the church; going from house to house, he dragged out the believers, both men and women, and threw them into jail. The believers who were scattered went everywhere, preaching the message. Acts 7.59 - 8.4

We had been there for several days when a prophet named Agabus arrived from Judaea. He came to us, took Paul's belt, tied up his own feet and hands with it, and said, This is what the Holy Spirit says: The owner of this belt will be tied up in this way by the Jews in Jerusalem, and they will hand him over to the Gentiles. When we heard this, we and the others there begged Paul not to go to Jerusalem. But he answered, What are you doing, crying like this and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be tied up in Jerusalem but even to die there for the sake of the Lord Jesus. Acts 21.10-13

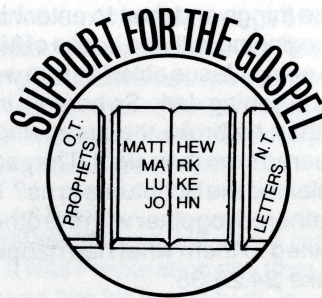
How Jesus appeared to Saul, who afterwards was called Paul:

I persecuted to the death the people who followed this Way. I arrested men and women and threw them into prison. The High Priest and the whole Council can prove that I am telling the truth. I received from them letters written to fellow-Jews in Damascus, so I went there to arrest these people and bring them back in chains to Jerusalem to be punished. As I was travelling and coming near Damascus, about midday a bright light from the sky flashed suddenly round me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, Saul, Saul! Why do you persecute me? Who are you, Lord? I asked. I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you persecute, he said to me. The men with me saw the light, but did not hear the voice of the one who was speaking to me. I asked, What shall I do, Lord? and the Lord said to me, Get up and go into Damascus, and there you will be told everything that God has determined for you to do. . . I have appeared to you to appoint you as my servant. You are to tell others what you have seen of me today and what I will show you in the future. I will rescue you from the people of Israel and from the Gentiles to whom I will send you. You are to open their eyes and turn them from the darkness to the light and from the power of Satan to God, so that through their faith in me they will have their sins forgiven and receive their place among God's chosen people. Acts 22.4-10 and 26.16-18

The Good News was promised long ago by God through his prophets, as written in the Holy Scriptures. It is about his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: as to his humanity, he was born a descendant of David: as to his divine holiness, he was shown with great power to be the Son of God by being raised from death. Through him God gave me the privilege of being an apostle for the sake of Christ, in order to lead people of all nations to believe and obey. Paul in Romans 1.2-5

REASONS WHY WE CAN TRUST THE BIBLE.

The Gospel accounts do not stand alone. They receive heavy support from both the writers of the New Testament letters and from the Old Testament Prophets, who wrote about the Life of Jesus while His coming was still in the future.



Only letters or gospels from apostles (who were eye witnesses of the ministry and resurrection of Jesus) were accepted or from those closely associated with them.

What we have seen and heard we announce to you also. 1 John 1.3

We have not depended on made-up stories in making known to you the mighty coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. With our own eyes we saw his greatness. 2 Peter 1.16

So then, our brothers, stand firm and hold onto those truths which we taught you, both in our preaching and in our letter. . . With my own hand I write this: GREETINGS FROM PAUL. This is the way I sign every letter; this is how I write. 2 Thessalonians 2.15 and 3.17

Jesus promised that all the apostles' teaching would be directed by the Holy Spirit.

The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and make you remember all that I have told you. John 14.26

Paul's letters appeared first. They can be accurately dated by comparing the details in them with the accounts of Paul's travels in Acts and by references to Paul's letters in the writings of the apostles' immediate successors. Some had been written by 60 A.D. (Paul's first imprisonment at Rome) and the rest by 65 A.D. (Paul's second imprisonment and death). Written while many still lived who could remember what Jesus said and did, they give an outline of the Gospel which agrees with the accounts given in the Gospels. Also in agreement is the Gospel outline found in Acts and in the other New Testament letters written by Peter, James, John, Jude and the writer to the Hebrews.

I passed on to you what I received, which is of the greatest importance: that Christ died for our sins, as written in the Scriptures (the writings of the Old Testament Prophets); that he was buried and that he was raised to life three days later, as written in the Scriptures; that he appeared to Peter and then to all twelve apostles. Then he appeared to more than five hundred of his followers at once, most of whom are still alive, although some have died. Then he appeared to James, and afterwards to all the apostles. Last of all he appeared also to me (Paul). 1 Corinthians 15.3-8

The Gospels themselves appeared from about 60 A.D. onwards. Mark, who is mentioned in Acts and in the letters, wrote down Peter's preaching. We also have two of Peter's letters. Matthew wrote a list of Jesus' sayings which he later expanded with further material and with material from Mark. Luke who was Paul's companion, did careful research collecting material into which he inserted both Matthew's sayings and Mark's account. He also wrote Acts and is mentioned in the letters. John wrote last to provide additional information. We also have his three letters and the Revelation given to him. We get a considerable knowledge of Jesus from the selections given, which Jesus said the Holy Spirit would make sure to happen. The Gospels were immediately accepted as accurate accounts of the apostles' teaching at a time when many people could still remember Jesus.

Many people have done their best to write a report of the things that have taken place among us. They wrote what we have been told by those who saw these things from the beginning and who proclaimed the message. And so, your Excellency, because I have carefully studied all these matters from their beginning, I thought it would be good to write an orderly account for you. I do this so that you will know the full truth about everything which you have been taught. Luke 1.1-4

The writings were copied and circulated. The New Testament writers read each others' writings and the letters were read in several places. By 100 A.D. two collections of the books had appeared, the Gospel and the Apostle (Gospels and Acts — letters).

The scripture says, "A worker should be given his pay." 1 Timothy 5.18 quoting Luke 10.7

As you wait for that Day (the return of Jesus), do your best to be pure and faultless in God's sight and to be at peace with him. Look on our Lord's patience (his delay in coming) as the opportunity he is giving you to be saved, just as our dear brother Paul wrote to you, using the wisdom that God gave him. This is what he says in all his letters when he writes on the subject. 2 Peter 3.14-16 referring to Paul's letters

After you read this letter, make sure that it is read also in the church at Laodicea. Colossians 4.16

Write down what you see, and send the book to the churches in these seven cities: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. Revelation 1.11

The Early Church Fathers (immediate successors to the apostles) writing from 100 A.D. onwards quote extensively from the New Testament with comments about contacts with the apostles and about the authors of the Gospels. We have copies of many of their writings. There are also scanty references in Roman and Jewish writings of this time from which a brief outline of Jesus can be gathered.

Then we have early manuscripts (handwritten copies) of the New Testament. They can be dated by the form of the handwriting and by the material written upon. We have fragments from as early as 150 A.D. e.g. the John Rylands fragment of John's Gospel. We have the Chester Beatty and Bodmer manuscripts written between 200 and 300 A.D. containing most of the New Testament. There are the Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus from 350 A.D., containing most of the whole Bible, and several others from the following century. We also have portions from 400 A.D. onwards of the Syriac and Latin translations that were made from the Greek around 150 A.D. By comparing these and many others we are able to ascertain the original New Testament text extremely exactly.

Archeology gives further confirmation. The Gospels and Acts show a very exact knowledge of details about people and places of the first century A.D. which strongly proves that they are based on eye witness accounts.

The New Testament is written in the form of Greek spoken in the first century. Also in many places the Greek of the Gospels, including Jesus' words and the apostles' speeches in Acts, is a word for word translation from Aramaic, the language of Jesus and his disciples.

The Old Testament books were written by prophets — people who gave a message from God.

Men were under the control of the Holy Spirit as they spoke the message that came from God. 2 Peter 1.21

The true prophet spoke about obeying God and accurately foretold the future. Thus identified, the books of the prophets were added to the previous books, building up the Old Testament until the last prophet Malachi in 400 B.C.

I was studying the sacred books and thinking about. . . what the Lord had told the prophet Jeremiah. Daniel 9.2

We can date the writing of Bible books by their references to current events, persons and places and by references to the books by later writers, e.g. in later Bible books. From this we can see the amazingly accurate fulfilment of the Bible's many detailed prophecies of the future. Those about the coming of Jesus were all fulfilled in his lifetime. Many of those about Israel and the surrounding nations have been fulfilled exactly, often many centuries after they were written. Others still await fulfilment as do those about the return of Jesus. No book except the Bible foretells the future with consistent accuracy.

I alone am God and there is no one else like me. From the beginning I predicted the outcome; long ago I foretold what would happen. Isaiah 46.9-10

All the prophets spoke about Jesus, saying that everyone who believes in him will have his sins forgiven through the power of his name. Acts 10.43

Archeology has shown the extreme accuracy of historical and geographical references all the way through the Old Testament. Very many references to current events, persons, towns, nations, customs and words then in use have been confirmed by archeological finds, which strongly proves that the events described in the Old Testament have been accurately recorded.

The Old Testament's claim to be the Word of God is endorsed by Jesus himself:

Do not think that I have come to do away with the Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets. I have not come to do away with them, but to make their teachings come true. Matthew 5.17

From the time of Ezra in the Bible (450 B.C.) the Old Testament has been very carefully copied by the Jews. We have Jewish manuscripts of the Old Testament from 900 - 1000 A.D. which agree extremely closely with the Dead Sea Scrolls (Jewish manuscripts from the first century B.C.) and with Samaritan manuscripts from about 1000 A.D. whose text has been handed down separately by the Samaritans from 400 B.C. There is also the Greek translation made around 250 B.C. handed down by Jews then by Christians, of which we possess manuscripts from 350 A.D., which also agrees with the Jewish text. The great similarity found on comparing these manuscripts proves that our present text is a high quality copy of the original.

The above evidence is adequate to show that the Bible gives us an accurate picture of Jesus.