

# **“Where in the Bible Does It Prove that Jesus Was 100% Man and 100% God?”**

Thanks for your question! There are actually many biblical passages which teach both the deity and humanity of Christ. I've listed just a few for your consideration.

## **1. Isaiah 9:6-7**

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

*Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.*

Note that the promised Messiah (or Christ) would be born as a son to Israel. He was thus a Man. At the same time, however, His name will be called Mighty God, etc. He is thus also God.

## **2. Micah 5:2-3 (quoted in Matt. 2:6)**

*“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.”*

*3 Therefore Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor gives birth and the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites.*

Again, Messiah is born of a woman (v. 3) to be ruler in Israel

(v. 2). He is thus a Man. However, His goings forth are “from the days of eternity” (v. 2). He thus had no beginning and must therefore be God (Who alone is eternal).

### 3. John 1:1-3, 14

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

*2 He was with God in the beginning.*

*3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.*

*14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

Notice that the Word is God (v. 1). Notice also that the Word became a human being (v. 14). Jesus is both God and Man.

### 4. Philippians 2:5-11

*Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:*

*6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,*

*7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.*

*8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!*

*9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,*

*10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,*

*11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

This is a classic passage on both the deity and humanity of Christ.

### 5. Colossians 1:13-23

*For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,*

*14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

*15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.*

*16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.*

*17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

*18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.*

*19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him,  
20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

*21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.*

*22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—*

*23 if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.*

Again, this passage strongly affirms both the deity (v. 19) and humanity (v. 22) of Jesus.

These are just a few passages which can be offered. Many passages, taken in isolation, affirm either the deity of Christ on the one hand, or His humanity on the other. When all this evidence is taken into account, it becomes clear that the Bible repeatedly affirms that Jesus was indeed the unique God-

Man.

God bless you,

Michael Gleghorn

Probe Ministries

---

# **“What is the Purpose of God?”**

**Dear Probe,**

I was having an interesting conversation with an atheist over at Wasteland Of Wonders [an Atheist/Agnostic Website and Message board] when the topic of ultimate purpose came up!

Now most believers in God, myself included, seem to say that if the universe just *is*, then it becomes a big pointless absurdity, almost like a sick joke!

However if God exists then the universe and everything in it has a purpose, but the fellow over at Wastelands of Wonder with whom I was chatting said the following :

“Okay then, what is the ultimate purpose of God’s existence? Don’t you just have the same problem with theism, but pushed back a level? If God “just is,” what purpose then is there for your existence?”

I have to say this question reminds me very much of the infinite regression problem of “If God exists then who made God?!”

The best I could think of was that God contains an explanation for himself and that was it! This question truly had me bedazzled and I was scratching my head looking for a decent,

non-cop-out explanation! [Like God explains himself]

**So may I ask, if you were asked this question by someone what would you say?**

Thank you for the interesting question! Let me try to answer it this way:

First, there would seem to be an important difference between the two questions, "Why does the universe exist?", and "Why does God exist?" Today, most scientists and philosophers believe that the universe had a beginning; it is not eternal. However, if God exists at all, He exists necessarily and is therefore eternal. Thus, even though each question is asking WHY something exists, they are each asking this about very different kinds of things.

Second, it's important for us to remember that purposes can only exist within a mind. The dictionary on my desk defines "purpose" as follows: 1. something one has in mind to get or do; plan; aim; intention. 2. object or end for which a thing is made, done, used, etc. Clearly, nothing which lacks a mind can have purposes of this sort. Whatever purpose there is for the existence of impersonal things must come from intelligent, purposeful beings. As a general rule, such beings would also be personal. Here I am thinking primarily of man, but also of God and the angels if they exist. Of course, some higher animals may have what might be described as very limited sorts of purposes for some of the things which they do. But generally speaking, purposes are the products of intelligent, personal beings.

Thus, if the universe is simply a "brute fact," and was not brought into existence by a purposeful, intelligent being, there can be no ultimate purpose for its existence. If nothing exists outside the universe then clearly, going back to the previously given definition of purpose, there can be no object or end for which the universe came into existence. The

universe can only have some ultimate purpose if it was created by an intelligent being who, in fact, had some purpose in making it.

However, when we come to the question which you were asked, "What is the ultimate purpose of God's existence?", we need to pause and consider exactly what we are being asked. I think you are correct in seeing this question as a variant of that other, often-asked question, "Who made God?" While such questions can be asked, I honestly doubt whether they are truly meaningful.

In the case of the question, "Who made God?", the questioner seems to be assuming that whatever exists requires a cause of its existence. But this is not true. Actually, it is only what BEGINS to exist that requires a cause. The universe began to exist; therefore, the universe requires a cause of its existence. But God never began to exist; He is eternal. It is therefore meaningless to ask "Who made God?", for what is really being asked is something like "Who made the Unmade Maker?", or "Who created the Uncreated Creator?" Clearly such questions are meaningless.

I believe that the question, "What is the ultimate purpose of God's existence?" or "Why does God exist?", is probably a similar sort of question. If the Christian God exists, then He is eternal. It is therefore unnecessary to posit a cause of His existence. Furthermore, if the Christian God exists, then He is the Creator of everything (other than Himself, of course!).

But now go back to our definition of "purpose" mentioned earlier and remember that, since God is the eternal, Uncreated Creator of all that exists, there was clearly no one other than God who might have had a purpose for bringing Him into existence. Additionally, it would also be meaningless to ask what purpose God had for bringing Himself into existence. The notion of a self-caused being is absurd. In order for a being

to cause its own existence, it would first have to exist – which is obviously absurd. But if the purpose of God’s existence cannot be explained by reference to an intelligent, purposeful being other than God, and if it can also not be explained by referring to a self-creative act of God Himself, I conclude that the question is probably meaningless.

Thus, while one can meaningfully ask about God’s purpose(s) in creating the universe (and thus about the reason WHY the universe exists), one cannot meaningfully ask this question about God Himself. Probably, the question is simply meaningless. But if not, we could not possibly know “the ultimate purpose of God’s existence” unless He tells us—and so far as I’m aware, He hasn’t done so.

Hope this helps.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn  
Probe Ministries

---

## **“Is Cremation Against the Bible?”**

**I have become curious as to why certain Christian denominations claim cremation to be against the Bible. Is it?**

Thanks for your e-mail. Although many Christian and Jewish groups DO permit the bodies of the deceased to be cremated, this is not the usual manner of disposing of the body. Furthermore, there are some groups who are strongly opposed to

cremating a body. For instance, The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church states, "Cremation is normally forbidden in the Orthodox Church." But WHY are some opposed to cremation? Is this practice unbiblical? These are good questions.

The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion states that some rabbis are persuaded, on the basis of Deuteronomy 21:23, that interment is a positive biblical command. This would make cremation an unbiblical practice. In addition, some rabbis argued that cremation was disrespectful to the deceased; others that it implied a denial of belief in the doctrine of physical resurrection. There is one clear biblical account of a cremation. In 1 Sam. 31:9-13, the men of Jabesh-gilead are said to have "burned" the bodies of Saul and his sons. Afterward, they buried their bones. Thus, The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion states that "in spite of the general prohibition against cremation", most branches of Judaism permit it (even if somewhat reluctantly).

The situation today is similar for most (but not all) Christian denominations. The *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* states, "Belief in the resurrection of the body made cremation repugnant to the early Christians." The article goes on to point out that the practice was "revived in the 19th century, largely in free-thinking circles, though among some Christians it has now come into favour." The Roman Catholic Church permits, but does not recommend, cremation. The Orthodox Church typically forbids it. Others sanction it, though somewhat cautiously.

In my opinion, there is no clear biblical command prohibiting cremation of the deceased. Traditionally, however, both Jews and Christians have been a little wary of disposing of a body in this fashion. There seems to be at least a twinge of conscience about whether it's really acceptable, or properly respectful (whether to God or the deceased), to cremate the dead. I can certainly understand this feeling (and even share it to a degree), but I do NOT think the Bible forbids it.



Furthermore, I do not think it creates any problems for the doctrine of a physical resurrection. Many people throughout history have been burned at the stake, eaten by wild animals, etc. Many of those who have received a traditional burial have already completely decomposed. The doctrine of physical resurrection does not require that the same atoms which once composed a body also compose the resurrection body. Indeed, if those scientists are correct who tell us that the entire atomic content of the human body changes every seven years or so this would clearly be absurd anyway. Whatever the precise nature of the resurrection body, the God who can create an entire universe *ex nihilo* (i.e. out of nothing) will obviously not be hindered in resurrecting the bodies of all men and women (cremated or otherwise) and assigning them to their eternal destination.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn  
Probe Ministries

---

## **“Is Acupuncture OK?”**

**What do you know about acupuncture? No one in my church knows much about it except that it works.**

In a book on Alternative Medicine, written by Christian scholars at The Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity, the authors noted that a National Institutes of Health (NIH) review, while finding many of the claims for acupuncture to be lacking in firm medical and scientific evidence, nonetheless reported that “acupuncture reduced nausea and vomiting after chemotherapy or surgery and was effective at relieving dental pain” (Gary P. Stewart and others, *Basic Questions on*

*Alternative Medicine: What is Good and What is Not?*, [Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1998], 44).

But what is responsible for the limited success enjoyed by acupuncture? The above authors write:

“Different explanations for the effectiveness of acupuncture have also been proposed. Acupuncture causes numerous biological changes, with the release of endorphins being the most significant. These compounds are part of the body’s natural way to relieve pain. Also, pain in one area of the body can be reduced when another area is irritated, which may partially explain why the needles work” (p. 44).

Thus, there are some reasonable physical explanations for the limited success of acupuncture. But are there potential moral and spiritual dangers which one must be wary of in acupuncture? Yes. To quote again from the previous source, “Caution should be exercised in choosing a practitioner. Those who adhere to its roots in traditional Chinese medicine and religion may call on spiritual powers to assist in treatments, thus exposing people to occult influences” (p. 44).

This is a very good point and we would do well to be careful of such possibilities. But of course not everyone who practices acupuncture is involved with the occult. In fact, I’m aware of a local Chinese doctor who incorporates acupuncture (when appropriate) into his medical practice. But this man is a devout Christian and does not buy into the philosophical/religious ideas sometimes associated with traditional Chinese medicine.

So it appears that there is at least some evidence that acupuncture can be medically effective in treating pain and nausea. However, one should be careful in selecting a practitioner for the reasons stated previously.

Hope this helps. God bless you!

Michael Gleghorn  
Probe Ministries

Addendum 3/17/2019: A friend of Probe, Dr. Caroline Crocker, provided us with this insightful article on the worldview aspect of acupuncture, adding, "Acupuncture is based on nonChristian prescientific ideas. Sorry." It states that there is no scientific support for any mechanism that would explain a way for acupuncture to work, and that clinical trials show that it doesn't work apart from a placebo effect.

<https://sciencebasedmedicine.org/reference/acupuncture/>

---

## **"You Can't Say Edgar Cayce was a Failure as a Prophet!"**

Your comment about Edgar Cayce being an "abysmal failure" as a prophet is a completely subjective view of his work. There are those who believe that the things of which Mr. Cayce spoke are true. Also, because you can not have a truth without it being believed and it having both epistemic certainty as well as facts to back it up, you can not say as a "truth" that he was a failure as a prophet. Even Nostrodamus was off in many of his predictions, yet he was accurate in what he said.

Thanks for your e-mail. Lou Whitworth, the author of the article you read about Edgar Cayce, is no longer with Probe. Please allow me to reply in his stead.

You begin by stating:

*Your comment about Edgar Cayce being an "abysmal failure" as*

*a prophet is a completely subjective view of his work. There are those who believe that the things of which Mr. Cayce spoke are true."*

Although I would probably not have chosen to use the adjective "abysmal", the claim that Cayce was a failure as a prophet is actually not subjective. It is based on the objective authority of God's Word in the Bible. The Bible actually sets up an objective standard for determining whether someone is, or is not, a true prophet. This standard is nothing less than 100% prophetic accuracy. In Deuteronomy 18:20-22 we read the following:

"But the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. And you may say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?' When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him."

In light of this passage, the Christian reasons as follows:

1. Edgar Cayce uttered certain prophecies, or healing remedies, that were not accurate.
2. God's word says that a true prophet is always accurate in what he predicts.
3. Therefore, Edgar Cayce was not a true prophet of God. Biblically speaking, he was a false prophet.

This, of course, is not to deny that Edgar Cayce may have uttered some prophecies and healing remedies which were

accurate. But since he also uttered some false prophecies, God's word indicates that he was not a true prophet. The same reasoning would also apply to the prophecies of Nostradamus. As you yourself pointed out, "Nostradamus was off in many of his predictions".

There is another passage of Scripture which seems particularly relevant to Edgar Cayce. Remember, even Cayce at times wondered about the true source of his special powers. In Deuteronomy 13:1-4 we read the following:

"If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you to find out if you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall follow the Lord your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him."

This passage is especially interesting in light of Cayce's own comments concerning his powers:

"The power was given to me without explanation...it was just an odd trait that was useful in medicine...That's what I always thought, and against this I put the idea that the Devil might be tempting me to do his work by operating through me when I was conceited enough to think God had given me special power" (Edgar Cayce: The Sleeping (False) Prophet).

Since Cayce was quite familiar with the Bible, he had every reason to be suspicious of the source of his power, especially since he made predictions which did not come true.

But please let me also briefly address your description of truth. You write:

*"...because you can not have a truth without it being believed and it having both epistemic certainty as well as facts to back it up, you can not say, as a "truth" that he was a failure as a prophet."*

I would simply have to disagree with this statement for two reasons:

1. I can imagine many examples of something being objectively true and yet not being believed by anyone, not possessing epistemic certainty (a very difficult criterion to meet, by the way), and not even having any independently verifiable facts to back it up! For instance, suppose an angel appeared to an unbeliever and told him to repent of his sins and to put his faith in Christ for salvation. Suppose this was an objective experience, capable of sense verification (sight, hearing, touch, etc.) by anyone who happened to be present. But suppose no one was present but the unbeliever – and after having this experience, he concludes it was merely a subjective hallucination! Furthermore, suppose everyone who hears this story accepts his interpretation; namely, that the event was simply a hallucination – not an objective experience. Finally, suppose that the angel leaves absolutely no physical trace of his appearance – nothing to confirm that the appearance had been an objective event in the external world! In this case, it would be absolutely TRUE to say that an angel had appeared to this man, etc. However, no one actually BELIEVES this to be true (including the man who experienced it), it LACKS epistemic certainty, and there are NO independently verifiable facts to support that this event actually happened. The only evidence that this event actually occurred is the man's memory, which he believes pertains to a hallucination – not an actual visit from an angel. In spite of this, however, it would still be TRUE to say that the event actually occurred in the real, mind-independent, external world of the observer; it was completely objective. Such examples could be multiplied, but you get the idea.

2. Since there are good reasons to believe that the Bible is the Word of God, I think that one can legitimately conclude that Cayce was a false prophet by biblical standards. And if this is true, then Cayce was ultimately a failure as a prophet according to the standard of the Ultimate Judge of all such matters, namely, God Himself. The Bible gives us God's standards for determining whether someone is, or is not, a true prophet. Cayce failed to meet these biblical standards. Therefore, the Christian has good grounds for believing that Cayce was not a true prophet.

I know that there are indeed those who believe that the things which Edgar Cayce spoke in his trances are true. But I hope you can see why biblical Christianity must reject that belief.

I wish you all the best,

Michael Gleghorn  
Probe Ministries

---

## **“You’re An Absolute Idiot As Far as Your Knowledge of Yoga Is Concerned!”**

Would you please let Michael Gleghorn know that he is an absolute idiot as far as his knowledge of yoga is concerned—especially Iyengar yoga?

It is a sign of ignorance to talk about something that one knows nothing about. If more people in this world practiced yoga, as opposed to organized religion, this world would be a much better place!

Hello,

Sue forwarded your letter to me. Thanks so much for writing! I guess I never do anything halfway; if I'm going to be an idiot, I'm going to be an "absolute idiot"—partial idiocy just wouldn't satisfy me! :o)

I'm sorry you didn't enjoy [my response on yoga](#). I guess you won't much like [my upcoming radio program](#) on the subject either. Just so you know, I did try to quote primarily from authoritative yoga sources (including the Iyengar website and various yogis, swamis, etc.). Furthermore, before sending that reply to my correspondent, I had Brad Scott (formerly of the Ramakrishna Order) read it for accuracy. He thought it quite good.

Most likely you disagree with my personal perspective on yoga. That doesn't surprise me. I certainly don't expect everyone to agree with me.

I write from within a Christian worldview perspective. If you don't share that perspective, it's not surprising that you would not agree with some of my remarks. The worldview upon which most of yogic philosophy is based is utterly incompatible with biblical Christianity. If you've accepted yogic philosophy, we would doubtless differ on a great many issues (e.g. the nature of God, of man, of salvation/liberation, the uniqueness of Jesus, what happens after death, etc.). If one of these competing worldviews is true, the other must be false. For many reasons (virtually every article on Probe's website addresses these reasons in one way or another) I'm a completely convinced Christian. I therefore do not want to see my brothers and sisters in Christ led astray by embracing what I honestly believe is a false worldview. And that is really my main objection to yoga. It's certainly nothing personal against those who practice it.

I certainly wish you well, but since you refer to me as an



“absolute idiot” I’m hardly convinced that the world would be a better place if more people practiced yoga. I would hate to be called such names by the majority of the world’s inhabitants! :o)

Grace and peace to you,

Michael Gleghorn

Probe Ministries

---

## **“Did Christ HAVE to be Deity?”**

Greetings Don,

I came across [your website article](#) concerning the deity of Christ and thought I would respond. if you have the time and interest, please entertain some of my thoughts and get back with me if time allows. My questions surround the topic of the necessity of Christ being deity. I accept that He is, but wonder if He MUST be for both the atonement and eternal salvation. What I would like to do is copy the text from my interaction with a good friend yesterday. That way I won’t have to rewrite our dialogue. When you have time, please interject if you would. WB is my good friend, a pastor. I am DB.

WB: Your questions about Christ’s deity in regards to salvation do sound like the JWs. “God can do it anyway he so pleases” (even Calvin suggests this as well). If God wanted, he could have made a world without the possibility for sin as well. He can do it any way he pleases, but he has reasons for doing it the way he does.

DB: Yes, he does. But as God, he could do it any number of ways. If you hold to the middle/knowledge position, you would have to agree to this idea, and the idea that he chose the best possible way to redeem mankind. That, in-and-of-itself, doesn't demand that Christ be deity.

WB: The early church fathers reasoned (there, I used the dirty word "reason") that Christ had to be God for our salvation to be effectual. You have heard it before, even from me. Be patient as I explain it again. If I sin against you, how long does the sin remain? Answer: until you forgive me or until you die. Even if I die first, the sin remains as an offense against you.

DB: No problems here at all. I agree wholeheartedly.

WB: If I sin against God, how long does the sin remain? Until he forgives me or until he dies. Since he does not die, and is an infinite being, then the sin is eternal: actually, my sin against him becomes an infinite offense. Now: how can an infinite transgression be forgiven? (I hope we don't have to revisit justification in all of this). Only an infinite being can pay for an infinite sin – only an infinite being can absorb an infinite curse and satisfy the infinite penalty of an infinite crime. Only an infinite being can bear an infinite wrath. If Jesus was a man, his death would have no efficacy.

DB: Here's where questions arise on my part. I agree that my sin is an infinite offense against God. Actually, God is eternal and infinite and we are neither (in the absolute definitions of those terms—i.e. "immeasurable or without beginning or end"). Hence, maybe there is some reservation on my part to claim I, a finite being, can commit an infinite act. I suppose since we live forever (in glory or judgment), our sins remain always or are cleansed and forgiven always; hence, they are infinite or erased. All that being said (I'm typing out my thoughts), I don't feel it requires that Christ must be deity to be a sufficient sacrifice for my sins. What

is required is a perfect sacrifice. If Christ was a created being, one who was higher than angels and who took on the form of man, lived a perfect, sinless life with free will (like Satan but succeeding), his sacrifice would be sufficient. I don't understand how, using reason, it would not. Like us, he would have had a beginning. Like us, free will. Unlike Adam, he did not sin (even if he could have—if he was not deity, this would give even more credence to the example that even though he was a man, he did not sin vs. our position as Trinitarians). As he was sinless, created or not, his perfect example and sacrifice would be sufficient. It seems that if there coexisted TWO forms of deity at the same time, and it was possible for them to sin against each other as does man, then a mediator, who would then have to be deity, would be required. To require deity to be sacrificed for the sins of finite man seems overkill and doesn't pan out in my mind as reasonable. It's certainly plausible, but I don't see how it has to be. Please correct me here. If God requires a perfect sacrifice, Jesus would have been a sufficient sacrifice if God said he was having lived a perfect life (as a perfect man or perfect Adam).

WB: The applicability of Christ's atoning work to us as human beings depends upon the reality of his humanity.

DB: Absolutely.

WB: The efficacy depends upon the genuineness and completeness of his deity. DB: Not if God only requires a perfect, sinless sacrifice vs. the sacrifice of a deity. I still fail to understand why reason disallows this. It seems to me we are predisposed to this position to embrace our view of the trinity vs. the other way around. Reason, in my mind, doesn't exclude this argument.

WB: The JW's reject this saying that God can do anything he pleases. Okay, why didn't he just let a muskrat die for our sins then? The beauty of the cross is not that we have been

redeemed, but that the eternal Holy God was willing to undergo the kenosis (humiliation from glory to earth to servant to criminal to death to tomb).

DB: I agree—that is the beauty of the cross. But if God created for himself a son with free will (much like Satan—and NO, I don't think they were brothers!!!) to be a sacrifice for a lower mankind who despises them both and who hates them, then his suffering and sacrifice on our part for the love of his father, who he could disobey at will, is a lovely story as well. That's just as moving in my mind. If he was deity and couldn't sin (if he was impeccable), we can only glory in his suffering, not his resistance to sin. Again, reason warrants that conclusion.

WB: This reveals God. And it is this that is the centerpiece of the Christian faith (our salvation was the result, and the reason, but the emphasis is on the grand mystery of God himself. (How boring it would be to send someone else to do his dirty work).

DB: I addressed this above.

Hello \_\_\_\_\_,

Thanks for your e-mail. Don is overwhelmed with other duties and asked me to respond in his place. I hope you understand.

Since you claim to accept the doctrine of Christ's deity, I will simply assume this is a belief we share. Thus, rather than offering any arguments for this important doctrine, I will simply assume it is true for the purpose of this response.

Let me make just a few points by way of introduction. First, I think you raise an important issue that needs to be carefully considered and discussed. Second, I will have to reply in a somewhat abbreviated fashion, merely outlining what I consider to be some important points. Third, at the time of this

writing, I freely admit that I CANNOT offer a conclusive argument that it was necessary for Christ to be God in order to provide an acceptable atonement for the sins of man. However, I want to offer a cumulative case for this position which I think is nonetheless compelling. This will involve both a response to some of your statements, as well as a brief, positive presentation of some evidence which I think makes it at least highly probable that Christ would indeed have to be God to provide an acceptable atonement for our sins. Finally, I offer these thoughts for your consideration since you wrote to Probe requesting a response. Although I have to reply rather quickly because of many other pressing duties, I am also offering a tolerably thoughtful response that I ask you to read carefully.

Please allow me to focus on your statements beginning with the remark, "Here's where questions arise on my part." You state:

*"I don't feel it requires that Christ must be deity to be a sufficient sacrifice for my sins. What is required is a perfect sacrifice. If Christ was a created being, one who was higher than angels and who took on the form of man, lived a perfect, sinless life with free will (like Satan but succeeding), his sacrifice would be sufficient. I don't understand how, using reason, it would not."*

I wonder HOW you actually KNOW this to be true? Granted, you MAY be right. But HOW do you really KNOW? I note that you appeal to "reason" – a faculty for which I too have great respect – but it's important to remember that reason, like ALL of man's faculties, is fallen. This remark is not intended to denigrate reason. But it's common knowledge that man often makes errors in reasoning about all sorts of things. Not only that, we often begin our reasoning from false presuppositions, which often results in correctly reasoning to false conclusions. Finally, we almost never have all the essential information which we would need to reason to the right answer

– even if we didn't continually commit errors in our reasoning.

I would argue that the question of whether or not it was necessary for Christ to be God in order to provide an acceptable atonement for the sins of man is the sort of question about which it would be quite easy to reason incorrectly. I would also argue that YOU BEAR THE BURDEN OF PROOF here. This is so for the simple reason that Christ was in fact God (as you admit), and the Father did in fact send His Son to be “the propitiation for our sins” (1 JN. 2:2). Since God is a rational moral agent, it seems fair to assume that He had some good reason for actually doing things as He did. Not only this, I think it's fair to ask whether God would have sent His only Son as the sacrifice for our sins if He could have achieved this end in some other way. It is at least odd that God would have sent His only Son to do what a morally perfect creature could just as easily have accomplished. Since God did in fact send His Son, however, you clearly bear the burden of proof in demonstrating that this was, in fact, not necessary. I don't think you can do so. Hence, I think your argument is ultimately unsuccessful.

Let me briefly illustrate this last point from a section of the dialogue between you and your friend:

*WB: The applicability of Christ's atoning work to us as human beings depends upon the reality of his humanity. DB: Absolutely. WB: The efficacy depends upon the genuineness and completeness of his deity. DB: Not if God only requires a perfect, sinless sacrifice vs. the sacrifice of a deity. I still fail to understand why reason disallows this. It seems to me we are predisposed to this position to embrace our view of the trinity vs. the other way around. Reason, in my mind, doesn't exclude this argument.”*

Concerning your final comments, I would agree that reason, in

itself, doesn't necessarily exclude the possibility that God only requires a perfect, sinless sacrifice rather than a Divine one. But remember my comments on "reason" again. Just because human reason cannot exclude the possibility that you mention does not in any way prove that a Divine sacrifice was not necessary! And since you bear the burden of proof here, I must ask you HOW, specifically, you KNOW that God does NOT REQUIRE A DIVINE SACRIFICE? Since this is what God actually did, I would argue that it is more reasonable to believe it was necessary than that it was not. Admittedly, this does not PROVE my argument is true, but I do think it's more reasonable. And I am not obligated to assume the burden of proof here anyway.

I think you make an interesting, and potentially revealing, comment when you write:

*"It seems that if there coexisted TWO forms of diety at the same time, and it was possible for them to sin against each other as does man, then a mediator, who would then have to be diety, would be required."*

Again, I wonder HOW you KNOW this? Why, specifically, would a Divine mediator be required? Certainly reason does not demand this! Why would any mediator "be required" at all? It's quite possible that the gods could mediate their own dispute, just as two men might do. It's also possible that a man, or a talking raccoon, could serve as a mediator. But here's what's interesting. If your logic is valid, and a god must mediate between gods, why would it not also follow that a God-Man must mediate between God and man?

But here's another point. The example of reconciling two gods likely involves the reconciliation of equals. But this is not the case when we consider the reconciliation of man to God. Here, the parties are NOT equal. God is the Creator, man is His creation. It seems at least reasonable to believe (and is

in fact true, I think) that the Creator may have a particular character which requires that reconciliation be achieved ONLY through a means which is perfectly consistent with all His attributes. And this, of course, may radically limit the means by which such reconciliation can actually be achieved. Again, I personally think it would be odd for the Father to send His only Son to accomplish on behalf of man what a morally perfect creature was capable of. Indeed, you yourself confess:

*"To require diety to be sacrificed for the sins of finite man seems overkill and doesn't pan out in my mind as reasonable. It's certainly plausible, but I don't see how it has to be."*

But since this is what God actually did, you bear the burden of proof in demonstrating that such a sacrifice was, in fact, overkill! Since God is a rational moral agent, it is at least reasonable to think that a Divine sacrifice may indeed have been NECESSARY. And if it was necessary it cannot, by definition, be overkill.

Let me conclude with two more observations. First, we both agree that Jesus was, in fact, the God-Man. I could easily demonstrate from the Scriptures both that Jesus believed this of Himself and that His disciples believed it as well. But here's the point. Every time that Jesus, or one of His disciples, makes the claim that He is the ONLY way to God there is, at least potentially, an implicit argument that only a God-Man can reconcile man to God! I could quote many verses, but let me offer just a few. When Jesus says to Nicodemus, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so MUST THE SON OF MAN BE LIFTED UP; that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life" (JN. 3:14-15, emphasis mine), He is speaking as the God-Man. I admit that it is not necessary to interpret such a statement as requiring a Divine sacrifice, but it certainly has this potential – and that's something to think about. In other words, since Jesus is the God-Man, He could be implicitly understood as saying that ONLY such a One



as He is capable of reconciling man to God. It's the same with many such statements of Jesus (e.g. JN. 14:6, etc.). And Jesus' disciples, who also believed in His deity, repeatedly claim that there is no other way for man to be reconciled to God. For example, in Acts 4:12 Peter declares, "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." Again, this does not PROVE that a Divine sacrifice was necessary (the burden is yours to show it was not), but it may certainly be read as implying its necessity.

Second, consider this. In Paul's famous verse on substitution, 2 Cor. 5:21, we read: "He (the Father) made Him (the Son) who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Luther referred to this as the "Great Exchange." Christ takes our sin on Himself and gives us His righteousness in its place! Now an argument could be made that, in order to be acceptable to God, man must be clothed in His righteousness. If this is so, then it would seem to follow that a Divine substitute was not superfluous, but ESSENTIAL. For how could we become "the righteousness of God" in Christ, unless Christ was actually God? It's reasonable to believe He could only give us God's righteousness if He was, in fact, God. And if such righteousness is essential for our reconciliation to God, then it follows that a Divine substitute would be necessary to achieve this goal. Again, I fully admit that this argument is NOT CONCLUSIVE—it is merely suggestive. But as I've said repeatedly (I'm sure you're sick of it!), you bear the burden of proof – not me. Thus, I think I've offered some good reasons to believe that a Divine sacrifice was indeed necessary and not overkill. I also think I've demonstrated that you're far from proving your own position (if in fact it's actually your position; I'm not saying it necessarily is).

Wishing you God's richest blessings,

Michael Gleghorn

# **“Did Christianity Really Come From Zoroastrianism?”**

I am a Christian and have been one all of my life. I am moderately well versed in apologetics. As far as I can tell, as of now, there is only one real argument against Christianity and that comes from Zoroastrianism. I do not know how much you know about this religion, but it was founded by someone called Zoroaster or Zarathushtra who was born around 1200 BC and has a holy text called the “avesta.” It used to be one of the most popular religions in the world, but has since dwindled down to about 140,000 members, most in India.

The argument that people make is that the Jewish ideal of a savior comes from Zoroastrianism, apparently there is a strong savior figure in Zoroastrianism that will die, become resurrected, and then judge the dead. People claim that when the Jews were taken in Babylon they were exposed to this faith and adopted parts of it as their own; they say this explains why the idea of a savior figure emerges in the parts of the Bible that were written during or after the Jews’ stay in Babylon. People will then go on to say that Zoroastrianism developed many cults, particularly among Romans, about the time of Jesus that claimed a divine figure will come to earth and defeat “the bull” or something like Satan or the devil, and then judge everyone. These people claim that this made the acceptance of Jesus much more likely and also point out that the three wisemen that went to see Jesus were called “magi” which is a priest in Zoroastrianism. One of the tenants of Zoroastrianism says that the savior figure will be found by

following a certain star, which is what the three wisemen did. Also Zoroastrianism seems to hint that the savior will be born by a virgin (but I am not sure of that).

People would claim that the prophecies that are fulfilled in the New Testament are added in by the authors and would counter the martyrdom of the authors as evidence for belief by saying that they eventually grew to believe it, which is possible according to modern day psychology. They would then say that Jesus was either made up, or a historical figure that happened to be very intelligent but also insane in a way that was not apparent to people around him. A very unlikely event, but one that must be used to explain something amazing as the spread of Christianity according to them.

Now I have of course not cited any evidence for my references on the argument for Zoroastrianism leading to Christianity which is because much of what I have learned is from people who I think reference A History of Zoroastrianism by Mary Boyce. I have not read that book (it is in two volumes I believe), so I cannot judge its arguments, but from a purely historical point of view, if Zoroastrianism really said all the aforementioned material before Jesus was around and then it traveled to Babylon, it does seem like a good argument against Christianity.

I must admit that there some things wrong with this theory, one is that Zoroastrianism is very big about purification by fire, which Christianity never mentions, although it would be possible to think that Zoroastrianism was diluted by the time it got to Babylon and Christianity also does talk about hell being very fiery. I do not know how much of the language the avesta is written in we can actually translate, maybe all, maybe not that much. And I also am well aware of people distorting facts to suit their own purpose and I have no idea how respected Mary Boyce is among historians. I would also like you to check out the web page [www.geocities.com/Pentagon/6315/religion/zoro.html](http://www.geocities.com/Pentagon/6315/religion/zoro.html) as it

**argues that Christianity is the result of a cult and cites sources.**

**Please tell me your thoughts on this matter and on any other argument that Christianity resulted from cults or other religions; it has been pulling at my heart for a while.**

Thanks so much for writing! The argument that Judaism/Christianity borrowed from Zoroastrianism is, as yet, unproven. In fact, if any borrowing was done, it was quite possibly the other way around (i.e. Zoroastrianism borrowed from Judaism/Christianity).

In the first place, the evidence actually indicates that Zoroaster wasn't even born until about the time of the Babylonian Captivity. Kenneth Boa states that his dates are sometimes given as 628-551 B.C. (*Cults, World Religions and the Occult* [Illinois: Victor Books, 1990], 45). Other scholars give similar, though not identical, dates (e.g. Herzfeld, 570-500 B.C.; Jackson, 660-583 B.C. – see W.S. Lasor, "Zoroastrianism," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter Elwell [Michigan: Baker Book House, 1984], 1202). If these dates are even relatively accurate then it is quite possible that Judaism did not borrow from Zoroastrianism. Rather, it may actually have been Zoroaster who borrowed from the religion of the Jewish captives in Babylon.

It is certainly true that Zoroaster spoke of such things as "... the coming of a savior and the resurrection of the body," etc. (Ibid., 44). But he may have borrowed these ideas from the Jewish captives in Babylon. Indeed, it appears that all of these ideas can be found in the Jewish Scriptures PRIOR to the Babylonian Captivity.

For instance, even if we grant the contention of the person who wrote the web article you referred me to, that Isaiah offers the first, full monotheistic conception of God (e.g. Isaiah 43:10-13), it by no means follows that Isaiah borrowed

this conception from Zoroastrianism! Indeed, Isaiah wrote his book BEFORE Zoroaster was even born! The period in which Isaiah was writing was roughly that of 740-680 B.C. Thus, if there was any borrowing, it was Zoroaster borrowing from Isaiah—not vice-versa. Besides this, LaSor argues that Zoroaster was not a true monotheist anyway, but a polytheist. At most he was a dualist: “He exalted Ahura Mazda...as supreme among the gods...and viewed the world as an agelong struggle between Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu” (Ibid., 1202).

In addition, the coming of a savior is promised as early as Gen. 3:15 in the Bible. This was long before the birth of Zoroaster. Genesis was probably written between 1450-1410 B.C. And there are numerous other Messianic prophecies before the Babylonian Captivity (e.g. in Numbers 24:17 (Law); Psalm 22—especially v. 1, 7-8, 14-18 (writings); Isaiah 52:12-53:12 (Prophets)). All of these prophecies were given BEFORE the birth of Zoroaster and the development of Zoroastrianism. Thus, we need not think that Judaism/Christianity borrowed the idea of a Savior from Zoroastrianism; likely it was just the reverse.

The resurrection of the body seems clearly alluded to in Job 19:25-27. Although this book may have been written during the time of Solomon (approx. 965 B.C.), the events themselves are almost certainly from the patriarchal period (approx. 2000 B.C.). Additionally, Psalm 16:10, written by David long before the Babylonian Captivity also alludes to the physical resurrection of the Messiah (see Acts 2:25-32). Thus, the idea of bodily resurrection (including the resurrection of the Messiah) would seem to predate the advent of Zoroastrianism.

Finally, angels are mentioned in the Bible frequently in Genesis (e.g. 3:24; 19:1; 28:12; etc). Thus, the biblical doctrine of angels is also prior to the beginning of Zoroastrianism.

As for the NT authors adding in Messianic prophecies after the

fact, it is simply false. For example, a copy of the text of Isaiah, dating to around the 2nd cent. B.C., was found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. This copy of Isaiah is thus PRIOR to the birth of Christ. The prophecies are genuine. Not only this, they also predate the origin of Zoroastrianism as I mentioned previously.

As for Jesus being either unhistorical or insane, both conjectures are entirely without merit. The first flies in the face of an immense amount of information from both ancient Christian and non-Christian sources that were roughly contemporary to Jesus. For instance, aside from the NT and early Christian writers, there are references to Jesus in the Talmud, Josephus, Tacitus, Pliny the Younger, etc. The second notion, that Jesus was insane, is pure speculation with virtually no evidence whatsoever to support it. People say all sorts of strange things, but the evidence in support of these theories is flimsy in the extreme. And the evidence against such ideas is truly overwhelming.

I hope this sets your mind at rest a little. The ties between Judaism/Christianity and Zoroastrianism are certainly interesting, but the evidence is insufficient to say that the former borrowed from the latter. Indeed, if any borrowing was done, it was likely Zoroastrianism borrowing from Judaism/Christianity.

God bless you,

Michael Gleghorn, Ph.D.  
Probe Ministries

\*\*\*

**I thank you for answering my question. I would just like to add to that response, which detailed how the Jews did not “steal” from Zoroastrianism, that in Deuteronomy 18:10 the Jews are forbidden to have anyone “pass through fire,” a practice that Zoroastrianism used and adopted. The passage**

goes on to say that they are forbidden to do many things that the other pagan cults did, such as the Zoroastrians. That would suggest that the adoption of Zoroastrian traditions would be unlikely considering that they were forbidden to have anything to do with them.

Thanks, \_\_\_\_\_, for this addendum!

Sue Bohlin  
Probe Ministries Webmistress

---

## **“Is Tai Chi Always Related to Eastern Meditation Practices?”**

I was interested to read your response to [the email regarding Christians training in martial arts](#) and I agree with it. I have a related question. Is Tai Chi always related to Eastern meditation practices? I like the peacefulness and gracefulness of the movements but I am hesitant to learn it myself as I fear it is another form Eastern meditation.

You ask a very good question. In *Encyclopedia of New Age Beliefs*, the chapter on “The Martial Arts” has a number of interesting quotes, comments and practical advice useful for Christians considering involvement in the martial arts (Ankerberg and Weldon, Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 1996; pp. 351-378).

Probably the first question we need to answer is whether or not Eastern meditation is inherently bound up with Tai Chi. Can the physical exercises be separated from the meditative

elements of Tai Chi? Historically, “the development of Tai Chi is often credited to Chang San-Feng (ca. 1260-1368)...His strong interest in the I Ching and other occult pursuits were well known and, in part, eventually led him to develop Tai Chi” (Ankerberg & Weldon, 363). The origin of Tai Chi appears to have strongly influenced the philosophical rationale for its various movements. For instance, one text states: “[T]he movements of Tai Chi Chuan and the [I Ching] hexagrams upon which they are based are both methods of describing the circulation of psychic energy in the body of the meditator” (Da Liu, *Tai Chi Chuan and I Ching*, New York: Perennial/Harper & Row, 1978; cited in Ankerberg & Weldon, 366).

But does this mean that the physical movements cannot be separated from the Eastern meditation practices? It seems to depend on who you ask. One book on Tai Chi states, “The great majority [in China]...have always engaged in it, and do so still, quite without mystic or religious purpose” (Edward Maisel, *Tai Chi for Health*, New York: Dell/Delta, 1972; cited in Ankerberg & Weldon, 369). However, another source declares, “The ancient and elegant system of Chinese exercise known as T'ai Chi Ch'uan is designed primarily to maintain and enhance health by giving full expression to the life-force, or ch'i, of the universe, embodied in each of us...Tai Chi is more than a mere physical exercise...it is a silent meditation, an energizing exercise...a daily ritual and prayer...It embodies the vibrant philosophy of Taoism...” (Jerry Mogul, “Tai Chi Chuan: A Taoist Art of Healing,” Part One, *Somatics: The Magazine-Journal of the Bodily Arts and Sciences*, Autumn 1980; cited in Ankerberg & Weldon, 369).

Personally, I would be hesitant to say that Tai Chi exercise programs ALWAYS incorporate Eastern meditation practices. However, it would probably be true to say that they OFTEN incorporate such practices. Thus, I would be extremely careful about becoming involved with Tai Chi. Here are three important principles to help one in making a wise, informed decision



about a Tai Chi exercise program:

1. What is the world-view of the instructor teaching the class? If the instructor embraces Eastern philosophical and religious ideas this will almost certainly come out in how the class is conducted. Ankerberg and Weldon write, "In large measure, the religious or nonreligious nature of martial arts instruction depends more on the instructor than on any other factor" (354). If the instructor embraces Eastern ideas, I would definitely avoid the class.

2. "It may also be prudent to observe an advanced class. This will help the prospective student determine whether Eastern philosophy is taught only as the practitioner progresses" (Erwin de Castro, et al., "Enter the Dragon?" Part 2, prepublication copy, *Christian Research Journal*, 1994; cited in Ankerberg & Weldon, 373). Again, if you notice Eastern ideas surfacing in advanced classes, I would avoid even beginning your training there.

3. Carefully seek God's guidance in prayer.

Like many of the issues we face in life, I doubt whether this one is completely black or white. However, I would carefully avoid involvement in any form of Tai Chi which incorporates Eastern thought and practices. Since many programs likely do incorporate such things, I would be very cautious about becoming involved in this discipline. However, if you are able to find a completely non-religious program, taught by an instructor who does not hold any Eastern philosophical and religious ideas, and if you have carefully sought God's guidance in prayer and have a clean conscience about participating, then I doubt that the physical exercises are somehow wrong or sinful in themselves. That's my opinion, at any rate.

God bless you,

Michael Gleghorn

# **“Why Do Christians Go to Church on Sunday Instead of the Sabbath?”**

**Why do most Christians go to church on Sunday, the first day of the week, instead of the sabbath, the seventh day of the week?**

Christians typically go to church on Sunday, rather than Saturday, because Jesus was raised from the dead on a Sunday morning. The resurrection is extremely important for Christians. Indeed, it's so important that, if it didn't occur, Christianity would be false! In 1 Corinthians 15:17 Paul writes, “...if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.”

But why is such great significance attached to Jesus' bodily resurrection? Although many reasons could be given, let me mention just two:

1. In the resurrection, God the Father vindicated the person and work of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who had been crucified not for His own sin, but for ours (2 Cor. 5:21). Thus, in Romans 1:4 we read that Jesus “was declared the Son of God with power by (or “as a result of”) the resurrection from the dead.” But don't Christians believe that Jesus was already the Son of God before His resurrection? Yes; this passage teaches that the resurrection was God's powerful confirmation that Jesus' message about Himself was true. After all, anyone can CLAIM to be the Son of God, but only God can

confirm the truth of such a claim by raising the person from the dead!

2. In Romans 4:25 we read that Christ “was delivered up because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.” To “justify” someone means to declare them “righteous,” or not-guilty. This passage indicates the sufficiency of Christ’s death for all believers. In other words, believers can be confident of their justification by God on the basis of Christ’s resurrection. If the Father had not been fully satisfied with Christ’s death for our sins, He would not have raised Him from the dead. The resurrection is thus God’s confirmation of the complete sufficiency of Christ’s death for all who believe!

It is thus because of the tremendous importance of Christ’s resurrection for the Christian faith that Christians worship on Sunday, the day that God raised Jesus from the dead.

I hope you find this information helpful. May God bless you as you search the Scriptures!

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn  
Probe Ministries