



PREPARED FOR THE HIGH/LOW

WEEK 2

Week 2 - Prepared for High/Low

Research

Welcome back to Week2. Get out your pens and note cards. It is time for a little research.



Jesus Christ is the focal point of all of history. He changed the world, but people today still do not believe he existed at all, let alone that He was God in the flesh.

Today's Topic: What historical evidence is there for the existence of Jesus?

The Bible teaches that Jesus was a man.

We believe the Bible to be the one and only source of truth. *John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.* And it teaches that Jesus was fully God and fully man. *John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.* And *Colossians 1:19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,*

Does this give you confidence that Jesus existed? Yes or No Why?

Early historical evidence supports the existence of Jesus.

Source #1 The Four Gospels

Why is biblical evidence for Jesus often rejected?

Listen to this quote about biblical evidence. “These sources are all Christian and are obviously and understandably biased in what they report, and have to be evaluated very critically indeed to establish any historically reliable information,” Historian Bart D. Ehrman says. “But their central claims about Jesus as a historical figure—a Jew, with followers, executed on orders of the Roman governor of Judea, Pontius Pilate, during the reign of the Emperor Tiberius—are borne out by later sources with a completely different set of biases. Therefore, admissible as evidence.

Sample of Biblical Source: Luke 2

[6] *And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. [7] And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.*

[39] *And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. [40] And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him*

Other Non-Biblical Evidence:

Source #2 Josephus in Jewish Antiquities - In one passage of *Jewish Antiquities* 20.9.1 that recounts an unlawful execution, Josephus identifies the victim, James, as the “brother of Jesus-who-is-called-Messiah.” *Antiquities* 18.3.3. "Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was the Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct to this day.

Source #3 Tacitus - In *Annals of Imperial Rome*, a first-century history of the Roman Empire written by the Roman senator and historian Tacitus. In chronicling the burning of Rome in 64 A.D., Tacitus mentions that Emperor Nero falsely blamed “the persons commonly called Christians, who were hated for their enormities. Christus, the founder of the name, was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the reign of Tiberius.”

Jesus was a real person in history that existed. As we continue our story in Mark, Jesus is now grown. [Luke 2:52](#) *And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.*

Jesus grew in wisdom and stature until he began his ministry around 30 years old. How do we know his age? [Luke 3:23](#) *Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli,*

Jesus began his ministry with our friend and his relative, perhaps his second cousin (that means Mary and Elizabeth were cousins but that is speculation), John the Baptist.

As we prepare to dive into the book of Mark, here are some historical facts.

- Jesus did exist as a man. There is evidence in and outside the Bible.
- Jesus is set to begin His ministry to the world.

Making a Plan

Let's start with reading our entire passage before we break it down. What flow do you see through the passage?

Mark 1:9–11

[9] In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. [10] And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. [11] And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

[12] The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. [13] And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.

[14] Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, [15] and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

[16] Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. [17] And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." [18] And immediately they left their nets and followed him. [19] And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. [20] And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.

Have you ever experienced ups and downs, similar to Jesus in the passage above?

Let's look together at some of the high points and low points mentioned in our story.

High Point – The Baptism of Jesus

Mark 1:9–11 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. [10] And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. [11] And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

Jesus has an opportunity to hear audibly from the Father. What does God the Father say about Jesus?

Does Matthew’s account add anything to the account?

Matthew 3:13–17 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. [14] John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” [15] But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. [16] And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; [17] and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

Jesus’ baptism accomplished several things for us as future believers. Let’s look at a couple of them.

1. **Jesus’ baptism established the Trinity** – All three persons are present at the same time destroys the idea of Modalism (God the Father became Jesus who became the Holy Ghost). Oneness Pentecostalism attempts to hide their modalism by saying Jesus can manifest Himself in all three “modes: simultaneously” but this simply makes Jesus into a narcissist for declaring His love for Himself in whom He is well pleased. Our God is three in one.

What are your thoughts?

2. **Jesus' baptism fulfilled the law** – Grant Osborne summarizes this fulfillment saying, Jesus “fulfills” the “right” requirement of God in “the OT pattern and prediction of the Messiah.” He does not need to repent, but by submitting to baptism Jesus begins His messianic work by identifying with the human need and providing the means by which it can be accomplished.”

Jesus was setting an example that He would fulfill in His death and resurrection. What is the story of your baptism?

Oh how quickly life can change.

Low Point – The Temptation of Jesus

From the amazing testimony of the Father, straight into the desert. Have you ever encountered this in your life where something great is quickly followed by an attack of the enemy?

Notice the word, immediately in the next sentence.

Mark 1:12–13 The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. [13] And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.

Quick Note: satan (yes I purposefully don't capitalize satan), the accuser, is a LIAR. *John 8:44 You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.* **When satan speaks DON'T LISTEN!**

Let's look at how Jesus defeats the enemy and his attacks as a pattern for us in our low points.

Attack #1: Lust of the Flesh

Matthew 4:1–11 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. [2] And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. [3] And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” [4] But he answered, “It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.””

Jesus’ fast was over, *And after fasting forty days and forty nights*, and he was obviously hungry.

What is the big deal? You don’t need to wait for God in this circumstance. You have the power. Change these stones. What’s the big deal? It won’t hurt anyone.

These are the lies that stream through our head when we are tempted by the lusts of the flesh. Pornography, gluttony, laziness, and on an on. Jesus quotes the book of Deuteronomy to rebuke the enemy. Scripture is key to rejecting the lies of the enemy.

- **Deuteronomy 8:3** *And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.*

Notice the context. God provided manna, bread from heaven, the daily bread. God provides everything our flesh needs. We simply live content.

Which of these defenses, scripture or contentment, help you defeat this attack of the lust of the flesh?

Is this attack effective on you? Yes Sometimes Not usually

Interesting Facts from Barna Surveys:

68% of church goers view pornography on a regular basis

On average, every home in the US wastes 474.5 pounds of food per year

The new magic of technology has pushed people away from hard work.

The new normal of expectations is celebrating mediocrity.

Attack #2: Pride of Life

[5] Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple [6] and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, ““He will command his angels concerning you,’ and ““On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.””

satan knows scripture. He will use anything to attack us.

Fulfill your destiny. Prove you are who you say you are. It is scripture, just do it. If you are the son of god, I mean that’s a big if, prove it. Prove it.

[7] Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

Most people recognize that Jesus is quoting Deuteronomy 6:16. *Deuteronomy 6:16 “You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah.”*

But the same phrasing is also used in Isaiah 7. Notice the promise after the quote.

Isaiah 7:10–15 Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz: [11] “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” [12] But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” [13] And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? [14] Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. [15] He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good.

We can overcome the pride of life when we remember to compare ourselves to Jesus.

Is this attack effective on you? Yes Sometimes Not usually

Do you struggle with pride of life?

Interesting Quote:

Since narcissists and prideful men deep down feel themselves to be faultless, it is inevitable that when they are in conflict with the world they will invariably perceive the conflict as the world’s fault.” – M. Scott Peck

Attack #3: Lust of the Eyes

This temptation is a different one.

[8] Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. [9] And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.”

Is satan trying to cause Jesus to covet? Covet what? The kingdoms? Their glory? Is satan trying to provoke Jesus to anger? I mean, Jesus owns everything right?

- **Deuteronomy 10:14** *Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it.*
- **James 1:17** *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.*

Does the enemy every cause you to covet?	Yes	Sometimes	Not usually
Do you struggle with reacting with anger?	Yes	Sometimes	Not usually

[10] Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, ““You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.”” [11] Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

Jesus uses two different quotes to make his point to the enemy. See if you can notice the implications in these verses and perhaps why this is the final temptation recorded.

- **Deuteronomy 6:13–15** *It is the LORD your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve and by his name you shall swear. [14] You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you—[15] for the LORD your God in your midst is a jealous God—lest the anger of the LORD your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth.*
- **1 Samuel 7:3–4** *And Samuel said to all the house of Israel, “If you are returning to the LORD with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your heart to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.” [4] So the people of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroth, and they served the LORD only.*

What are your thoughts about the temptations we have discussed?

These patterns of attack are still prevalent for us today. Look at 1 John 2:15–17 below.

- **1 John 2:15–17** Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ^[16] For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. ^[17] And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.
- **1 Corinthians 10:13** No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

What encouragement do you find in these verses?

High Point – Calling the Disciples

We will revisit this topic in a few weeks with the call of Levi and the other disciples. But first, read the verses below.

Mark 1:14-20 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, ^[15] and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.” ^[16] Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. ^[17] And Jesus said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” ^[18] And immediately they left their nets and followed him. ^[19] And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. ^[20] And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.

What are some of your observations about the above passage?

Checking the List

Celebrate baptism

What does it mean to celebrate baptism?

- **Colossians 2:12** *Having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.*

Jesus can help us in our temptations

We have a Savior that knows what we go through.

- **Hebrews 2:18** *For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*

We have a Savior that was without sin.

- **Hebrews 4:15** *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.*

How do these two facts make Jesus the perfect example for us to follow?

Serve God even in the midst of the ups/downs

There is a lie in the Christian world, that our sin disqualifies us from serving. How have you seen this lie at work in the church?

God works through us despite our sin. How is God calling you to serve?

The good news of the gospel is found in *1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Through the highs and the lows, if we confess our sins, Jesus forgives us! Praise the Lord for His unending grace.

What do we need to pack into our bags for the adventure that lies before us?

WORD OF GOD

CONFESSION

BAPTISM

THE GOOD NEWS

LIE DETECTOR

PERSEVERANCE

Time to pack up again. If you could only pick 2 of these phrases above to put into your heart and mind, which would you choose and why?

Choice 1: _____

Why?

Choice 2: _____

Why?

Finish your time together with a time of prayer. Pray for God to help us defeat the schemes of the enemy with the power of God's word.