



Why I am a Christian

—from a former delinquent and atheist

Even though, as a typical French person born in the late 50s, I was raised a Christian, coming from a very Catholic family, attending church faithfully and following all religious rituals, I did not believe at all in God. For me, it was just fables, like Santa Claus or Easter bunnies. As I grew into my teen years, I started to hang out with the wrong crowd and to follow a wrong path, shoplifting every day, being quite a mean and vulgar person and getting easily into fights, even with boys!

As an adamant atheist, it seemed to me that Christianity was broken into two kinds of Christians: Christians who had no idea if it was true and could not prove it, and Christians who were hypocrites and who did not act as though it was true. I did not want to be a part of either of these two groups. For me, Christianity was irrelevant.

But one day, a friend lent me a Bible and that evening I started to read the New Testament. I continued all night long, as the wise and loving words of Jesus deeply moved me. When morning came, I felt as though my mind, my heart and my soul had been thoroughly cleansed. I had a God experience that night, a transformational experience, a total metanoia. No more violence, no more stealing, and even no more foul language. I was transformed overnight into a new person, deeply touched by God.

However, as a once sceptic teenager, I wanted to make sure that there was evidence to substantiate what had happened to me and to the story I had read, that it was not only all emotions. Were the Gospels reliable? As I read and studied on this very question, I found myself enthralled in what appeared to be accounts written by people who were eyewitnesses. The Gospels not only contain the wise, radical, loving words of Jesus, but they are a series of recorded events, all written earlier than 69 AD, and in fact, better corroborated than any other ancient historical account. They are history.

(a) Archaeology and history corroborate many people, locations and events described in the Gospels and offer much evidence.

(b) Ancient Jewish, Greek and pagan accounts corroborate the outline of Jesus' identity, life, death and resurrection. So that even if there were no Gospels, countless early statements of non believers tell us an awful lot about Jesus. Among many unfriendly pagan sources, we can read this account of Thallus, ancient Greek historian, in 52 AD, talking about after the crucifixion: "On the whole world, there pressed a most fearful darkness; and the rocks were rent by an earthquake, and many places in Judea and other districts were thrown down."

The Gospels accounts have been accurately delivered to us through the centuries. We can test their contents and transmission, as their authors were present during the life of Jesus and wrote their accounts early enough to be cross-checked by those who knew Jesus. Their authors lacked motive to lie about their observations and died as martyrs rather than recant their testimony.

Everything in the Bible resonates with everything outside of Scriptures. I don't believe in something that is not rooted in history, I believe in something that actually happened.

As you can see, I did not become a Christian just to please my parents and obey them, or because I was born in a Christian family. I was in fact quite comfortable with being an atheist, making fun of and mocking Christians. Neither was I searching for truth, or hoping for heaven and being afraid of hell.

I did not become a Christian because it is easy in a growingly hostile culture where our worldview is seen as nonsensical, where our beliefs are said to be blind and are challenged all the time.

But you see, the Gospels when I read them were so clear, and as I did test them, they passed the test. Why am I a Christian? Because it is true, it is evidentially true!