

THE SUPER

NATURALNESS

OF CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

Today there is a great war, being waged against the historic fact of the super naturalness of Jesus Christ. Scholars of various schools are doing all within their power to destroy the credibility of both the Word of God and the historical fact of Christ's supernatural power and abilities. One of these schools, named the "Jesus Seminar" based in the United States makes many statements about the Lord Jesus Christ, that seek to undermine the faith of Christians. Declaring that much of the things taught in the Gospels cannot be attributed to Jesus Christ.

There are basically two embattled positions in this conflict, those whom we may define as the 4supernaturalisms and those who take the position of Naturalists, the above mentioned "Jesus Seminar" holds the later position. Naturalism is the school of thought that includes all forms of philosophy, believing that in the final analysis the basis of all things is physical. It is the philosophy that believes all things can be explained by science. The naturalist insists that there is no positive evidence that can warrant mans belief in the supernatural. They deny that there was anything supernatural in the life of the Lord Jesus, and that everything He did has a natural explanation.

On the other hand, the super naturalist is the individual or group that believes in the manifestation of God in and through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, as He lived among men. The writer believes in the supernatural life of Christ, and seeks to show something of this in this brief paper.

Apart from the supernatural preservation of the Holy Bible, which is the Divine Revelation to us, there are five features that can be studied all of which show the supernatural nature of Christ, they are.

The miraculous preservation of the Messianic Line,
The miraculous Conception of the Lord in the womb of the virgin Mary,
The Miracles that the Lord performed,
The Transfiguration
The resurrection of Christ from the dead.

It is not the intention of the writer to analysis the many objections that the Naturalistic school have present of the Supernatural position over the years, although some of the specific ideas have been mentioned under the various subject headings. The basic idea of the paper is to set forth as simply as possible the historic and biblical facts of the five aspects of Christ's life.

This booklet, although far from being an exhaustive work, seeks to present some of the historic facts concerning the supernatural existence of Jesus Christ.

THE MIRACULOUS PRESERVATION OF THE MESSIANIC LINE. In both the Gospels of Matthew and Luke we have the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ, in Matthew running back forty-two generations, through Joseph to Abraham. In Luke the information is found to run back to Adam. It is the purpose in this to discuss what some claim to be contradictions and omissions in these listings, but simply to show that there is on record, what we might call "The Messianic Line." The few variations, and that is supposing there are any, make little or no difference to the matter in hand.

Now all men living today have a long line of ancestors, going back many years, the writer of this paper can trace his lineage back to Recorded as Gaetesdene in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, dated AD944 and in the 16th., century and to a specific village in England. But that is a mere four hundred years, and the amount of research required to get to that point is enormous. Past that point one must acknowledge, that yes although there were many ancestors, who they were, what they were, has been lost to the ages of history. There may have been rich men, may have been robbers, there may have been Christians and pagans. Records do not exist, even in England as to these things.

The Genealogy of the Lord Jesus goes back over forty-two generations and covers at least 2000 years to

Abraham, and then some, because as we have said Luke goes back to Adam, so we are looking at over four thousand years of recorded history. In fact, in one respect to the dawn of mans creation, now there is not a man living who can claim to be able to do this, despite the fact we all come from the one Adamic stock, now that is miraculous.

That however is only of secondary interest, because we must remember that God made two great promises, one to Satan and one to Abraham. The Promise made to Satan (the serpent) is found in Genesis 3:15, where He says that through the seed of the woman, would come one who would bruise his (Satan's) head. This promise was given at least two thousand years before Abraham, when, God calls Abraham, and to him promises a seed that would bless the earth Genesis 12:1-3, now there is little doubt that this Promise or prophecy points to Jesus. Paul points this out in Galatians 6:16. About three hundred years later, this promise is reaffirmed to Jacob, this time being a little more specific, stating that a ruler of Israel would rise out of the tribe of Judah.

Six hundred and fifty years pass and to a direct descendant of Judah, David the son of Jesse, is crowned King of Israel. Nathan, the prophet of God in 2Samuel 7 reaffirms to David, that the Messiah promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, through into the Tribe of Judah, David's tribe, would be born of his descendants,

v,12 declares "*I will set up thy seed.*" Now this initially refers to Solomon, there is little argument about that, however we have the authority of Peter in Acts 2:29-30 for applying this to Christ. Christ is the seed of David. From David a long period of some one thousand and forty years pass before the Saviour, the seed of David is born.

Now what we have in all this is a long series of Divine Promises, each associated with the Messiah. It is therefore of vital importance that to fulfil the Promise that the messianic Line be both protected and recorded. Now think of this, to accomplish this, it was necessary that there be born at least one male child in each generation, who would grow into manhood and who would also produce a son. This line had to run back unbroken for at least two thousand years and if we go back to the original promise over four thousand years. There was an unbroken line of male descendants; from at the latest Abraham through to Christ, who was to be born of the tribe of Judah, this is a miracle.

Wilbur Smith uses as an example of the supernaturalness of this the example of Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln had four children, all sons, so based on this one would think that the Lincoln line was safe for posterity. However, of these four children one died in infancy, one in his youth, another in early manhood before he was able to get married. So out of the four sons, three died

before they were able to leave and progeny. The only one of the four boys to marry was Robert Todd Lincoln, (1893-1926) he fathered three children, two girls and a boy, before he could get married the only son died. Now whilst the two girls married and had children, the direct male line from Abraham Lincoln died and is today extinct.

This example shows the frailty of human lineage, with this line terminating in less than a century. Yet with Abraham God maintained his direct line for two thousand years, until Christ was born. Now with the relative high rate of child mortality, in those days, along with problems of sterility, wars etc., this is not only a remarkable feat, in human terms, but one of super- natural proportions.

THE TESTIMONY OF HIS BIRTH. THE PAR-THE-NO-GENESIS OF CHRIST.

Of the many facts that come under assault from the critics of the Lord Jesus Christ, two stand out above the rest, the Resurrection, and the Virgin Birth. It is the latter that we are now concerned with. Now the writer is not so much concerned with the actual aspects of the birth of Christ, as important as they were, because the fact is Christ was born in the normal manner. After nine months of gestation Mary gave birth to Christ, in the same way that women have given birth since the day Eve gave birth to Cain and Abel. The Supernaturalness of Christ's birth lies elsewhere, and it is the purpose of this booklet to highlight these facts.

OBJECTION ONE: There have been arguments put up by men against this doctrine, the main one being that of the biological impossibility, the idea that a female egg could be fertilized without the male agency. It is however a fact of nature that this very thing takes place almost daily in nature. For example, the 'drone' bee is born from an unfertilised egg, having a mother, but no father, the mother being the Queen, this same thing happens with the Saw and Gall flies, as well as among plants, one of which is the common Dandelion.

No knowledgeable critic of the Virgin Birth would risk his reputation by saying that such a thing is impossible, when it is a well-established fact of nature. We have however to acknowledge that there is a vast difference between the creatures mentioned and Humans, and these things are mentioned only to show the biological possibility and nothing more.

OBJECTION TWO: That the Gospel record of the Virgin Birth was construed because the Jewish people expected their Messiah to be born in such a manner. There is not a single shred of evidence to support this idea. Nothing in the writings of the rabbinical teachers, suggest that the Christ would be conceived and born of a virgin. The prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 was not then considered a viable fact.

OBJECTION THREE: That the theory of the idea of the virgin birth originated in the Babylonian religion and was later adopted by the Gospel writers. The first thing to ask is why on earth should they need to do such a thing, and then what if the Babylonian religion had this point correct after all?

Now the fact is the Babylonian Religion did believe this? The point is, simply because the religion of Babylon is deemed pagan, does not mean that they did not retain some elements of truth. There are many things that could be discussed at this point, but the origins and development of that religion is not the objective of this booklet

The fact of the matter is that God's Word tells us very differently, that Christ is risen from the dead, and because of this we have an eternal hope in Him.

The evidence of our Lord's resurrection is shown to be satisfactory, according to the common rules and principles that discriminate between good and bad evidence. Over the years many thousands of people have shifted the evidence, searching out every minute piece for analysis, carefully assessing every fragment, weighing up every detail, and concluding that Christ died and rose again. There are few historical accounts better supported by good evidence than the resurrection of Christ.

The Word of God reveals to us the Resurrection of Christ and the fact that it was a supernatural event, in the life of our Super- natural Saviour, to deny this is to deny a great and impressive array and weight of evidence.

However, as the idea that the virgin birth of Christ had its origins in this, we need to take a very brief look at it, and what follows is of a theoretical nature, yet there is strong evidence to support the concept.

The religion of Babylon developed from the same source as the religion of the Jews when the Jews became custodians of God's Redemptive plane. Prior to the Noahic flood, the Promise of the Redeemer, encapsulated in proto evanglium, Genesis 3:15.

This divine promise was held within the Messianic line from Seth, through to Noah, the promise being that the Redeemer would come from the seed of the woman, not of the man; this is seen today as referring to the Virgin Birth of Christ. If so today, why not then, when things were a lot clearer in people's eyes, (it is from this same verse that the Roman Catholic dogma of Mariolatry has its origins). This Promise was taken into the Ark, when the inhabitants eventually emerged, so did the Promise and all that it entailed, although the writer is not condoning the idea that this is where Matthew and Luke obtained their information.

Among other things, within the Babylonian religion, was this idea that the Redeemer would be born of a virgin. The idea of which had its origins in Scripture. The fact that this became perverted over the years and was applied to other gods is as far as this theory is

concerned irrelevant, the fact of the matter is that these people despite all the corruptions retained some element of truth. This does not mean that I condone or accept this pagan religion, I most certainly do not, but by the same token we must always be careful that we do throw out the proverbial baby with the bath water. This idea is mentioned only to show that the idea is not so obnoxious as some may consider it to be.

With these three major objections out of the way, and we have only just touched them, we need to look at the positive aspects of the Lord's birth and the events the lead up to it.

THE SUPERNATURAL FOREKNOWLEDGE:

Now what we are about to say is only valid if we believe that the things recorded are historical facts, and not added later. In Matthew 1:21, we have the record of the angel's appearance to Joseph, in which he revealed to Joseph two things that no human parent could possibly know about their unborn child. The first was the sex of the child and the second was what the child would grow to be, his purpose or mission on earth.

Consider the first of these facts, it is true that today via the means of modern science and the development of the Ultra Scan, it is possible to know the sex of a child, but two things should be noted,

Firstly, the child in the womb must be well developed before this can be determined.

risen.

A dead man, no matter how good he may have been whilst alive, is of no value if dead, if dead He cannot forgive sin, and forgive- ness of sin is the central part of the Gospel, so all the teaching of forgiveness all the faith and trust we may have been all to no effect if Christ is dead in some forsaken grave.

The truth is that Christ is risen; "He was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification." the credibility of our faith hangs on this one fact.

D: THE CREDIBILITY OF HEAVEN IS RELIANT UPON IT: 1Corinthians 15:18-19, these are solemn words, "they also which are fallen asleep in Christ perish." If Christ is not risen, then all those who have gone to the grave trusting in this fact, have perished, all those saints who died in the arenas of Imperial Rome, all those who died at the stake at the Reformation all those who have died through natural causes throughout the centuries have all perished. They have gone out of this life believing a lie. With a false hope in their soul.

world as his oyster, suffer as he did for a lie? The answer must be no, he would have been insane to have done so. Look at the way he describes his suffering II Corinthians 11: 24-27: -

"Five times received I 490 stripes save one."

"Thrice I was beaten."

"Once I was stoned."

"Thrice I suffered ship wreck."

"In perils of my own country men."

"In perils by the heathen."

"In hunger and thirst."

"Often cold and naked."

For what did he suffer? A Lie? The other apostles also suffered greatly for this Gospel and not one would have suffered if it had all been built on a lie.

C: THE CREDIBILITY OF FAITH HANGS ON IT:
Still in the passage in 1Corinthians 15 Paul further elucidates as to the importance of the resurrection by telling us that unless Christ is risen, then 'Your faith is vain.' We have already considered the word Vain in v.14, and have seen it means empty. The second word is different, the Greek word 'Mataious' and it means to be of 'No Effect.' The implication being this, that despite the strength of one belief, of one faith, it is completely ineffective if Christ is not

Secondly, it is only within the last thirty to forty or so years that this has been available.

So going back nearly two thousand years, or even two decades, no mother or father knew the sex of the child that was to be born. Yet here we have the angel telling Joseph that the child Mary carried was a boy child, that fact is miraculous because it was at the time out of the normal course of events and humanly speaking outside the course of nature; to know the sex of an unborn child it was not a natural occurrence.

The Angel informs Joseph what the boy child would grow up to be "*Thou shall call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins.*" He would be the Saviour of His people. Now whilst it is true, most parents have high hopes and aspirations for their offspring, none know when that baby is born what he or she will grow up to be or do in life. For example

Frank Whittles mother did not know that her son would become the inventor of the Jet Engine, the parents of **Tony Blair**, the Prime Minister of Britain, had no idea that he would become the leader of Britain anymore than the parents of president **Clinton** knew that he would become the leader of America.

The parents of these people may have had hopes to these ends, but they did not know, the Angel that appeared to Joseph had no doubts that when the baby Mary was carrying become¹³ a man, He would both grow and become the Saviour. To know such

unknowable things, can only be defined as miraculous

THE MIRACULOUS DATA REGARDING THE BIRTH PLACE OF CHRIST. Within the period of up to two years after the birth of Christ, the Magi from the East requested to know where the King of the Jews was to be found. Naturally they had arrived at the Kings palace. Herod unable to give the answer called his advisors, who informed him that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem of Judea. This information was of course gleaned from the writings of Micah some 700 years before. That this prophet foretold the place where Christ would be born is inescapable, every faithful Jew would have read it, and it stands before them for all to see.

Now to predict the birthplace of someone not born is in human terms impossible. Nowhere in the history of mankind is there such a record as this scans the pages of history, and nowhere will you find such a prediction as this. Look at the pages of the history of English literature, and nowhere will it be found that in the village of Elstow, in Bedfordshire, there was to be born a son, who would become one of the greatest writers in Christian History, by the name of John Bunyan.

Where are the records that foretold that William Shakespeare would be born at Stratford on Avon, in England, or that Napoleon would be born on the island of Corsica? There are none, there is not a single

If He did not rise there is not Justification. The Resurrection of Jesus was the sign to the entire world, to the entire universe, that God had accepted the sacrifice of Calvary. However, if there is no resurrection, then it means that God did not accept that sacrifice, therefore His blood, has no efficacy, it has no cleansing qualities, and we remain guilty sinners. The entire Gospel rests upon the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

B: THE CREDIBILITY OF THE APOSTLES REST UPON IT: This again is made plain by Paul in the fifteenth chapter of first Corinthians, when he says, "Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God." Paul squarely faces the problem of his own credibility, if Christ is not risen then he along with all the other Apostles and along with every Gospel preacher of every generation, is a false witness of God. That is an incredible thing to say, yet is true, because if Christ is not risen then the whole message that was then preached and has subsequently been preached is a lie from beginning to end.

Was it likely that he and the others would have suffered for a lie, in the manner that they suffered, would Paul, who at one time saw the

to the content of the message preached. The word 'vain' simply means empty, that is having no real content, so if Christ is not risen, if the body of Christ is laying in some unknown unmarked grave, somewhere close by the city of Jerusalem, then every thing that is preached about Him, His mission, His purpose in being, is emptied of all content, it is like an empty shell on the beach.

If the resurrection of Christ is denied, the Good News of the Jesus Christ is also denied, and the supernatural and miraculous disappear from the religion of Christ, and all that is left is destitution and hopelessness. If those who deny the resurrection are correct in their doctrine, then the religion, the true Christian religion is dead, because Christ is dead, and therefore He is unable to deliver the things He promised. If Christ is not Risen, then there is no spiritual rebirth, no forgiveness of sins, no hope of eternal life, no heaven, no nothing, therefore as Paul again says 'We are of all men most miserable.'

It is an indisputable fact that Christ died, but if He is not risen, then there was no atonement made by His death. The purpose of Christ's death was to make atonement, to obtain a full discharge of all our personal liabilities, the evidence that this had been accomplished was His resurrection from the dead, for as Scripture says, "He rose again for our justification,"

word in history that informs us who and where the president of the United States of America twenty years from now will be born. Yet seven hundred years before the Messiah was born the place of His birth was clearly foretold.

Now if the prophet had been asked to make a guess at where the Christ was to born, he would surely have said Jerusalem, the Royal city, and not some small town. The fact that Jesus was born there was the result of the National taxation decree, if the conception had taken place only a few weeks before or even after, then the Baby would have been born elsewhere, probably in Nazareth. If one takes all these facts into consideration, we are left with the fact that this was in itself a supernatural occurrence.

THE CONCEPTION: If the subjects already mentioned can be seen as having supernatural qualities about them, the central element of the Lord's birth, namely that of His conception, surpasses everything else. It is in His conception, rather than His birth, that the miraculous took place. It is this factor that is one of the most disputed points of Scripture, with many of the so called leading Christian leaders, publicly denying it.

The historical record tells us without any equivocation that Mary was '*Found with child of the Holy Ghost.*' This is part of the family history, not only of Mary and Joseph, but also of the whole

Church of Christ here on earth. Two things need to be looked at, at least in this booklet, many things will be more fully discussed when we look at the 'Virgin Birth' as a subject, they are: -

The fact of Christ's pre-existence demands such a conception.

The sinlessness of Christ demands such a conception.

THE FACT OF CHRIST'S PRE-EXISTENCE:

That Christ pre-existed, will for the purposes of this study been considered as read, the Bible is clear on this point. Now whilst there are some religions that hold to the idea of the transmigration of souls, of reincarnation and the like. It must be acknowledged, that most people reject the idea, although with the development of the New Age Movement the idea is catching on.

That however, is far removed from the principle we have before us, because not one sane single person on this planet, believes that Martin Luther, dead for nearly 350 years, will one day re appear in somebody home as a new born baby. We do not nor can we accept the idea that a man and woman by natural union can conceive an individual, who has had a previous existence on earth.

All who are born into this world are new individuals, having no past life. When¹⁶ the Lord Jesus Christ was born into this world, He was not a new being, He was

Governor, if it ever came to his ears what the guards had said. These men were placing their army careers on the line, by saying that they had been asleep, whilst on guard duty. If this reached the ears of Pilate they would be in hot water, but they had the assurance that the Jewish authorities would tell him the truth, that they had persuaded them to tell lies, we might call this the Ciaphas Gate Affair. The first attempt to explain the Resurrection away ended in the corruption of the Roman Guard.

One final thing, there is no record of the Chief Priests or any of their people going to investigate the validity of the claims that were being made, they accepted what they had heard, they knew that the tomb was empty. They knew that Jesus had kept His word but they did not want to believe it.

THE CREDIBILITY FACTOR: There are several things that need to be mentioned as this paper is drawn to an end, and they might be seen as the credibility evidences: -

A; THE CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPEL:

As the apostle Paul tells us "*If Christ be not risen then is our preaching vain.*" The word Preaching here not only refers to the overt act, but more specifically

indications of anyone being worked up into a hysteria, no fasting, which might have prompted an hallucination. The walk on the Emmaus Road was quite a mundane thing.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE GUARDS:
Matthew 28:11-15. This testimony was unsolicited and was never intended as a testimony to the resurrection of Jesus, but it is here, and it is historically valid. Such was the testimony that these men gave, and we do not know what they reported, but it was of such importance that the authorities tried to bribe them into saying that, they fell asleep, and whilst asleep the disciples had stolen the body. That is quite a sizable tale for them to have to tell, because it meant that the entire watch fell into such a sound sleep, that the moving of the stone did not disturb them. So, their sleep, if they slept, was unnatural, drugged? Highly unlikely Furthermore if they had been asleep, which they had not, why were they given money to tell the truth?

Furthermore, these same religious leaders promised that they would take care of the

not a new individual, He had a past, a present and future. It is the past existence that is important to us. He was before His incarnation the Eternal Son of God, to use a known definition. Prior to His incarnation He had appeared on several occasions to various individuals, these appearances known technically as Theophanies.

However, to become our Redeemer, to fulfil the plan and purposes of God, it was essential that He take upon Himself full human nature, to become Flesh, as John tells us in his Gospel, "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."

Had Christ come into the world by any other means, He could not and would not have been man, He could not have taken upon Himself flesh and our human nature. The best He could have been would be a spiritual being in disguise, in many respects an alien, not being able to be touched with our infirmities, not knowing personally the suffering of the human mind and frame, not experiencing the problems and difficulties of human life, its temptations and trials.

It was essential to the purposes of God that He became man, not merely in name but He had to become such in order to die in the place of man, giving His life a ransom for many. Now the only way that one can become man, to take on human flesh and nature is to be born that way. Jesus laid aside His divine nature, and supernaturally, via the person of the Holy Ghost, enters the womb of Mary to become like as one of us.

The conception of Christ was a supernatural event
His Pre- existence demanded it.

The fact of His sinlessness:

As with the previous chapter, we will take the fact of Christ's sinlessness as read, it is not the purpose of this paper to discuss the pros and cons about that. The Scripture makes is very clear that this was the case Jesus was sinless. If Jesus had been born by natural conception He would have inherited our sinful nature, and would therefore like us have been a sinner, and as such He could not have become our Saviour. The fundamental teaching of the Scripture is that the one who was to be the Redeemer was to be without spot or blemish.

Now the problem is this, how can anyone born into this race that is universally contaminated with sin, be born sin free? How can it be, that in the entire history of humanity only one man has been born absolutely free from sin. Was Mary sinless, as the Roman Catholic Church would have us believe? The answer is no, how could she have been, she was born of natural conception; she had both an earthly mother and father. For one to be born into this world and to be without sin, demands a supernatural conception and there is nothing in Scripture to even suggest that Mary was conceived in such a way.

Dr. G Campbell Morgan spoke of the Lord's conception in these words, "The Angel answered the biological question, saying: The things shall be done

8: Matthew records for us the fact that Jesus not only appeared to the disciples but also to some five hundred people Matthew 28:16-20, Paul also confirms this in 1Corinthians ch.15:8.

9: Paul also gives us information that the Gospel writers do not give us and that is Jesus appeared to James 1Corinthians 17:7. What the circumstances of this visit was we have no idea.

10: Luke gives us the last record in Acts ch.1:3-8, when He appeared to the Apostles immediately before His accession to heaven, and gave them their final instructions.

If this eyewitness evidence were to be used by the prosecution counsel in a modern-day court of law, there would be no defence able to stand against it. It is overwhelming. These appearances were not limited to just one or two people. Not to specific or special occasions, but to diverse people on divers' occasions, to one group, when they had decided to go back to their trade of fishing. Another thing that should be noted is the natural way these things occur. There is nothing forced, nothing exaggerated, nothing extreme, no

These are best enumerated and are as follows: -

1: Jesus appeared to the women as they returned from the Empty tomb, Matthew 28:9, not only was He seen by them, but He spoke to them.

2: Jesus was seen by Mary Magdalene, as she probably made her second journey to the Tomb that Sunday morning John 20:11-18 Mark 16:9-11

3: Luke 24:34 and 1Corinthians. 15:5, Jesus appears to Peter, on that same Sunday.

4: On the way to Emmaus, the Lord walks with and converses with Cleopas and another disciple. Mark 16:12-13 and Luke 24:13-35

5: In the evening of that same day, when ten of the disciples are together, Jesus appears to them, Mark, Luke, and John all record this event.

6: About a week later when all the disciples were gathered, including Thomas, Jesus again visits them, this time Thomas believes, John 20:26-28

7: In John 21:1-23 Jesus is seen by several disciples, by the Sea of Galilee.

as a direct act of God, the power of the Most High, the Holy Spirit, wrapping thee round, overshadowing thee, producing in thy womb the Man-Child; and also, by the same act, by that same energy, by that same force, the Holy Spirit overshadowing, that which is begotten shall be held for contamination with the sin of thy nature, and in human nature. It shall be holy. It shall have beginning in thy womb by the act of God; it shall be held from contamination with the sinfulness of thy nature, by the same act of God, the possibility of the Virgin Birth, and the way of the Immaculate Conception were declared by the angel."

In short Mary was simply the host mother, the surrogate mother, and although sinful herself, the child she carried was protected from having her sinful nature passed on. Which brings us to an interesting biological thought. The Bible has a great deal to say about Blood, it is the major theme of the Scripture, it tells us that Life is in the Blood. It is a medical fact that if one's blood gets contaminated then one is in trouble and if that blood ceases to flow then life is over. Two things need to be considered: -

Firstly, the physiology of blood:

This is an important consideration in the study of the Virgin Birth of Christ, in Leviticus 17, we read these words, "*The life of the flesh is in the blood.*" The more accurate rendering of this would be 'the soul of the flesh is in the blood,' as the word translated 'Life' is in fact 'Nephesh' which in the second part of the verse is

translated soul. Now this word is used some 754 times in the Old Testament, and when applied to men has the following meanings, in 96 passages it speaks of exercising certain powers, or of performing certain actions, in 22 passages it refers to man possessing certain basic animal type desires, in 231 cases it speaks of man exercising mental faculties, and 243 time it speaks of man a being a living being.

In other words, the soul is what we are, now this has as the above definition informs us, something intrinsically to do with the Blood. Blood is the major organ of the human body, without it life is impossible. With the skills and expertise of modern medical science we can survive without many organs, but without blood, we cease to live. Now an interesting point about blood is that, even when removed from the body, if kept at body heat it will continue to live, at least for sometime.

Return to the verse in Leviticus 17, 'The life of the soul is in the blood.' Go back further to the day of mans creation, God had formed the body of man from the dust of the ground, and then we are told that He *"Breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul (nephesh)."* God placed into man something that brought him to life; man because of this Divine action became a vital, living, thinking being, with a unique character and a special relationship to his creator. Now as the soul of the flesh is in the blood, we are left to draw one of two conclusions, either that God imparted to man in that divine act the very blood itself, or that He implanted in the blood the special elements

is, "Why?" What possible reason could he have had?

Three further theories have over the years been propounded, they are 'The Fraud Theory" that the resurrection is nothing more than a fraud conceived by the disciples to make it appear that the prophecies of Christ and the Old Testament were in fact fulfilled. "The Vision of Hallucination Theory" this is the most acceptable of the theories, needing no further explanation, being as it is self explanatory.

The final idea "The Telegram Theory" this of all is a most remarkable idea, it basically teaches that Christ ascended into heaven and that from time to time, He would telegraph His body back to earth. If this were the case then it is a far more supernatural event than the resurrection itself.

None of these ideas have any worth, they have little or no basis upon which to base the theories, and no credible historian could accept them.

THE POST RESURRECTION EVIDENCES:

There is no doubt that the Tomb was empty on that Sunday morning, however this in sufficient evidence. There are however additional evidences that need to be considered, and they are the eyewitness accounts recorded in the Gospels and in the book of Acts.

the Sunday morning one of four persons or groups of persons stole the body away.

The first person under suspicion is Joseph himself, the he secretly removed the body, and buried it in an unknown grave, for what reason, is he supposed to have done this? This can only be speculated on, but there would have been little if any personal gain in carrying out such an act. There is some evidence to suppose that not long after the resurrection he exiled himself from Israel and took up residence in Britain.

The second suspicion fails on the disciples themselves, that they bribed the guards and whilst they slept the disciples stole the body, this theory was first advocated by Celsus, one of the leading pagans to oppose Christianity.

The third group that have been accused of stealing the body of Christ are the Jews themselves. Now if they had done such a thing and secretly held the body of Christ, why did they not produce it as evidence, once the rumours of the resurrection had started?

The fourth, group or rather person, is that of one of the guards, the thing that we must ask on this point

that constitute the soul. Maybe in scientific terms we will never know the answer. We will have to be content with the Biblical teaching on the matter and the declaration that 'The soul of the flesh is in the blood.' Knowing that blood is in a very real sense the seat of life. Many years ago, when the science of blood was in its infancy, the eminent Physician Hervey, stated: -

"Blood is the primigenial and principal part, because it is, and from it the foundation of motion and pulsation is derived; and because animal heat or vital spirit is first radicated and implanted and the soul takes up her mansion..... The blood is the fountain of life."

And a great deal more could be said on this matter, we need to turn our thoughts to the second of the two factors:

Secondly, the theology of blood:

In the book of acts we learn that God, *"Hath made of one blood all nations of men, that dwell on the face of the earth."* Humans no matter to which ethnic group we may belong, all have their origins in one blood stock, namely that of Adam. This is important because it was into Adam and not Eve that God breathed the Breathe of life, it was out of Adam that God created Eve.

Furthermore, it was to Adam that God gave the warning, *"That the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."*²¹ Disobedience to God's command was

to bring about a disastrous effect upon the blood, for once sin had been engaged in, the life-giving properties of the blood, would be failing, and death would come in. It would appear from what we have seen, that in some way the very blood of Adam was poisoned with sin, a terminal disease infested his blood and subsequently that of all men.

It is interesting to notice that recent Genetic research has uncovered, a Gene that researchers believe is the cause of death. The question often asked is why if death was the result of sin, why did not Adam die immediately? He did, in that he was spiritually separated from God, spiritual death took place immediately. However physical death took longer, an illustration of this may be seen in the cut flower, despite the fact it has been severed from its life source it still lives on, it still shows signs of life, but it is technically dead, it will eventually cease to show these signs and wither. No matter what we may do, we are like that cut flower, we cannot stop ourselves dying, as soon as the knife cut the flower's stem, the life forces began to ebb from it, as soon as Adam sinned the life forces began to ebb from him.

Another factor we need to consider is this, Eve was produced from Adam, and she became as Adam said 'Bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh.' One of the main components of blood is manufactured from bone marrow, so although Eve's blood was essentially her own, it was initially from Adam. Biologically, it is the male seed, rather than the

evidence to support this idea.

THE WRONG TOMB THEORY: The idea propounded here is that on the Sunday morning, the women went to the wrong tomb, they thought they had come to the tomb where Jesus had been laid, but had gone to the wrong one. Like the idea this is without any warranty, and the same defence argument applies. Not considering the fact of the angel's appearance and his words to the women.

Furthermore, in this consideration, we must remember that Jesus was not buried in a public cemetery, but in a private burial place, there would not have been that number of new tombs under construction, so the likelihood of wrong identification is very remote. Besides, was it likely that one would forget the place where a loved one was buried, after only three days? Such is a preposterous suggestion.

THE STOLEN BODY THEORY: The basic theory is that sometime between the body of Christ being laid in the tomb on the Friday (if Friday was the day of the Crucifixion, there are strong arguments for Thursday or even Wednesday, as being the correct day) nevertheless assuming it was on the Friday afternoon or evening. Between that time and

of the tomb, revived, and then with his own strength, moved the stone and knocked out the guards. The question that one must ask the advocates of such a question, is how could this man, who was so horribly injured, whose body had hung for all those hours on the Roman cross, whose heart had been pierced with a Roman spear, be able to perform such a feat of strength? The arguments against this idea are many; in any case what would have been the point in doing this?

THE BURIAL PIT THEORY: There is not the slightest shred of biblical evidence for this, but the theory is that instead of Jesus being carried to the New Tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, His body was cast into a pit, prepared for those who had been executed, possibly by the executioners themselves.

Now there is one question that arises from this idea, if this was the case, then why did not Pilate exhume the body of Jesus when it was being spread abroad that Jesus had risen from the dead? Would it not have been the easiest thing in the world for them to do? And it would have lain to rest once and for all the concept of the resurrection. There is not a single grain of

women's egg, that injects life, for even though the egg may be fertile, it does not and cannot by itself produce blood, and remember, 'The soul of the flesh is in the blood.' So, the catalyst of this life-giving force is the seed of man and not the seed of the woman.

It is not and never has been the sin of Eve that has affected us; it has always been the seed and sin of Adam. Again, we come back to the Scripture that say, "*By one man sin entered into the world,*" and that sin has been through his genetic line passed on to all men "*For all have sinned.*" Adams sin is still being transmitted today as it was before the flood, it is not a matter of his sin being imputed to us, but it is a literal transmission, the passing on of a serious genetic fault, his blood becoming contaminated and loosing much of its life force, the result of his sin.

The Scripture also teaches that blood is the means of man's redemption, "*Without the shedding of Blood there is no remission of sins,*" "*The Blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanses us from all sin.*" Furthermore, in the revelation it speaks of being "*Washed in His blood.*" Blood is therefore a major part of God's redemptive plan, this therefore implies that the Blood of Christ, is sin free, were it not so then, there can be no remission of sin. For contaminated blood, would be of no avail, it would not be vicarious being no better than any other sin contaminated blood.

The blood of every child is ²³ unique, it is the produced in the child's body, as the result of the union between

the mother's egg and the father's sperm. Now theoretically, if it were possible for a woman to conceive a child with the male part of the conception process, being enacted, the child thus conceived, would because there is no male genetic involvement in the make up of the blood, be sinless. The reason for this assumption is based on the biological fact that the blood of the mother is never passed to the Child. Now whilst it is true, all the other life-giving elements are passed to the infant via the placenta, the mother's blood stream is fully isolated from the embryo, the blood of the child developing within itself, having no contaminant of sin within it.

Should this separation ever be violated, and then the child is in very real danger of death. The child is enveloped from being contaminated by blood that may be deemed the sin carrier. In the case of a virgin mother, as it was with Mary, conceiving a child without male participation, the blood of that child, would be free from the contamination of sin, yet at the same time the child would have all the characteristics and attributes of a human child.

I fully realize that there are other factors that should be considered in this, and that the above is theoretical, needing much fuller research, which is outside of his scope and ability, nevertheless the implications are clear and have some considerable bearing on the necessity of the miraculous conception of the Lord Jesus Christ. Notwithstanding this, the fact that Mary conceived, without the aid of

All the Gospel writers record the fact of the Resurrection, of the empty Tomb, whilst it is true that the accounts differ in some of the details, the fact is there are four recorded accounts to this phenomenon. In this fact all agree, that the Tomb on that Sunday morning was empty, there was not the slightest hint of the body of Christ to be found in that tomb. The witness of God's Word is plain, the grave was empty.

The question that has perplexed the critics of the Bible and has caused much concern among the believers is how did it happen? What did take place? Many theories, and that is all they are theories, have been presented over the years in attempts to give a rational explanation to this supernatural event. Before going on to look at the historical evidence, it may be as well to just briefly look at the major theories that have been expounded: -

THE SWOON THEORY: This is a perennial idea, that re-surfices every few years, the idea is that Jesus never actually died, that he simply went into a faint, that when He was taken down from the cross, He was not dead, and when laid in the cool

body, in which Christ lived and died. There are those who claim that they believe in the resurrection, but only in a spiritual sense, in that it was the spirit of Christ that rose from the tomb, there is not nor can there be such a thing as a spiritual resurrection. It is only a body that enters a grave, a spirit never does enter such a place, a spirit can never know anything about resurrection, because a spirit does not die in a physical sense, a spirit, if it is possible could manifest itself any time after the body dies, it cannot be placed or confined to a grave.

THE BIBLICAL EVIDENCES:

THE EMPTY TOMB:

All four Evangelists record the fact that Jesus died, and that he was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, a tomb located in the same place where Jesus died. The death of Christ was fully assured when the soldiers saw that He was dead, but to make quite sure, instead of breaking His legs, they pierced His side with a spear. Modern scientific research tells us that act can leave no doubt in the minds of the unbeliever as to the reality of His death.

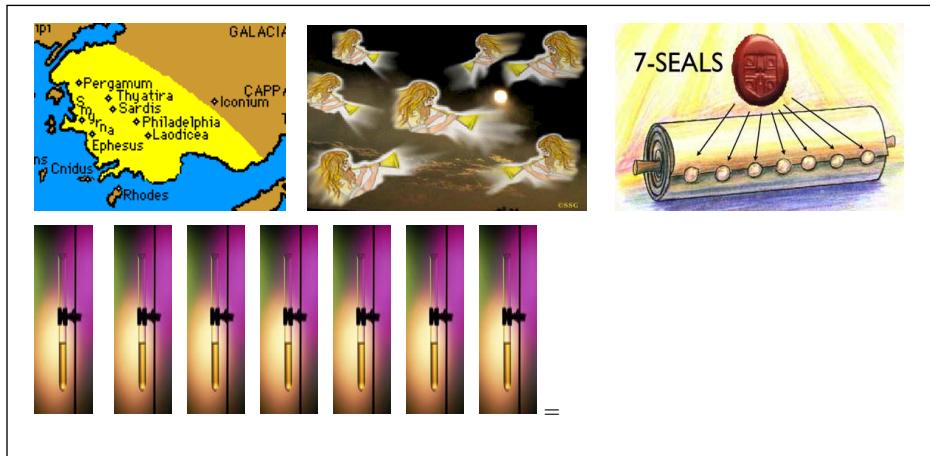
a man, truly makes the Child she carried the, seed of the woman, as was promised in Genesis 3:15.

Nevertheless, for a child to be born sinless, yet at the same time to be fully human, The Seed of the woman, it takes a super- natural power to produce such a thing, and even with modern science and all the research into Invetra-fertilisation, the elements of both male and female are required in order to produce what is unceremoniously called the 'Test Tube Baby,' and the production of these are far from miraculous, being the labours of man's hands.

There is every reason for accepting the Biblical record of the Lord's miraculous conception, for if He is the only begotten Son of the Father, the virgin birth is not only credible, but a necessity. If Christ was born sin free and lived sin free, this can only be accounted for by such a birth. If Christ made His exit from death by the miracle of the Resurrection and then from this world by the Ascension, then it is not too difficult to believe that He entered into this world in a similar supernatural way.

THE TESTIMONY OF HIS MIRACLES. There can be little doubt that the subject of Miracles is one of the most hotly debated and controversial subjects of the age. They have been the butt of numerous assaults throughout the ages with the present age being no exception. On the one hand there are those who reject all forms of the miraculous, including the ²⁵miracles of Jesus, employing all manner of reasoning to discredit them. On the other hand, we have the modern-day advocates of miracles,

who claim that they are still being performed in the same manner as in the days of Christ, which presents the problem of continuance. Now although this paper is concerned primarily with the Miracles of Christ in respect to His Supernatural Nature, we cannot help but become embroiled in some of these current disputes.



Definitions:

What is a miracle? Dr. Robert Dabney defined a miracle in this way, "a miracle is a phenomenal effect, above all the powers of nature; properly the result of supernatural power, that is of God's immediate power, which He has not regularly put into any second causes, lower or higher." In other words, a miracle is the supernatural manifestation of Divine power. ***The Concise English Dictionary*** defines a miracle as being, "a marvellous event or act due to supernatural agency." Miracles are out of the normal course events, and are always associated with special revelations of God.

are forced to the conclusion that there is no legitimate reason for the continuance of miracles such as those performed by Jesus. We should also remember, that even in these times of revelation miracles, as such were apart from the Lord's life, and are very rare. According to God's Word, God's plan for the sick today is for them to call the Elders of the Church, James 5. The craving that many have today for miracles springs not from faith but from lack of it, as Jesus said "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe," John 4:48.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE RESURRECTION, of all the supernatural aspects of the Life of Christ, the Resurrection has drawn more attention than probably all the others combined, it has been repudiated, by some of the best brains in the Rationalist and Humanistic schools of thought and defended by some of the best brains in Christian thought. People from all walks of life have written many books on the subject. It is the great fulcrum of the Christian faith, for in the words of Paul, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." The historical fact of the resurrection is the very touchstone of Christianity; it is fundamental to every thing that is to be believed.

By resurrection, it needs to be clearly understood that the reference is to and can mean nothing other than the Resurrection of the Body, the same albeit glorified

God.'

On the other hand, miracles must not be underrated, as we have seen Jesus did not work the miracles without a purpose. Many were led to faith through the help of them, because it the miracle that showed them who Jesus was, it opened their eyes as the true nature and character of the Lord. Furthermore, Jesus Himself appealed them to as evidences of His Divine authority.

THE MATTER OF CONTINUANCE. what about miracles in the post-apostolic age? This is the question that is on the minds of many Christians today. There can be no doubt about it God can do what He wants to do, it is not however a question of can God do it, but is God doing it? Today the Roman Catholic Church, claims as she always has done that saints are capable of and in fact do perform miracles, hence the many shrines, the most popular one being Lourdes in France. Then in the realm of the, Charismatic/Pentecostal groups, there are many claims of healings and miracles. The question is do they meet with the Biblical criterion that is a subject for another paper.

If our analysis is correct, if the miracles are the seal of divine revelation and that Christ was the final fulfilment of Gods revelation to mankind. Then we

The late Professor C.A. Roe, gave this definition when he said that a miracle is "an occurrence which cannot be effectuated by the ordinary action of the known material forces of the universe, and could only have been brought about by the agency of intelligent volition; and which is preceded by an announcement on the part of the agent, that it is about to happen or takes place directly at his bidding." A miracle is therefore an act of Divine intervention in the natural situation, doing something those natural powers or forces are unable to do.

THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST.

We are concerned solely with the miracles of Christ, which can for matters of ease and convenience be compiled into several categories, they may be seen as: -

- 1: The Miracles of Nature: the storm at sea, turning water into wine etc, Comprising of seven.
- 2: Physical Healings: the cleansing of the lepers, giving sight to the blind, the restoration of hearing to the deaf, etc. Comprising in all of seventeen
- 3: Exorcisms: the casting out of demons, six in number.
- 4: The Feedings: the multiplication of small amounts of food, making them sufficient to feed thousands,

two.

5: Resurrections: the raising of the dead to life, in all three in number

Now whilst there were many other miracles performed by Jesus, they are not named, nor are there any specific details given about them, so it is these and these alone that are of concern to us. Other biblical miracles, performed by others, such as Moses, Elijah, Paul etc., are separate to these and are studies.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MIRACLES: There are several factors that we need to have in mind, characteristics that are important in this analysis.

1: THEIR UNIQUENESS:

The miracles that Jesus did were unique. The words spoken by Jesus Himself recorded in John 15:24 testify of this fact, He says that the works (miracles) that He had done "*None other man did.*" The eyewitness to the healing of the man sick with the Palsy in Mark ch.2, of that miracle the people testify '*we never saw it on this fashion.*'

2: THERE WAS NOTHING UNDUE: The age in which Jesus lived was such that thrived on fanciful

unbelieving Jews that He had the power and authority to forgive sins Matthew 9:6-7. Furthermore, He used the mighty works that He had done to bring the condemnation upon the unbelieving cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida. Now as Jesus had such a high regard for these how much more should the believer of today, consider them.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MIRACLE: As with all things there is the inherent danger of going to the extremes. There is firstly the danger of attaching too much importance to the miracles; it is possible to exaggerate their value. Miracles are not and were never intended to be the highest evidence of Truth; they were not a compelling force in bringing people to the Truth. There were many who saw the miracles of Jesus and did not believe. The miracles were confirmatory signs not revelations in their own right of Divine Truth.

Faith, that is True faith, is not founded of what the eye can see, but upon what the ear can hear, and that is the Word of God, the Words of Jesus are of far higher value, of far greater importance than the miracles themselves. This is fact that those who seek to implement so called signs and wonders in today's 'church' need to take serious notice of, Signs do not generate faith, faith is generated by the Word of God, 'faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of

Then came Jesus, whose ministry, which brought the new and final revelation, was confirmed with miracles, signs, and wonders.

The miracles were the seals, which God set upon His revelation and upon His representative to certify without any shadow of doubt the revelation was of supernatural character. This was the case with Moses as he stood before Pharaoh, with Elijah as he stood before Ahab and the prophets of Baal. Now if God had bestowed upon Jesus, as He had done Moses and Elijah, the power to perform miracles, He is declaring Jesus to be His representative. However, as we have noted Jesus performed these miracles Himself, the conclusion there is that as He is the miracle worker, for He did these things by His own power, He thereby declares, shows and proves Himself to be the Lord of the Universe, the very God of the very God, truly in Him dwelt the Godhead bodily.

The miracles that Jesus performed were and are clear evidence of His super naturalness, the plain evidence that He is God.

Whilst considering the objective of the miracles, it may be of some interest to point out that Christ Himself placed no little importance on them. He used them as the means of confirming the faith of John the Baptist Luke 7:22. He used them to prove to the

stories. Stories of things that were utterly incredible, completely and utter beyond reason to believe that such things could happen, silly and unreasonable things. Witchcraft and occult magic thrived, every miracle Jesus performed was credible, and He did nothing to stretch men incredulity. For example, He did not cause a worm to become a giant snake, of a snail's shell to become a sailing craft, of a tree to grow to abnormal size. There is nothing about the miracles that can cause embarrassment to reason, because they are all reasonable things.

3: OF HIS OWN WILL: All the miracles that Jesus performed He did as a matter of His own free will, He did not rely on any source outside of Himself, He did not engage in magic incantations or spells, He was able to say of His own volition "I Will, be thou clean."

4: OF HIS OWN POWER: All the miracles Jesus performed were of His own Power, this follows on naturally from the previous point, Jesus was able to say "*I say unto thee arise,*" He possessed the power of God, he did not have to seek Gods power in order to accomplish this work.

5: THEY WERE RESTRAINED:

There was nothing exaggerated about what Jesus did, the Gospel records, they simply record the

unadulterated facts; there are no additions, embellishments, such as one finds in extra biblical literature and pagan mythology.

6: THEY HAVE A HIGH OBJECTIVE: There are those who have claimed that the miracles of Jesus can be compared with the sleight of hand practiced by magicians, in fact there is one conjurer in England who claims that he can turn water into wine and walk on water. He may well be able give that illusion, the difference between such men and Christ, is that these men set out purposely to do three things.

Firstly, to fool the audience into thinking they are doing something they are not.

Secondly, they are trying to draw to themselves attention and fame, by amazing the people with their trickery.

Thirdly, many of these people handsomely line their pockets with dollar bills from the audience, turning their admitted skill into financial gain.

All these things are in total contradiction to the ministry of Jesus; he did not travel the country to amaze the crowds. He did not make a living out of these miracles; indeed, it is hard to even conceive of Him accepting so much as a cent from His work.

Incarnate." Did not the Lord Jesus in John 10:37-28 say, *"If I do not the works of my father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe me not, believe the works, and believe that the Father is in me and I in Him."*

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE MIRACLES:

We have already touched upon this matter in the previous paragraphs, but there is further elucidation required. The incarnation of Christ marked the greatest epoch in human history. This was the greatest and the Final revelation that God was to make to mankind of His Grace and Mercy. Throughout the ages God had been preparing man for this event, slowly and gradually revealing more and more of His plans and purposes, through the prophets of old.

The coming of Christ was the final revelation, the culmination of all previous revelations. Now all other revelations had been in some way accompanied by miracles, Abraham's wife Sarah, who was barren, conceived and gave birth at a very old age. Moses stood before Pharaoh and showed forth the power of God in Signs and Wonders. God miraculously cared for and protected Israel in the wilderness. New revelation came through the prophets and was confirmed by Signs and wonders. Then for four hundred years there was no prophet in the land, no miracles apart from the trickery of the charlatans.

10: NOT DUPLICATED BY SCIENCE: Despite what we call the miracles of modern science, modern science is not duplicating the things Jesus did. Men who are born blind are not being given sight, even though many wonderful things do take place. The mortuaries are still being used, it is true with modern science, those who once appeared to be dead, and who would have been left for dead, can with modern technology in many cases be resuscitated, but that is far removed from the things Jesus did. The captain of the ocean-going liner cannot command the storm to cease despite his many modern navigational aids.

11: INSTANTANEOUS: Whenever Jesus performed a miracle the effect was instantaneous. There was not delay, no gradual progression, no incisive surgery, no recovery period. The key word in the Lord's miraculous activity was 'immediately.' This is a factor that today's charlatans need to take notice of. And, the reason why we can say that even with the great skill of modern medicine, the doctors and surgeons of today are not and cannot replicate the miracles of Jesus.

The miracles show His uniqueness, they are the evidences of His Divinity, and these supernatural works were performed before men to serve, as Rd. William Taylor once said as a "stairway, up which men might ascend to the reception of Him as God

And furthermore, there is no way that Jesus set out to deceive the crowds into thinking He was doing something which He was not.

In contrast to the many charlatans, Christ never so much as used his powers in any way to help Himself; He was in all these things utter unselfish, giving of Himself for the good of others. All that He did was for the Glory of God. We will be looking at the major purpose of the miracles under another heading. However, it can be said at this point, that the miracles declared His Lordship.

7: THE PASSING OF TIME: It is often said that the stories of the Lord's miracles evolved after His death and that as time passed so did the frequency and number of reported miracles. In other words that time embellished the Lord's works, such is often the case with human autobiographies. Sometimes it is difficult for those who had intimate knowledge of the subject to be able to recognize from the written record as so much has been added. This is not the case with the Lord's miracles as a careful look at the record shows.

The four Gospels are our sole record. Now it is generally accepted by all critics that Marks Gospel was the first in order, and John's Gospel the last, with the other two somewhere in between. Mark probably

wrote his about the year A.D. 60 whilst John much later, some placing it as late as 90 A.D. these are matters of dispute, but place them in order of written priority. Here the facts Mark records eighteen miracles, whilst Matthew writing later only records twenty, a difference of just two. Luke who wrote his account even later, records twenty-one, that is just three more than Mark, whilst John the latest recordist, gives just eight. So, from the pure statistic point of view there was no increase of embellishment of the Lord's miracles with the passing of time.

8: FAITH PROMOTERS:

The miracles of Jesus were unique in that they always drew faith to Himself. This is why on two occasions Jesus used means or tools in the performance of miracles. A full discussion of this is given in my paper 'The Life and Times of Jesus.' But basically, the position was this, the people who came to Jesus, one was the Syro Phoenician woman, and the other was the Blind man in Mark ch.8. Both came to Him, not knowing who He was, but simply thought of Him as a miracle worker, nothing, all that He had to do was touch them. Jesus had to show them both exactly who He was before performing the healings. With the Syro-Phonecian woman he used what appear to us to be hard words, but to her they were the means of opening her eyes to Him as the

promised Messiah, even though she was Gentile. The blind man also had to be taught the same lesson that merely the touching was not suffice, and that human means were of little or no avail, for after using the means, the man's eyesight was still faulty. However Jesus then showed Him it was His Word, and not the means that he was to receive his sight. The miracles of Jesus were designed to promote faith in Him as the promised Messiah.

9: OPEN TO PUBLIC APPRAISAL:

Jesus did not perform these miracles in secret, but in the open. The people who came to Jesus were able to be assessed and test the claims for themselves. The people were not ignorant of what they saw; they were able to assess a situation just as well as any man today. The lepers had to go to the Priest and obtain their clearance and assurance that they no longer carried the disease that they had been made whole. The relatives of the dead who had been raised were able to see for themselves what had taken place. The friends of Lazarus were concerned about the smell of rotting flesh, yet that did not deter the miracle from taking place. The friends and neighbours of those who were born blind were able to see and examine the patients. The four and five thousand that were fed miraculously were able to see, feel with their own hands and eyes, not to mention the satisfaction of enjoying the food, the miracle that Jesus did.