

## The Facts of Faith- Week of January 30th, 2005

Mission Statement: To serve the Christian church by showing that the basis of its faith is reasonable.

### Some Insight Behind the Passage: Jeremiah 1:4-10

#### The word of the Lord came to me..."

It is not by accident that Jeremiah receives his prophetic authority the way he does. Most of the prophets use similar language (See Ez. 1:3 and Zeph. 1:1). But why should we believe Jeremiah or the other prophets? The better question might be, "Why did the Jews believe them?"

It was dangerous to be a prophet in ancient Israel. Deuteronomy 19:20-22 insists that a false prophet be put to death and provides at least one way to identify a false prophet. We don't know how the prophets of the Old Testament came to be validated as authentic prophets, but we are certain that they were- at risk of their very lives!

The Deuteronomy passage (vs. 18) has something else of interest: "I will raise up for them a prophet like [Moses] from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him."

Christians identify this prophet as Jesus. The prophets describe the word of the Lord coming to them but Jesus is described as the Word [logos] made flesh (John 1:14). Jesus was not like other prophets in serving only as a mediator between man and God, he *was* God. However, Jesus was careful to meet the criteria of Deuteronomy 19 to demonstrate that he was who he said he was. That is why Jesus won the massive following that he did among a people deeply skeptical of prophetic claims.



### Language Insight:

Paul's elevation of love over knowledge in 1 Cor. 13:2 is not accidental. Already in his time, orthodox Christianity was under attack. One group of people, that we call 'Gnostics,' was falsely claiming that Jesus gave select people secret information. The word 'gnosis' is translated as 'knowledge' in verse 2. Paul is implying that even with secret knowledge, if you aren't acting in love, you have nothing.

### Some readings this month:

**Old Testament:** Isaiah 60:1-6, 43:1-7, 62:1-5, Neh. 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10, Jeremiah 1:4-10

**Epistle:** Eph. 3:1-12, Acts 8:14-17, 1 Cor. 12:1-11-31a, 13:1-13

**Gospel:** Luke 3:15-17, 4:14-30, ch. 21-22; John 2:1-11

### A Historical Note...

The Bible was written in two primary languages, Hebrew and 'Koine' Greek. Koine (common) Greek was the language of the Roman Empire. Aramaic was a common language in Jesus' time, but only Matthew's gospel was written in it, implying that Jews spoke as much in Greek as in their native tongue.

### Church Fathers Speak...

Augustine, Lecture on John:

"The miracle indeed of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby He made the water into wine, is not marvelous to those who know that it was God's doing. For He who made wine on that day at the marriage feast, in those six water-pots, which he commanded to be filled with water, [He] does this every year in vines."

Public Domain (Tractate 8)

© 2004 Anthony Horvath

[www.sntjohnny.com](http://www.sntjohnny.com)

### Another reasonable defense of the faith...

#### On Miracles and Science

Christians have been lead to feel as though their views are not based on reason and evidence. The reality is actually much different.

Miracles are one area people think science has hurt Christians. Researching this, you will 'learn' that science has determined that it is impossible for virgins to conceive, for water to turn to wine, for people to rise from the dead, etc. Of course, that's the whole point! Their very 'impossibility' is what makes them miracles!

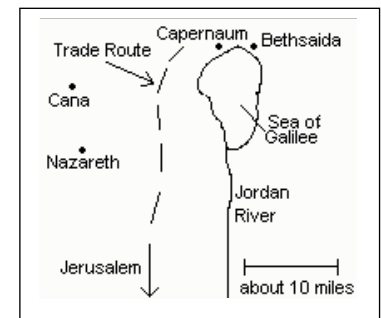
Science has its place. It has been very successful because it has collected data over a long period of time in order to detect patterns, develop rules, and make predictions. The whole point of calling something a 'miracle' is that it breaks patterns, defies rules, and is not predictable. Many scientists believe that the miracles in the Bible did not happen because they can't be scientifically demonstrated, but obviously this is an area where science actually has little to say, and should remain silent on the matter.

This is not to say that we should accept things without testing. However, such testing usually won't be scientific. Instead, it will be similar to the testing that courts apply in evaluating testimony. However, the main point is that in a fair investigation, you have to at least be open to the possibility of miracles. Scientific tests are not appropriate when applied to miracles. But the smug belief that science knows about all things 'possible' is not appropriate, either. In the area of miracles, at least, Christianity is very safe from challenges from science.

### Archeology and Geography Insight...

In Luke 4 Jesus reads from the prophet Isaiah in his hometown synagogue, in Galilee. Many think that Galileans were illiterate, uneducated, and only knew Aramaic. But Jesus reads from the Septuagint- the Greek translation of the Old Testament. In contrast to modern views about Jesus' education, he and his listeners apparently knew Greek. This is not

surprising when we note that Galilee is only a few miles from Capernaum, a major city on a foreign trade route. Capernaum (4:23) was where Jesus made his headquarters (Matt. 9:1). This location was well placed for the spread of his message and the Gospel throughout the Roman Empire.



More information and discussion is available at [www.sntjohnny.com](http://www.sntjohnny.com). All are welcome at the forums to discuss and debate topics in this insert and anything else.

To subscribe to this bulletin, visit the web page or call 608-385-2629. Speaking and presenting services are available by founder and author, Anthony Horvath.

