

Christianity Has Been Proven (Part Two)
(Rev. Dr. John Bartol)

Even atheists concede that Christ's coming changed the course of history.

If we compare the historical attestation for Jesus with the evidence for other figures who lived in ancient times, there's just no comparison. For example, no one doubts the authenticity of the Greek philosopher Aristotle. Yet the earliest copies of his work are dated 1400 years after he lived. The earliest biographies of Alexander the Great were written more than 400 years after his death. If space permitted, we could give many more examples.

In contrast, there are now more than 5,686 known Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. Add over 10,000 Latin Vulgate and at least 9300 other versions (MSS). No other documents of antiquity even begin to approach such numbers and attestation. +. Josh McDowell, *New Evidence That Demands A Verdict* (Here's Life Publishers, 1981) p. 34,35.

Surely anyone with an open mind can see that by the legal – historical method, the truth of Christianity has been established beyond reasonable doubt. Either one believes the historical evidence of Jesus to be authentic, or else must become completely sceptical about all of ancient history.

There are many other lines of proof in support of the authenticity of Christianity. But to know God we must acknowledge our need for a higher faculty of knowledge. Reason must not be abandoned but beyond its boundary lies a realm only discovered by faith. This holds especially true in knowing God, a real person known only through a personal, subjective relationship.

Because intellectual knowledge alone, including the legal historical, does not make anyone a Christian. You can believe certain truths with your mind and still have an un-surrendered heart. Christian conversion does not come about by following a set of rules or rituals or even signing a creed. It is having a personal relationship with a living person, the Lord Jesus Christ. Not something we do for ourselves on the outside but what God does for us on the inside.

This new relationship involves the mind (intellect), the heart (emotions), and the will. The Mind says, I believe that Christ is the son of God and that He can meet my deepest needs. The Heart says, I love Christ because he died for me and paid the penalty for my sins. The Will says, I will commit my life to Christ in obedience and faith. Christianity is not trying but trusting; not feeling but faith; not simply believing with your mind but receiving Christ into your heart and life.

Something about Christ then and now, demands a decision. Some hated him and wanted to kill him because he threatened their preconceived ideas about God and life. Others loved him and left all to follow him. One overcame doubt with

faith and declared, “my Lord and my God” (John 20:28). Millions of people claim to have met God through Christ and He has changed their lives. These truths challenge us to get off the fence of apathy and indifference and commit our lives to Him in glad and full surrender.

“You ask me how I know he lives? He lives within my heart.”

Alfred H. Ackley