

WHY I BELIEVE: JESUS IS GOD'S SON AND LORD

I Jn 4:7-14

I. INTRODUCTION

A. LAST WEEK—"WHY I BELIEVE GOD IS FATHER, ALMIGHTY, CREATOR"

1. HOW WE KNOW—GOD IS ALMIGHTY CREATOR

- Biblical Record
- Natural Revelation
- Scientific Evidence
- Human Logic—Conscience—Intuition (God-shaped vacuum)

2. HOW WE KNOW—GOD IS FATHER

a. New Testament Emphasis

b. OUR Father

- o Children of God—by receiving His Son—**Jn 1**
- o Adopted as His children—**Gal 4**

c. Father's Uniqueness

1. Other 'gods' require

- o Worship—for self-gratification
- o Moral obedience—for good social order

2. Our Father

a. Also expects worship—requires obedience

- But for our own good—to have relationship with Him

b. God **loves** us—like a *true* Father

- God IS love
- Loves unconditionally
- Loves sacrificially
- Forgiving Loves—that restores

d. Personal Experience

- o His Spirit comes to us—enables us to call Him "Abba, Father"—**Gal 4**
- o His Spirit bears witness to our Spirit—we are His children—**Rom 8**

B. THIS SERMON = "JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD AND LORD"

1. THE FATHER SHOWS HIS LOVE—BY GIVING US HIS SON

2. THE FATHER HAS EXALTED JESUS—AS LORD OF ALL

II. TEXTS AND IDENTITY

A. BECAUSE GOD **LOVES** US—HE GAVE US HIS **SON**—TO **SAVE** US

1. TEXT—JN 4:7-14

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 By this the love of God was manifested in us that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. 13 By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. 14 We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

2. IDENTITY

a. **Son of God**—“only begotten Son”

1. Not created—eternal—co-equal with God the Father
2. Pre-incarnate glory and power—co-creator of universe
3. Poured Himself out—**Ph 2**—to become **Son of Man**—key identity in Gospels

b. **Jesus** = “savior”—from Jeshua/Joshua = JHWH rescues

- o **Mt 1:21**—*You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins*

c. **Christ** = “christos” = messiah—deliverer—anointed one

- o **Lk 4:18ff**—*The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor . . . [fulfilling **Is 61**]*

d. **Symbolized by early church—IXΘΥΣ**



B. CHRIST AS **LORD**

1. GOD MADE HIM BOTH LORD AND CHRIST

Acts 2:36—Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.

2. EXALTED TO LORD—FOR HIS OBEDIENCE

Ph 2:8-10—*Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

- a. Father restored to the Son of Man—the glory He previously had as Son of God
- b. Answered Jesus’ request in his Priestly Prayer

Jn 17:5—*Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the word was*

3. ACKNOWLEDGING HIS LORDSHIP—SECURES OUR SALVATION

Rom 10:9—*if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*

III. THE WRITTEN RECORD

A. JESUS CHRIST ACTUALLY EXISTED—SECULAR SOURCES

1. First century sources

- o **Flavius Josephus (Jewish historian, c. 37-100 AD)**
- o **Phlegon of Tralles (late 1st century Greek historian)**

2. Early second century sources

- o **Cornelius Tacitus (Roman historian and governor—writing c. 112 AD)**
- o **Seutonius (Roman historian—writing c. 120 AD)**
- o **Lucian of Samosata (second century satirist)**

3. Several references in early **Jewish Talmud** (100-500 AD)

B. BIBLICAL RECORD

1. HE IS SON OF GOD

- a. God’s proclamation—“*You are my son in whom I am well pleased . . .*”
 - **Baptism**
 - **Transfiguration**
- b. John’s testimony—“*I have seen, and I testify that this is the Son of God*”—**Jn 1**
- c. Mark’s Gospel—“*The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God*”
- d. Jesus’ own testimony
 - **Jn 5**—the Son can do only what He sees the Father doing

- **Jn 6**—I came to do the will of Him who sent me—the Father
- **Jn 14**—In my Father’s house, there are many mansions

2. HE IS LORD

- o Title “Lord Jesus Christ”—**104 times** in NT [in various forms]

3. THE PROPHESED MESSIAH—FULFILLED OVER 25 OT PROPHESES

- **Born of a virgin (Isa 7:14; cf. Matt. 1:21f.)**
- **Would die 483 years after declaration to rebuild temple in 444 BC (Dan. 9:24f)**
- **Tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10; cf. Luke 3:23, 33 and Heb. 7:14).**
- **Descendant of David (2 Sam. 7:12f.; cf. Matt. 1:1).**
- **Born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; cf. Matt. 2:1 and Luke 2:4–7).**
- **Cleansing of temple (Mal. 3:1; cf. Matt. 21:12f.).**
- **Betrayed for 30 pieces of silver—betrayed buried in potter’s field (Zech 11:12-13)**
- **Die a humiliating death (Ps. 22 and Isa. 53; cf. Matt. 27:31f.).**
 - **Having hands and feet pierced (Ps. 22:16; cf. Luke 23:33).**
 - **Being crucified with thieves (Isa. 53:12; cf. Mark 15:27–28).**
 - **Piercing of his side (Zech. 12:10; cf. John 19:34).**
 - **Casting of lots for his garments (Ps. 22:18; cf. John 19:23–24).**
- **Burial in a rich man’s tomb (Isa. 53:9; cf. Matt. 27:57–60).**

—Plus Many More—

IV. THE LOGICAL CHOICE

A. CHRISTIAN APOLOGISTS’ CHOICE—“LUNATIC, LIAR, OR LORD”

1. ARGUMENT—POPULARIZED BY C.S. LEWIS AND G.K. CHESTERTON
2. THREE OPTIONS
 - a. Christ was a **lunatic**—His claims are invalid
 - b. Christ was a **liar**—His claims are false
 - c. Christ was truly **Lord**—we must accept Him as God—and worship Him

A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.

B. NITZSCHE'S ATHEISTIC OPTION

1. **God is Dead**—God never existed—now socially constructed idea of God is no longer viable
2. **Humanity must save itself**—become stronger—restructure values—overcome adversity
3. **Uber-mensch—super-human**—leads society to advance according to humanistic values

C. "EITHER—OR"—WE MUST MAKE A CHOICE

1. **Either God** the Father exists—Jesus is His Son and Lord—and only He can save us
2. **Or Humanity** is by itself—and WE are our only hope

D. HUMAN SYSTEMS HAVE NOT WORKED—TWO EXAMPLES

1. **POLITICAL SYSTEMS**—FRAILITY OF EARTH-BOUND 'LORDS'
 - a. **Ramses II**—greatest pharaoh—of Exodus?—died 1213 BC—age 90
 - o Mummy—in Cairo Egyptian Museum
 - o 1974—body deteriorating—flown to Paris for examination
 - o Issued passport—occupation "King (deceased)"
 - o Given full military honors—at Paris airport
 - o Greek transliterated name = **Ozymandias**

OZYMANDIAS

**I met a traveler from an antique land who said:
"Two vast and trunk-less legs of stone stand
In the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away."**

- b. **Nebuchadnezzar II**—of Babylon—died 562 BC—age 72
 - o Destroyed Jerusalem temple
 - o 90x9 foot golden idol—God defied by protecting Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego

- o God humbled king by driving him insane—then restoring him
- o Nebuchadnezzar’s testimony

Dan 4:36—*Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride.*

- c. **Alexander the Great**—died 323 BC—age 32
 - o Died in palace of Nebuchadnezzar II—in Babylon—of fever
 - o For 500 years—tomb on display in Alexandria
 - o **Tomb lost** to history—nobody knows where he is buried
- d. **Attila the Hun**—Scourge of Europe—died 456 AD
 - o **Buried under Danube River**—attendants killed to keep location secret
- e. **Louis XIV**—died 1715—age 77
 - o Longest reigning European monarch—over 72 years
 - o The ‘Sun King’—and the **single candle** at his funeral
 - o **Jean Baptiste Masillon**—“**Only God is great!**”
- f. **Napoleon**—died 1821—age 52—stomach cancer
 - o Emperor of most of Europe—1804-14
 - o Spent last 6 years—**in exile**—St Helena—African island 1200 miles from Africa
- g. **Vladimir Lenin**—died 1924—age 53—**embalmed**
 - o Inscription on tomb in Red Square—“**He WAS the greatest leader of all peoples, of all countries, of all times. He WAS the lord of the new humanity. He WAS the savior of the world.**”
- h. **John Lennon**—died 1980—age 40
 - o Article in *London Evening Standard*—6 March 1966—quote:
 - o “**Christianity will go. It will vanish and shrink. I needn’t argue about that. I’m right and I’ll be proved right. We’re more popular than Jesus now. I don’t know which will go first, rock ‘n’ roll or Christianity.**”
- i. **CONTRAST—JESUS CHRIST**

Rev 1:17-18—*Do not be afraid, I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore . . .*

2. **RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS**—ALL FALL SHORT OF JESUS AS LORD

a. **Moses**

1. John's declaration: Jesus' **grace/truth** superior to Moses' Law (**Jn 1:17**)
2. Better provision than Moses's—**living bread**—not just manna (**Jn 6:32-33; 47-51**)
3. **New Covenant** superior to Old Covenant
4. His **works superior** to those of Moses
 - o Salvation—to *eternal* life
 - o Miracles—more powerful and numerous

b. **Mohammed**

1. Just a **man** and prophet
2. Performed **no miracles**—but admitted Jesus did them
3. Mohammed simply **died**—632 AD—age 62—Jesus was resurrected and lives!
4. Character
 - a. Jesus **humble**—to point of death
 - Jesus did not resist death—taught peace—died rather than fight
 - Mohammed spent last ten years fighting to advance his cause by force
 - b. Morality
 - Jesus lived sinless life
 - Mohammed **robbed** caravans—had more **wives** than Muslim law allowed

c. **Hinduism**

1. **Pantheism**—everyone becomes like gods
 - Christianity—personal God and distinction between Creator and created
2. **Superstition**—legends about gods—occult practices—demon worship
 - Christianity—clear, divine revelation—by Jesus Christ and Bible
3. **Scriptures** hard to understand—without guru's guidance
 - Bible sufficiently clear for salvation—to anyone who can read or hear it
4. Salvation

- a. Hindu **works** for ‘salvation’
 - ❖ Endless **struggle**—for liberation from cycles of reincarnation
 - ❖ *Might* be earned by knowledge, works, devotion to one of many deities
- b. Christian salvation
 - ❖ **Personal** relationship—with the Creator of the entire universe
 - ❖ God’s **grace**—not human ingenuity—faith not works
- 5. Moral teaching
 - a. Hinduism—leaves those **suffering** to their destiny
 - b. Christ—says to **care** for our neighbor
- 6. Hindu meditation **empties** self—Christians are **filled** with God’s Holy Spirit

d. **Buddha**

- 1. Buddhism offers—only **hopeless despair** and **suffering** in this life
 - o Jesus offers **abundant life**—here and now—**Jn 10:10; Jn 5:40**
- 2. Buddhism ends—in **eradication** of personal identity in oblivion
 - o Jesus offers **personal hope** for **eternal life**—**Jn 14:3-4; Lk 23:43**
- 3. Buddha only *pointed* to a way
 - o “**Buddhas do but point the way—work out your salvation with diligence.**”
 - o Jesus *is* THE WAY—the truth and the life (**Jn 14:6**)
- 4. Buddha died—about 400 BC—age 80—Jesus was resurrected and lives!

V. THE UNIQUE CHOICE

A. UNIQUE TEACHINGS

- Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you
- Whoever wants to be first must be last and servant of all
- It is better to give than to receive
- I have not come to call the righteous but sinners
- Whoever believes in me will never die

B. UNIQUE CHARACTER—SINLESS

- 1. Tempted in every way like us—but without sin—**Heb 4:15**
- 2. Affirmed by Apostles
 - o Peter—in **I Peter 1 and 2**

- o John—in **First John**
 - o Paul—in **II Cor 5**
3. Affirmed by others
- a. **Pilate**—found Him innocent—**Lk 23:4**
 - b. **Thief** on the cross—said Jesus had done nothing wrong—**Lk 23:41**
 - c. **Centurion** at cross—proclaimed Him ‘innocent’ (**Lk 23:47**)—‘Son of God’ (**Mk 15:39**)

VI. POWER OF TESTIMONY

A. **MARTYRS**—WILLING TO DIE—BELIEVING IN HIS RESURRECTION

B. **CHURCH**—HISTORIC AND GLOBAL WITNESS

1. **2000 years continuity**—every effort to eradicate it has failed
2. **2.2 billion Christians**—31.5% world population

C. **SKEPTICS**

- **H. G. Wells**—I am an historian, I am not a believer, but I must confess as a historian that this penniless preacher from Nazareth is irrevocably the very center of history. Jesus Christ is easily the most dominant figure in all history.
- **Mahatma Gandhi**—A man who was completely innocent, offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act.
- **Jean-Jacques Rousseau**—Shall we suppose that the evangelical history is a mere fiction? Indeed it bears no marks of fiction; on the contrary, the history of Socrates, which no one presumes to doubt, is not so well attested to as that of Jesus Christ . . . Socrates died like a philosopher; Jesus Christ died like a God.
- **Albert Einstein**—I am a Jew, but I am enthralled by the luminous figure of the Nazarene. Jesus is too colossal for the pen of phrase-mongers, however artful . . . No man can read the gospels without feeling the actual presence of Jesus. His personality pulsates in every word. No myth is filled with such life.

D. **PERSONAL**

1. **LEO TOLSTOY TESTIMONY**

- o For thirty five years of my life I was, in the proper acceptation of the word, nihilist, a man who believed in nothing. Five years ago my faith came to me. I believed in the doctrine of Jesus Christ and my whole life underwent a sudden transformation. Life and death ceased to be evil. Instead of despair, I tasted joy and happiness that death could not take away.

2. **JESUS CHRIST CHANGES LIVES!**

- o **II Cor 5:17**—*Therefore if anyone is in Christ, his is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*

3. THIS ARGUMENT IS IRREFUTABLE

- o No logical argument can disprove what a true believer has experienced in Jesus Christ

VII. INVITATION

BEHOLD THE THRONE OF GOD ABOVE

Before the throne of God above
I have a strong and perfect plea.
A great high Priest whose Name is Love
Who ever lives and pleads for me.
My name is graven on His hands,
My name is written on His heart.
I know that while in Heaven He stands
No tongue can bid me thence depart.

When Satan tempts me to despair
And tells me of the guilt within,
Upward I look and see Him there
Who made an end of all my sin.
Because the sinless Savior died
My sinful soul is counted free.
For God the just is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me.

Behold Him there the risen Lamb,
My perfect spotless righteousness,
The great unchangeable I AM,
The King of glory and of grace,
One in Himself I cannot die.
My soul is purchased by His blood,
My life is hid with Christ on high,
With Christ my Savior and my God!

FOURTH PASTOR: DR. HORACE G. WILLIAMS

Church growth and community expansion led our church to call its first full-time pastor in February 1925. Horace Greeley Williams had been serving as Education Director of University Baptist Church in Austin, where he had helped to start the first Baptist Student Union in Texas.

Williams was born in October 1893 to Joseph and Leila Ann Williams of Clanton, Alabama. His public education was in Alabama and Ohio, and he entered the ministry at age 17. He earned his master's degree from Southern Seminary and his doctorate from Southwestern Seminary. After serving in World War I, he married Maggie Lou Johnson of Athens, Alabama in 1923. They never had children.

Upon calling Williams, our church used part of its building fund to erect a 6-room parsonage on lots east of Gambrell Street. Dr. Williams wanted to help, so he paid \$25 per month for rent.

By 1926, the church had grown to 670 members. That same year, Southwestern Seminary built Cowden Hall and gave the old barracks used by the music school to the church—on the condition that the church would move it from campus. The church did so and set the barracks on the corner of James and Beddell, facing the seminary. \$9000 of renovations were done, including the addition of a baptistery. In those days, James Avenue was a muddy health hazard, but the city finally decided to pave it.

The music program at church got a boost when Dr. I.E. Reynolds located a used pipe organ for \$6000, to go along with the \$75 piano that the Mother's Club had purchased. An orchestra was also started.

After moving from the seminary campus, the church found itself in a fast-growing community of non-seminarians. In keeping with a vision to broaden its ministry, the church voted in May 1928 to change its name from Seminary Hill Baptist Church to Gambrell Street Baptist Church.

From the beginning, the church gave sacrificially to missions. Dr. Williams and seminary president Dr. Scarborough led the church to continue in this vein. In 1925, the church challenged the SBC by giving \$2400 to prevent the recall of three missionaries. At the same time, the church voted to keep at least half of its regular offerings for local work.

In July 1929, Dr. Williams resigned to become pastor of Norwood Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. In 1933, he went to Calvary Baptist Church in Tuscaloosa, Alabama and remained there until his retirement in 1960. Dr. Williams was active in the Alabama State Convention and served on numerous boards. He taught Bible at the University of Alabama. This was one of his special ministries: working with thousands of students throughout his lifetime—in Austin, Fort Worth, and Tuscaloosa.

He died in Tuscaloosa in 1982.