

Introduction:

1. Let's play a game. It's called fact or fiction. I will give a name of someone or something, and you decide whether or not it is factual or fictitious. Are the following factual or fictitious: Unicorns, Smeagol, Superman, and Zombies? If you believe any of these are real, then you have a problem.
2. But when it comes to Jesus, how would you answer: fact or fiction? Was Jesus born by a virgin woman? Could He really walk on water and feed thousands with a few fish and some bread? Was He God in the flesh? Did He die on the cross and rise from the grave on the third day? Many say that Jesus is about as real as Mickey Mouse. What do you believe about Jesus?
3. We live in a time where many have doubts concerning the man named Jesus. While you may believe, people will challenge your faith concerning Jesus. How would you answer the skeptic about whether Jesus really lived, that He performed real miracles, and rose from the grave? You need to know for certain the evidence pertaining to Jesus, Luke 1:1-4. Tonight, let's consider some facts about Jesus.

The Lesson:

I. Fact #1: Jesus really did exist.

- A. Many claim that Jesus never lived.
 1. Documentaries and books can still be found where people argue that Jesus was nothing more than a myth made up by over-zealous religious people.
 2. Some say that even if He did exist, there's no historical evidence available for us to examine to come to a solid conclusion.
- B. Was Jesus merely some fictitious character, or did He really exist?
 1. The majority of historians conclude that Jesus really did live.
 - a. Famous historian H.G. Wells, who was an atheist, believed Jesus lived.
 - b. Josephus, a Jewish historian in the first century, wrote that Jesus of Nazareth lived.
 2. The amount of non-biblical historical sources that say Jesus lived is staggering. And yet the best historical source to know whether Jesus lived is the New Testament.
 3. The New Testament is a collection of historical books that we can trust to be accurate.
 - a. No other historical document has as many manuscripts as the New Testament.
 - b. The gap between the originals and copies for the gospels is shorter than other historical books that are deemed to be reliable and accurate. The short gap eliminates the possibility the story of Jesus to be corrupted with mythical elements and legends.
 4. The New Testament writers wrote of Jesus and His life from a historical perspective, Luke 1:5, 3:1-2, 23:1-2. Why? Because Jesus really lived. The story of His life is intertwined with other historical people, places, and events. We can be certain that Jesus lived.

II. Fact #2: Jesus performed real miracles.

- A. While most agree that Jesus lived, not all believe that He performed miracles.
 - 1. Some reject the miracles of Jesus because of the implications that would follow. If Jesus performed miracles as the scriptures teach, then He is the Son of God, John 20:30-31.
 - 2. But is there reason for us to doubt whether the miracles of Jesus were genuine? Was Jesus nothing more than a magician like Criss Angel, or did He have power to perform genuine miracles? Were His miracles fake, or were they real?
- B. The descriptions of them presented in the New Testament help us to know they were real.
 - 1. The credibility of the New Testament documents has already been established. The gospel writers like Matthew and John who recorded the miracles of Jesus were eyewitnesses to them. They wrote what was true and what happened in the life of Jesus, even when it made them look bad, Matthew 16:8; John 20:19. That's because they dealt with facts.
 - 2. Furthermore, when one closely examines the miracles of Jesus, it's easy to see they were not merely some illusion or magic trick, but were genuine miracles.
 - a. His miracles were subject to sense perception, John 2:9; Luke 22:51.
 - b. They were performed in the presence of eyewitnesses, Mark 1:21-27.
 - c. There was no possible naturalistic explanation with what Jesus did, John 9:1-7.
 - d. Not even His enemies could deny them, John 11:45-48.
 - 3. It's a fact that Jesus performed miracles. Why is this fact so important? Because the signs testified that Jesus was God in the flesh. We can be certain of that!

III. Fact #3: Jesus rose from the grave.

- A. Everything about Christianity hinges on the resurrection of Jesus.
 - 1. It's been said that "...the truth or falsity of all world religions-and the ultimate meaning of life itself-come down to just one key issue: did Jesus, or did he not, return from the dead? The answer to that fundamental question would settle everything."
 - 2. How certain can we be about the resurrection of Jesus? Is it fiction or did it really happen?
- B. The evidence demands that Jesus died on the cross, was buried, and rose on the third day.
 - 1. Jesus did die on the cross, John 19:30-35. He was buried in a tomb. The historical documents of the gospels all say He was risen on the third day, John 20:1-8. The apostle Paul said that He saw Him, 1 Corinthians 15:3-11. He also reminded people of the other hundreds of witnesses who saw Jesus alive, 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. The evidence is clear.
 - 2. Jesus rose from the grave. That is a fact. Yet some will reject it because of what it means, Acts 17:30-31; John 8:23-24.
 - 3. There can be no question that Jesus lived, performed miracles, and rose from the dead.

Conclusion:

- 1. We began with the game called fact or fiction. How will you answer concerning Jesus?
- 2. If you believe these facts then remember the words of the apostle Peter, 2 Peter 3:10-13.