Confirmed By Three: Proof For Our Faith

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday May 21st, 2017 (Courthouse CoC, Chesterfield, VA)

Text: II Pet. 1:12-21 Scripture Reading: Lk. 24:44-48

### Intro

1. Mankind has always questioned God: They question His word, His existence, and His love.
2. Recent attempts to reject Jesus as having really existed:
	1. Writer Michael Paulkovich says, “'Jesus NEVER existed” (2014)
* Claimed that there is little evidence for a person known as Jesus existing in history.
* Jesus is thought to have lived from about 5BC to 33AD in the Roman Empire.
* Says he found little to no mention of the supposed Messiah in 126 texts written in the first to third centuries, and says he was a “mythical character.”
* Only one mention of Jesus was present, in a book by Roman historian Josephus Flavius, but he says this was added by later editors.
* He says this is surprising despite the “alleged worldwide fame” of Jesus.
* All this has led him to believe that Jesus was a “mythical character”
* <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2776194/Jesus-never-existed-Writer-finds-no-mention-Christ-126-historical-texts-says-mythical-character.html> <http://www.blippitt.com/jesus-discovery/>
	1. *Caesar's Messiah: The Roman Conspiracy to Invent Jesus* by Joseph Atwill (2011)
* Atwill argues that the stories of Jesus in the New Testament are actually stories of Titus' campaign through Galilee and the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple.
* In this reading, the Gospels are clever satires created by the Flavian Emperors and their supporters.
* The main thrust of his argument is that the emperors wanted to create a pacifist Messiah to end the Jewish war (66-73 A.D.) and so they gave them Jesus who said:
	+ “Turn the other cheek”
	+ “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s”
	+ “Love your enemy”
* <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2776194/Jesus-never-existed-Writer-finds-no-mention-Christ-126-historical-texts-says-mythical-character.html>
* [http://www.amazon.com/Caesars-Messiah-Conspiracy-Flavian-Signature/dp/1461096405/ref=sr\_1\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1439429961&sr=8-1&keywords=ceasar%27s+messiah](http://www.amazon.com/Caesars-Messiah-Conspiracy-Flavian-Signature/dp/1461096405/ref%3Dsr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1439429961&sr=8-1&keywords=ceasar%27s+messiah)
1. Both attempts fail in light of the overwhelming evidence that Jesus existed. Even other scholars and historians don’t take these two men seriously.
	1. To say 126 contemporaries don’t mention Jesus so He didn’t exist is like taking 126 contemporary writers of Plato’s day who never mention him and then argue that he is a “mythical philosopher!”
2. Peter says “the truth” is confirmed by three things & provides proof for faith! (II Pet. 1:12-21)

#### Eyewitness Testimony

* 1. II Pet. 1:12-16: The apostles “did not follow cleverly devised tales.” Eyewitnesses.
	2. The force of human testimony rests upon three things:
		1. Honesty of witnesses: determined by general character and credibility
		2. Competency: opportunity to obtain knowledge, ability to observe & retain facts
		3. Number of witnesses: testimony of more than one witness = more credibility
	3. More than one eyewitness?
		1. I Cor. 15:3-8: All the apostles, and more than 500 witnesses at the same time!
		2. “Newly Found Document Holds Eyewitness Account Of Jesus Performing Miracle!” *(Ignazio Perrucci, was hired by the Vatican authorities to sort, analyze and classify 6,000 ancient documents in 2012)*
			1. “An Italian expert (Ignazio Perrucci) studying a first century document written by the Roman historian Marcus Velleius Paterculus that was recently discovered in the archives of the Vatican, found what is presumed to be the first eyewitness account ever recorded of a miracle of Jesus Christ *(Written 31 A.D., predates the gospels and book of James).* The author describes a scene that he allegedly witnessed, in which a prophet and teacher that he names Iēsous de Nazarenus *(Greco-Latin for Jesus of Nazareth),* resuscitated a stillborn boy and handed him back to his mother.” *(Not the first eyewitness account seen – Acts 1:21-22)*
		3. Jn. 20:30-31; 21:25: Not all miracles of Jesus recorded but these were written “…so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.”
	4. The possibility of having fellowship with the apostles in knowledge of Christ:
		1. I Jn. 1:1-4: “What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ” *(Lk. 1:2; Acts 1:3; 2:32; 4:20: Gal. 1:12).*
	5. If one refused to accept the testimony of the apostles, would they accept any testimony?

#### God’s Testimony

* 1. II Pet. 1:17-18: God’s voice thundered from Heaven, confirming His Son.
	2. God’s testimony at time of Christ’s baptism
		1. Mt. 3:16-17: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well- pleased."
	3. God’s testimony on Mt. Of Transfiguration
		1. *Mt. 17:1-8:* (Vs. 5) "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!"
	4. God’s testimony during Christ’s last public discourse in Jerusalem
		1. *Jn. 12:28:* "Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."
	5. God’s audible voice was heard by men three times while Christ was on earth!

#### Prophecy’s Testimony

* 1. II Pet. 1:19-21: The proof of God’s omnipotence rests in prophecy!
	2. The emphasis on prophecy:
		1. *Acts 2:16-21:* Peter quoted *Joel 2:28-32* as an explanation of the unusual events on Day of Pentecost.
		2. *Acts 2:25-31:* He quoted David’s prophecy *(Ps. 16:8-11)* as being fulfilled in Christ.
		3. *Acts 3:18:* He quoted prophets concerning the suffering of Christ.
		4. *Acts 3:22-24:* He quoted Moses *(Deut. 18:15, 18).*
		5. *Acts 10:43:* The prophets bear witness to the forgiveness found in Christ.
		6. I Pet. 1:10-12: The prophets spoke of the sufferings & glory of Christ.
	3. Prophecy is important because it shows the divine nature of God, to show He is an all-powerful, omnipotent being!
		1. A False prophet has to be wrong just once! *(Deut. 18:22)*
		2. Harold Camping foretold end of the world – May 21, 2011; Oct. 21, 2011
	4. There are at least 332 prophecies concerning Christ fulfilled!
		1. Lk. 24:45-48: The fulfillment proclaimed! *(Acts 3:22-24)*
	5. Many more prophecies fulfilled, including those that do not concern Christ.
	6. The amount of prophecies fulfilled proclaims God’s power and omnipotence!

## Conclusion

1. Jesus cited 4 testimonies as evidence in John 5 to prove that He is the Christ:
	1. John the Baptist *(Jn. 5:33-35)*
	2. Jesus’ miracles *(Jn. 5:36; also Jn. 3:2)*
	3. God the Father *(Jn. 5:37-38)*
	4. The Scriptures *(Jn. 5:39-40, 45-47: Moses testified about Him too!)*
2. The force of the written message:
	1. II Pet. 1:15; 3:1-2: Even though the (physical) writer is long dead, the word lives on and we are accountable to it *(Jn. 12:48; Rom. 2:16).*
3. That is why it is so important to be “established in the truth!” (II Pet. 1:12)
4. Man will always rebel against God, but let us hold fast our faith, “established in the truth!”
5. If you are not a Christian, you need to be. Repent and be baptized into His name!
6. If a Christian in error, don’t wait till it’s eternally too late. Repent and be renewed!
7. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!

**NEWLY-FOUND DOCUMENT HOLDS EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT OF JESUS PERFORMING MIRACLE**

<http://worldnewsdailyreport.com/newly-found-document-holds-eyewitness-account-of-jesus-performing-miracle/>

**Rome| An Italian expert studying a first century document written by the Roman historian Marcus Velleius Paterculus that was recently discovered in the archives of the Vatican, found what is presumed to be the first eyewitness account ever recorded of a miracle of Jesus Christ. The author describes a scene that he allegedly witnessed, in which a prophet and teacher that he names *Iēsous de Nazarenus*, resuscitated a stillborn boy and handed him back to his mother.**

Historian and archivist Ignazio Perrucci, was hired by the Vatican authorities in 2012, to sort, analyze and classify some 6,000 ancient documents that had been uncovered in the gigantic archive vaults. He was already very excited when he noticed that the author of the text was the famous Roman historian Velleius, but he was completely stunned when he realized the nature of the content.

Professor Perrucci found the text in the archives of the Vatican, while searching amongst a bundle of personal letters and other trivial documents dating from the Roman era.

The text as a whole is a narrative of the author’s return journey from Parthia to Rome that occurred in 31 AD, recorded in a highly rhetorical style of four sheets of parchment. He describes many different episodes taking place during his trip, like a a violent sandstorm in Mesopotamia and visit to a temple in Melitta (modern day Mdina, in Malta).

The part of the text that really caught M. Perrucci’s attention is an episode taking place in the city of Sebaste (near modern day Nablus, in the West Bank). The author first describes the arrival of a great leader  in the town with a group of disciples and followers, causing many of the lower class people from neighbouring villages to gather around them. According to Velleius, that great man’s name was *Iēsous de Nazarenus,* a Greco-Latin translation of Jesus’ Hebrew name, Yeshua haNotzri.

Upon entering town, Jesus would have visited the house of a woman named Elisheba, who had just given birth to a stillborn child. Jesus picked up the dead child and uttered a prayer in Aramaic to the heavens, which unfortunately the author describes as “immensus”, meaning incomprehensible.  To the crowd’s surprise and amazement,  the baby came back to life almost immediately, crying and squirming like a healthy newborn.

Marcus Velleius Paterculus, being a Roman officer of Campanian origins, seems to perceive Jesus Christ as a great doctor and miracle man, without associating him in any way to the Jewish concept of Messiah.

Many tests and analysis have been realized over the last weeks to determine the authenticity of the manuscript. The composition of the parchment and ink, the literary style and handwriting have all been carefully scrutinized and were considered to be entirely legitimate. The dating analysis also revealed that the sheepskin parchment on which the text is written, does indeed date from the 1st century of this era, more precisely from between 20-45 AD.

This new text from an author known for his reliability, brings a brand new perspective on the life of the historical character that is Jesus of Nazareth. It comes to confirm the Gospels on the facts that he was known for accomplishing miracles and that his sheer presence in a town was enough to attract crowds of people.

A complete and official translation of the document should be made available online in many different languages over the next few weeks, but the impact of the discovery is already felt in the scientific community. Many scholars have already saluted the finding as one of the greatest breakthrough ever realized in the study of the historical life of Jesus, while others have expressed doubts about the conclusions of Professor Perrucci and demand for more tests to be performed by other scientific institutions before drawing any conclusions.