

**Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*  
Jesus Christ**

388. "Jesus Christ with whom both Testaments are concerned; the Old as its hope, the New as its model, both as their center."

189. "*God through Jesus Christ.* We know God only through Jesus Christ. Without this mediator all communication with God is broken off. Through Jesus we know God. All those who have claimed to know God and prove his existence without Jesus Christ have only had futile proofs to offer... [prophecies] Apart from that, without Scripture, without original sin, without the necessary mediator, who was promised and came, it is impossible to prove absolutely that God exists, or to teach sound doctrine and sound morality. But through and in Christ we can prove God's existence, and teach both doctrine and morality. Therefore Jesus is the true God of men.

"But at the same time we know our own wretchedness, because this God is nothing less than our redeemer from wretchedness. Thus we can know God properly only by knowing our own iniquities.

"Those who have known God without knowing their own wretchedness have not glorified him but themselves. (I Cor. 1.21)"

191. "It is not only impossible but useless to know God without Christ... *'The better one is the worse one becomes if one ascribes this excellence to oneself.'*" [Quoting St. Bernard]

192. "Knowing God without knowing our own wretchedness makes for pride.

"Knowing our own wretchedness without knowing God makes for despair.

"Knowing Jesus Christ strikes the balance because he shows us both God and our own wretchedness."

417. "Not only do we know God only through Jesus Christ, but we know ourselves only through Jesus Christ; we know life and death only through Jesus Christ. Apart from Jesus Christ we cannot know the meaning of our life or our death, of God or of ourselves.

Without this Scripture, whose only object is Christ, we know nothing, and can see nothing but obscurity and confusion in the nature of God and in nature itself."

449. "Deism, almost as remote from the Christian religion as atheism, its complete opposite.

"Let them conclude what they like against deism, their conclusion will not apply to Christianity, which properly consists in the mystery of the Redeemer, who, uniting in himself the two natures, human and divine, saved men from the corruption of sin in order to reconcile them with God in his divine person."

"It teaches men then these two truths alike: that there is a God, of whom men are capable, and that there is a corruption in nature which makes them unworthy. It is of equal importance to men to know each of these points: and it is equally dangerous for man to know God without knowing his own wretchedness as to know his own wretchedness without knowing the Redeemer who can cure him."

"Jesus Christ is the object of all things, the center towards which all things tend. Whoever knows him knows the reason for everything."

"Those who go astray only do so for want of seeing one of these two things. It is then perfectly possible to know God but not our own wretchedness, or our own wretchedness but not God; but it is not possible to know Christ without knowing both God and our wretchedness alike."

[For these reasons one does not attempt to argue from nature about God. For one, such arguments are not convincing to atheists anyway, and second,] “such knowledge, without Christ, is useless and sterile.”

“The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, God of the Christians is a God of love and consolation: he is a God who fills the soul and heart of those whom he possesses: he is a God who makes them inwardly aware of their wretchedness and his infinite mercy: who unites himself with them in the depths of their soul: who fills it with humility, joy, confidence and love: who makes them incapable of having any other end but him.”

842. “Our religion is wise and foolish: wise, because it is the most learned and most strongly based on miracles, prophecies, etc., foolish, because it is not all this which makes people belong to it. [...] What makes them believe is the cross.”

352. “The incarnation shows man the greatness of his wretchedness through the greatness of the remedy required.”

228. “What do the prophets say about Jesus Christ? That he will plainly be God? No, but that he is a truly hidden God, that he will not be recognized, that people will not believe that it is he, that he will be a stumbling-block on which many will fall, etc.

“Let us not then be criticized for lack of clarity since we openly profess it. ‘But,’ they say, ‘there are obscurities, and but for that Jesus would not have caused anyone to stumble.’ And this is one of the formal intentions of the prophets. *Shut their eyes.*”

Other thoughts on biblical prophecy: 304, 306-07, 332, 335, 338, 390; series vi–xix, section two

311. “*Proofs of Jesus Christ.* The hypothesis that the Apostles were knaves is quite absurd. Follow it to the end and imagine these twelve men meeting after Jesus’s death and conspiring to say that he had risen from the dead. [...] Follow that out.”

322. “The Apostles were either deceived or deceivers. Either supposition is difficult, for it is not possible to imagine that a man has risen from the dead.

“While Jesus was with them he could sustain them, but afterwards, if he did not appear to them, who did make them act?”

316. “Who taught the evangelists the qualities of a perfectly heroic soul, so that they could depict one so perfectly in Jesus? Why do they make him weak in his agony? Do they not know how to describe a steadfast death? Yes, because the same St. Luke describes the death of St. Stephen more heroically than that of Jesus.

“They make him capable of fear before death had become inevitable and then absolutely steadfast.

“But when they show him so distressed it is when he distresses himself; when men distress him he is steadfast.”

299. “The Gospel only speaks of the Virgin’s virginity up to the birth of Jesus. Everything in relation to Jesus.”

309. “Jesus said great things so simply that he seems not to have thought about them, and yet so clearly that it is obvious what he thought about them. Such clarity together with such simplicity is wonderful.”