

INTRODUCTION

A honeymoon couple was in the Watergate Hotel in Washington. The concerned bride asked, "What if the place is still bugged?" The groom said, "I'll look for a bug." He looked behind the drapes, behind the pictures, under the rug. Finally, he said, "AHA!" Under the rug was a disc with four screws. He got his Swiss army knife, unscrewed the screws, and threw the screws and the disc out the window.

The next morning, the hotel manager asked the newlyweds, "How was your room? How was the service? How was your stay at the Watergate Hotel?" The groom suspiciously asks, "Why are you asking me all of these questions?" The hotel manager replies, "Well, the couple in the room under you complained their chandelier fell on them."

What you don't know really can hurt you...or others! What you don't know about Jesus could be hazardous to your eternal health.

I grew up in a sleepy little town in Lower Alabama where nothing exciting ever happened. My city school went from the first grade to the eighth grade. When I was in the seventh and eighth grade I served on our safety patrol. We were volunteer crossing guards. We would stand at the intersections near the school and when students want to cross we would stand in the street with a stop-sign so the traffic would stop. I was really proud to be a safety patrol officer. We had a badge, and for my school pictures, I moved the badge up so it would appear in the photo.

One morning, I was standing at my spot and I saw an amazing car approaching. It was a long Pontiac Bonneville convertible with the top up. There was a huge set of cow horns attached to the front of the car and guns mounted on different parts of the exterior.

When I saw that car approaching, my eyes got as big as baseballs. I had never seen a car like that before or since. I stopped the car just to take a look at it. I walked to the driver's side and he rolled down the window I asked, "Whose car is this?" The driver pointed his thumb to the backseat and said, "Hank Williams, Jr." There in the backseat was a guy with hat and sunglasses and smoking what I assumed was a cigarette. He said, "Hey, kid." Then they drove off. I had never heard of Hank Williams, Jr. But, of course, everyone in Alabama had heard of Hank Williams.

I couldn't wait to get back to the school and tell everyone what I had seen and who I had met. It was the most exciting thing to happen in our town all year. So I went into my class and started telling my friends, "Hank Williams Jr. car just came through here. His car had longhorns on the hood, and guns all over the car. And Hank Williams, Jr. spoke to me."

But nobody believed me. They said, "Dykes, you're just making that up! There's no such thing as a car with longhorns on the front." I said, "No, I actually saw him!" They all laughed and said, "Sure."

But then two of the other safety patrol guys from another intersection down the street from where I was entered the room telling the same story. They were out of breath from running. "You won't believe what we just saw. There was this huge car with cow horns on the hood and guns everywhere. The sign on the back tire said, "Hank, Jr." So, nobody believed me until these two witnesses verified my story. It was great to have two witnesses verify my claim.

Jesus had somewhat the same problem I had that morning. He had made some outrageous claims about who He was and what He was doing. In If you look at John 5:18 you find the enemies of Jesus wanted to put Him to death because He was making Himself equal to God. They were asking Jesus to provide witnesses to His claims.

There is a very powerful legal principle that comes from the Bible. This foundational principle is found in Deuteronomy 19:15 and it says, "One witness cannot establish any iniquity or sin against a person, whatever that person has done. A fact must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses."

My story about seeing Hank Williams, Jr. wasn't believed until I had two other witnesses. The reason for this principle is that any individual can make any claim, but unless it can be verified by the testimony of two or more witnesses, it doesn't hold any merit.

Can you think of a television actor who recently claimed he was attacked and beaten up by two assailants who put a noose around his neck and yelled, "This is MAGA territory!" There don't seem to be any witnesses coming forward to verify the claims he made on national television. In fact, there is proof he made it all up.

Jesus was mindful of this Biblical principle of the need for two or more witnesses. In this passage of scripture, He uses the words "testimony" or "testify" ten times in just six verses.

John 5:31-47: Jesus said, "If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true. There is another who testifies about me, and I know that the testimony he gives about me is true. You sent messengers to John, and he testified to the truth. I don't receive human testimony, but I say these things so that you may be saved. John was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light."

"But I have a greater testimony than John's because of the works that the Father has given me to accomplish. These very works I am doing testify about me that the Father has sent me. The Father who sent me has himself testified about me. You have not heard his voice at any time, and you haven't seen his form. You don't have his word residing in you, because you don't believe the one he sent. You pore over the Scriptures because you think you have eternal life in them, and yet they testify about me. But you are not willing to come to me so that you may have life."

"I do not accept glory from people, but I know you—that you have no love for God within you. I have come in my Father's name, and yet you don't accept me. If someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him. How can you believe, since

you accept glory from one another but don't seek the glory that comes from the only God? Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe me, because he wrote about me. But if you don't believe what he wrote, how will you believe my words?"

These Jewish leaders didn't believe Jesus. In fact, they hated Him and were determined to eliminate Him for all of His radical claims. As you know, many Jewish people today don't believe Jesus is the Messiah. And there are multitudes of people who don't believe Jesus really is God in the flesh.

At any important court trial, both the prosecution and the defense may employ someone who is called an expert witness. This is a person who is permitted to testify at a trial because of their particular knowledge or expertise in a field relating to the case. Jesus mentioned that John the Baptist testified about Him. When John saw Jesus he said, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" But Jesus said He didn't need human testimony. Because He had three additional expert witnesses who would testify He was who He claimed to be.

So, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I would like to call these three expert witnesses to testify on behalf of Jesus Christ.

1. His miracles verified that Jesus came from Heaven.

Our first expert witness isn't an individual, it is a group—every miracle that Jesus ever performed is called to testify as an expert witness.

Jesus told the Jewish leaders to look around at the works He was performing. When we started our study of John last May, I pointed out that John's account is organized around seven key miracles, which are called signs. We've already studied three of them and we have four more to go. The first was the water turned into wine. The second was the healing of the official's son at a distance. The third was the healing of the lame man at the Pool of Bethesda. In John 6 we'll study the next two signs, feeding the 5,000 and Jesus walking on water. The sixth sign is when Jesus healed a man who was born blind. And the seventh sign was when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.

Jesus' miracles were signs to point us to someone and to something. So, here's a question for you to consider. How many miracles did Jesus perform while He was on earth? Do you have any idea? If you said, "Nobody knows" that would be the correct answer. In Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John we read about 37 unique miracles. But when you come to the very last verse in John, you encounter a stunning claim. Here's how John finished his account of a few of the miracles of Jesus. He wrote, "And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which, if every one of them were written down, I suppose not even the world itself could contain the books that would be written." (John 21:25 CSB) Wow! So there could have been many thousands of miracles we don't have recorded. How fun will it be to get to Heaven and learn about the other miracles of Jesus.

We don't know how many miracles Jesus performed, but we do know why He performed miracles. It wasn't just to perform random acts of kindness to help hurting people. He performed the miracles so we would believe and when we believe, we would experience life.

Here's how John summarized the purpose of the miracles, "Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." (John 20:30-31 CSB)

The miracles of Jesus were just Him changing things. He changed water into wine. He changed disease into health. He changed death into life. Jesus is still performing miracles because He is still changing lives. I've seen Jesus change thousands of lives. Let me tell you about one.

In the church where I formerly served there was a man who was the chairman of our deacons. He had a rebellious son named Jay, he really sank into sin in his early twenties. He was deep into drug use and joined a motorcycle gang notorious for committing crimes. He grew his hair out and got tats and piercings and rode with his gang all over the south. His parents were heartbroken and we prayed for Jay many times. After a couple of years of that kind of life he moved back home and lived in a shed behind his parents' home.

He had become disillusioned with that lifestyle and some of the gang members he thought were his friends had betrayed him. He was really deep in depression and despair. One afternoon his dad called me, and said, "I think Jay is really ready to give his life to the Lord, would you talk to him?" I said, "Sure."

I drove over to their house and walked around back. Jay was there working on his Harley. He had a cigarette hanging out of his mouth and was covered in grease. So I started talking to him about motorcycles and asking him to share about some of his travels. I just listened to him for over 30 minutes as he talked about how the guys he thought were his friends had robbed him and deserted him.

After a while, I directed the conversation to Jesus, not religion. And to fast-forward a little, that afternoon, Jay knelt onto that concrete pad and gave his heart to Jesus. But the thing that makes this story stand out was that he was radically changed. Almost overnight, he became a bona fide Jesus-freak. He jumped in and got involved with our singles ministry. And before long he was a leader in the singles ministry. I don't know that I've ever seen someone changed so radically so quickly. He changed his vocabulary, his lifestyle, and even his appearance. He looked like a different guy.

I can prove that because about two months after he was saved Jay was driving his car to a single's event, when a policeman pulled him over for a taillight that was out. The officer asked to see his driver's license. His driver's license picture was taken before he was saved. After looking at his license, the policeman said, "Sir, step out of the car. You are not the same person as this driver's license picture. Do you want to explain what you're doing with this license?"

Jay burst out laughing and said, "Yes sir, a couple of months ago I gave my heart to Jesus and He has changed me into a new person." Jay even started to witness to the policeman. Finally, Jay produced another form of ID and the policeman let him go. But I love that story, because Jesus changed Jay so radically that even looked different that his driver's license picture. Jesus is still in the miracle business.

2. The Father identified Jesus as His Son.

The next expert witness I call to the stand to testify is God the Father. Jesus said that in addition to His works, that the Father testified about Him. Then He told them they had not heard the Father's voice. But everyone who was present when John baptized Jesus heard the voice of God.

The Bible says, "When all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized. As he was praying, heaven opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in a physical appearance like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: 'You are my beloved Son; with you I am well-pleased.'" (Luke 3:21-22 CSB)

This was the voice of the Father verifying that Jesus was His son; that He loved Him, and that He was pleased with Jesus. If you are a mom or a dad, I've often used this verse as a reminder of how God shows us what a perfect parent should communicate to their children. Moms and dads, you should verbally tell your children, "I love you, and I am proud of you." That's what the Heavenly Father said to Jesus. Son, I love you and I'm proud of you."

This wasn't the only time the Father testified about Jesus. Later on, Jesus took Peter, James, and John up to a mountain with Him. As He started to pray, His appearance changed and the Bible says that He was transfigured before them, that meant the veil of His human flesh gave way to the Shekinah glory of God. Moses and Elijah appeared and were talking to Jesus. Then the Father spoke from heaven again.

Many years later Peter would recall that day when he wrote: "For we did not follow cleverly contrived myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; instead, we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased!' We ourselves heard this voice when it came from heaven while we were with him on the holy mountain." (2 Peter 1:16-18 CSB)

So not only do the miracles of Jesus testify, but the Father also testifies and confirms the claims of Jesus.

3. Moses prophesied that Jesus is the Messiah.

The third expert witness I will call to testify is Moses, who represents all the writers of the Old Testament. Jesus told the Jewish leaders, "Go ahead and study all the scriptures, that was the Old Testament, because you think they contain eternal life. Well, all these scriptures testify

about me." That word "to search" or "pore over" in the CSB was a Greek word that described a dog tracking a scent to find a trail that leads to the prey. Jesus said everyone should put their nose to the Old Testament and follow the trail. And He claimed that all the trails lead to Him.

He said, "You all love and revere Moses and you claim to follow his teachings. If you really believed Moses then you would believe me because Moses wrote about me!"

Do you realize what an audacious claim Jesus made? Mohammed knew both the Old and the New Testament well, but he never claimed that Moses or any of the prophets wrote about Him.

The two greatest heroes of the Jewish people were Abraham and Moses. In John 8 Jesus said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad." The Jews said, "What? You're crazy. You're not even 50 years old and you claim to have seen Abraham? No way." Then Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I am." They were so angry that they picked up stones to stone Him.

On the first Easter afternoon, Jesus joined a couple of disciples walking from Jerusalem toward Emmaus. They didn't recognize Jesus. He asked them why they were so sad. They said, "We had hoped that Jesus of Nazareth would prove to be the Messiah, but sadly, three days ago, He died on the cross."

The Bible says: Jesus said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Wasn't it necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and enter into his glory?' Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted for them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures." (Luke 24:25-27 CSB)

Ultimately, you must believe the Bible by faith. But there are some people who are looking for proof. The prophecies written about Jesus 700 years before Bethlehem provide convincing proofs. Daniel predicted WHEN Jesus would be born, to the extent that the Magi showed up at that time looking for the King of the Jews. Micah predicted WHERE Jesus would be born. Isaiah predicted dozens of details about the birth, ministry, death and burial of Jesus.

You can't make these things up. The dating and details of these prophecies can't be ignored.

For the sake of comparison, just imagine that American archaeologists uncovered writings from a previously unknown native American tribe. The scroll was written in the 1400s, 700 years ago. One of the scrolls made a prediction about a particular man. It said he would be born in Ruston, Louisiana in 1953. That he would grow up near the territory of the Alabama Indians. That he would have a grandfather and a father named Orlo; that he would get married and be the father of two daughters, and would one day be the pastor of Green Acres Baptist Church.

Those are seven detailed predictions. There are over 7 billion people living on planet earth, but there is only ONE person who could fulfill all seven of those predictions. Me. That prophecy doesn't exist.

But what we do have are over sixty Old Testament prophecies that provide details about the Jewish Messiah, and only *one* individual has ever lived who has fulfilled all of them—Jesus of Nazareth. This is convincing proof.

CONCLUSION

So ladies and gentlemen of the jury, you have heard the testimony of these three expert witnesses: the miracles of Jesus; the voice of the Father; and the prophecies from Moses and the other Old Testament prophets. It is time for your verdict.

Years ago Albert Simpson wrote a song that asks: What will you do with Jesus? Neutral you cannot be. One day your heart will be asking, "What will He do with me?"

OUTLINE

Three Expert Witnesses for Jesus

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For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes



*David O. Dykes, Pastor
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