

The Word in the Word – Jesus in the Hebrew Scriptures

*Even matters which in Torah seem as fruitless as thorns,
are in reality of the highest significance.
—Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah, 1*

Six reasons why I believe in Jesus

If what Christianity teaches about Jesus is true, then it should make sense (as much as humans can understand) on every level. Whenever something is “right” it somehow fits and fills many needs and requirements at once, giving us reasons to believe no matter how we look at it. So what about Jesus? Is faith in him strictly a matter of an illogical “leap,” or are there many reasons to believe?

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. (Luke 24:45) NIV

Consider...

1. God wants to be intimate with me; Jesus makes it possible.

“...God sometimes describes himself in human terms in the Torah in order to meet me on a level I can understand. ...the Lord knows I need a God I can relate to if he and I are to have a deep and loving relationship. ...such a relationship is impossible with the Master of the universe because the Creator is too huge to fill this empty heart I have.... But because Jesus is both God and man, I can feel completely connected with the Lord, which is something God clearly wants, if the Hebrew Scriptures are true.” (TGAM)

- ▶ In what ways can Jesus interact with us that God the Father cannot? (Hints: **Ex 33:19-20**, **Mt 17:7**,

2. God has always interacted with creation through human beings.

“Prayer, sacrifice, and fasting prove that he has always operated in creation through human beings. Why should he not visit us personally in the same way?” (TGAM)

- ▶ Why does God want us to pray? Why does he use us to demonstrate His love through our actions? In other words, why does He choose to interact with creation through human beings? (See **Ge 1:27**, **Ge 2:15**, **1 Cor 12:27** and **John 16:7-11**)
- ▶ How does Jesus’ earthly ministry fit in with your answer? (See **1 Tim 2:3-6**)

3. Jesus explains many confusing paradoxes.

“...the Paradox of Fertility, the Paradox of Blessing, the Paradox of Omnipresence, and the Paradox of the Red Heifer...God seems to thrive on paradox and can only be explained to the human mind through paradox. The Paradox of Jesus—that a man can be God and that the immortal God can die on my behalf—fits this pattern.” (TGAM)

**GOD LOVES
AN HONEST QUESTION!**

(continued)

- ▶ What are the paradoxes mentioned above and their connections with Jesus? (For the paradox of Fertility: compare **Ge 17:17; 25:21**; and **29:31** with **Luke 1:30-34**. For the paradox of the Blessing: compare **Ge 15:5-6; 18:17-18; Dt 7:7-9** with **Ro 11 Mt 28:19-20**. For the paradox of Omnipresence, compare **Ex 25:8** and **1 Ki 8:27** with **John 2: 18-19**. For the paradox of the Red Heifer, see the handout from Lesson 8)

4. Jesus cannot be fully understood.

*"...if Jesus' man/God nature or the Trinity were completely understandable, I would abandon Christianity precisely because...all true explanations of God's nature must openly include paradoxical concepts my mind cannot grasp."
(TGAM)*

- ▶ If we cannot understand Jesus completely, why did He try so hard to explain Himself in the Bible with parables, similes and metaphors? (Hints: **John 3:16** and **8:31-32**)

5. Jesus makes sense of grace.

*"...Jesus is the only founder of a worldwide religion who claimed to be God. I believe in Jesus because he makes sense of grace. Since it is impossible for me to climb to heaven, heaven came down—in Jesus—and carried me up."
(TGAM)*

- ▶ God wants to bridge the gap between us, but in our pride, His grace is often refused. We pretend we do not need God, or we are too far gone for even God to reach this low; both of these are pride. In his *Autobiography*, Benjamin Franklin had this to say about pride: "For even if I could conceive that I had completely overcome it, I should probably be proud of my humility." How does this relate to the cross? (Hint: see **Luke 18:9-14**)

6. Jesus makes sense of justice.

*"Justice is balance. If Adam was spiritually perfect before his first sin condemned him to death, only a second flawless Adam rising up from death can restore the balance of the Garden. But I cannot pay that price because I cannot be blameless before the Lord, so Jesus became my surrogate, my substitute perfection on the scales of justice, providing the perfect life for perfect life that perfect justice requires."
(TGAM)*

- ▶ Thirst proves the existence of water; hunger proves the existence of food, and loneliness proves that love exists. When someone steals something of yours, what do you long for? How common is this reaction? What do your answers prove concerning justice?
- ▶ When a thief is caught, our legal system calls for both compensation and punishment. Why not stop at compensation? How does your answer relate to the cross?

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