

Christian Evidences

The Existence of God The Cosmological Argument

Heb. 3:4 “For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God.”

Gen. 1:1 “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”

Psalms 19:1 “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.”

Rom. 1:20 “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead”

Heb. 11:3 “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

I. The Essential Argument

1. Everything is an effect of some cause.
2. Unless there is “infinite regression,” there must be a first cause, a first mover or an unmoved mover.
3. But because there is no perpetual motion, because matter ceases to exist, and because of the law of entropy, there cannot be an infinite regression. All we know of matter is finite.
4. Nothing comes from nothing, and something cannot arise from nothing.
5. As a result, since there is a world, there must be some infinite force behind it.

II. Four Alternatives to the World’s Origin

1. It is an illusion
2. It spontaneously arose out of nothing
3. It had no origin but has existed eternally
4. It was created (Either inanimate matter with its incorporated energy, or a Personal Creator is eternal and caused the existence of everything else.)

An assessment of these four alternatives:

- a. #1 and #2 are absurd
- b. “The laws of thermodynamics (heat) indicate that the universe is running down. In infinite time this state of entropy would already have happened. The hot sun and stars, the earth with its wealth of life, are complete evidence that the origin of the universe has occurred in time, at a fixed point in time, and therefore the universe must have been created.” (Dr. Frank Allen)
- c. Dr. Edward Luther Kessel: “Science clearly shows that the universe could not have existed from all eternity. The law of entropy states that there is a continuous flow of heat from warmer to colder bodies. . . . Therefore the universe is headed for a time when the temperature will be universally uniform and there will be no more useful energy. Consequently there will be no more chemical and physical processes, and life itself will cease to exist. But because life is still going on, and chemical and physical processes are still in progress, it is evident that our universe could not have existed from eternity, else it would have long since run out of useful energy and ground to a halt. Therefore, quite unintentionally, science proves that our universe had a beginning. And

in so doing it proves the reality of God, for whatever had a beginning did not begin of it self but demands a Prime Mover, a Creator, a God.”

6. An Objection: “If everything must have a cause, then God must have a cause. If there can be anything without a cause, it may as likely be the world as God.’

1. God is not matter but spirit; He is self-existent. By definition God cannot be made or created.
2. The law of entropy does not apply to God as it would the universe, for God is self-perpetuating. He does not run down.

THE TELEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

3. The universe demonstrates order, purpose, and design; this implies that there must be One who arranged this order, purpose and design. Beauty, form, design, and purpose in nature all imply a creative mind, an intelligent architect. It suggests that the force that brought the Universe into being is an intelligent, planning, thinking being.
4. This design and purpose argues against the possibility that the universe arose by mere chance or accident.

EXAMPLES OF ORDER AND DESIGN

THE HUMAN BODY:

Psalm 139:14 “I will praise Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knows right well.”

Your body has 100 trillion cells; 3 billion die and are replaced each minute

Your brain continuously receives and sends signals far more sophisticated than the best of computers

eyes: 130,000 light receptors

ears: 100,000 hearing receptors distinguishing 2,500 different tones

taste: 3,000 different receptors in your mouth

30,000 receptors for heat

250,000 receptors for cold

500,000 receptors measuring pressure of touch

4 million pain sensors

10 billion nerve cells

100 billion brain cells for storing memory.

The human eye is the most perfect camera ever known to man automatically adjusts to light and distance, and focuses instantly. Two eyes on a horizontal plane are able to measure distance can distinguish between one million colors, can increase its ability to see 100,000 times. The eyes have brows, lashes, tears and a nose for protection.

Unlike any other creature, the human can speak and understand

3,000 languages and millions of words

Your heart beats an average of 72 times per minute. Each year it pumps five quarts of blood through 60,000 miles of veins and arteries (total 600,000 gallons).

If you cut yourself, your blot has a clotting system

You have a well-engineered skeletal system of 206 bones

You have a rugged yet sophisticated digestive system
You have a sensitive, analytical, taste-smell system
You have a marvelous muscular-connective tissue system
You have a programmed glandular-hormone system
Your lungs filter and warm the oxygen it places in the blood and take away the carbon dioxide
You have skin that both insulates and ventilates
You have a waste disposal system
You have a system to take oxygen and nutrition to every cell
You have a white cell defense system to fight disease
Your body has a self-restoring, self-healing system
Your two and one-half pound brain is the most complicated structure known to the universe with each cell connected to every other cell

The Human Eye

Then there is that wonder of wonders: the human eye! How could anybody look at a human eye and suppose that it just happened? Evolutionists tell us that where there is want, nature will provide what is needed. Can you imagine that we needed sight? No one had ever seen anything, but there was a need to see something. So nature created an eye. Imagine creating two eyes on a horizontal plane so that we not only can see but we also have a range finder that determines distances.

Did you ever wonder what happens to your tears that continually flow across your eye? Dr. William Paley wrote a classic work entitled *Natural Theology* in which he discusses the eye. “In order to keep the eye moist and clean—which qualities are necessary to its brightness and its use—a wash is constantly supplied by a secretion for the purpose; and the superfluous brine is conveyed to the nose through a perforation in the bone as large as a goose quill. When once the fluid has entered the nose, it spreads itself upon the inside of the nostril, and is evaporated by the current of warm air which in the course of respiration is continually passing over it. . . It is easily perceived that the eye must want moisture; but could the want of the eye generate the gland which produces the tear, or bore the hole by which it is discharged—a hole through a bone?” Let the atheist or the evolutionist tell us who bored the hole in the bone and laid a water pipe through it for the dispersion of our tears.

Sir Charles Scott Sherrington, famous English physiologist of Oxford who wrote a classic work on the eye, said: “Behind the intricate mechanism of the human eye lie breathtaking glimpses of a Master Plan.” When confronted with darkness the human eye increases its ability to see one hundred thousand times. The finest camera ever made does not even vaguely approach such a thing, but the human eye does it automatically. Furthermore, the eye will find the object it wants to see and focus upon it automatically. It will elongate or compress itself. Both eyes moving together must take different angles to fix themselves upon what is to be seen. When the eye got ready to create itself, it also had the forethought for its own protection, and built itself beneath the bony ridge of the brow, and also provided a nose on which to hang the glasses that most of us need. Then it provided a shutter to protect itself from any foreign object.

The Ozone Layer

Forty miles up there is a thin layer of ozone. If compressed it would be only a quarter of an inch thick, and yet without it life could not exist. Eight killer rays fall upon this planet continually from the sun; without ozone we would be burned, blinded and broiled by them in just a day or

two. The ultraviolet rays come in two forms: longer rays which are deadly and are screened out, and shorter rays which are necessary for life on earth and are admitted by the ozone layer. Furthermore, the most deadly of these rays are allowed through the ozone layer in just a very thin amount, enough to kill the green algae, which otherwise would grow to fill all the lakes, rivers, and oceans of the world. How little we realize what God is continuously doing to provide for our life. We see that we live with a tiny ozone layer protecting us from an unseen deadly bombardment that constantly comes down upon our heads. Beneath us is a thin rock crust, thinner than the skin of an apple in comparison.

Lava

Beneath that is the molten lava that forms the core of this earth. So man lives between the burning, blackening rays above and that molten lava below, either of which would burn him to a crisp. Yet man is totally oblivious that God has so arranged things that he can exist in such a world as this.

Red Blood Cells

Within human beings, there are many things that tell us God has made us. Our life is based upon the blood that flows in our veins. The amazing red blood cell, created in the bone marrow, immediately gives up its nucleus when it reaches the bloodstream. For any other cell, this would mean death, like cutting the heart right out of a man. A red blood cell is formed like a doughnut with a thin membrane across the hole. Without a nucleus it is able to carry more oxygen for the body because of this membrane and the shape of the cell. If it were shaped like other cells, it would require nine times as many cells to provide oxygen for the human body.

Some Concluding Remarks:

Consider what Dr. A. Cressy Morrison, a physician and former president of the New York State Academy of Science, has to say:

The evidence is strongly suggestive of this directive purpose back of everything.... We have found that the world is in the right place, that the crust is adjusted to within ten feet, and that-if the ocean were a few feet deeper we would have no oxygen or vegetation. We have found that the earth rotates in twenty-four hours and that were this revolution delayed, life would be impossible. If the speed of the earth around the sun were increased or decreased materially, this history of life, if any, would be entirely different. We find that the sun is the one among thousands which could make our sort of life possible on earth, its size, density, temperature and the character of its rays all must be right, and are right. We find that the gases of the atmosphere are adjusted to each other and that a very slight change would be fatal.... Considering the bulk of the earth, its place in space and the nicety of the adjustments, the chances of some of these adjustments occurring is in the order of one to a million, and the chances of all of them occurring cannot be calculated even in the billions. The existence of these facts cannot, therefore, be reconciled with any of the laws of chance. It is impossible, then, to escape the conclusion that the adjustments of nature to man are far more amazing than the adjustments of man to nature. A review of the wonders of nature demonstrates beyond question that there are design and purpose in it all. A program is being carried out in all its infinite detail by the Supreme Being we call God.

SOME POSITIVE EVIDENCES OF THE RESURRECTION
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Men who were eyewitnesses of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection wrote the Scripture. No other source of evidence can be considered as authoritative.

1. *Jesus predicted his resurrection and the day he would rise.*

John 2:19-21 "Destroy this temple (body), and in three days I will raise it up."

Matt 16:21 "From that time on Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."

See also Matt 17:9,22,23; 20:18,19; 26:32; 27:63; Mark 8:31; 9:10,31; 10:32-34; 14:28,58; Luke 9:22-27; John 10:17-18.

2. *The suffering of Jesus shows that he actually died.*

Mark 15:15-20 Jesus was beaten and scourged by the Roman soldiers. Such scourging was often enough to kill a man.

Mark 15:21,22 So weak was Jesus that Simon a Cyrenian was compelled to bear his cross. "They brought Him to the place Golgotha" (he needed assistance to get there) Lk. 23:26

John 19:31-37 Jesus was found to be dead already when the soldiers came to break his legs and hasten death. One of

the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, "and immediately blood and water came out."

Mark 15:42-45 Pilate marveled that Jesus was dead and would not release the body until he found out for sure from the centurion

John 19:38-42 If Jesus were not dead the burial procedures of wrapping the body in linen cloths and the mixture of myrrh and aloes would have suffocated him.

3. *Jesus appeared to women and men, to people alone, to two disciples, to the ten disciples in the upper room, then to the twelve, to the seven by the lake and to more than 500 at one time.* The appearances occurred in many different places and under different circumstances. Not one person who witnessed the appearances ever denied what he saw, heard and touched.

4. *Jesus was touched.* The resurrection body was a real body: Luke 24:39-43; John 20:27,28; 21:9-13. See also John 20:16,17 (NASV; NKJV): "Stop clinging to me." Luke 24:42,43: "And he took it and ate it in their presence."

5. *The guard at the tomb and the seal of the governor is strong evidence.* Matt. 27:62-66.

"Pilate said to them, 'You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how.' So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone, and setting the guard." To break the seal was a criminal offense. The fact that Jesus' enemies asked for a guard showed that they took his prediction seriously. After the raising of Lazarus, they were afraid that all men would believe in Jesus (John 11:45-53).

Matt. 28:11-15 The guards witnessed the resurrection but were bribed to lie that the disciples stole the body. They claimed they were asleep. But the penalty for sleeping while on duty was very severe. This is why the promise to appease the governor and make them secure.

6. *The heavy stone covering the grave was moved.* Matt. 27:60; Mark 16:3,4; Luke 24:2; John 20:1. The wording of Matthew and John seem to indicate that there was a slope up, which the stone was rolled. Matt. 28:2-4 "an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door."

"The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men."

How could a weakened Jesus (if he had not died) have been able to move the heavy stone, if he had not died? How did the disciples and Jesus evade the guards at the tomb, if the disciples stole the body?

7. *The grave clothes were left orderly.* John 20:3-9. When Peter and John entered the tomb they found the grave clothes left orderly. If Jesus were dead, the grave clothes would have been left on him. If the body were stolen, they would not have taken the time to leave the grave

clothes. How did Jesus get out of the grave clothes in his weakened condition? Lazarus was unable to remove his grave clothes (John 11:43,44).

None of the disciples ever denied the resurrection, but they died preaching it. According to the traditions of history, they were all martyred for their faith except John. Would you die preaching something you knew was a lie? It is certainly not in the character or teachings of Jesus that one should lie.

8. *No evidence of a dead body was ever found by the enemies of Christ.* If the body of Christ could have been produced, the enemies of Christ would have done so and exposed the disciples as false witnesses. We may be sure that no stone was left unturned in the many efforts to disprove the resurrection and stop Christianity.

9. *The remarkable change in the disciples.*

BEFORE (weak, cowardly and unbelieving)

Matt. 28:16,17 "when they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted."

Mark 16:9-14 they did not believe the women or the two; "He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart"

Luke 24:10-11 the women's words seemed to them like "idle tales, and they did not believe them."

Luke 24:19-27 the despair of the two on the road to Emmaus; the doubt of Peter and John because they did not see him

John 20:19 "the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews"

John 20:24-29 Thomas said, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

AFTER (convinced, determined, bold)

Acts 2:31-32 the boldness of Peter and the eleven at Pentecost preaching about Jesus' death, burial and resurrection, "to which we are all witnesses"

Acts 3:13-22 Peter and John refused to listen to the council (Sanhedrin) which condemned Jesus

Acts 5:17-21 apostles imprisoned but delivered by an angel went out to preach again

Acts 5:26-32 the apostles brought again before the council; Peter responds, "We ought to obey God rather than men."

Acts 7:59,60 Stephen stoned for preaching Jesus as the Christ

Acts 12:1-4 James killed with the sword, Peter imprisoned for preaching Jesus Christ

10. *The existence of the church.* The church did not just happen, it was caused by the power of God. Jesus predicted that the gates of Hades would not prevent his building his church (Matt. 16:18). The early church turned the world upside down (Acts 17:6). The only adequate cause for this event is the resurrection.

11. *The faith and the preaching of the apostle Paul.* Paul (Saul of Tarsus) was originally a persecutor of the church and a scholarly man of the Jews (Acts 7:58-8:4). As a witness to the resurrection his testimony is especially important in view of his previous zeal against Christianity (1 Tim. 1:12-14). His testimony of the resurrection in 1 Cor. 15:3-9 is the earliest documentary evidence we have. Paul's conversion and subsequent life cannot be satisfactorily explained except in the way he himself explained it--he had seen the risen Christ.

THEORIES OF THE RESURRECTION ANSWERED

I. THE SWOON THEORY

Theory: Christ did not really die but fainted from exhaustion. When he was laid in the tomb he revived and later showed himself to the disciples.

Answer:

1. Jesus was in a weakened condition and did actually die. The Roman soldiers were experts in killing and knew when a man was dead. Pilate had a centurion to reassure him of the death.
2. Jesus' body had gone through preparations for burial
3. How did Jesus remove the burial wrappings if he were alive and in a weakened condition?
4. How could Jesus have moved the huge stone in his weakened condition? How did he move it unnoticed by the guards?
5. After the 40 days of appearances, how did Jesus disguise himself for the rest of his life? His disciples went into all the world.
6. If Jesus were a hoax, why didn't the disciples disavow him? Why did they die for their faith in the resurrection?

II. THE VISION/HALLUCINATION THEORY

Theory: Christ appeared to His disciples but only in (a) spiritual visions or (b) hallucinations. Since the disciples were expecting to see Jesus, it would seem only natural for them to think that they did. The vision took the form of a bodily appearance.

Answer:

1. A vision is a miracle. This theory merely substitutes one miracle for another.
2. Why did the disciples think they saw a body if it were only a vision? Jesus in his appearances could speak, hear, eat, touch and be touched. See 1 John 1:1-4. Jesus proved himself alive by "many infallible proofs" (Acts 1:3).
3. How did the same vision occur to more than 500 people at one time?
4. The vision theory does not explain what happened at the tomb. What happened to the body of Jesus? What frightened the guards? Who rolled away the stone? Why were the linen wrappings left behind?
5. The disciples did not expect to see Jesus. In spite of his prophecies, the disciples were skeptical and unbelieving.
6. Why did the visions only last 40 days?
7. Why did the disciples agree to announce a lie? Why would they continue to lie until they were all killed?

III. THE LEGEND THEORY

Theory: Legends developed in Palestine some years after Christ's career that he rose from the dead. The resurrection was one of the legends.

Answer:

1. The Bible claims that the resurrection story was based on eyewitness accounts.
 - *Matthew and John were apostles and eyewitnesses
 - *2 Pet. 1:16 no cleverly-devised tales
 - *1 John 1:3 "that which we have seen and heard we declare to you"
 - *John 19:35; 20:30,31 John writes from first-hand experience

*Luke 1:1-3 Luke interviewed eyewitnesses

*Acts 26:24-26 "this thing was not done in a corner"

2. It is impossible to suppose that the early church did not know its own history; the very fact of the early church of the Bible account is evidence of its truth.

3. Wouldn't the Jews have shown the accounts to be false? See John 11:43-48; Acts 4:16,17.

4. What would cause the scholarly and zealous Saul of Tarsus to forsake Judaism and embrace a legend?

5. The evidence demonstrates that all the New Testament was written within 70 years of the time of Jesus. Most of it was written within 40 years. This is not enough time for stories to develop into legends. Legends usually take centuries to develop.

IV. THEORY THAT THE BODY WAS STOLEN BY THE DISCIPLES

Theory: The high priests and Roman soldiers were correct in their response to the Christian claim.

Answer:

1. This is certainly out of character of the timid, fearful, unbelieving, and scattered disciples to risk their lives against the Roman soldiers at the tomb to steal his body. They were hiding because they feared jail for themselves (John 20:19).

2. A small band of Jews would not have frightened the Roman soldiers, who were under punishment of death if they failed in their duty.

3. It is impossible to believe that all the guard fell asleep at the same time.

4. The Jews were permitted to make the tomb as secure as they knew how (Matt. 27:65). There were probably several soldiers at the tomb.

5. What could a few, poor fishermen do against disciplined and well-armed soldiers? Why was no one reported wounded or killed?

6. Why did they leave the grave clothes? If the disciples stole the body, how could they have enough time to roll the stone away, take off the grave clothes, and leave undetected? Why would they undress the body? Why did they leave the clothes orderly? What did they do with the body?

7. The soldiers were either awake or asleep. If they were asleep, how did the soldier know the disciples stole the body? If they were awake, why should they allow the body to be taken?

8. Why didn't the Sanhedrin apprehend the apostles on Pentecost and imprison them until they confessed what really happened? If the disciples had stolen the body, they would likely have remained hidden themselves and would never have openly confessed to being followers of Christ. The people knew that Jesus had arisen from the dead (Acts 2:22,32; Matt. 27:63).

9. What possible motive would the disciples have for stealing the body?

5. It is not the character of a follower of Jesus to be deceptive.

The Historicity of Jesus Outside of the Writings of Believers

Cornelius Tacitus

The greatest Roman historian in the days of the Empire was Cornelius Tacitus (born between 52 and 54 A.D.). Writing about the reign of Nero (54-68 A.D.), he described the great fire which destroyed Rome in 64 A.D. and told of the rumor that Nero burned the city himself in order to gain greater glory in its rebuilding. In his Annals 15.44, Tacitus says:

Therefore, to scotch the rumor, Nero substituted as culprits, and punished with the utmost refinements of cruelty, a class of men, loathed for their vices, whom the crowd styled Christians.

Christus, from whom they got their name, had been executed by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate when Tiberius was emperor; and the pernicious superstition was checked for a short time, only to break out afresh, not only in Judea, the home of the plague, but in Rome itself, where all the horrible and shameful things in the world collect and find a home.

For Tacitus, Christus would have been considered a proper name; but to the Jews and for the first Christians, it referred to the Messiah. The Jews did not believe him to be the Messiah and would have referred to him merely as Jesus. It is thought that this information came from a summary report from Pilate himself. It may sure be one of the ironies of history that the only mention Pilate receives from a Roman historian is in connection with the part he played in the execution of Jesus.

Tacitus makes a further reference to Christians in a fragment of his Histories, dealing with the burning of the Jerusalem temple in 70 A.D. This is preserved by Sulpicius Severus (Chron. 2.30.6).

Suetonius

Suetonius wrote of the lives of the first twelve Caesars in 120 A.D., from the life of Julius Caesar onward. In his Life of Nero (26.2), Suetonius says:

"Punishment was inflicted on the Christians, a class of men addicted to a novel and mischievous superstition."

Another possible reference to Christianity occurs in *Suetonius's Life of Claudius* (25:4), of whom he says:

"As the Jews were making constant disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he expelled them from Rome."

This reference to the expelling from Rome (ca. 50 A.D.) can be also be found in Acts 18:2, "And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome." It is likely that the strife among the Roman Jews at that time was over the introduction of Jesus Christ. Suetonius wrongly infers that "Chrestus" (Christ) was actually in Rome at the time.

The prophecy of Agabus in Acts 11:28 is "that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the reign of Claudius." Suetonius confirms this report in his Life of Cladius 18.2, where he mentions that during Claudius's reign there were "constant unfruitful seasons."

Lucian

Lucian, a Greek satirist likened to Mark Twain, wrote in the second century about Christ in these words in a work entitled, *On the Death of Peregrine*.

The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day--the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account. . . . You see, these misguided creatures start with the general conviction that they are immortal for all time, which explains the contempt of death and voluntary self-devotion which are so common among them; and then it was impressed on them by their original lawgiver that they are all brothers, from the moment that they are converted, and deny the gods of Greece, and worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws. All this they take quite on faith, with the result that they despise all worldly goods alike, regarding them merely as common property.

From this same source we also learn that the Christians had "sacred writings," which they read frequently. They also spared no trouble or expense to help each other in matters affecting their community. Unfortunately, the goodness of Christians led them to be easily taken advantage of by unscrupulous people.

Mara Bar-Serapion

The British Museum possesses a manuscript of a letter written between the first and third centuries A.D. The author was Mara Bar-Serapion, a Syrian who was writing to encourage his son in prison to imitate wise men. The letter reads in part:

What advantage did the Athenians gain from putting Socrates to death? Famine and plague came upon them as a judgment for their crime. What advantage did the men of Samos gain from burning Pythagoras? In a moment their land was covered with sand. What advantage did the Jews gain from executing their wise King? It was just after that that their kingdom was abolished. God justly avenged these three wise men: the Athenians died of hunger, the Samians were overwhelmed by the sea; the Jews, ruined and driven from their land, live in complete dispersion. But Socrates did not die for good; he lived on in the statue of Hera. Nor did the wise King die for good; he lived on in the teaching, which he had given.

Pliny the Younger

An author and administrator, Pliny the Younger (62-113 A.D.), the Roman governor of Bithynia, which is in Asia Minor wrote to the Emperor Trajan (98-117 A.D.), asking for guidance in how to deal with accused Christians. At that time it was illegal to be a Christian, and some were tortured or killed. In his letter Pliny describes an early worship service:

They (the Christians) were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god, and bound themselves by a solemn oath, not to commit any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble to partake of food--but food of an ordinary and innocent kind. (Epistles, Book 10.96 written in 112 A.D.)

Emperor Trajan

Pliny's inquiry received the Emperor's attention and response, which is published along with Pliny's letters:

The method you have pursued, my dear Pliny, in sifting the cases of those denounced to you as Christians is extremely proper. It is not possible to lay down any general rule, which can be applied as the fixed standard in all cases of this nature. No search should be made for these people; when they are denounced and found guilty they must be punished; with the restriction, however, that when the party denies himself to be a Christian, and shall give proof that he is not (that is, by adoring our Gods) he shall be pardoned on the ground of repentance, even though he may have formerly incurred suspicion. Information without the accuser's name subscribed must not be admitted in evidence against anyone, as it is introducing a very dangerous precedent, and by no means agreeable to the spirit of the age. (Pliny, Epistles, Book 10.97)

Emperor Hadrian

Serenius Granianus, proconsul of Asia, wrote to Emperor Hadrian (117-138 A.D.) about the treatment of Christians who were being tried. Hadrian replied to Minucius

Fundanus, his successor, with a statement against those who would accuse Christians falsely or without the due process of law. In a letter preserved by Eusebius, a fourth-century church historian, Hadrian says:

I do not wish, therefore, that the matter should be passed by without examination, so that these men may neither be harassed, nor opportunity of malicious proceedings be offered to informers. If, therefore, the provincials can clearly evince their charges against the Christians, so as to answer before the tribunal, let them pursue this course only, but not by mere petitions, and mere outcries against the Christians. For it is far more proper; if any one would bring an accusation, that you should examine it.

Hadrian said that if Christians should be found guilty after they had been examined, then they should be judged "according to the heinousness of the crime." If the accusers were only slandering the believers, then those who inaccurately made the charges were to be punished. (See Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 4:9.)

Thallus

We now appeal to a lost work by an historian of the first century that was quoted in 221 A.D. by Julius Africanus. Thallus wrote about the death of Jesus in his history of the Eastern Mediterranean world covering the time from the Trojan War to his own day (52 A.D.). This work is lost, but other authors cite fragments. It is debated about whether Josephus refers to this man as a wealthy Samaritan, who was made a freedman by Emperor Tiberius and who loaned money to Agrippa I. Africanus found a reference dealing with the darkness that covered the land at the time of the crucifixion and writes:

*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. This darkness Thallus, in the third book of his History, calls as appears to me without reason, an eclipse of the sun. (Julius Africanus, *Extant Writings*, 18 in the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 6, p. 130.)*

Africanus objected to Thallus's assessment because he could not see how an eclipse could take place when there was a full moon, as is the case when the Jews observed the Passover. Africanus does not tell us if Thallus mentions Jesus' name or not.

Josephus

This Jewish historian, writing in about 93 or 94 A.D. in his *Antiquities of the Jews*, spoke about the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There are two versions of this statement, one in Greek and the other in Arabic. The Greek text dates as early as 315 A.D. but has been disputed. Though Josephus was not a Christian, the language he uses may very well be how a cynical Jew might refer to Jesus.

*About this time there arose Jesus, a wise man, if indeed it be lawful to call him a man. For he was a doer of wonderful deeds, and a teacher of men who gladly receive the truth. He drew to himself many both of the Jews and of the Gentiles. He was the Christ; and when Pilate, on the indictment of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those who loved him at the first did not cease to do so, for he appeared to them again alive on the third day, the divine prophets having foretold these and ten thousand wonderful things about him. And even to this day the race of Christians, who are named after him, has not died out. (*Antiquities* 18:3.)*

Origen says that Josephus did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah (*Contra Celsum* 1:47). For this reason many scholars have debated whether Josephus actually penned these words. However Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History* (1:11) quotes the passage as genuine.

In 1972 Professor Shlomo Pines of Hebrew University in Jerusalem argued for an Arabic version of this same text which he believes to be older than the Greek one. This version was found in a church history written by Agapius, an Arab bishop in Baghdad. The Arabic version reads:

At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. And his conduct was good and (he) was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and from the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive. Accordingly he was perhaps the Messiah of whom the prophets have recounted wonders.

Professor Pines believes that medieval Christian censorship was probably responsible for the differences between the two versions. Whether one accepts the Greek or the Arabic, the essential story of the death and resurrection of Jesus was known by Josephus and recorded in his *Antiquities of the Jews*.

In another passage in the *Antiquities*, Josephus writes about the martyrdom of the brother of Jesus, called James:

(Ananus) assembled the Sanhedrin of the judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others, and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned. (20:9)

The Talmud

The Talmud is a collection of Jewish traditions, which were written down by Rabbi Akiba in 135 A.D. A very significant quotation is found in Sanhedrin 43a, dating from the Tannaitic period (70-200 A.D.).

On the eve of the Passover Yeshu was hanged. For forty days before the execution took place, a herald went forth and cried, "He is going forth to be stoned because he has practiced sorcery and enticed Israel to apostasy. Any one who can say anything in his favor, let him come forward and plead on his behalf." But since nothing was brought forward in his favor he was hanged on the eve of the Passover!

It is important to note at this point that the word "hanged" is a variant expression meaning that he was crucified. Gal. 3:13 speaks of the curse on "every one who hangs on a tree." The word "hang" is used of crucifixion also in the case of the two thieves (Luke 23:39).

Another possible reference to Jesus in the Talmud states that he was either thirty-three or thirty-four when he died (Sanhedrin 106b).

Biblical Inspiration

The Bible is no ordinary book; it is unique; there is no book like it in any time or in any place. It is unique because it comes from God; it is the Holy Book. No other book can make the

claims this book makes, nor is there the evidence to support any book like the evidence for the Bible

The Bible claims to be inspired of God--it is what God wanted and intended for you to know about Him and about your redemption. This claim means that this book must be dealt with. It is either true or false; if false, this is still a remarkable book; but if true, this book will one day be your judge

The Bible Claims Inspiration For Itself

1. **2 Tim. 3:16** All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 3:17 that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

2. **2 Pet. 1:20** But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is {a matter} of one's own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

3. **1 Cor. 2:12** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual {thoughts} with spiritual {words.}

4. **2 Sam. 23:1** Now these are the last words of David. David the son of Jesse declares, And the man who was raised on high declares, The anointed of the God of Jacob, And the sweet psalmist of Israel, "The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue.

5. **John 14:26** "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

6. **John 16:12** "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear {them} now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

7. **John 17:7** "Now they have come to know that everything Thou hast given Me is from Thee; for the words which Thou gavest Me I have given to them; and they received {them,} and truly understood that I came forth from Thee, and they believed that Thou didst send Me. 17 "Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth. 18 "As Thou didst send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

8. **1 Cor. 14:37** If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. 38 But if anyone does not recognize {this}, he is not recognized.

9. **1 Thess. 2:13** And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted {it} not {as} the word of men, but {for} what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

10. **1 Thess. 4:8** Consequently, he who rejects {this} is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.

11. **Heb. 1:1** God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in {His} Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

12. **Jer. 1:9** Then the Lord stretched out His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me, "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.

13. **Isa. 51:16** "And I have put My words in your mouth, and have covered you with the shadow of My hand, to establish the heavens, to found the earth, and to say to Zion, 'You are My people.'"

14. **Matt. 10:19** "But when they deliver you up, do not become anxious about how or what you will speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what you are to speak. 20 "For it is not you who speak, but {it is} the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

15. More than 2000 times the Scripture uses the phrase "the word of the Lord" and more than 1800 times uses "thus saith the Lord"

WHY WE CAN BELIEVE THE CLAIMS TO INSPIRATION

If God gave the Bible, we would expect Him to tell us so. Jesus endorses this very view in Matt 22:31 when he asked the Sadducees, "have you not read that which was spoken to you by God?" On another occasion he demonstrates the strength of the Bible. Jesus said in **John 10:34** "and the Scripture cannot be broken."

If God is the source of the Bible, we would expect the Bible to have unity and be perfectly harmonious. Though 40 different men wrote the Bible over a period of 16 centuries, there is amazing harmony from first to last. A common theme of the redemption of man from sin runs throughout. A common set of moral values and doctrines can be clearly seen. There is a sense of progression from age to age and childhood to maturity in the Scriptures. Each age has its own plan and purpose as part of that scheme of redemption. Remarkably, there is an incredible harmony between the books--there never has been even one proven contradiction.

Since God as the source is holy, we would expect the Bible to have an exalted moral tone. The Bible has never been excelled in morality--its eternal laws have proven themselves for centuries as the highest of morals:

- The Ten Commandments (a basis for right and wrong)
- Love your neighbor as yourself

The Sermon on the Mount

- Matt. 5: wrong to be angry
- Matt. 5 wrong to lust
- Matt. 6: wrong to display acts of righteousness (hypocrisy)
- Matt. 7:1 a man should judge himself first
- Matt. 7:12 do unto others as you would have them do unto you

- Love one another, just as I have loved you
- it is more blessed to give than to receive

Wherever the influence of the Bible is strong--people's moral lives are better; wherever it is weak there are anarchy and every evil thing. According to John Richard Green in *A Short History of the English People*:

"No greater moral change ever passed over a nation than passed over England during the years which parted the middle of the reign of Elizabeth from the Long Parliament. England became a people of the book, and that book was the Bible. It was read at churches and read at home, and everywhere its words, as they fell on ears which custom had not deadened, kindled a startling enthusiasm. As a mere literary monument, the English version of the Bible remains the noblest example of the English tongue. But far greater was the effect of the Bible on the character of the people. Elizabeth might silence or tune the pulpits, but it was impossible for her to silence or turned the great preachers of justice and mercy and truth who spoke from the Book. The whole temper of the nation felt the change. A new moral and religious impulse spread through every class."

Society will change when its people become a people of the Book! The Bible is a leaven that pervades the lives of men and women who will take the time to study and meditate upon it. The Bible provides the spiritual health humanity needs to live peaceful and tranquil lives.

Since God is timeless, you would expect the Bible to also be everlasting and perpetually relevant! Many books are out-of-date quickly, but the Bible is as fresh and up-to-date as today's newspaper. Yet the themes of the Bible are age lasting; they affect every generation. Themes dealing with morals, ethics, relationships and attitudes speak with relevance to every age and culture. There is no social problem, no class problem, and no sin problem that the Bible does not address clearly and correctly. One section of the Bible, the prophets, especially deal with the morals and injustices of people in any age.

Many of the ancient books have become extinct, but the Bible is the most attested book of all antiquity (5,000 Greek manuscripts that date much older than other books of that era). F.F. Bruce said, "There is no body of ancient literature in the world which enjoys such a wealth of good textual attestation as the New Testament."

Caesar's Gallic Wars (58-50 B.C.) 10 good manuscripts, the oldest of which is written 900 years later than Caesar's day.

Livy's Roman History (59 B.C.-17AD) only 35 of the 142 books survive in only 20 MSS. oldest is fourth century AD.

Histories of Tacitus (AD 100) only 5 of 16 books remain; of the Annals only 10 of 16 survive; the textual base comes from 2 MS: one dated in the ninth century and one in the eleventh.

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) we have only 5 MSS of any one work he has written, and the oldest copy extant is 1,400 years after the author.

History by Pliny the Younger (61-113 A.D.), 7 MSS, the oldest in existence dates from 850 A.D., 750 years after the author.

The Jews preserved the Scriptures as no other manuscripts have ever been preserved. With their massora, they kept tabs on every letter, syllable, word and paragraph. They had special classes of men with their culture whose sole duty was to preserve and transmit these documents with practically perfect fidelity--scribes, lawyers, and massorettes. Whoever counted the words of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero or Seneca?

While cynics have criticized the Bible; it remains after 2,000 years the all-time best seller: millions every year! Matt. 24:35! The Bible has been translated completely into hundreds of languages and translated in part in more than 2,000 languages.

In A.D. 303, Diocletian issued an edict to destroy Christians and the Bible: "an imperial letter was everywhere promulgated, ordering the razing of the churches to the ground and the destruction by fire of the Scriptures, and proclaiming that those who held high positions would lose all civil rights, while those in households, if they persisted in their profession of Christianity, would be deprived of their liberty." (Cambridge History of the Bible; Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* VIII: 2). The historic irony of the above edict to destroy the Bible is that Constantine, the emperor following Diocletian, 25 years later commissioned Eusebius to prepare 50 copies of the Scripture at the expense of the government. The Bible is unique in its survival. This does not in itself prove the Bible is true. It does prove that the Bible stands alone among books. A student seeking truth ought to consider a book that has such power to survive in strength.

Voltaire, the noted French infidel who died in 1778, said that in one hundred years from his time Christianity would be swept from existence and passed into history. But what has happened? Voltaire has passed into history; while the circulation of the Bible continues to increase in almost all parts of the world, carrying blessing wherever it goes. Concerning the boast of Voltaire on the extinction of Christianity and the Bible, only fifty years after his death the Geneva Bible Society used his press and house to produce stacks of Bibles.

Since the Bible comes from God, one can expect it to be free from error. John Lea in *the Greatest Book in the World* compared the Bible with Shakespeare. "In an article in the North American Review, a writer made some interesting comparisons between the writings of Shakespeare and the Scriptures, which show that much greater care must have been bestowed upon the biblical manuscripts than upon other writings, even when there was so much more

opportunity of preserving the correct text by means of printed copies than when all the copies had to be made by hand." He said:

"It seems strange that the text of Shakespeare, which has been in existence less than two hundred and eight years, should be far more uncertain and corrupt than that of the New Testament, now over eighteen centuries old, during nearly fifteen of which it existed only in manuscript. . . With perhaps a dozen or twenty exceptions, the text of every verse in the New Testament may be said to be so far settled by general consent of scholars, that any dispute as to its readings must relate rather to the interpretation of the words than to any doubts respecting the words themselves. But in every one of Shakespeare's thirty-seven plays there are probably a hundred readings still in dispute, a large portion of which materially affects the meaning of the passages in which they occur."

The Bible Lives

Generation follows generation--yet it lives
Nations rise and fall--yet it lives.
Kings, dictators, presidents come and go--yet it lives
Hated, despised, cursed--yet it lives.
Doubted, suspected, criticized--yet it lives.
Condemned by atheists--yet it lives.
Scoffed by scorners--yet it lives.
Exaggerated by fanatics--yet it lives
Misconstrued and misstated--yet it lives.
Its inspiration denied--yet it lives.
Yet it lives--as a lamp to our feet.
Yet it lives--as a light to our path.
Yet it lives--as the gate to heaven.
Yet it lives--as a standard for childhood.
Yet it lives--as a guide for youth.
Yet it lives--as an inspiration for the martyred.
Yet it lives--as a comfort for the aged.
Yet it lives--as food for the hungry.
Yet it lives--as water for the thirsty.
Yet it lives--as rest for the weary.
Yet it lives--as light for the heathen.
Yet it lives--as salvation for the sinner.
Yet it lives--as grace for the Christian.
To know it is to love it,
To love it is to accept it,
To accept it means life eternal.

If God is true and accurate and can be trusted, we would expect the same from the Bible. Historically, geographically, linguistically it proves true! Archaeology has repeatedly shown things to be exactly where and how they were supposed to be. Though critics have charged the Bible with error, such is not the case.

For instance, when Julius Wellhausen charged that Moses could not have written the first five books of the Bible, he did so because he thought that Hebrews and Egyptians could not write in 1500 B.C. However, the "black stele" was found with the laws of Hammurabi and dating to 2000 B.C. It is now known that writing dates back to 3100 B.C. in the ancient Near East.

On another occasion, the critics believed that there could never have been a Hittite nation, since there was no extra-biblical evidence for them. But evidence was found in Cappadocia to support the fact that there were Hittites. Evidence was also discovered in Egypt and in Haran,

where clay tablets describe this sophisticated, early civilization. A.H. Sayce was the first to find monuments with the Hittite nation.

The critics said that there were no camels during the time of Abraham in the Near East. When they opened up the ancient graves, however, they found camel bones and camel hair.

In contrast to the Bible, however, when Tacitus, the Roman historian, wrote his renowned *History and Description of Germany*, it was filled with so many errors that modern scholars were shocked. When the *Encyclopedia Britannica* was first published, it contained so many mistakes regarding places in America that the publishers of the *New American Cyclopedia* issued a special pamphlet exposing the blunders of its rival. The Bible, however, has not had the need for someone to apologize for it. The more one knows of the Bible, the more one realizes that the Bible proves true. Note John Clayton's list of amazing facts about the Medical Accuracy of the Bible.

Conclusion:

You can trust your Bible historically, geographically, medically, and doctrinally. You can trust it with your soul. Whatever the Bible says will prove true; when men have supposed the Bible to be incorrect, they have always been found to be wrong. God is not wrong about life, and He is not wrong about your soul or the judgment to come.

Your Bible is the most wonderful book you will ever possess--but if it remains unread on your shelf, it will do you no good! You've got to read it, love it, meditate on it, memorize it, and live it if you are to get the good out of it!

Can We Trust The New Testament?

Harvey W. Everest in *The Divine Demonstration* lists seven criteria by which historical testimony may be tested. Testimony is judged to be the truth when it meets these criteria:

1. When the witnesses are honest, competent and have opportunity to know. (See 2 Pet. 1:16-18) Peter said they were not attempting to deceive but were eyewitnesses of the things they proclaimed.
2. When the witnesses agree in the general statement, although they may differ on minor points.
 - a. Acts 2:22-32 Peter and the apostles were witnesses and stood together in proclaiming the facts
 - b. Acts 26:26 Paul argued that the things Jesus did were well known and "not done in a corner."
3. When there is no known motive for imposture. The apostles and preachers of the first century did not become rich or honored by men because of their testimony. In fact, history records their numerous persecutions by the Romans, their opposition from the Jews, and the difficult lives they faced to preach Jesus as the Christ.
4. When the facts recorded are strongly against the faith or interest of the narrator. The books of Acts records the persecution of the church and those who suffered for their faith, including Stephen and James who became martyrs. Traditions teach that all the apostles suffered death for their teachings (except the apostle John, who was imprisoned on the isle of Patmos [Rev. 1:9-10]).
5. When such witnesses are numerous. Jesus made several appearances in the forty days after his resurrection and demonstrated himself to be the Son of God by many convincing proofs (Acts 1:1-3). Paul said that Jesus appeared to more than 500 brethren at one time (1 Cor. 15:1-10).

6. When the recorded facts and the existing facts are related as cause and effect. The places, people, culture and circumstances recorded by the authors represented the way things really were. The New Testament is not filled with nameless, mythical people, who could never have lived. Rather, archaeology and secular historical records support the credibility of the New Testament. The dates of the New Testament match historical realities in the world of that era.

7. When the facts recorded are sustained by existing monuments, coins, games or other public institutions. The fact that the church exists is a marvelous testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ and to the truth of the apostles' teaching. There would never have been a church had the apostles not believed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The fact that churches to this day meet on the first day of the week, the Lord's resurrection day, is a testimony to the fact that the events of the New Testament are real.

The New Testament witnesses to the life of Christ meet all these criteria.

You Can Trust Your Bible

There are very good reasons to believe your Bible. It is not a book of fairy tales or myths or fables; it is a book of truth! This is significant because the Truth is important to our souls and our eternity. When we ask ourselves and ask others to give their lives to follow the Lord in accordance to His teachings, we better believe those teachings are true! If these teachings are not true, then we have little comfort or hope. But if these teachings are true, and if they come from God, then we would be foolish to ignore them.

WHY YOU CAN TRUST THE BIBLE:

I. PREDICTIVE PROPHECY

1. God has made a test for us to know if the message has come from Him: "I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And it shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words, which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him. But the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. And you may say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?' When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing, which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him. (Deut. 18:18-21)

2. Only God knows the future; many who pretend to know do not know at all "Remember this, and be assured; Recall it to mind, you transgressors. Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure' (Isa. 46:8-10).

In all the writings of Buddha, Confucius or Lao-tse, there is not one single predicted prophecy. In the Koran (Islamic writings of Mohammed) there is one instance of a specific prophecy, a self-fulfilling prophecy, that Muhammad would return to Mecca. He did; but this is quite different from the prophecy of Jesus that He would return from the grave. Muhammad could easily go back to Mecca on his own ability, but it takes God for one to come back from the grave.

Modern prophets like Jean Dixon, the most famous seer in America, make some clever guesses; but do they come true as the Bible prophecies do? In 1952, 1956, and 1960 Dixon

prophesied who would be the presidential candidate in each major party and who would be elected President of the United States. How did she do? She missed every candidate and every election.

A Christian lady saved a National Enquirer from a few years ago. It had an article where the ten leading psychics, seers or prophets were to predict the events of the next six months. There were 61 prophecies, but not one came true! It seems to me that if a person predicted 61 things, he would be lucky enough to get one. Perhaps God wanted to show people how unlike God they are!

Historians know how difficult it is to predict the future, because the events of life turn on so many "ifs." Eccl. 7:14 says, "In the day of prosperity be happy, But in the day of adversity consider--God has made the one as well as the other So that man may not discover anything that will be after him." Eccl. 9:11 "I again saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, and the battle is not to the warriors, and neither is bread to the wise, nor wealth to the discerning, nor favor to men of ability; for time and chance overtake them all."

Nor are these prophecies of the Bible vague generalities like some of the ancient prophets of Greece, the Oracle at Delphi or the Sibylline Oracles. For example, Maxentius, Emperor of Rome, is said to have come to one of the Sibylline Oracles and asked what would happen if he attacked the army of Constantine that was approaching Rome on the other side of the Tiber River. The Oracle's answer was: "In that day, the enemy of Rome will be destroyed." So, confident of victory, he attacked Constantine's army, but it was Maxentius who was destroyed. The oracle failed to define who the enemy of Rome really was; thus in the pattern of most oracular utterances, however it turned out, the prophecy was fulfilled.

The Old Testament alone makes 2,000 predictive prophecies, not a few lucky guesses. Here are 20 of more than 100 prophecies about Jesus Christ:

seed of Woman (Gen. 3:15)
seed of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3; 17:7; 22:18)
seed of Isaac (Gen. 21:12)
seed of Judah (Gen. 49:10)
seed of David (Psa. 132:11)
Time of His coming and death (Daniel 2,9)
born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14)
born in Bethlehem of Judea (Micah 5:2)
Elijah, a voice preparing the Way (Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1)
anointed by the Holy Spirit (Psa. 45:7; Isa. 11:2)
prophet like Moses (Deut. 18:15-18)
teach by parables (Psa. 78:2)
perform miracles (Isa. 35:5,6)
rejected by his brothers (Psa. 69:8)
reject by Jewish rulers (Psa. 118:22)
flesh would not decay (Psa. 16:8-10)
rise from dead on third day (Psa. 16:8-10; 30:3)
ascend to the heavens (Psa. 68:18; 24:7-9)
His law, Word to go forth from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:1-3; Mic. 4:12)
Gentiles would be admitted (Isa. 11:10; 42:1; Psa. 2:8)

These are but a few things, which Jesus could not have self-determined but must have relied upon others. Peter Stoner, mathematician, in *Science Speaks*, selected just 8 of these Messianic Prophecies concerning Christ and estimated the odds of these being accidentally fulfilled. Results 1 in 10 (to the 17th power); that is 1 in 10 with 17 zeros following it.

Suppose we take 10 to the 17th power in silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover the entire state 2 feet deep. Now mark one of these dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one?

Isaiah 53

So accurate was Isaiah 53 in predicting the specific circumstances surrounding the death of Jesus Christ that people say it could not possibly have been written before the time of Christ!

But when the Dead Sea Scrolls were found at Qumran, in the midst of them was a complete copy of Isaiah, all in one scroll, with chapter 53 in its details, carbon dated to 150-250 years before Christ!

Prophecies about Nations:

1. Deut. 28:47-68 Moses predicts what will happen to the nation of Israel should they ever forsake God and turn to idols. The incredible likeness of this prophecy to the actual history of Israel in the time of the prophets verifies the truth Moses spoke. Things became so bad that some killed and ate their own children (Deut. 28:53; Jer. 19:9). There would be left few in number as a remnant (vs. 62). They would be scattered among the people from one end of the earth to the other (vs. 64). The dispersion is a matter of reality (James 1:1,2).

2. Isaiah foretold in the eighth century that when Israel would become deeply involved in idolatry, that the Lord would raise up the Assyrians as the "rod of His anger" to punish them (Isa. 50:5,6); but after that is accomplished, the Assyrians themselves would be destroyed (10:12-25). When Judah lapsed into spiritual decay, the prophets announced that Babylon would arise to punish them (Jer. 25:9-11) and to captivate them for 70 years. Babylon did so and destroyed Jerusalem. They held the Jews for exactly 70 years (607 B.C. to 537 B.C.). At the end of the seventy years (as Daniel 2 and Isaiah 13 predicts) Babylon was taken by the Medes and the Persians and Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem. (Cf. Daniel 5:28).

Prophecy About Babylon

Isa. 13:19 "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldee's excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah." There are more than 100 specific prophecies about Babylon's fate:

1. Walls of Babylon: 186 feet thick at base and 87 feet thick at top, 200 feet tall, 250 watchtowers rose to 300 feet, enclosed an area of 196 square miles. It was 14 miles on each side; 56 miles in circumference. Historian Herodotus tells us these facts. The Great Wall of China is not nearly so large or strong. Though China's wall is older, it still stands. The walls of Jerusalem still stand. Jer. 51:58,62 says, "The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken; . . . it shall be desolate forever." When was this fulfilled? In the fourth century A.D., Julian the Apostate came to the throne of Rome. His one overwhelming desire was to destroy Christianity and reestablish the pagan religions of Rome. While engaged in a war with the Persians near the remains of Babylon, Julian completely destroyed the remnants of the wall of Babylon lest it afford any protection in the future for the Persian army. Thus the prophecy of Jeremiah 51 was brought to fulfillment in 363 B.C. by one of Scripture's greatest antagonists of all time. Isaiah could not possibly have written this after the fact because Babylon's walls did not come down for more than a thousand years after his death.

2. The city would not be inhabited. Jer. 50:13,39 "Because of the wrath of the Lord it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate. . .It shall be no more inhabited forever." Has this been fulfilled? Pictures of Babylon today show this place to be a trackless waste. Its soil will not now grow any vegetation in spite of the fact that it had the hanging gardens (one of the seven wonders of the ancient world). The soil will not even allow pastures for grazing sheep. Today only weeds grow there. Because of the great amounts of rubbish; it cannot be cultivated. Only jackals, vipers, scorpions, wild boars hyenas, and wolves today inhabit Babylon. Not even the Bedouins pitch their tent there. The heaps of rubbish are the only sign it was ever inhabited.

Alexander the Great, who conquered the world within a decade, decided that he would rebuild Babylon in 323 B.C. He wanted to make it the capital of his worldwide Empire. He issued 600,000 rations to his soldiers to rebuild the city. But shortly thereafter, Alexander at only 33 suddenly died of a fever. The enterprise was abandoned. The place soon became a desert.

There are many other amazing prophecies of the Old Testament that could be considered: Egypt, Tyre and Sidon, Samaria, Nineveh, Edom and Petra, Gaza and Ashkelon of the Philistines, Thebes and Memphis.

The Bible prophesies of Jericho, that it would be rebuilt but at great cost. God's Word says in Josh. 6:26: "Then Joshua made them take an oath at that time, saying, 'Cursed before the Lord is the man who rises up and builds this city Jericho; with the loss of his first-born he shall lay its foundation, and with the loss of his youngest son he shall set up its gates.'" (1400 B.C.) The fulfillment of this prophecy comes to pass in 1 Kings 16:34 "In his days (king Ahab) Hiel the Bethelite built Jericho; he laid its foundation with the loss of Abiram his first-born, and set up its gates with the loss of his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which He spoke by Joshua the son of Nun." (870 B.C.) With God time does not change things.

Conclusion:

We need to believe all the word of God; it has proved itself over and over again! God means what He says about sin, judgment, self-control, heaven and hell. We need to give our lives to Him in love and obedience.

<p>Argument for the Genuineness of the Documents.</p>
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The genuineness of these writings really admits of as little doubt--and is as susceptible of as ready proof as that of any indent writings whatever. The rule of municipal law on this subject is familiar, and applies with equal force to all ancient writings, whether documentary or otherwise. The first enquiry, when an ancient document is offered in evidence in our courts, is, whether it comes from the proper repository; that is, whether it is found in the place where and under the care of persons with whom such writings might naturally and reasonably be expected to be found; for it is this custody which gives authenticity to documents found within it. If they come from such a place and bear no evident marks of forgery, the law presumes that they are genuine, and they are admitted to be read in evidence, unless the opposing party is able successfully to impeach them.... Now, this is precisely the case with the sacred writings. They have been used in the Church from time immemorial, and thus are found in the place where alone they ought to be looked for.

If it be objected that the originals are lost, and that copies alone are now produced, the principles of the municipal law here also afford a satisfactory answer.... If any ancient document concerning our public rights were lost, copies which had been as universally received and acted upon as The Four Gospels have been, would have been received in evidence in any of our courts of justice without the slightest hesitation. The entire text of the *Corpus Sums Civilis* is received as

authority in all the courts of continental Europe upon much weaker evidence of its genuineness; for the integrity of the Sacred Text has been preserved by the jealousy of opposing sects beyond any moral possibility of corruption, while that of the Roman Civil Law has been preserved only by tacit consent, without the interests of any opposing school to watch over and preserve it from alteration.

These copies of the Holy Scriptures, having thus been in familiar use in the Churches, from the time when the text was committed to writing; having been watched with vigilance by so many sects, opposed to each other in doctrine, yet all appealing to these Scriptures for the correctness of their faith; and having in all ages, down to this day, been respected as the authoritative source of all ecclesiastical power and government, and submitted to and acted under, in regard to so many claims of right on the one hand, and so many obligations of duty on the other; it is quite erroneous to suppose that the Christian is bound to offer any further proof of their genuineness or authenticity. It is for the objector to show them spurious; for on him, by the plainest rules of law, lies the burden of proof. If it were the case of a claim to a franchise, and a copy of an ancient deed or charter were produced in support of the title, under parallel circumstances on which to presume its genuineness, no lawyer, it is believed, would venture to deny its admissibility in evidence, nor the satisfactory character of the proof.

Messianic Prophecies

The apostles throughout the New Testament appealed to two things, which established that Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Messiah. The first was the resurrection, but the second is fulfilled Messianic prophecy. Jesus said, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:44,45). The Old Testament contains more than 300 prophecies of the Messiah which were fulfilled in Jesus.

The truth of Jesus and the inspiration of the Scriptures may be established through fulfilled prophecy. If God is God, then His word will be true and His knowledge infinite. Indeed, His word will never be broken (John 10:35). If God has spoken, He will make it good (Num. 23:19). God is able to subject all things to His will (Isa. 46:9,10). The prophesied Messiah could be absolutely identified by His fulfillment of the prophecies made about Him (Rom. 1:2-4).

Notice these appeals to Messianic prophecy:

And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. (Luke 24:27)

"These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." (Luke 24:44)

"You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life. (John 5:39,40) "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me." But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" (John 5:46,47)

And He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:20,21)

"For I tell you, that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, 'AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH TRANSGRESSORS'; for that which refers to Me has *its* fulfillment." (Luke 22:37)

"But *they have done this* in order that the word may be fulfilled that is written in their Law, 'THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE.' (John 15:25)

New Testament Writers Appeal to Prophecies Fulfilled in Jesus

Acts 3:18; 10:43; 13:29:17:2,3

Rom. 1:2

1 Cor. 15:3,4

1 Pet. 2:5,6

Old Testament Prophecies About the Messiah

PROPHECY

FULFILLMENT

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. He was to be born of the seed of the woman
Gen. 3:15</p> | <p>Matt. 1:18</p> |
| <p>2. He would be the Son of God
Psalm 2:7; 1 Chron. 17:11-14; 2 Sam. 7:12-16</p> | <p>Luke 1:32-35</p> |
| <p>3. He would overcome the serpent
Gen. 3:15</p> | <p>Heb. 2:14</p> |
| <p>4. He would be of the seed of Abraham
Gen. 12:1-3; 17:7; 22:18</p> | <p>Gal. 3:16</p> |
| <p>5. He would be of the seed of Isaac
Gen. 21:12</p> | <p>Heb. 11:18</p> |
| <p>6. He would be of the seed of Jacob
Num. 24:17; Gen. 35:10-12</p> | <p>Luke 3:23,34</p> |
| <p>7. He would be of the seed of Judah
Gen. 49:10</p> | <p>Heb. 7:14</p> |
| <p>8. He would be of the seed of Jesse
Isa. 11:1</p> | <p>Luke 3:23,32</p> |
| <p>9. He would be of the seed of David
Psalm 132:11; Jer. 23:5</p> | <p>Acts 13:23; Rom. 1:3</p> |
| <p>10. The time of His coming and death
Dan. 9:24-27</p> | <p>Luke 2:1</p> |
| <p>11. Born of a virgin
Isa. 7:14</p> | <p>Matt. 1:18; Luke 2:7</p> |
| <p>12. He was to be called Immanuel
Isa. 7:14</p> | <p>Matt. 1:22-23</p> |
| <p>13. Born in Bethlehem
Micah 5:2</p> | <p>Matt. 2:1; Luke 2:4-6</p> |
| <p>14. Great Men shall come and bow down to him
Psalm 72:10-15</p> | <p>Matt. 2:1-11</p> |
| <p>15. Children slaughtered: that He might be killed
Jer. 31:15</p> | <p>Matt. 2:16-18</p> |
| <p>16. Introduced by John the Baptist
Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1; 4:5-6</p> | <p>Matt. 3:1-3; Luke 1:17</p> |
| <p>17. Was anointed by the Holy Spirit
Psalm 45:7; Isa. 11:2; 61:1</p> | <p>Matt. 3:16,17; John 3:34; Acts
10:38</p> |
| <p>18. Was a prophet like Moses</p> | |

Deut. 18:15-18	Acts 3:20-22
19. He was sent as a deliverer to the people Isa. 61:1-3	Luke 4:16-21, 43
20. He is the light to Zebulun and Naphtali Isa. 9:1-3	Matt. 4:12-16
21. He comes to the temple and cleanses it Haggai 2:7-9; Malachi 3:1; Isa. 56:7; Jer. 7:11	Luke 19:45,46; John 2:13-16
22. His poverty Isa. 53:2	Mark 6:3; Luke 9:58
23. He was meek and not loud Isa. 42:1,2	Phil. 2:5-8
24. His compassion Isa. 40:11; 42:3	Matt. 12:15-20; Heb. 4:15
25. He was without guile Isa. 53:9	1 Pet. 2:22
26. He had great Zeal for God's house Psalm 69:9	John 2:17
27. He taught by parables Psalm 78:2	Matt. 13:34,35
28. He performed miracles Isa. 35:5,6	Luke 7:18-23; Matt. 9:35
29. His brothers rejected him Psalm 69:8	John 2:17; Mark 3:21,31
30. The Jews hated him Psalm 69:4; Isa. 53:3	John 1:11; 7:5
31. The Jewish rulers rejected him Psalm 118: 22	John 7:48; Matt. 21:42
32. He was a stumbling stone and a rock of offense Isa. 8:14	1 Pet. 2:8; Rom. 9:32
33. His flesh did not decay Psalm 16:8-10;	Acts 2:31
34. He rose from the dead on the third day Psalm 16:8-10; 30:3; 41:10; 118:17	Luke 24:6, 31, 34
35. He ascended into the heavens Psalm 68:18; 24:7-9	Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9
36. He became a priest like Melchizedek, who was both king and priest Psalm 110:4; Zech. 6:12,13	Heb. 5:5-6
37. His Law went forth from Zion and his word from Jerusalem in the last days Isa. 2:1-3; Micah 4:12	Luke 24:46; Acts 2:1-40
38. He would enlist Gentiles into his service Isa. 11:10; 42:1; Psalm 2:8	John 10:16; Acts 10:44-48; Rom. 15:9-12
39. The righteousness of his reign Isa. 9:6,7; Num. 24:17-19; Micah 5:2	Rom. 3:23-26; 1 John 2:2
40. His Pre-Existence Micah 5:2; Isa. 9:6,7; 44:6	Col. 1:17; John 1:1,2; 8:58; Rev. 1:17
41. He shall be called Lord Psalm 110:1	Luke 2:11; 20:41-44
42. He shall be seated at the right hand of God Psalm 110:1	Heb. 1:3; Acts 2:34,35

Prophecies of the Sufferings of the Messiah

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Betrayed by a friend
Psalm 41:9; 55:12-14 | John 13:18-21 |
| 2. Forsaken by his disciples
Zech. 13:7 | Matt. 26:31-56; Mark 14:50 |
| 3. He was sold for thirty pieces of silver
Zech. 11:12 | Matt. 26:15 |
| 4. This money was thrown into the temple
Zech. 11:13 | Matt. 27:5 |
| 5. This money was given to buy the potter's field
Zech. 11:13 | Matt. 27:7 |
| 6. He was patient and silent in his sufferings
Isa. 53:7 | Matt. 26:63; 27:12-14 |
| 7. He was smitten on the cheek
Micah 5:1 | Matt. 27:30 |
| 8. His sufferings were intense
Psalm 22:14,15 | Luke 22:42-44 |
| 9. He was scourged and spat upon
Psalm 35:15; Isa. 50:6 | Mark 14:65; John 19:1 |
| 10. His face was greatly marred
Isa. 52:14; 53:3 | John 19:1-5 |
| 11. He suffered that he might bear our sins
Isa. 53:4-6, 12; Dan. 9:26 | Matt. 20:28; 26:28 |
| 12. The rulers, Jews and Gentiles, combine against him to put him to death
Psalm 2:1-4 | Luke 23:12; Acts 4:27,28 |
| 13. He was extended on the cross, and his hands and feet were nailed to the wood
Isa. 25:10,11; Psalm 22:16; Zech. 12:10 | John 19:18; 20:25; Luke 23:33 |
| 14. He was numbered among the thieves
Isa. 53:12 | Matt. 27:38; Mark 15:27, 28 |
| 15. They gave him gall and vinegar
Psalm 69:21 | Matt. 27:39-44 |
| 16. He was mocked
Psalm 22:7,8; 35:15-21 | Matt. 27:39-44 |
| 17. He was separated from the Father
Isa. 63:1-3; Psalm 22:1 | Matt. 27:46 |
| 18. They divided his garments and cast lots for them
Psalm 22:18 | Matt. 27:35 |
| 19. He became a curse for us and bore our reproach
Psalm 22:6; Isa. 49:7 | Rom. 15:3; Heb. 13:13; Gal.
3:13 |
| 20. He made intercession for his persecutors and for the thieves
Isa. 53:12 | Luke 23:34 |
| 21. He was pierced after His death
Zech. 12:10 | John 19:34-37 |
| 22. They did not break a bone of his body
Ex. 12:46; Psalm 34:20 | John 19:33-36 |

23. He was buried with the rich
Isa. 53:9 Matt. 27:57-60
24. People shook their heads
Psalm 109:25; 22:7 Matt. 27:39
25. Darkness came over the face of the land
Amos 8:9 Matt. 27:45

Many prophecies Jesus fulfilled were totally beyond the power of human control, such as: (1) place of birth, (2) time of birth, (3) manner of birth of a virgin woman, (4) betrayal, (5) manner of death in crucifixion, (6) people's reactions at his death, (7) piercing, and (8) his burial.

Concerning these eight prophecies, Peter Stoner in *Science Speaks* estimated the probability of anyone fulfilling all of them is 1 in 10¹⁷. That would be 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000. In order to help us comprehend this staggering probability, Stoner illustrates it by supposing Awe take 10¹⁷ silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time, providing they wrote them in their own wisdom.

Now these prophecies were either given by inspiration of God or the prophets just wrote them as they thought they should be. In such a case the prophets had just one chance in 10¹⁷ of having them come true in any man, but they all came true in Christ.

Chances of Fulfillment

"There is only **1 chance in 480 Billion x 1 Billion x 1 Trillion** that 17 Old Testament predictions would be fulfilled in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ." (*The Signature of God*, Grant R. Jeffrey, Frontier Research Publications, Toronto, Ontario, pg. 181. This probability is based on particular prophecies referenced in the book, pages 172-181. Some of those listed prophecies are referenced below.)

PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH 53

PROPHECY	ISAIAH 53	NEW TESTAMENT FULFILLMENT
Despised	3	Matt. 27:39-43
Rejected	3	John 1:10,11; 7:5, 48
Acquainted with Grief	3	Heb. 4:15
Bearer of Grief and Sorrows	4	Matt. 8:16,17
Without Deceit	9	1 Pet. 2:22
Dumb Before His Persecutors	7	Matt. 26:63; 27:12,14
A Bearer of our stripes	5	1 Pet. 2:24,25
A sin-bearer	5, 12	1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 9:28;
Numbered with transgressors	12	Luke 22:37
Intercessor for transgressors	12	Luke 23:34
Deprived of Justice	8	Matt. 27:24

Buried with the Rich	9	Matt. 27:57-60
Raised from the Dead	10	Mark 16:9
Exalted and Honored	12	Phil. 2:9-11
Pierced Through	5	John 19:34; 20:25

“Truly eight centuries ahead Isaiah saw the glory of Jesus and ‘spoke of him’ (John 12:41). In his 53rd chapter vividness of detail causes readers to think they are looking at history not prophecy. Unbelievers have searched heaven and earth, the living and the dead, to find anybody but Jesus (cf. Moses, Uzziah, Zerubbabel, Jeremiah, Zedekiah, Isaiah, Jehoiachin, Israel) to fit the chapter’s statements; but nobody except Jesus fits. Further, it would be impossible for anybody else purposely to arrange his life so as to make Isaiah 53 tell of him.” (Hugo McCord, *Messianic Prophecies*, 44.)

“How could the same Messiah be a Mighty God and an Eternal King, yet also be despised and rejected by men and be cruelly put to death? The Jewish scribes wrestled with this paradox for centuries without finding the answer, but now that it has all been fulfilled, we can see how beautifully it all came to pass in the life of Jesus.

“When prophecy contains numerous detail, all of which is exactly fulfilled, that is infallible proof that the prophecy is from God” (Herbert C. Casteel, *Beyond a Reasonable Doubt*, 170).

FACTS OF ASTRONOMY

Compiled by John Clayton

The field of astronomy is one of our most ancient disciplines. It has only been within the last century, however, that our technology has allowed close observation of our environment in space. As recently as the 15th century man was not even sure that the Earth was round, and the last planet to be discovered was found in the early 1930s. In spite of all this the Bible is completely accurate in its description of the Earth and its orientation in space. In the space below are some of the facts of astronomy that can be found in the pages of God’s Word.

Scientific Fact or Principle

Bible Passage

Scientific Fact or Principle

The Earth is round

Day and Night occur simultaneously on the earth

The Earth is suspended by force—nothing physical. Hindus say four elephants; and Greeks said a man, Atlas.

The North is empty. The north pole of the Earth points out of our galaxy, where there is nothing but empty space.

Space is too large to be measured or the stars to be counted. Number of known galaxies is over a billion, with over 100 billion stars in each galaxy.

Stars give off interpretable frequencies other than light. All stars give off mechanical shock waves in the audio part of the spectrum.

The Earth was in a nebulous form early in its creation.

Dust is important to our survival as a shield in our upper atmosphere

Air has weight.

Light can be parted into colors.

Constellations possess force and influence on other objects in space.

The continents have floated away from each other.

Arcturus and other stars move through space.

Sunlight and moonlight did not get to the surface of the Earth until sometime after the beginning of Creation.

Matter is made up of invisible particles.

The Earth has four topographic highs or "corners."

The oceans have natural lanes in them, which are used for shipping to this day. Matthew Maury discovered them by re-reading the Bible and searching for them.

The age of everything in our galaxy is the same.

Many of these ideas are quite subtle, and many of them might be accidental; but the point needs to be kept in mind that there are no Biblical statements, which contradict scientific fact. (John Clayton) A further excellent resource is Kenny Barfield's book, *Why the Bible is Number One*.

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The Medical Accuracy of the Bible

A good source of information on this subject is S. I. McMillen's *None of These Diseases*.

The Medical book of the Egyptians was a book called "Payrus Ebers," written about 1552 B.C. The following are quotes from this book, which represent the knowledge of medicine in Moses' time:

"To prevent hair from turning gray, anoint it with the blood of a black calf which has been boiled in oil, or with the fat of a rattlesnake."

"When hair falls out, one remedy is to apply a mixture of six fats, namely those of the horse, the hippopotamus, the crocodile, the cat, the snake, and the ibex. To strengthen it, anoint with the tooth of a donkey crushed in honey."

"To remove embedded splinters apply worm's blood and asses' dung."

Now let's consider some Biblical statements related to medicine and sanitation.

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Scientific Fact or Principle

Bible Passage

Blood is necessary for life to exist.	Lev. 17:11-14
Both man and woman possess the seed of life	Gen. 3:15; 22:18
Eating the blood of animals is not a good practice.	Lev. 17:12,14
Eating an animal that died naturally is dangerous.	Lev. 17:15
How to diagnose leprosy.	Lev. 13
The principles of quarantine to cure contagious disease.	Lev. 13-15 (13:46)
The wisdom in not eating certain animals that carry disease.	Lev. 11
Circumcision of males should be done eight days after birth. They would bleed uncontrollably if done sooner.	Gen. 17:12
Principles of bacterial contamination from person to person and how to avoid this contamination.	Lev. 15:19-33
Certain insects can be eaten safely.	Lev. 11:22
The human body can be opened for surgery.	Gen. 2:21
Human waste products should be buried.	Deut. 23:12-14
Burning, washing of self and clothes after coming in contact with possible diseased animal or man.	Num. 19:5-22
The seeds of plants cannot be contaminated by contact with diseased animals.	Lev. 11:37

There are other principles found in Scripture. God gave Israel a system of hygiene that not only distinguished them from their neighbors but also prevented the diseases and plagues of their day. A number of these practices are still used today, and none have been shown wrong. Isn't this quite a record for a man who studied the "Papyrus Ebers"? God inspired Moses and gave him wisdom unavailable otherwise.

How Did the Bible Writers Know These Scientific Principles?

How did the Bible writers know these things centuries before science discovered them? The answer is that God told them.

THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING

The problem lies in the existence of evil and suffering in the presence of a loving and all-powerful God. Some say:

Either God is all-powerful but not all good, and therefore doesn't stop evil and suffering.

Or God is all good but not all-powerful, and therefore cannot stop evil and suffering.

In either case, the God of the Bible, claiming to be both all good and all-powerful, cannot exist.

Why Has God Not Stopped All Evil?

I. The Nature of Man as A Free Moral Agent

1. God did not make man an evil being; He made man innocent and pronounced him "very good."

a. God made man in His own image; man has intellect, emotions, and a will--he is free to choose.

b. If man did not have a will, he would be no more than a puppet or a machine.

c. Free Will includes the possibility of choosing right or wrong, good or evil.

- d. All men sin. Rom. 3:23
- 2. How should God deal with the sinfulness of man?
 - a. Someone suggests: "He should destroy all sinners and Satan too!
 - b. But all men are sinners! If He destroyed all that sinned, He would destroy you and me.
 - c. Men do not want pure justice from God; what they want is mercy.
- 3. God has chosen to work with men, not forcing them to righteousness, allowing them the freedom to choose to do good or evil.
 - a. God has not been negligent! He sent Jesus into the world to die for us, and then to build a kingdom for righteousness.
 - b. God has given us His Word, the Bible, to guide us. He prefers that men repent of their sins and be saved than for them to be punished. Ezek. 33:11; 2 Pet. 3:9
 - c. God cannot be held responsible for what men, who choose to do evil things, do to each other.

II. The problem of natural disasters: hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanoes, tornadoes, fire, hail, wind, floods, disease, etc.

- 1. Accidents: Eccl. 9:11,12 The laws of nature are constant: gravity, rain, wind, fire, lightning, and floods are all necessities of life but can hurt.
 - a. God sends His sun upon the evil and the good, and His rain upon the righteous and the unrighteous Matt. 5:45
 - b. Accidents happen when men are careless, unaware, or unprepared for the changes of nature
- 2. Some things God permits (Deut. 29:29) we don't always know why specifically
 - a. some things are a test of our faith Job 1:12
 - b. suffering sometimes brings us closer to God 1 Pet. 4:19
 - c. suffering reminds us of our need for God Matt. 7:7-11
- 3. The chastening of God is for our benefit to strengthen us and help us endure Heb. 12:5-11
 - a. chastening is not punishment; its purpose is to benefit
 - b. Isa. 45:5-7 calamity often awakens people to the fact that God is the Lord of our lives.

The Values of Suffering

- 1. If it can be shown that suffering has a value and can lead to good in a person's life, then its presence would not be an argument against the existence of a good God.
- 2. It is an assumption that ease and happiness are the greatest good in life. Eccl. 7:2-4
- 3. Some "good things" can only be brought about in our character by suffering. The pearl comes not through ease but suffering.
- 4. Romans 8:28 Not all things are good, but God causes all things (good or bad) to work together for good for those who love Him.
- 5. What suffering can do for men:
 - a. help man know himself, what his character is, and what he can do to bless the lives of others.
 - b. help man learn what is really important or valuable.
 - c. teach man to be thankful for his blessings.
 - d. teach man compassion for the needs of others. 2 Cor. 3:5
 - e. teach man the value of prayer.
 - f. teach man the value of kindness in word, thought or deed.
 - g. teach man that bright ones often follow dark hours. Psalm 30:5
 - h. encourage men to remember God--some people never think of God until some great need comes into their lives.
 - i. trials bring about patience Rom. 5:4

Jesus Christ Suffered On the Cross For Our Sakes

1. Jesus Christ knows what it is to suffer in many forms: pain, injury, insult, punishment, rejection, prejudice, jealousy, hatred, hunger, weakness. He suffered through no fault or sin of His own. No one can accuse Jesus of not understanding suffering.
2. Jesus' suffering on the cross teaches us that love and suffering are not incompatible. Jesus never once questioned his Father's love. God's love is dramatically shown through the suffering and death of Jesus upon the cross. Rom. 8:6-8; 1 John 4:8. No one can accuse God of not caring for men.
3. Jesus' death teaches us that suffering is not always punishment for our sins. Jesus was sinless (1 Pet. 2:22; Heb. 4:14-16). Jesus died not for his own sins, but for ours.
4. Jesus' death teaches us that suffering can accomplish good purposes for others. The suffering of one may bless the lives of many others.
 - a. Joseph suffered to save Israel during the famine.
 - b. Moses suffered to lead Israel out of Egypt to freedom.
 - c. David suffered that he might be able to establish a righteous kingdom in Israel.
 - d. Jesus suffered that He might "save His people from their sins." Matt. 1:21
 - e. Voluntary suffering, even unjustly, helps accomplish wonderful things in the character of those involved.
 - f. Love costs something. John 15:13
5. Jesus' death on the cross proclaims that there is something worse than suffering, *sin*. A holy and good God must truly hate sin. He cannot transform sin; He must judge it. Our Heavenly Father condemned sin by the cross of Christ. When Jesus died, He bore the condemnation of the world's sin. Don't pity Jesus on the cross. Instead, pity Caiaphas, Pilate, or Judas. We must never let our sorrow blind us to the real cause of suffering in our world, our true enemy, sin and rebellion against God.
6. Jesus' death assures us that suffering in God's will always leads to glory. Suffering itself does not lead to glory, but suffering "in the will of God" and depending on the grace of God will lead to glory. The death of Jesus transforms suffering into love and glory. The rugged cross symbolized shame, but Jesus transform the instrument of death into a message of love.
7. Jesus' death on the cross teaches us that suffering doesn't last forever, and death is not the end. When God's people suffer, the Father is near them, sharing their pain, and holding them in His hands. Whether a Christian lives or dies, he never leaves the love of a caring Father in Heaven. Rom. 8:37-39; 14:8. Jesus yielded himself into the hands of His Father to receive His spirit at death. We also have that assurance. Jesus had the confidence and the courage to yield to His Father in times of suffering. This too is a great source of strength for the Christian. 1 Pet. 2:21-24

V. CONCLUSION

1. The Christian can join in Habakkuk's song Hab. 3:17-19
2. Trust in God helps the Christian rise above the sufferings of this life. 2 Cor. 4:7-15

Why Does God Allow Victims To Suffer? *What Can God Do To Help the Innocent?*

So entire races are enslaved; ethnic minorities are discriminated against; entire populations are oppressed by ruthless political machines; supposedly undesirable citizens are liquidated; hostages are held; neighbors are used abusively for selfish ends. A cumulative evil effect is built up for succeeding generations. What are God's options? He could eliminate the human family arrangement, but we could not bear that. He could make mechanical robots of us all by

withdrawing our freedom and computerizing our actions. We would never agree to that. He could step in ahead of every damaging human move, but that would be a withdrawal of freedom. He could take away the ability to suffer, but that would entail the loss of more than we are willing to surrender. He could settle the score with each guilty person after each offense. That would sidestep the problem since it would not relieve innocent suffering, though the Christian faith does promise that someday all justice will be equalized. God could himself “make it up” to each offended person and make all the suffering worthwhile. This he has promised to do. This he has done. This he is doing every hour of every day for those who will allow him.

Was It Morally Right for God to Order the Killing of the Canaanites?

By Clarence Lavender

The Bible teaches that God never does anything wrong. God is never out of control but always does things consistent with his holy and just nature. “Now therefore let the fear of Jehovah be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with Jehovah our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of bribes” (2 Chron. 19:7). There must be good explanation when God orders the death of people, some of them women and innocent children.

The Destruction of the Canaanites

Those who question the ethics of God concerning the destruction of the Canaanites, or any other judicial decision made by God, fail to take into account six things:

1. They ignore the reason given for the destruction of wicked people, “that they teach you not to do after their abominations which they have done unto their sons” (Deut. 20:18).

2. The only way a person can accuse God of wrong is to be equal with God. No mortal can make the same judgments God makes because he does not have God’s view of things or his knowledge.

3. The Canaanites were grossly immoral. The justice of God demands punishment for sin. “The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). God must show his righteousness in punishing the wicked or violate his own nature (Rom. 3:23-27).

4. A person would have to be omniscient to know that what happened to the innocent children of guilty parents was not the best thing that could have happened. The alternative here may be to grow to adulthood and become malignant blights in the society of men like their parents.

5. Punishment here may be in recognition of what the Canaanites had earned. When it became clear they were past redemption, their destruction occurred.

6. Punishment was deserved by the Canaanites, whereas it was not in the case of the Holocaust—which was only a vendetta by Hitler and the Nazis against the Jews.

It was dedication to continual wickedness that marked the Canaanites for extermination. The scriptures uphold the justice and righteousness of God even in his command to eradicate the Canaanites.

Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord thy God dost drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the Lord aware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Deut. 9:5).

God’s call for Israel to destroy “the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite” was not traced to the Jews’ moral superiority or their number, but to fulfill his promise to Abraham and his seed. God was preserving a lineage through which the Messiah would come and all nations be blessed.

There had been a patient waiting from Abraham's time for the sin of the Amorites to reach its full measure. "But in the fifth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (Gen. 15:16).

The Canaanites were singled out for severe treatment to prevent Israel and the rest of the world from being corrupted. "Of the cities of these peoples. . .thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth. . .that they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so would ye sin against Jehovah your God" (Deut. 20:16-18). When people bum their children in honor of false gods, practice sodomy, bestiality, and all forms of wickedness, the land itself begins to vomit them out (Lev. 18:25-30). The modern world would do well to heed the warning (Rom. 8:22).

Objection to the fate of these nations is really an objection to the highest manifestation of the goodness of God. Greene likens this action on God's part, not to doing evil that good may come, but doing good in spite of certain evil consequences, just as a surgeon does not refrain from amputating a gangrenous limb, even though in so doing he cannot help cutting off healthy flesh.

A husband agrees to abort a tubular pregnancy. The purpose of the abortion is not to take the life of the child, but to save the life of the mother; besides the child could not survive in any case.

The doctor knows that in destroying cancer cells healthy cells will be destroyed. His purpose is not to kill good cells but bad ones; yet in trying to save the person from the spread of cancer, good is destroyed, but it could not have survived regardless.

At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it: If that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil. I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it: If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them (Jer. 18:7-10).

Canaan had a forty-year countdown. They heard of the events in Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, and what happened to the kings who opposed Israel along the way. We know they were aware of such events, for Rahab confessed that these same events had terrorized Jericho and that she, as a result, had placed her faith in the God of the Hebrews (Josh. 2:10-14).

The destruction of the Canaanites was based on the same principle by which the whole world was judged in the universal flood and that by which the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were judged. Usually those who object to these events are those who deny compatibility of the doctrine of eternal destruction with the mercy and love of God. God's character and the acts he requires are fully consistent with everything that both Testaments teach us to expect in our God. The problem usually centers in a deficiency in our view of things and our inability to properly grasp the whole of the subject.

The Risk of Believing

From Rene Pascal

If atheism-agnosticism is a risk, is not theism also a risk? "Perhaps God is not." Yes; but which risk is worse? Which "way of going wrong" is worse? To believe, and God is not? Or, not to believe, and God is? Let us weigh them. They are equal on the intellectual level, they are equally errors, failures of belief to correspond to reality. But beyond that? Nothing with regard to the first: belief in God while He is not. But the second: not to believe while God is? This represents a terrible failure on my part to give the response due to God, to acknowledge Him as my Creator, to thank Him for the gift of my existence, to love Him in response to His love for me. The other "way of going wrong," believing God is while He is not, represents no corresponding failure to give a response due. If the atheist is right there is simply the state of affairs that there is no God; no adequate response is due to that.

The failure to give the response due to God if He is, is also the greatest evil, and loss, for the individual person. It is the loss of all that we ultimately long for: love, truth, beauty, liberation from guilt, fulfillment hope, meaning. For all these are to be found only in God; or not at all.

AGNOSTICISM AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

We have been speaking of two great alternatives: theism and atheism. But perhaps there is a third, agnosticism; and perhaps it is the reasonable option for a person who is uncertain whether theism or atheism is the truth. Agnosticism represents an attempt at a neutral middle position: "I assert neither that God is, nor that He is not; I simply don't know, and so I leave the question open." That is certainly a position, but is it really neutral? What does this position entail for one's life? Does it not entail the same thing as atheism: that one does not live before God, that one does not reckon with God, that one does not pray to God, does not thank Him? Whether one does not reckon with God because one says, "God is not," or because one says, "I don't know that He is," makes no practical difference. Either way God is not present to the person's consciousness. While there is a logical difference between asserting God is not (atheism) and not asserting that He is (agnosticism), there is no existential difference, no difference for the conscious life of the person. One is as opposed as the other to a commitment to God, to seeing the world as manifesting God, to viewing existence as ultimately meaningful because it comes from God and leads to Him as its destiny. For this reason, as William James explains in his essay, "The Will to Believe," agnosticism is not a neutral middle position. "Do not decide, but leave the question (of God) open, is itself a passional decision — just like deciding yes or no — and is attended with the same risk of losing the truth!"

It should be stressed that uncertainty about God is not the same as agnosticism. Pascal, at one stage of his life, was uncertain about God. But he was never an agnostic. Agnosticism is a specific response to uncertainty, a definite position: "Do not decide, but leave the question open!" Pascal's response to uncertainty is exactly the opposite of this: I want to decide, I want the question settled, I want to know; and so I seek God. The contrast to the agnostic "do not decide" is most vividly brought out by Pascal's beautiful phrase: "My heart inclines wholly to know, where is the true good, in order to follow it; nothing would be too dear to me for eternity."