

**THRU THE BIBLE SYNTHESIS**  
**"Part XXXVIII: Luke - Certifying The Christian Faith As God's Fulfilling Historical Reality"**

Introduction: (To show the need . . . )

(1) We teach that one gains eternal life through faith in Christ, and we that Jesus is God's perfect Son come in the flesh as the God-man.

(2) However, some secular and religious authorities today **deny** that Jesus was equipped to **fulfill** man! Some deny that He **existed**:

(a) Bishop John Spong, Episcopal Bishop of Newark, N. J., stated: "If Paul was going to create a person (like Jesus) out of whole cloth, he **never** would have located him in this scrubby, dirty little Galilean town (Nazareth)." ("Who Was Jesus?" Life, Dec. '94, p. 68)

(b) Peter A. Bien, Professor of English at Dartmouth College, says: "I don't think we know who Jesus was. The Gospels, which were written for political purposes--to convert people--are after the fact. Fifty years at least. Mary? Well, obviously he had a mother, so it had to be somebody--her name doesn't matter . . . What difference does it make? . . . I realize **much** of what we know about Jesus is **novelistic**. But I **act** as if it **isn't**." (Ibid.)

(c) Jon Murray, President of American Atheists, believes: "There was no such person in the history of the world as Jesus Christ. There was no historical, living, breathing, sentient human being by that name. Ever. (The Bible) is a fictional, non-historical narrative. The myth is good for **business**." (Ibid.)

(3) The issue has intensified to the present. On April 9, 1996, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia addressed the Mississippi College School of Law, a Baptist school, stating: "Devout Christians are destined to be regarded as fools in modern society." He went on to say that intellectuals have rejected miracles and the Easter story (W. Pruden, "A Kick in the Pants for the 'Fool for Christ,'" Washington Times, April 12, '96, p. A4 as quoted in Dr. James Dobson's Focus on the Family June 1996 newsletter, p. 1). When James Dunn, a liberal Baptist theologian appeared on CNN's television program, "Crossfire" to critique Justice Scalia's remarks, he stated, "Yeah, I believe in miracles. I believe in the essential miracle of (Christ's) incarnation, and after that, all the rest are downhill from there." (Ibid., p. 3).

**Well, since it's been 2,000 years since Jesus "allegedly" walked on earth, can we validate that He EXISTED? If so, can He really fulfill as God's true, perfect Son, or is it all a business scam?!**

(We turn to the "Need" section in the notes . . . )

**Need: "(1) Though Evangelicals assert that one must believe in Christ for salvation, others deny that He ever EXISTED! IF Jesus lived, He lived 2,000 YEARS ago, so how can we NOW tell If He EVER lived?! (2) If SO, can He fulfill an empty, aimless life!!"**

- I. **Throughout the Old Testament, God's people, Israel so completely failed to counter Nimrod's world apostasy to the point that the Gentiles became destitute and aimless in their spiritual darkness:**
  - A. Though God created the world and set man up as His deputy, sin deposed him, and Satan became ruler on earth, Gn. 1-5; 2 Cor. 4:4.
  - B. The Lord renewed history through the Noahic flood, Gen. 6:1-9:7.
  - C. Yet, Noah's descendant, Nimrod, began an apostasy opposing God's rule on earth, Gen. 10:8-10; 11:1-9; Rev. 12:1-3.
  - D. God thus chose Abraham to start a nation to check his sin, Gn. 12:1-3.
  - E. Yet, the Old Testament records not only that nation, Israel repeatedly failing to curb Nimrod's error, but her tendency to be corrupted by it in spite of God's discipline to the contrary, Gn. 12:4-Malachi.
  - F. Thus, when God's long-awaited **world** Messiah arrived, Israel's apostasy led her to **reject** Him, so God **postponed** that Kingdom to disciple **individual** Jews and Gentiles worldwide (Matthew's Gospel).
  - G. However, this absence of God's worldwide kingdom left an ancient **vacuum** of **emptiness** and **uncertainty** for long-godless Gentiles:
    1. When Israel failed to disciple the nations, over time, they tried to fill their spiritual void for God with paganism, Geldenhuys, Luke, p. 54
    2. However, paganism proved to be **uncertain** and **unfulfilling**, Ibid.
    3. With a **postponed** Messianic Kingdom, something needed to fill the aching **emptiness** in **Gentiles** wrought by **long ages of darkness**.
- II. **God thus raised up a Gentile in Luke who had access to Christ's eyewitnesses and secular records to pen a Gospel giving certainty and fulfillment to needy GENTILES, Ibid., p. 1-58; Lk. 1:1-4.**
  - A. Luke recorded **verifiable** things re: Jesus, showing He was **historical**:
    1. With Luke's news of a census before Jesus' birth, that this census came "**before**" Quirinius ruled Syria (Lk. 2:1-2 with Hoehner, see below), that Herod the Great ruled before John's birth (Luke 1:5), & thus 6 mos. before Jesus' (Lk. 1:36) coupled with **secular source dates on these things**, we know that Jesus was born in late 5 B.C. or early 4 B.C.! (Hoehner, Chr. Asps. of the Life of Chr., p. 11-27)

2. Luke 19:42 claims Israel should have recognized the **day** of Christ's revealing. Since Dan. 9:25-26a predicts Messiah to appear publicly 483 **Jewish** years of 360 days/yr. after the edict to build Jerusalem, and since that edict came March 5th, 444 B.C. acc. to Neh. 2:1-8, Luke asserts that Jesus fulfilled Daniel 9:25-26a about Messiah's arrival on a donkey **March 30th, A.D. 33!** (Ibid., Hoehner, p. 139)
3. Jesus suffered after His Galilean-reckoned Pascal meal (Lk. 22:1-8; Ibid., Hoehner, p. 70). As this came **near** full moon, Nisan 14 (Ex. 12:1-6), there *should* have been a full moon the **day** Luke *implies* He **died, April 3, A. D. 33** (cf. Hoehner, p. 139). Well, Goldstine's New & Full Moons: 1001 B.C. To A.D. 1651 (American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 1973, p. 87) a **secular, computer-generated** listing of lunar syzygies, lists a **full** moon at 191.65 long. at 18:02 hrs., Baghdad time on **April 3, 33 A.D.!**
4. Luke 23:54 states Jesus died on "preparation" day, a **Friday**. Such a post-Pascal meal day occurred on **Friday A.D. 33**, Ibid. Hoehner, p. 100. Luke's record fitly matches the right **year** with its *weekday!*
5. Summary: **Even a liberal** seminary article said: "Wherever modern scholarship has been able to check up on the accuracy of Luke's work the judgment has been unanimous: he is one of the finest and ablest historians of the ancient world." ("The Purpose of Luke," Union Sem. Review, Nov. '45, v. lxvii, no.1 (Ibid.,Geldenhuys, 40))

B. Having shown Jesus to be **historical**, Luke used the Greek's quest for perfect human personality (Ibid., p. 45) to reveal Jesus to be God's **FULFILLING, PERFECT human** and thus **qualified SAVIOR**:

1. As **perfect** man, Luke **details** His **perfect ORIGINS** -- His **virgin birth** (Lk. 1:26-2:38) and **perfection in childhood**, Lk. 2:40-52.
2. His **perfect** love and severity, tenderness and might, humility and fearlessness and **perfect** attitude to God in Luke's great emphasis on prayer in Christ's life reveal His human **perfections**, Ibid.

III. **Luke's contribution to the "thread of redemption" shows Jesus to be fully REAL and FULFILLING as the PERFECT SAVIOR.**

***Application:** If desiring to put our faith on firm ground that really fulfills, peruse the Gospel of Luke in light of secular records and discover the REAL, PERFECT God-Man, Jesus, and (1) believe on Him for salvation! (2) As a believer, to have the perfect Christ living through us, (a) confess any sins we do (1 Jn. 1:9) and (b) depend on the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:16-23) to obey Scripture, 1 Jn. 2:1a,1b-6!*

***Lesson:** The Christian Savior is REAL and FULFILLING, for the historical origins of Jesus in Luke are supported by strong secular evidence, and Luke's record reveals Jesus to be God's PERFECT Savior!*

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the lesson . . .)

One of the most notable extra-biblical evidences for the existence of Jesus of Nazareth that survive for us today are remarks made by Justin Martyr in A.D. 150.

Justin Martyr, a Christian, wrote to the Roman emperor Antoninus Pius (A.D. 138-161) an apologetic for his faith in an era when standing for the Christian faith was very **suspect** by the Romans! We have his writing which states:

(1) "(In explaining how Jesus fulfilled the 22nd Psalm, Martyr said) But the words, 'They pierced my hands and feet,' refer to the nails which were fixed in Jesus' hands and feet on the cross; and after that He was crucified, His executioners cast lots for His garments, and divided them among themselves. **That these things HAPPENED YOU may learn from the 'Acts' which were recorded under PONTIUS PILATE.**" (Justin Martyr, First Apology, 35.7-9 as quoted in Josh McDowell, A Ready Defense, p. 192)

(2) Later, in the same apologetic, Justin Martyr wrote: "**That He** (Jesus of Nazareth) **PERFORMED these MIRACLES YOU may EASILY satisfy YOURSELF from the 'Acts' of PONTIUS PILATE.**" (Ibid., Martyr, 48.3 (quoted by McDowell, loc. cit.))

**Though the "Acts" of Pontius Pilate themselves have yet to be discovered by modern archaeologists, had no such secular record by Pontius Pilate about Jesus ever existed, Justin Martyr would have endangered his own welfare and Christian testimony by undermining this apologetic to Rome's emperor who could EASILY have GAINED ACCESS to such a record of a SUBORDINATE ROMAN district as Pontius Pilate ruled to CHECK on Justin Martyr's CLAIMS! But Justin Martyr did not only allude to such "Acts" of Pontius Pilate ONCE, but TWICE in the SAME apologetic!**

There is thus strong historical evidence that **secular** authorities knew that Jesus of Nazareth lived, that He performed miracles, and that He died by crucifixion. The sheer numbers of people from all parts of the Roman Empire who laid down their lives upon the claim that Jesus rose from the dead testifies to the reality of this historical Christ's gospel. **If we believe on Jesus Christ, we have GOD'S certain hope of eternal life!**