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**THE  
TRUTH  
OF THE  
GOSPEL**

**(Studies in the Evidences of Christianity)**

**By**

**JOHN WADDEY**

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## INTRODUCTION

The contents of this book were written over a period of many years. Often a piece was written as a response to a specific article written by an atheist or skeptic. Some were first prepared as sermons or material for a class discussion. Some of the chapters are much longer than others. This should not be taken to mean that they are therefore more important than the shorter pieces. An article prepared for a newspaper must of necessity be more concise than a sermon or a chapter written for a book. Also, being written over time, there will likely be some overlapping of content. Hopefully this will not distract from the usefulness of the book. Most of these lessons have been published elsewhere along the way, but the truths they contain never grow old.

The material discussed in this volume is what is commonly called "Christian Evidences." The author does not claim to have covered every aspect of Christian Evidences nor that his discussion exhausts each topic discussed. The book is compiled for use by ministerial students, for private reading and for Bible study material for churches.

Christians have always had to contend with unbelievers who were determined to discredit their faith and keep the church from gaining respectability and public acceptance. In the first three centuries unbelievers did their best to destroy the infant religion. With the triumph of Christianity over paganism in the fourth century, atheism and infidelity in the Western World were largely quiet and hidden in the shadows. There were exceptions, like the French Revolution and the rise of Deism in Great Britain and Rationalism in Germany in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century atheism burst into full bloom in the Nazi movement of Germany and the Communist revolutions that swept over Russia, China and other nations. During those past periods of time faith in God remained strong and vibrant, even in the lands where atheism prevailed in government. In the last three centuries great missionary work was undertaken and Christianity spread around the world.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has brought a new situation. Zeal for Christ has waned. Materialism and hedonism have taken their toll. Unbelievers now control virtually all schools of higher learning and waste no opportunities for instilling their skepticism in the hearts of their students. The corrupting influence of television and movies has contributed to the decline of faith. Now we see militant atheists boldly attacking God, Christ, Christianity, the Bible and the church. They have gained ascendancy in the nation's media, in academia, in public education and in the courts. Few Christians seem equipped to respond to their vicious and deceitful charges.

The man who contemplates serving God as a preacher of the gospel must understand the message and the method of unbelievers if he is to be successful in his work. He must know how to respond to their assaults and have the courage to do so. In response must be both biblical and reasonable. The future of the Cause of Christ and the welfare of millions of people depend on those who represent God to the world. Hopefully the lessons of this little book will be of help in preparing preachers and other Christians to stand fast in the faith (I Cor. 16:13) and in the defense of the gospel (Phil. 1:16).

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## 1.

### DOES GOD EXIST?

Atheists answer no to this question. Skeptics and agnostics are unsure. Christians are confident that God exists! Their faith is not blind, it is based on solid reasons.

"The heavens declare the glory of God and the earth showeth his handiwork" (Ps. 19:1). **The creation demands a creator.** Machines don't just happen, nor did our universe. It must have had a creator. Since no man nor group of men could create it, a being wiser and mightier than mankind did so. That being is God.

**Your personal existence demands a Supreme Being.** Trace your genealogy all the way back to the first man (whom the Bible calls Adam); who were his parents? Scripture tells us, "God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Gen. 1:26). Not from primeval soup, protozoa, or apes did we get our intelligence, moral sense and religious impulse. These human characteristics came from God our creator.

**The existence of moral law demands a law-giver.** In every human heart there is a sense of "ought and ought not." Every tribe of people has a moral code by which they live. Where did such codes originate? Not with chimps in the jungle! They originated with a moral God. Even enemies of God, who reject his law, complain when they are mistreated. Why?

**Design implies a designer.** "Every house is built by someone" (Heb. 3:4). All things of our cosmos reflect intricate design. Pause and reflect on yourself: your eyes, your hearing, your heart, your hand. You are a living example of brilliant design and so is every other aspect of our world. If you discovered a hidden cave and deep in its caverns you found an arrow head, you would conclude that intelligent life had been there beforehand. So when you observe a bird, a beetle or a man, you can be sure an intelligent designer made those marvelous things. That designer is God.

**Works of art demand an artist.** When viewing a painting you would not ask how did this evolve? or what accident produced it? The glorious beauty in the created world implies a creative artist. That artist is God.

God lives and reigns. Each of us will stand before him and give an account for our lives (Rom. 14:10). God makes it clear that "without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him" (Heb. 11:6). If you believe, then determine to serve Him through Jesus.

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## 2.

### GOOD REASONS FOR BELIEVING IN GOD

Only ten percent of our society identify themselves as atheists. However, many of those who believe in God base their faith on family tradition or hope of a happy eternity rather than on the solid reasons God has provided.

While saving faith comes from hearing the word of Christ (Rom. 10:17), evidence for the existence of God abounds in nature and in reason.

\* David wrote, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork" (Ps. 19:1). Although they are without vocal ability, "their line is gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world..." (19:4). One cannot look up at the starry heavens without pondering, "Who made this vast universe?" "Who set it in

motion?" "Who preserves it?" Since no man, nor all of humanity, is capable of so doing, it must be the handiwork of superhuman being, who is worthy of our adoration and worship.

\* When a thinking person contemplates the vast power that operates within the cosmos we are forced to ask, What is the source of that power? Does power manifest itself from nothing? A light bulb does not lighten itself, it must have a source of power. Only an all powerful God is an adequate explanation for this enormous energy.

\* When we consider the existence of life, whether of man or beasts, birds or fishes, we are forced to ask, From whence came this life? The long experience of the human race teaches us without fail that life only comes from prior life. There is absolutely no record of a living thing emerging from non-living matter. It is God who "giveth life and breath and all things" (Acts 17:25).

\* Paul told the citizens of Lystra that God "left not himself without witness, in that he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:17). The food we eat is a reminder of God's providential care of his creation. Think of the billions of creatures inhabiting the earth and sea, and the fact that their food is provided. We are reminded that our "heavenly Father feedeth them" (Matt. 6:26).

\* The Apostle reminded the Roman Christians that "the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" (2:4). Every day, in a thousand ways, God's goodness is demonstrated to all who are honest to acknowledge it.

\* The basic structure of reality testifies to the triune God. Our God is manifested as Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19). Our world of reality consist of time, space and matter. We ourselves consist of body, soul and spirit (I Thess. 5:23).

\* The human race is a witness for God. Solomon observed that God has planted eternity in our hearts (Eccle. 3:11). Thus we see in every tribe of people a religious impulse. Even atheists tend to deify their great leaders, humanity as a whole, reason or pleasure. They have their beliefs and writings that are treated as sacrosanct. But in all tribes and nations, be they primitive or advanced, we find people praying in times of crisis. They long for a golden age. They hope for life after death. They build their shrines. There is in all people a sense of right and wrong and a sense that evil must be punished. Except for the few who are truly sociopaths, the human conscience provokes guilt and shame for wrong conduct. It rewards us for right conduct. Paul writes that "Gentiles that have not the (written) law (of God), do by nature the things of the law...they show the work of the law written in their hearts. their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them (Rom. 2:14-15). From whence does this religious impulse arise? Certainly not from animals. None of them reflect such an need for religious expression. It is not a matter of ignorance, for even highly educated people reflect this innate need. Man feels driven to look to some source or power beyond himself. That of course is the God of creation.

\* Human language is a witness for God. How did you learn to speak? You learned from those with whom you were raised. Spoken language is not automatic for human beings. The child born profoundly deaf, will never speak verbally unless he has rigorous training by specialists. The question is who taught the first of the human race to talk? They did not learn it from animals nor of their own ability. Some intelligent being had to teach them to speak. The only possibility is that God, the Creator who interacted with them taught them to speak!

\* The sinful act of cursing and taking God's name in vain is a witness of Jehovah's existence. In every nation, angry sinners curse and swear by the name of God or Jesus Christ. Did you ever hear anyone say Moses damn you, or Buddha, Vishna, Allah or Mohammed damn you? But wicked men do swear by God, the most high God who created all and rules all, and by Jesus Christ his Son!

\* The myths and legends of the many nations testify to the facts of God, creation, the Great Deluge, etc. Even nations whose mythology involves many gods, in their earliest stages, spoke of a Supreme God. They all relate tales of a beginning of all things, a creation. Virtually all of them know something of a massive flood that destroyed all but a remnant of life. These dim, distorted shadows are remnants of the facts of Jehovah the Creator and Judge of humanity.

\* The Jewish people are a witness for God's existence. To them God said, "Ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah" (Is. 43:10). We know their origin. God selected one man and woman (Abraham and Sarah) and from them created this remarkable nation (Gen. 12:1-3). We know of the remarkable deliverance of the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt by the leadership of Moses (Ex. 12:1-13:22). We know the origin of their unique religion. For some 1500 years they stood virtually alone in a world of idolatry, as the people of one God (Ex. 20:2-3)! Their peculiar customs of worship, of food and dress, their institutions are all well known. The history of their punishment for their failures and sin and their deliverance, protection and provision by their God is undisputed. After repeated attempts to exterminate them, they still survive, small in number, witnesses to Jehovah!

\* God's judgments on wicked nations testifies to his existence. Sodom and Gomorrah, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Egypt of the Pharaohs, Rome, these and scores of other wicked societies who defied God and persecuted his people perished,

often in most unusual ways. They were all overthrown by a power greater than themselves. Who or What was the Cause of these judgements sent upon the wicked? The prophet Daniel wrote, "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will...(Dan. 4:25) "He removeth kings, and setteth up kings..." (Dan. 2:21). When wise men contemplate the dealings of God with the nations of the past, they tremble at his judgments!

\* Our seven day week with six days for labor and one for rest point us to God. Is it not strange that in every nation of the world men observe this weekly schedule. Our year is easily accounted for by the earth's annual journey around the sun. Months are measured by the waxing and waning of the moon. Days are determined for us by the earth's rotation on her axis. But whence came the seven day week with a day of rest? The only archetype is that noted in the Creation account of Genesis chapter one. Moses wrote of the sabbath, "It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed" (Ex. 31:17).

\* In most of the world, the Bible, God's unique book, is available to people. Even those who do not, or have not read it know it to be different than any other book. Some hate it. Others have tried to destroy or outlaw it, but still it stands. Its remarkable survival is another witness to the God who gave it. It is established in heaven (Ps. 119:89). Jesus assured us, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35). In it, God has spoken to humanity (Heb. 1:1).

\* Jesus of Nazareth stands out as the most significant man in human history. His name towers above all others in the annals of humanity. He is unique in his birth, his life, his teaching, his mighty works, his death, resurrection and ascension. He alone was virgin born (Matt. 1:23); was without sin (1 Pet. 2:22); was raised from the dead, never to die again (Rom. 1:4). He is "the true light which lighteth every man, coming into the world" (John 1:9). Every man is under obligation to confess him as Lord and obey him (Phil. 2:11).

To this very day, God the Father, seeketh men and women who will worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23). Those who refuse to believe in the Most High God are without excuse, given the many witnesses to his everlasting power and divinity (Rom. 1:20).

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### 3.

## GOD HATH SPOKEN

"God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds..." (Heb. 1:1-2).

William Barclay says "This the most sonorous piece of Greek in the whole New Testament. It is a passage that any classical Greek orator would have been proud to write." These verses affirm that God, the Creator, has communicated with humanity. Some scoff at the idea that the Bible is a message from God. They reason that such is incredible and unbelievable thing.

\* But if there is an intelligent, omnipotent God who created the world and mankind; if He made man in his image, endowed him with volition and expects him to obey Him, then:

\* It is entirely reasonable to conclude that He would give man instructions setting forth His will in understandable terms.

\* It is to be expected that such a document would be perfect in content, since it came from an all-knowing, powerful, perfect Mind.

\* He who designed the human mind would be thoroughly capable of designing a book simple enough to be understood by man; practical enough to be workable in every culture and generation.

\* We would expect that He who gave his only Son to die a tortuous death to purchase the church would not leave her without adequate reliable, authoritative guidelines for her faith, worship and practice.

\* It is entirely reasonable that He would be fully capable of giving humanity such a record and equally able to preserve it in tact for all generations to come.

Note the several lessons these short verses teach us:

I. **God Hath Spoken.** This asserts the fact of a revelation from the Creator to his creation. It is a divine message, unique from all others. In over 2300 cases, Scripture writers said, "Thus saith the Lord."

II. **God Hath Spoken.** These words in the present-perfect tense, tell us that God's revelation is an accomplished fact. "The faith was once for all (times) delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). The Apostles were guided "into all the truth" (John 16:13). Notice that the writer does not say that God continues to speak new information to man! The final chapter of our Bible was completed by the close of the first Christian century. Not one word has since been added. We are strictly warned to neither add to nor take from His Word (Rev. 22:18-19).

III. **God Hath Spoken.** He has communicated with us in language, with understandable words. Paul explained that he and other inspired writers had the Spirit which is from God, "that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth..." (I Cor. 2:12-13). Peter said that "men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Pet. 1:21). Paul wrote "in a few words, whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ..." (Eph. 3:3). To Timothy, Paul wrote, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (II Tim. 3:16). The word "inspiration" means "God-breathed," suggesting that Scripture first came from God's mouth. God does not communicate with us with feelings and impulses, only through His Word.

IV. **God Hath Spoken Unto Us.** He hath spoken to humanity, not to angels or demons. He speaks to all mankind, not just to a few professional clerics. The Bible belongs to every man.

V. **God hath Spoken Through His Son.** Jesus is the divine Word of God (John 1:1; 14). He came to declare the Father (John 1:18). The words Christ revealed were from the Father (John 12:49). His words will judge us in the last day (John 12:48-49). They are authoritative and must be obeyed if we wish to please Him (Matt. 28:18,20). We must never presume to go beyond his words (II John 9). All who desire to be Christians are responsible to Christ alone, not to Moses or any of the Old Testament Prophets (Matt. 17:1-5).

The responsibility of the church and every Christian is to hear and heed the blessed Word of God (Revelation 2:29).

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## 4.

### CREATION BY JEHOVAH

It is a fundamental truth of Christianity that the heavens and earth and all things therein were created by Jehovah God. This is the opening statement of our sacred book. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). David wrote "By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth...For he spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast" (Ps. 33:6-9). The Apostle John adds that it was by the agency of Christ, the divine Logos or Word, that all things were made (John 1:1-2). Paul added his testimony to the same truth, "All things have been created through him (Jesus) and unto him" (Col. 1:16). The author of Hebrews agrees that it was through Christ that God made the worlds (Heb. 1:2-3).

Yet, in the face of this testimony, many educated men, proud of their training and accumulated knowledge and filled with arrogance and rebellion, have devoted their lives to denying this grand truth

\* "In truth, from the period of the earliest stages of Greek thought man has been eager to discover some natural cause of evolution, and to abandon the idea of supernatural intervention in the order of nature" (Henry Fairfield Osborn, **The Origin and Evolution of Life**, p. ix).

\* "I must therefore say quite bluntly that I regard the hypothesis of special creation as too foolish for serious consideration" (H. S. Shelton, **Is Evolution Proven?**, p. 137).

\* "Overwhelmingly, biologists had been accepting evolution because there was nothing else for them to do; but they had

not proved it to their own satisfaction” (A. L. Kroeber in **Evolution of Man**, p. 2).

Even many who wear the sacred name of Christ deny the Genesis account. They prefer Darwin’s unproven theory of origins. They are embarrassed to stand alone with Christ. They find comfort in being accepted by their unbelieving neighbors. This is a manifestation of liberalism in their hearts.

If we cannot trust the first three chapters of Genesis, how can we trust the rest of our Bible? Jesus believed and taught that God’s word “is truth” (John 17:17). David wrote, “The ordinances of Jehovah are true, and righteous altogether” (Ps. 19:9). Jesus linked his credibility to that of Moses. He said, “For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote of men. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?” (John 5:46-47).

Belief in creation by God is absolutely reasonable. It is a self-evident truth that “Out of nothing comes nothing.” It is likewise true that every effect demands an adequate cause. For an inanimate object to move, there must be an adequate force from without. Design demands an intelligent designer. The forces of nature can destroy a house, but they can never build one. That takes intelligence. Life only comes from life. From whence did the first living creatures derive their life? Intelligence comes only from an intelligence source. No rock ever produced a bird. No tree has given birth to a man.

Evolution is an unproven attempt to account for the origin of the cosmos and man without an intelligent Creator, known as God.

\* Charles Darwin himself wrote, “When we descend to details, we can prove that no one species has changed (i.e. we cannot prove that a single species has changed, JW), nor can we prove that the supposed changes are beneficial, which is the groundwork of the theory” (**Life & Letters of Charles Darwin**, Vol. II, p. 2:10) “I am conscious that I am in an utterly hopeless muddle. I cannot think that the world, as we see it, is the result of chance; and yet I cannot look at each separate thing as the result of design “ (**Ibid.** Vol II. p. 146).

\* Thomas Henry Huxley said, “I by no means suppose that the transmutation hypothesis is proven or anything like it” (**Life & Letters of T. H. Huxley**, Vol. I, p. 252).

\* Louis T. More stated, “The more one studies paleontology, the more certain one becomes that evolution is based on faith alone” (**The Dogma of Evolution**, p. 160).

\* Paul Lemoine is quoted, “Evolution is a sort of dogma in which the priests no longer believe but that they maintain for the people” (**French Encyclopedia**, 5-82-8).

\* William Strauss, Jr. said, “I wish to emphasize that I am under no illusion that the theory of human ancestry I favor at the present time, can in any way be regarded as proven (**Quarterly Review of Biology**, Sept 1949, p. 220).

Moses’ declaration in Genesis 1:1 sets forth many profound truths:

\* “In the beginning God” **denies atheism** which insists there is no God.

\* “In the beginning God” **denies polytheism**, the concept that there are many gods.

\* “In the beginning God created” **denies evolution** with its concept of spontaneous generation and perpetually improving changes.

\* That “God created the heavens and earth” **denies pantheism** which says the cosmos is identical with God, that it is the body of God. God existed prior to the creation of the material universe. His relation to the creation is much like that of a clockmaker to his clock.

\* That “God created the heavens and earth” **denies materialism** which asserts that matter is eternal. The cosmos had a beginning and will have an end (II Pet. 3:9-11), but God is eternal. He has always been and will always be!

Think of what belief in divine creation does for man.

\* It provides us a reasonable explanation of the universal question, “How did the heavens and earth come to be?”

\* It provide us with an elevated understanding of ourselves. We are not the result of a cosmic explosion or accident. We are not just highly evolved animals. We are the children of God (Acts 17:29), made in his image (Gen. 1:26), made to live forever (I John 5:11).

\* It reminds us of our moral obligation to live worthily of our station among the creatures of God. We alone bear his image. He has given us dominion and stewardship over the world he made (Gen. 1:28).

\* It reminds us that every human life has special value. The horse we may ride, the ox we can use to pull our wagon. We can kill our pig or cow for food. We hunt down and kill the wild beast that preys on our livestock. We destroy rodents



that invade our homes. We exterminate insects that want to live with us. But man is special, a protected species. Because man is made in the image of God we are told, "Thou shalt not kill, i.e., do no murder" (Ex. 20:13; Rom. 13:9). "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made he man" (Gen. 9:6).

\* It reminds us of our dependence on God our creator. He gives us every good and perfect gift (Jas. 1:17). It reminds us of our duty to be submissive and obedient to our Creator in all of life (Eccle. 12:1, 131). Perhaps most of all it demonstrates the greatness, power and goodness of God.

Rather than trusting the uncertain, shaky theory of evolution, Christians base their faith on the solid rock of God's Truth. Charles Darwin confessed, "I never feel surprised at any one sticking to the belief of immutability (The opposite of evolution, J. W.),...I remember too well my endless oscillation of doubt and difficulty" (**Life & Letters**, Vol. II, pp. 210-211).

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## 5.

### WHAT DO ATHEISTS BELIEVE?

Our society is roiling with conflict as secularists seek to gain control of public life and policy. By skillful use of indoctrination of school children, media propaganda and with the aid of secularist judges they have been able to impose their agenda on the American public. With their "political correctness" controlling public expression and the constant threat of lawsuits by their legal wing, the American Civil Liberties Union, they have intimidated and silenced many who despise their goals.

An ancient axiom states that to win any battle one must "Know his enemy." In 1894 Samuel P. Putnam, a militant unbeliever, published his book, "**400 Years of Free Thought**." In describing what Free Thought stands for he listed the following interesting things:

\* "First. That there is but one method of discovering truth, namely the scientific method."

\* "Secondly....Free thought affirms that this universe is not moral, either as a person, a nature, a principle or a force. It is simply unmoral. It does not teach love, or justice or mercy. It is, fundamentally, matter, force, and relation without a particle of moral meaning. Ethics originate with man, and end with man....Nature does not care for man...She tortures and kills man without pity. Man, therefore, must rely upon himself. Ethics are entirely relative; they are of man, by man, for man....Evolution itself, as a process of nature, does not make for righteousness or civilization. It is man himself."

\* "Thirdly, Radical Free thought is secularism. Secularism is...Free thought translated into moral action, into social energy and progress..."

\* "Secular politics declares a total separation of church and state. It means a Secular government without God or Bible or Christ or religion in it"

\* "Secular philosophy means that all motives to moral action should arise from this life which we know, and not from some future life of which we know nothing."

\* "Man is the supreme being, and the gods that flash within his brain, clothed with such potency and glorious attributes, are but the transformed excellences of himself."

\* "...the future must realize the majesty of man in himself; that what he thinks and feels and does in any circumstances is of more import than what any other conceivable being can think or feel or do in any circumstances however august" (pp. 505-508).

These seven points give us a vivid picture of those who are determined to secularize America.

\* By insisting that the only truth is that discovered by the scientific method, they deny that a Supreme Being who created man could provide him a book that is a source of truth. Jesus said to the Father, "thy word is truth" (John 17:17). This explains their hatred toward the Bible.

\* Their godless universe without moral or spiritual values is a world of ruthless brutality whereas Christians see the universe as the handiwork of a gracious, loving and forgiving God. One tends to act out in his life the world view that he holds. When this world view captured the governing powers of Germany it produced one of the most brutal regimes

in human history. It caused massive human misery and suffering on the nations of Europe and America. Christians are the often unrecognized heroes who rush to help those who have suffered from disasters, wars and famines. Their religion teaches them to do so (Gal. 6:10).

\* In the world view of atheists, all things are the result of evolution. This includes man, which they say is nothing more than a highly evolved animal. The engine of evolutionary progress is struggle and the survival of the fittest. In a world without morals, love, justice or mercy to impede them, the strong and ruthless survive and prosper and the weak are made subservient or destroyed. Christians see the world as the result of God's creative power (Gen. 1:1). Their world is to be governed by God's moral, ethical and spiritual standards revealed in the Bible which he has provided (II Pet. 1:3-4). They treat others as they wish to be treated and seek no power over them (Matt. 20:26-27).

\* Secularism is atheism translated into moral action, social energy and progress for the Cause of Unbelief. Secularism is the prevailing political goal of liberal politicians. As secularists work to defeat Christianity, we must confront them with the powerful gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16) and the sword of the Spirit, the word of God (Eph. 6:17)

\* Secularists want a nation whose government does not acknowledge God, the Bible, Christ or religion. Such a system was tried in Russia and her Communist satellite nations with disastrous results. That was not the intention of our founding fathers or their successors. Secularists have been clamoring for attention in the last half century and have made considerable progress. A society that recognizes and honors the wholesome and gentle teachings of Christ will bless humanity. A people governed by the law of evolution will live by the iron rule of "the survival of the fittest."

\* The entire motivation for moral conduct for secularists arises from this life and not that which is beyond it. They fail to appreciate the moral depravity of many non-Christian people and the cruelty of which they are capable. Jeremiah correctly depicts the heart of such people: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceeding corrupt..." (Jer. 17:9). When such people are in the ascendancy and have power over others their conduct can be cruel and tyrannical.

\* They proclaim man as the supreme being of the universe and praise his august attainments. They overlook the misery of millions of people who living in poverty and degradation. They close their eyes to the millions of people who live their lives in debauchery and shame. They ignore the evil that man is capable of and has perpetrated throughout his history. Evil men have always aspired to be gods. Satan, knowing this, appealed to Adam and Eve's vanity saying, eat of the forbidden fruit and "ye shall be gods" (Gen. 3:5 see footnote). Ancient kings commonly claimed to be deity. The king of Tyre, with a pride-filled heart said, "I am god, I sit in the seat of God..." (Ezek. 28:2). Death and the open grave proclaim the foolishness of their boast of being "the supreme being of the universe."

David asked, "Why do the heathen rage, and the people meditate a vain thing...Against Jehovah and against his anointed...? (Ps. 2:1-2). Rebellious men vainly fight against the God who made them and who provides the very air that keeps them alive. Little do they realize that their foolish ranting against God is possible only because He allows them to live...hoping they will come to repentance (II Pet. 3:9).

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## 6.

### BELIEF IN GOD AND SATAN

A few years ago, a newspaper reported that **More People Now Believe the Devil Exists**. The mystery is that so many intelligent people ever doubted the reality of Satan. An ancient monarch wrote, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Ps. 53:1). It is just as foolish to say there is no devil. The daily news is an overwhelming testimony to the reality of evil on our world. The book which declares the existence of God, warns us to resist the devil (Jas. 4:7).

The article also mentions that faith in God is declining. There is no excuse for atheism, because any intelligent creature on earth can look about him and know that there must be a Creator, i.e, a God (Rom. 1:20).

I. We can know of God through the creation. By looking at the cosmos, the mind inevitably asks what caused it? Every effect must have an adequate cause. The cosmos is an effect greater than the whole of humanity could cause. Therefore, a Being greater than mankind caused the cosmos. The creation proclaims God's everlasting power and divinity" (Rom.

1:20).

II. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork" (Ps. 19:1). The intricate design that permeates every aspect of creation demands a creator. Design always implies an intelligent designer. The creation is designed in every detail. Therefore, the universe has an **intelligent designer**. That intelligent designer is God!

III. Mankind shows the work of God's moral law, written in his heart (Rom. 2:15). There is in every human being a sense of "ought and ought not." The most primitive societies have a code of moral responsibility. Even atheists argue about ethics and morals. Where there is law, there must be a lawgiver. All law demands a **law maker**. Moral law exists universally. Therefore a universal lawmaker exists.

These observations prove the existence of an all-powerful, all-wise, moral, Creator. To know of His will for us, it was necessary that we have a revelation from Him. Faith comes by hearing the word of God. (Rom. 10:17). So He gave us the Bible with sufficient information to guide us in every walk of life.

How sad it is that in the most enlightened nation in the world, with such easy access to God's Revelation, the Bible, so many are rank unbelievers. Many more are practical atheists, who say Lord, Lord, but do not obey Christ (Luke. 6:46)!

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## 7.

### PITY THE POOR ATHEIST

You likely have heard the quip about the funeral for the atheist. A friend passed by the open casket and observed, "Poor Fred, He is all dressed up and nowhere to go." There are many other common joys that the atheist cannot participate in and enjoy.

\* While 95 percent of Americans gather with their families to celebrate Christmas with all of its joy and festivity, a dedicated atheist must abstain lest he be guilty of giving any honor to Jesus the Son of God.

\* While virtually all Americans celebrate Thanksgiving Day with family and friends, the consistent atheist must stand on the sidelines. This celebration is a day dedicated to thanking God for his rich provisions and abundant mercies upon our nation. In 1621 William Bradford of Plymouth Colony called for a day of Thanksgiving to God for preserving them. Late in the 1700s the Continental Congress called upon citizens to supplicate God Almighty "to secure for these United States, the greatest of all human Blessing, Independence and Peace." In 1941, Congress set aside the fourth Thursday of November as a perpetual Day of Thanksgiving to God Almighty, "For the continuance of his favor and protection to these United States." Come to think about it if the atheist kept the day, to whom would he be thankful?

\* They should not observe Independence Day, since the founders of the nation did their work on the basis that Nature's God had created all men equal and endowed them with the inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

I don't know about you, but I am glad that my faith in the Living God allows me to enjoy these and a thousand other blessings....and to be thankful to Him for them. A thousand stories have been told about the child or adult so poor and distressed that they could not celebrate Christmas or Thanksgiving. It is the personal decision of the atheist to deny himself these happy pleasures. My heart is touched for the first, but I can only pity the second.

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## 8.

### THE POOR UNBELIEVER

**Gore Vidal**, successful author and explorer wrote, "Christianity is such a silly religion." Reckon what Mr. Vidal would offer as an intelligent: Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Voodoo? David wisely observed, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God" (Ps. 14:1). Paul wrote "the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved, it is the power of God" (I Cor. 1:18).

Regarding the Bible **Robert Ingersoll** sneered, "The inspiration of the Bible depends upon the ignorance of the gentleman who reads it." Paul's observation was, "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; because he cannot know them..." (I Cor. 2:14). The Bible has inspired more of the enduring works of art, sculpture, poetry and music than any other piece of literature. Faith in God, Christ and the Bible inspired the earliest settlers of our country and the founding documents of our nation. It motivated the establishment of hundreds of our colleges and universities, hospitals and benevolent homes. It has been a prime factor in the civilization and elevation of the nations of the world. The literary works of atheists, Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin and Frederick Engels laid a curse on Russia, Eastern Europe and China. Russia and her European satellites were ruined economically, morally and socially. Having rejected their atheistic system, they are still trying to recover from its ruinous effects.

**Thomas Paine**, patriot of the American Revolution, wrote, "It would be more consistent that we call (the Bible) the work of a demon, than the word of God. It is a history of wickedness that has served to corrupt and brutalize mankind." I have read that Paine wrote his attacks against the Bible without having read that sacred book. One thing I know, he never read the Sacred Book I have before me. To have read it and then say the above words would indicate that he was incapable of understanding God's message or that he so hated God and his book that he was willing to falsely represent it in order to poison unsuspecting souls.

**Ted Turner** said, "Christians are losers." In addition to being rich, Turner must be blind. For the majority of the population of our nation confess faith in Christ. Taken as a whole they represent best of American society. Their religion teaches them to work and earn their living and to be honest in dealing with others. They are patriotic, law-abiding citizens. They are the most benevolent people in the world. They lead wholesome lives and have stable families. They rank high among the successful achievers in life. They are the glue that holds our society together. Certainly secularists like Turner do not excel them in goodness and success. Christians live and die in hope of eternal life with their Savior. Turner will live a few years and likely die without God and without hope. Without Christ, his destiny is the lake that burns with fire and brimstone (Rev. 21:8).

**Voltaire** wrote, "If we would destroy the Christian religion, we must first of all destroy man's belief in the Bible." This is the determined policy of the atheistic element in our society. They work tirelessly to shake people's faith in the God's Word. They have captured the public education establishment, most of our national media and have a powerful presence in our government. Their chief organ of evangelism is the American Civil Liberties Union. Don't listen to their wicked attacks against God's Book. Read it, believe it, trust its message and live it in your life. The proof will unfold itself before your eyes. "The ordinances of Jehovah are true, and righteous altogether" (Ps. 19:9).

Many atheists manifest hatred for God, Christ, his church, his Word and his people. We feel sorry for them. While their hearts seeth with hatred, resentment and anger, we have righteousness, joy and peace in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17). While we are busy doing good to all men (Gal. 6:10), they devote themselves to tearing down the good. We look about us and see the wonderful things God has made for us; they see the accidental results of mindless matter. We look in a mirror as confess we are fearfully and wonderfully made (Ps. 139:14), they look and see a descendant from an ape. While we face life and death with optimism and hope (Heb. 6:18-19), they face it with bitterness, despair and hopelessness. We have a Savior, they have only a Judge (Matt. 25:31, 46).

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## THE SUPERIOR ATHEIST

Anyone who has had occasion to dialog with an atheist has likely observed an air of superiority in his opponent. The typical atheist tends to look down with arrogant pity on Christians as poor deluded children who need to be delivered from their misery. I use to wonder why atheists act this way? Years of observation have led me to conclude the following:

- \* Because he believes what the majority rejects, he feels superior to the great host of believers.
- \* Because many intellectuals are unbelievers, he thinks that by identifying with them, it will make him an intellectual. He conveniently overlooks the millions of intellectuals who were and are devout Christians.
- \* Because Christians believe they were created by a Superior Being (Gen. 1:26-31) to whom they are indebted, the atheist rejects their message. He thinks he was not created by anyone. He is the consequence of a cosmic accident that resulted in a protein molecule. Millions of years later, his ancestors crawled out of the muddy water as some slimy primitive form of life and after a few more million years they grew fur and became monkey-like creatures. A million or more years later, they emerged, primitive, pitiful creatures, part animal and part human. For that, he feels superior to those who think that God made them in his image and gave them dominion over His earth (Gen. 1:28).
- \* Because Christianity appeals to the poor, the humble and downtrodden (It also appeals to the educated and powerful), he does not want to be identified with those lowly groups. His peers in atheism imagine themselves to be the superior caste of humanity. The atheist believes Darwin's theory about the survival of the fittest to applies to him and his unbelieving friends.
- \* Because Christians are expected to live a life of self-denial (Matt. 16:24), the atheist rejects it, preferring to be counted among those who can do whatever they wish to do.
- \* Because Christians must live in subjection to Christ and obey his will in all things (Heb. 5:9), the atheist rejects Christianity. He wants to be his own Master and not accountable to anyone or anything above himself. He forgets that everyday of his life he must conform to laws of nature and obey laws written by people who occupy positions above him. Most of those law-makers he will never see.
- \* Because Christians think and talk much about the joys of heaven and life beyond this present existence (John 14:1-3), the atheist rejects their faith. He wants all his joys and pleasures now. He has difficulty imagining an existence beyond planet earth. But he can easily believe in life on other planets such as Mars, etc.
- \* Because Christianity has much to say about a day of Judgment when all will have to answer for their conduct in this life (II Cor. 5:10), the atheist rejects it. He and his fellow-atheists prefer to live their lives with no thought of being held accountable. That would take much of the joy out of the atheist's lifestyle.
- \* Because Christians believe in a Hell where the wicked, including unbelievers, will spend their eternity (Rev. 21:8), atheists reject their religion. Atheists don't like to hear about, think about or worry about Hell. By denying it, they feel superior to those poor Christians who are careful to avoid going to such a place.

Did you hear about the pig who imagined he could fly. He look down with pity on all the other pigs in the lot. They could not fly. He bragged about his superior position as a flying pig. He scorned the company of his neighbor pigs who wallowed in the mud. He told romantic stories about his superior talent and the suffering he endured because the other pigs could not see his wings. Finally, when cold weather arrived, the farmer set the day for slaughtering his pigs. Amazingly, the superior pig, did not escape by flying away. He was as helpless as all the rest of the pigs. He ended up in some cook's frying pan. Proud Atheists are not much different from the pig who thought he could fly.

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## 10.

### ADVANTAGES OF ATHEISM

Atheism is the belief that no God actually exists. In our secular age it is thought that perhaps 3-4 percent of our population actually subscribe to the doctrine while far more live as though it were true. Over the years atheists have received some bad press for their thinking. Recently however I read a piece by Aubrey Belue cataloging a number of advantages for those whose faith is in "no-god."

- \* The atheist has no moral or spiritual restraints on his lifestyle. His only real concerns are will this hurt me? Can I get by with this? Can I avoid getting caught?
- \* The atheist has an advantage over the Christian in that he has an extra day for personal use and pleasure. He can sleep, golf, fish or anything he chooses on the first day of the week. Christians are obliged to devote part or all of the day to their Lord.
- \* The atheist has extra funds for his personal use. He is not expected to share his prosperity with God's cause and for such Christian endeavors as caring for the poor, orphans, those who are down and out. He sees no need for taking the uplifting message of Christ to the citizens of the most backward and downtrodden nations of the earth.
- \* The atheist has no concerns about right and wrong. He need not search his soul nor apologize for violating any ancient precept of moral behavior. As Dostoevsky said, "If God is not, nothing is morally wrong." He can do whatever he wishes and the world be hanged if they don't like it.
- \* The atheist has no need to worry about such things as death, life beyond the grave, judgment, heaven or hell. Such things are all tied to Jehovah and Christ his Son. They are out of his purview. For him they don't exist.
- \* The atheists has no need to own, read or believe the Bible. He can devote his reading to something more meaningful such as novels, romances, etc.

One would think that all of these advantages would bring abounding joy and happiness to atheists, but they seem to have trouble finding such blessings. The members of this sect of unbelievers I have encountered all seemed to be bitter, angry, unhappy souls.

There are however, certain down sides to the faith system of atheism.

- \* All atheists must die (Heb. 9:27). Not one has escaped this fate.
- \* All atheists will be resurrected by Christ (John 5:28-29). Since they have rejected their opportunity to live with God in eternity, they have only the other alternative to look forward to!
- \* All atheists will one day stand before God and give an account to Him who created them, provided ever blessing they enjoyed and gave his Son to save them (Rom. 14:10; II Cor. 5:10).
- \* All, including atheists, must spend eternity somewhere, either in heaven or hell (Matt. 25:46).
- \* The atheist gambles his all on the hope that there is no God. Therefore he must face the possibility that he may have guessed wrong. In those quiet moments in the dark of night, in times of serious illness, in those frightening moments of dangerous accidents, or serious injury, he cannot keep the doubts from flitting through his mind. "What if there really is an all powerful, intelligent, moral governor of the universe? What if Jesus really is God's Son sent down from heaven? "What if the Bible really is God's authoritative message to humanity? "What if I really do have an immortal soul that will survive the grave and live forever? What if judgement, heaven and hell are realities?"

No wonder men have observed that in time of war, few atheist are found in foxholes. And human experience still observes that not many people die unbelievers. To be worthwhile a system must not only be beneficial in life, but also in death. There, unfortunately, atheism fails its adherents. Well did Hugh Miller write, "Atheism is the death of hope, the suicide of the soul."

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## 11.

### ATHEISTS WHO FILL PULPITS

A few years ago I began receiving letters from an atheist who was militant in opposing God, Christ, the Bible and the Church. Each letter was studied and answered point by point. Over time, I discovered some shocking facts about my correspondent. First, I learned that for 45 years he had been a preacher. Last I learned that he had lost his faith several years before leaving the pulpit. His wife remains faithful to Christ, and refused to follow him in his unbelief. Strangely, he still attends church with her while continuing to lodge his attacks against all that is sacred.

Here in Arizona, I have on several occasions clashed with an atheist who still identifies himself as "Reverend" ....., minister of the Unitarian Church. He also served as a chaplain in the U. S. Military. When I inquired, he acknowledged that while serving as a chaplain he was an unbeliever. I asked what kind of hope did he offer those who were going into combat? What consolation did he give those who were wounded or dying? His answer was a shrug of his shoulders. Today he is a soured, bitter, anti-Christian atheist, yet he continues to who hides behind his "reverend" title.

In the Summer, 2010 edition of the Wilson Quarterly, I found an article entitled, "Atheists Anonymous." It was excerpted from an article, "Preachers Who are Not Believers" by Daniel Dennett and Linda LaScola. Their article was based on interviews with five working ministers who have become atheists.

A Southern Baptist minister did not hesitate to say, "The whole grand scheme of Christianity is just a bunch of bunk." Another minister stated, "If I had an alternative, a comfortable paying job, something I was interested in doing, and a move that wouldn't destroy my family, that's where I'd go..."

Some of the men had "encountered arguments against the truthfulness of Christianity while in seminary" and then volunteered, "You can't go through seminary and come out believing in God."

It should come as no surprise that some preachers are actually atheists. Paul warned of false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ. "It is no great thing therefore if his (Satan's) ministers also fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness" (II Cor. 11:13-15).

We should ever keep in mind that many seminaries where preachers are educated harbor atheists on their faculty. Their goal is to corrupt the faith of as many of their students as possible.

These ministerial atheists come in several varieties:

- \* There is the **secretive atheist** who never openly acknowledges his loss of faith. He leads proper prayers, he baptizes those who request it. He dutifully preaches his sermons. He marries the young and conducts funerals for the deceased. Since he does not believe, it's all a lie perpetrated for the salary he receives. He fools his congregation but not Christ (Heb. 4:13).
- \* There is **shy atheist** who does quietly discuss his loss of faith with others of like sympathies. His church will never know it. He will not challenge strong believers. Neither will he speak up to defend the faith from its enemies. He too is a hireling, an actor playing a role to draw a check. In the first two groups, the preachers may have at one time believed, but along the way their faith died.
- \* There is the **worthless shyster** who has never believed nor held anything to be sacred. Too lazy to compete for a job in the business world, he figured out that he could pretend to be a Christian and find a job as a preacher. Being a cunning deceiver he tells his congregation what they wish to hear and enjoys the emoluments it provides him.
- \* There is the **hardened atheist** who uses deceit to maintain his position. His position with a church is a convenient facade for his hard and sinful heart.
- \* There is the **militant atheist** who is determined to destroy the faith of others. These men are often found in the classrooms of colleges and universities and sometimes in Christian schools. They use their position to undermine the faith of the students before them. They write "religious books" that cast doubt on some or all of the supernatural aspects of Christianity. These are sometimes found in the seminaries as mentioned above.

\* There is the **practical atheist**. This type is far more numerous. They are men full of "God-talk." Their position as "spiritual leaders" is well advertised. They can preach a pleasant sermon and do all that a true believer would do. But practical atheists do not feel obliged to honor and respect the will of Christ as recorded in the Bible. They do not hesitate to question His authority. They blush not to tamper with His church to make it more to their liking. The practical atheist would never deny God, nor Christ. They would never openly deny the Scripture. They say, "Lord, Lord," but do not the will of the Father in heaven (Matt. 7:21).

The unbelieving preacher stands in great peril. Jesus, the appointed judge of humanity (Acts 17:30), said "He that believeth not, hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18). "Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him (God); for he that cometh to God must believe that he is..." (Heb. 11:6). In addition, the atheistic preacher is guilty of hypocrisy and deception. The destiny of such sinners is the lake of fire and brimstone (Matt. 23:33; Rev. 21:8).

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## 12.

### SOME REASONS FOR UNBELIEF AND ANTAGONISM TOWARDS GOD

There are some lost sinners whose hearts only need to be stirred to make the flame of faith come alive. Yet others refuse to recognize God as the Lord of their lives. They are wholly indifferent to the whole subject of faith and religion. But there is a third class of unbelievers who make the supreme object of their lives the propagation of their skepticism. With evangelistic skill and enthusiasm, they seek to inject the contagion of their belief into the veins of everyone they come in contact with. Why are some people so hateful and militant against our Jehovah? In his classic book on Christian Evidences, **Therefore Stand**, the late Wilbur Smith sets forth a number of reasons for this response of the unbeliever toward God. We will note nine of them.

1. **Man, fallen away from fellowship with God, is biased and prejudiced toward his former friend whom he has wronged.** We see this same emotion in human friendships that become alienated and romance that goes sour. It seems difficult for friends to become alienated without a degree of hostility emerging and strangely enough it is usually the offending party that harbors the hostility. The sacred writer makes note of this, for example, Paul reminds the Colossians, "And you being in time past alienated and enemies in your evil works..." (1:21). Jesus said the world hated him, "Because I testify of it, that its works are evil" (John 7:7). David pondered the very point in Psalm 2:1-3, asking, "why do the nations rage and the people meditate a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against Jehovah and against his anointed, saying, 'Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their cords from us.'" Sinners are hostile to the Lord because His goodness constantly reminds them of their own sin and condemnation.

2. There is a **darkness that clouds the minds of men apart from God.** Second Corinthians 4:3-4 points out that the gospel is veiled or hidden in them that perish...In which the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel... should not dawn upon them." Satan's influence over the human mind is similar to that of one man who dominates another's thinking and conduct. A good example is the evil Charles Manson who totally lorded over the minds and lives of his young hippie followers. The Gentiles knew God but refused to glorify him and give him thanks for his blessings. They "became vain in their reasoning and their senseless heart was **darkened**." The French commentator Godet points out: "**Reasoning** is always taken by writers of the New Testament in an unfavorable sense; it denotes the unregulated activity of the understanding, in the service of a corrupt heart." Paul writes of sinners who "walk in the vanity of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart. . . ." (Eph. 4:17-18). Again he speaks of "men corrupted in mind and bereft of truth" (1 Tim. 6:6).

3. **The pride of sinful man** makes him militant against God. There lurks in the hearts of sinners a desire to be their own God. Satan's temptation to Eve was, "Ye shall be gods" (Gen. 3:5, See footnote). So he tempts all men. Jesus asked, "How can ye believe who receive glory one of another, and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not" (John 5:44).



When man confesses the holy Christ, he declares himself unholy. When he bows to the independent God, he admits his dependence. It humiliates man's false pride and destroys his self-sufficiency to acknowledge the Sovereign God. Dr. H. F. Osborn writes, "From the period of the early days of Greek thought, man has been eager to discover some natural cause of evolution and to abandon the idea of supernatural intervention in the order of nature" (**The Origin and Evolution of Life**, p. ix). Dr. Jeffrey Brun in his **Survey of European Civilization** says, "The new learning offered man a more vainglorious picture of himself, and rooted itself in his pride; whereas **his religious beliefs have been the fruit of his humility**" (pp. 9-11). Even today it is common to read of the humanist who is predicting that man in his evolutionary growth and technical progress is nearing a state of divinity. Such thinking is at war with the one God. In all things the mind of sinful man would be its own measure, guide and rule. It exalts its own imagination which it loves and applauds, dotes on and adheres to. Man's besetting sin is to invent his own moral and spiritual guidelines (Eccle. 7:29). This philosophy makes **self** the absolute judge of what is to be believed; what is right and wrong. It rejects an objective supernatural guidance, scorning what does not suit self. Thus, where false pride prevails, where it is not put to death by the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:13), man will never receive the gospel in an acceptable way. Or if he accepts Christianity in part, he will seek means for negating and rejecting its full demands.

4. Then there is in some a **determination to live without God**. David says in Psalm 14:1, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." The thrust of the original text is, "The fool hath said, no God for me." Thus the decision and verdict of his heart is to reject the very concept of God. It implies that he seeks out arguments to persuade himself that there is no God. Now as always, some humans refuse to have God in their knowledge (Rom. 1:28). If men are to persist in godlessness, they are compelled to create reasons for their unbelief. It is not that the facts force men to disbelieve. Sinners are determined to reject God because their chosen lifestyle requires freedom from all restraint.

5. There are **educational influences in our modern age that by their very nature create an attitude of skepticism**. In most secular colleges and universities there are numbers of professors whose learning has filled them with vanity and arrogance, who dedicate themselves to liberating their students from what they style the "bondage of religious superstition." The student who is subjected to such influences will often succumb. Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he shall go, and even when he is old he will not depart from it." However, the reverse of this is also true. Train up a child in unbelief, and when he is old he will be an infidel.

6. **The increasing supremacy of natural things to the subordination of the spiritual things** contributes to the problem. The cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke out the nobler heavenly recognitions (Luke 8:14). Materialistic man feels no need for a transcendent God to aid him. So he scoffs at and ridicules those who do sense their need.

7. **The exaltation of science and knowledge tends to turn man away from God**. Man is so absorbed in the pursuit of nature's secrets that he is increasingly ignorant of his inner spiritual life and needs. It has always been true that to the most sophisticated intellectuals, the word of the cross is foolish. The world in its wisdom has never known God (I Cor. 1:18, 21, 26). Worldly wisdom affects proud men just like alcohol affects the alcoholic. Drunk on his own pride he rejects his Creator.

8. **Sin begets unbelief in wicked hearts**. Jesus said, "Everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works be reproved" (John 3:20). When a man does not love the truth but has pleasure in his unrighteousness, he will surely reject the God of truth" (II Thess. 2:12). Evil men seek to hinder or hold back that truth in their unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18). Sinners never wish to look into the mirror of God's Word to discover just how deformed and perverted they truly are.

9. **Ignorance of the Word of God and true Christianity contributes to the atheism of the world**. When men are ignorant of God's righteousness, they will always seek to establish a righteousness of their own (Rom. 10:13). For some this is atheistic humanism where man exalts himself to the place of God. Since faith comes from hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17), the man who has no knowledge of the Scripture cannot be expected to believe. The appalling ignorance of God's truth that prevails in most hearts is a fertile seed bed for infidelity. Some who are enemies of God have only known perversions of Christianity such as Catholicism, Protestantism or the cults. These they confuse with the Lord's true system and then they reject it all. Such people point to the cruelty and wars of Catholicism as their reason for rejecting Christianity. But true Christianity has never promoted or engaged in a war. If this distinction were understood, this reason would be neutralized at once.

Ours is a day of militant unbelief. Like a mighty tidal wave it is sweeping across our land and much of the world. Perhaps

the knowledge herein shared will better equip us to go forth and fight the good fight of faith. Through our King Jesus, we will be more than conquerors (Rom. 8:37).

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## 13.

### THE ARROGANT PRIDE OF UNBELIEF

The ancient Greeks used the word “hubris” when speaking of pride. It means “wanton insolence.” Pride is the supreme sin and it breeds destruction and total ruin. When hubris (pride) takes root in a human heart, the person forgets his humanity and imagines himself to be his own god. Pride is an exaggerated estimate of self-worth. It is arrogance and haughtiness. It is a universal sin of humanity. It is pride that keeps us from recognizing our lost and sinful condition and our need for God’s mercy and forgiveness. Pride is the first-fruit of our rebellion against God. It is a manifestation of inordinate self-love. Solomon understood that “pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Prov. 16:18). Again he noted that “When pride cometh, then cometh shame” (Prov. 13:10)

Satan quickly spotted the vulnerability of Adam and Eve. When he told them they would be as God, their defenses collapsed (The footnote is stronger, “ye shall be gods”). From that day to the present a segment of humanity has aspired to godhood. The Prince of Tyre said in his heart, “I am a god” (Ezek. 28:2). His heart was lifted up with pride because of his wealth and power. God punished him and destroyed his kingdom (28:17). The king of Babylon presumed he would “exalt himself above the stars of God...I will make myself like the Most High” (Is. 14:13-14). God promised to bring him down (14:15). Many of the ancient kings claimed to be deity and demanded the worship of their people. Even today numerous cult leaders have claimed that they were Christ. Some New Age teachers claim to be a part of God!

Humanism is false pride developed into a philosophical system. Secular humanism exalts man and discounts or denies God. This prideful insolence is demonstrated in Shakespeare’s lines, “What a piece of work is man...how noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! In form and movement how express and admirable! In action how like an angel! In apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the world, the paragon of animals” (Hamlet). The liberal philosophy that prevails in our culture promotes this false pride. Public education devotes its energies to instilling a perverted self-esteem in students. The behavior of vast numbers of young people passing through this system demonstrates that it was hubris that they learned in the name of self-esteem. Careless spokespersons sometimes refer to superior athletes, singers and performers as “gods.” While few would actually consider them as deity, their use of such terminology fuels the ego of these gifted performers. Even liberal churches encourage this false pride by rationalizing and excusing man’s sin and rebellion against God and his standards. They do so by accepting the speculations of scientists and philosophers over the declarations of God’s written Word. They prefer the theory of evolution over God’s revelation of His creation.

\* Many people of our generation imagine themselves to know more about truth, the will of God, Christianity, personal conduct and morality than the Bible. They commonly put their views above what God has said (Heb. 1:1-2).

\* Some feel themselves to be superior to Christians. They assume their secular thought and values to be better than the faith based beliefs of the followers of Christ. They look down on Christians as ignorant and superstitious.

\* Some unbelievers are happy just to ridicule and poke fun at the idea of God, the divinity of Jesus, creation, the Bible, the miracles recorded in the Bible, the ideas of heaven and hell and Christians.

\* Others are more militant. Their hatred for God burns hot, they feel compelled to use every opportunity to attack God and all things related to Christianity. We see this today in the work of Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins and their followers.

\* Some are so consumed with their contempt for God, his church and his people that they resort to physical persecution. This was seen in Nazi Germany, in the Communist nations such as Russia, China and Cuba. It is seen today in the Muslim nations.

Paul described many sinners in ancient Rome as being "hateful to God" (Rom. 1:30). That hatred is flourishing in our 21<sup>st</sup> century. It poses a challenge to every Christian. We must stand up for God, Christ and his church. We must be prepared to give an answer to any man who asks us a reason for our faith (I Pet. 3:15). Peter uses the word "apologia" which in our English is an apology, i.e., a verbal or written defense of our faith. That is the purpose of this book.

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## 14.

### YOUR REMARKABLE BIBLE

Likely, on a shelf in your home is a book called The Bible. Far fewer have read this ancient book than own it. The Bible is a collection of 66 smaller books. It is divided into two major sections; the Old Testament, given to the ancient Hebrews to order their lives and worship (Deut. 5:1-6) and the New Testament of Christ given to those who would follow Jesus. The first five books of the Old Testament were written by Moses some 3500 years ago. The New Testament was completed by the end of the first Christian century. The Bible consists of several different types of literature: law, history, biography, poetry, practical advice, philosophy, hymns, epistles and prophecy. Men from many stations of life participated in writing this book, yet it is perfectly harmonious in content. This is accounted for by the fact that the Holy Spirit of God guided all of them in their writing (II Pet. 1:21). Paul says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God..." (II Tim. 3:16). "Inspired" means, "God breathed" and implies the message originally came from the mouth of God. Being of God, it is without error in its content. In the Old Testament, 2,500 phrases express the thought, "Thus saith the Lord." This supernatural nature of the Bible is seen in the following points:

- \* **It is indestructible.** It has survived the combined assaults of atheists, heathen, powerful governments, opposing religions and even disloyal friends. Its attackers have perished but it still stands, unscarred and impregnable.
- \* **It is incomprehensible.** Some of the greatest minds on earth have spent a life time studying this Holy Book only to find it as unfathomable as at the beginning of their quest. The finite mind of man cannot master an infinite production,
- \* **Its style is different than any other book. The brevity of its record is remarkable.** The most important body of information in the world can be carried in one's coat pocket or purse. **The omissions** of the record mark it as divine. Think of all the extra things you would have put in the Bible had you written it. God gave us only what we needed. **The impartiality** of this book is significant. The truth is told about its heroes, including their dismal failures. Men do not write their books after this fashion.
- \* **The fulfilled prophecies** call for an inspired author. Hundreds of predictions, written down hundreds of years before the fact, have been fulfilled in a remarkable way.
- \* **The discoveries of archaeology** have verified the Biblical record of history, geography and ancient people.
- \* **The positive impact of the Bible on humanity** distinguishes it from any other book ever written. Where the Bible is circulated, read and believed civilization reaches its highest peak and individual freedom is most fully realized. Where it is absent, tyranny, enslavement and ignorance prevail.
- \* The Bible is the essential foundation of Christianity, for without a Bible we would have no knowledge of Jesus, what to believe or do in order to please Him.
- \* The Bible is the most important document in the development of Western Culture and civilization. Its is the foundation for our laws, our value system, our ethics, our concept of marriage and family and of social responsibility.
- \* It was the single most important volume in the development of our English language.
- \* The Bible is the most loved and probably the most hated book in our society.

Take time to read this Book sympathetically and carefully. You will feel in yourself the proof of its divine character. It will make you a wiser, better person. It will help you see yourself as you really are. It will give you direction for life and help you find peace with God. It is the standard by which you will be judged in eternity (John 12:48).

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## 15.

### THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

The Christian believes the Bible to be the inspired word of God. Our knowledge of our God is derived from the Bible; it is our holy guide for worshiping and serving Him. We live our daily life by its precepts; and it is our fountain of hope for a better life after this one.

Hordes of unbelieving sceptics daily work to discredit the Bible, to prove that it is a fraudulent, human production. They ridicule the Christian for believing the Bible to be a divine production. These liberals or modernists, as they are labeled, claim to preach Jesus, yet they argue that the Bible is a human production and almost totally unreliable. They will say that the Bible is inspired, but in reality they only mean that it bears the marks of literary genius as do the writings of Shakespeare, Milton and Browning. A common expression of their concept is "the Bible contains the word of God."

Our belief in the inspiration of the Bible is not dogmatic, i.e., without proof, but rather many proofs exist and because of them we believe. The Bible claims inspiration. In the Old Testament, we often read: "Thus saith the Lord;" "God spake;" "The Lord testified, saying;" "The Lord hath spoken it." There are 2,500 such phrases in the Old Testament. The New Testament abounds with similar statements, suggesting its inspiration. Paul writes "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (II Tim. 3:16-17). Peter says "For no prophesy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Pet. 1:20-21). John penned the book of Revelation, yet he said "hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Rev.2:11).

What is the nature of inspiration? Our word "inspiration" is translated from the Greek "*theopneustos*" (*Theos* means God; and *pneustos* means breathed). "The word implies an influence from without, producing effects which are beyond natural powers" (Miller). "The author has been overshadowed by a power outside himself." Inspiration, then, preserved the recipient from error in his teaching. It is because of its inspiration that we have full faith in the reliability and authority of the Bible. Truly it is a lamp to our feet and a light to our pathway (Ps. 119:105). You owe it to yourself to be a diligent student of this wonderful inspired book from God.

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## 16.

### IS OUR OLD TESTAMENT TEXT RELIABLE?

"By and large we are fully justified in saying concerning the Old Testament what Westcott and Hort said concerning the New: except for trivialities, not one part in a thousand is in serious doubt and we have no objective evidence to make us think that doctrinal differences or substantial matters are involved in the whole process of Old Testament copying" (**Can I Trust My Bible?**, sub. **How Reliable is the Old Testament Text?** by R. Laird Harris, p. 132).

I. "Text-data for the Old Testament is not vast as compared with the multitude of witnesses on the Greek text, nor does the available data appear as impressive" (**How We Got the Bible**, Neil Lightfoot, p. 69).

II. Until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, our oldest manuscripts dated from the ninth century A.D.

Our earliest Hebrew manuscripts were known as the Cairo Codex and the Leningrad Codex. The Cairo Codex, which contained the prophets, is dated at 895 A.D. The Leningrad dates from 916 A.D.. The British Museum Codex of the Pentateuch comes from the tenth or eleventh century. The Leningrad codex of the entire Old Testament dates from 1008 A.D. (**Ibid.** p. 69-70).

III. The reason why ancient copies of the Hebrew text have not survived is that Jewish scribes looked upon their copies of the Scriptures with an almost superstitious respect. This led them to give a ceremonial burial to any copy which was old or worn (**Ibid.**, p. 70).

IV. **The Massorettes:** These were Jewish scholars dedicated to the preservation of the Old Testament text. These groups came into existence at a very early date. The most notable group was at Tiberias and began about 500 A.D. They sought ways and methods to eliminate scribal slips of addition or omission or mistakes in copying. This they achieved by intricate procedures of counting. They numbered the verses, words and letters of each book. They calculated the middle verse, the middle word and the middle letter of each book. Each copy upon completion was carefully checked to insure accuracy of work (*Ibid*, p. 71).

Even before the Massorettes schools, Jewish scholars conscientiously sought perfection in transcribing the text. Rigid regulations were laid down for the preparation of copies to be used in synagogues. The length of the column must not be less than 48 nor more than 60 lines. Each column must be 30 letters wide. The whole copy must be first lined. An **authentic copy** must be the exemplar, from which the transcriber must not deviate in the least. No word or letter or even punctuation was to be written by memory. The scrolls in which these regulations were not observed were condemned to be buried or burned or used only for common reading such as in schools (**Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts** by F. Kenyon, pp.78-79)

#### V. Other Sources for Determining Our Old Testament Text:

1. **The Samaritan Pentateuch**, Its beginning is traced back to about 400 B.C. To a high degree it confirms the traditional Hebrew Text.
2. **The Septuagint** (from the Latin Septuaginta, meaning seventy). This is a Greek translation of the Old Testament dating from about 250 B.C. For a while it was virtually the only Bible for the early church. It was the text most often quoted by the inspired writers of the N.T.
3. **The Aramaic Targums**. These are translations/paraphrases from Hebrew into the Jewish dialect of the first century.
4. **The Syriac Peshitta**. This Syriac translation dates from possibly the first century.
5. **Latin Versions**, The Old Latin and the Latin Vulgate. The Vulgate is by far the most valuable and is the work of Jerome and was prepared in 390-405 A.D.
6. Other Sources include quotations found in the **Jewish Talmud** (A body of Jewish literature containing the **Mishnah**(text) and Gemara (commentary), dating from 200-500 A.D. Fragments of **Origen's Old Testament** used in the third century A.D. and other versions such as the **Coptic, Ethioptic, Armenian** and the **Arabic**. While not all of these are of equal value, they do help by adding to the sum of witnesses for the text.

VI. **The Dead Sea Scrolls:** Since March of 1948 eleven caves have been discovered on the cliffs above the Dead Sea that yielded about 382 rolls of ancient manuscripts and thousands of fragments. Many of these contain Old Testament scriptures. "every book of the Old Testament is found either in manuscript, quotation or allusion in the Qumran literature" (**The Dead Sea Scrolls**, Pfeiffer, p. 101).

Since the Essene community that owned these scrolls was destroyed by the Romans in 68 A.D., all of these manuscripts are at least that old or older. Scholars have dated some of the scrolls at 250 B.C. Thus we have a body of literature giving us the text of our Old Testament that is 1,000 years older than anything previously had.

The Dead Sea Scrolls have proven that the ancient Masoretic text has been faithfully transmitted to us. "The new evidence confirms what we already had good reason to believe—that the Jewish scribes of the early Christian centuries copied and recopied the text of the Hebrew Bible with the utmost fidelity" (F. F. Bruce, **Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls**, p. 61-62).

Conclusion: Today we can be assured that we have the same scripture that was read by God's children in the first century. The God who could inspire men to record His will, his use of the same power to preserve for us His Sacred Word.

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## 17.

### THE BIBLE: MYTH OR TRUTH?

I never cease to be amazed at the arrogant pronouncements of theologians and religious scholars who dismiss as myths most of the historical records and all of the miracles of the Bible. Of course those who do so are unbelievers who make their living as teachers of the Bible. They take advantage of their position and the immaturity and gullibility of their students to destroy their faith and poison their minds against God's Word. Generally, they pretend they are Christians but their teachings and their claims are irreconcilable.

Most of those liberal scholars class the Genesis record of Creation, the Flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and similar events as non-historical myths. The first five books of the Old Testament, including Genesis, were written by Moses. Jesus said to his contemporaries, "if you believe not his (Moses') writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (John 5:46-47). The divine formulae is Jesus and Moses, not Jesus vs. Moses.

Religious liberals are not embarrassed to call the virgin birth and the resurrection of Christ myths. When God, through Isaiah, predicted the virgin birth of his Son, the prophet said, "the Lord himself will give you a sign" (Is. 7:14). These modern unbelievers are too proud and stubborn to accept the sign given. Concerning the resurrection of the Lord, Paul wrote, "if Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (I Cor. 15:17). Thus the self-appointed critics of God's Word have two choices: believe in Jesus, including his supernatural birth, his miracle and resurrection, and be saved, or deny the facts of his birth, life and death and be lost. Human pride is a strutting, arrogant thing. Earthlings with their limited knowledge and comprehension dare to assert themselves against the all-powerful, all-knowing Creator of the universe and dispute His divine word. Believers will one day see these haughty intellectuals bowing before the Lord, begging for mercy (Phil. 2:9-11). The books of God will be opened and they will be judged by the things written in the sacred record (Rev. 20:11-12). The Christ they relegated to myth will be their living judge.

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## 18.

### THE MANIFOLD VALUE OF THE BIBLE

What price could we put on the Bible? Just how could we measure its value? David wrote that God's word was "more precious than fine gold" (Ps. 19:10). In Communist nations disciples are willing to pay a month's wages for a Bible and risk government harassment in so doing. This may seem strange to some Americans who have never taken time to read one of the numerous Bibles in their home. There are many values that flow from God's holy book, each of which provides an incentive to study it diligently.

Consider some of these values:

**Practical Value:** "The Scriptures teach us the best way of living, the noblest way of suffering, and the most comfortable way of dying" (John Flavel). "The Bible is the one book to which any thoughtful man may go with any honest question of life or destiny and find the answer of God by honest searching" (John Ruskin).

**Personal Value:** "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119:105). Other books were written for our information, but the Bible was given for our transformation and guidance.

**Educational Value:** "I believe a knowledge of the Bible without a college course is more valuable than a college course without a Bible" (William Lyon Phelps). "The opening of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (Ps. 119:130).

**Literary Value:** Again we quote from Dr. William L. Phelps, former president of Yale University, "from even a literary point of view (the Bible is) the greatest book in the world." The famous English author, Charles Dickens, wrote, "the New Testament is the best book the world has ever known or will know." Our American patriot, Patrick Henry, said, "There

is a book worth all other books which were ever printed."

**Social and Civic Value:** "For more than a thousand years the Bible collectively taken has gone hand in hand with civilization, science, law--in short, with the moral and intellectual cultivation of the species, always supporting and often leading the way" (Samuel T. Coleridge). The brilliant Thomas Jefferson wrote, "I have always said. . .that the studious perusal of the sacred volume will make better citizens, better fathers and better husbands."

**Political Value:** "The Bible has been the Magna Carta of the poor and the oppressed" (Thomas H. Huxley). Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). "It is impossible to mentally or socially enslave a Bible reading people" (Horace Greeley).

**Religious Value:** "The Bible is the only source of all Christian truth, the only rule for the Christian life, the only book that unfolds to us the realities of eternity" (Sir M. Hale). Peter expressed it thusly, "Lord, to who shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:68). "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim 3:16-17).

**Eternal Value:** "Do you know a book that you are willing to put under your head for a pillow when you are dying? Very well that is the book you want to study when you are living. There is only one such book in the world" (Joseph Cook). It is amazing how few infidels are found on the death-bed. All men instinctively reach for the hope set forth in the Holy Bible. Jesus warned, "The word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48).

In the Apostle John's visions of the judgement, he saw all the race of man before the Judge of the universe with, "the books opened and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books. . . ." (Rev 20:11-12).

With Immanuel Kant we affirm, "The Bible is the greatest benefit which the human race has ever experienced." The question is, what use are we making of this marvelous book? Why not begin your course of Bible study today.

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## 19.

### WHAT THE BIBLE IS LIKE

Such a marvelous, multifaceted thing is our Bible that no single illustration is adequate to describe it. Sacred writers use numerous pictures to describe God's wonderful book and the various purposes it serves.

\* God's Word in Jeremiah's mouth was like a **fire** (Jer. 5:14, 23:29). Fire refines and purifies, burning away the dross. It also destroys things that cannot resist its flames. So does God's Word.

\* The same prophet pictures Scripture as a **hammer**. "Is not my word like...a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jer. 23:29). A hammer can be a useful tool for building up a structure, but it can also smash and destroy that which is unwanted, undesirable, unyielding or imperfect. In the hands of a skilled blacksmith, a hammer can beat and shape the hot iron into something useful. In the hands of a capable teacher, God's Word can save a soul from ruin. It can help rebuild a life or a broken family. God's word can break a hard and stubborn heart and bring it to repentance. It can convict a sinner of his wickedness pronounce him guilty.

\* Jeremiah also describes Scripture as **food** for the hungry soul. "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy words were unto me a joy and the rejoicing of my heart..." (Jer. 15:16). The author of Hebrews tells us that God's Word contains both milk for babes in Christ and strong meat for adults in the faith (Heb. 5:13-14). As the physical man will weaken and perish without adequate physical food, so will the spirit of man perish if it does not receive sufficient spiritual food from God's Word. Those who regularly partake of the Word will grow strong in the Lord (Matt. 4:4).

\* Paul describes the Bible as the **sword of the Spirit** (Eph. 6:17). He sees the Bible as the offensive weapon given to the Christian soldier to use in confronting, battling and defeating sin and error. When Scripture is wisely used, the man of God can best any adversary with God's Word.

\* In his 19<sup>th</sup> Psalm, David compares the value of the Word of God to much **fine gold** (19:10). It is a treasure of spiritual wealth. It will bring to the spirit of man the wonderful things he needs and desires. It is worth pursuing and retaining once

it is found.

\* In the same psalm, David says that God's Word is "Sweeter also than **honey** and the droppings of the honeycomb." (Ps. 19:10). Refined sugar was unknown to ancient man. Honey was their only source of sweetness. It was highly prized and eagerly sought for. It delighted those privileged to eat it. So is God's Word a delight to those who know and partake of it.

With such a wonderful treasure in our possession, how can we possibly neglect to read it, study it and make it the standard of our lives? May it be that every person who wears the name of Christ will be known as a person of the Book of God.

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## 20

### THREE WAYS OF HANDLING THE WORD OF GOD

God has favored humanity by giving us a written revelation of his sacred will. We call it the Bible. While most Americans have a copy of the Bible, not all make the same use of it.

**I. Some neglect the Bible.** They do not read nor study it. Like a souvenir, it lays on a table or stands on a shelf, unopened and unused. It benefits them none at all. Rather, it is a silent witness to their indifference and lack of appreciation to the God who made and will one day judge them (Rom. 14:12).

**II. Many corrupt the word of God** (II Cor. 2:17). Not all do so intentionally. Through the influence of others, they have missed the correct meaning of Scripture. That error they pass on to others. But some corrupt the word of God from evil motives:

- \* To justify their sin, or their quest for power over others;
- \* To intentionally avoid the clear meaning and intent of Scripture;
- \* To support their own thinking and opinions about religion;
- \* To defend a long and fondly held tradition.

All should know that God frowns upon and will not tolerate those who take liberties with his Word.

**III. Faithful men and women give diligence to present themselves approved unto God, handling aright the word of truth** (II Tim. 2:14-15). They recognize Scripture as a divine and holy gift from the Creator. They see it as inspired of God (II Tim. 3:16). They know that being the Word of God, given by the Holy Spirit, it is inerrant, the sum of perfection (Ps. 19:7). They acknowledge the full and final authority of the Bible in all matters of faith, worship and practice of the church. They study it with diligence. They seek to understand its meaning. They strive to follow its precepts and honor its prohibitions. They do not challenge or question its claims or the truthfulness of the wondrous events it records. They love it, cherish it and are willing to stand up and speak up in defense of Scripture (Phil. 1:16). They love all who share their allegiance to God's Word and reject and refuse those who do not.

How do you handle the word of God?

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## 21.

### THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE

The Bible is scientific and in harmony with the proven facts of science. We affirm: The Bible does contain scientific truth, even though its facts are stated in non-scientific language. The Bible does not contain the errors and fallacies of science common to the age of its production. The Bible is in harmony with modern science in that it has anticipated many of the discoveries of these recent centuries. There has yet to be found one verified scientific fact that contradicts the Bible. The following facts were written in the Bible thousands of years before their discovery by scientists.

- \* The rotundity of earth. "It is he that sitteth above the circle of the earth" (Is. 40:42); written 750 BC.
- \* Suspension of earth in space by gravity. "He...hangeth the earth upon nothing" ( Job 26:7); written 1700 BC.
- \* Emptiness of northern space. "He stretcheth out the north over empty space" (Job 26:7); written 1700 BC.
- \* The one blood of the human race. "and He made of one blood every nation of men..." (Acts 17:26); written 62 AD.
- \* The varied fleshs of the animal world. "all flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of man, and another flesh of beast and another flesh of birds and another flesh of fishes" (I Cor. 15:39); written 57 AD.
- \* "The paths or lanes of the seas" (Ps. 8:8); written c.a.1,000 BC. Matthew F. Maury, founder of the science of oceanography, read this verse and was motivated to seek out and chart the principal lanes of sea travel. These illustrations could be multiplied.

How did Bible writers know these things? Was it accidental? If so, that would be the greatest miracle of history. The answer is, "holy men spake from God being moved by the Holy Spirit, (II Peter 1:21).

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## 22.

### DARWIN OR MOSES?

Moses says, "In the beginning, God *created* the heavens and the earth." (Gen. 1:1). "And God *created* man in his own image" (Gen. 2:27). A sizeable portion of the educational profession seems to think that Moses' declaration is made obsolete by Darwin's Theory of Evolution. In most schools, Evolution is taught as a scientifically established fact.

Darwin admitted he had not proven his theory! To T. H. Huxley, he wrote (12/2/1860), "I certainly agree with you, that the difficulties on my notions are terrific..." (*Life & Letters of C. Darwin*, Vol. II, p. 147). On 5/22/1863, he wrote to G. Bentham, "when we descend to details, we can prove that no one species has changed (i.e., we cannot prove that a single species has changed); nor can we prove that the supposed changes are beneficial, which is the ground work of the theory" (*Ibid.* II, p. 210).

Let no teacher wreck your faith, or that of your child with Darwinism. Darwin wrote to Bentham, 6/19/1863, "I for one, can conscientiously declare that I never feel surprised at anyone sticking to the belief of immutability (the opposite of evolution, J.W.)... I remember too well my endless oscillations of doubt and difficulty" (*Ibid.* II, pp. 210-211). Those tottering toward atheism, should note Darwin's confession, "In my most extreme fluctuations, I have never been an atheist in the sense of denying the existence of a God" (*Ibid.* I, p. 274).

When contemplating the possibility of "creation" by intelligence, he wrote, "... the universe is not the result of chance. But then with me the horrid doubt always arises whether the convictions of man's mind, which has developed from the mind of the lower animals, are of any value or at all trustworthy. Would anyone trust in the convictions of a monkey's mind ...?" (*Ibid.* I, p. 285). In view of this, why should we trust him when he thinks and writes about evolution?

We close with this Darwinian gem, "I am conscious that I am in an utterly hopeless muddle. I cannot think that the world, as we see it, is the result of chance; and yet I cannot look at each separate thing as the result of Design..." (Ibid. II, p. 146).

Evolution is a faith, not a fact. Darwin's muddled mind could not prove it, nor has any other. Believe the Bible. It is reasonable.

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## 23.

### EVOLUTION, FACT OR FAITH ?

If evolution were an established fact, every intelligent person would concede it. If it is but a philosophic faith, it must be measured against other faiths, such as Creation. Then it becomes a question of which faith is most reasonable. In many areas evolutionists have virtually won the contest by default of believers in Creation. Evolutionists admit they have not proven their case.

\* **William L. Straus, Jr.:** "I wish to emphasize that I am under no illusion that the theory of human ancestry I favor at the present time, can in anyway be regarded as proven" (**Quarterly Review of Biology**, Sep. 1949, p. 220).

\* **William Bateson:** "Meanwhile, though our faith in evolution stands unshaken, we have no acceptable account of the origin of the species" (**Wm. Bateson, F.R.S. Naturalist**, p. 391).

\* **Emanuel Radl** "It is true that the theory (of evolution, J.W.) has not received any clinching proof" (**History of Biological Theories**, pp. v-vi).

\* **Relis B. Brown:** "The piecing together of the evolution story is comparable to the reconstruction of an atom bombed metropolitan telephone exchange by a child who has only seen a few telephone receivers" (**Biology**, 2nd edition, p. 531).

\* **Louis T. More** plainly stated the case, "The more one studies paleontology, the more certain one becomes that evolution is based on faith alone" (**The Dogma of Evolution**, p. 160)

\* **Charles Darwin** confessed, "... I never feel surprised at any one sticking to the belief of immutability (opposite of evolution, J.W.) ... I remember too well my endless oscillations of doubt and difficulty" (**Life & Letters**, Vol. II, pp. 210-211).

Christians reject the unproven faith of evolution for faith in the Living God, the Creator of heaven and earth (Genesis 1:1).

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## EVOLUTION HAS FAILED

Evolution is anti-Christian. It denies that God created man and the cosmos. It tells your children they are only highly evolved animals. It inspires them to live by a code of naturalism rather than the Bible. Text-books present evolution as an established fact. It is only a theory.

The truth is, **Evolution has failed:**

- \* To explain the existence of material universe;
- \* To explain the origin of mechanical and chemical energy;
- \* To prove that the one cell protozoa is the origin of many celled animals;
- \* To prove the transmutation of species;
- \* To prove that one species has fundamentally changed throughout the centuries;
- \* To prove that natural selection and survival of the fittest have evolved different kinds of creatures, or that acquired characteristics are hereditary;
- \* To bridge the gap between cold blooded reptiles and warm blooded mammals;
- \* To produce one distinct missing link between man and ape or any two distinct kinds of creatures;
- \* To explain the existence of some form of mentality in all forms of living creatures;
- \* To explain the existence of intelligence, rational power and spiritual inclinations;

Evolution has failed from the beginning to the end.

When evolutionists can prove their assumptions, then they can sensibly talk about evolution being a fact. "In the beginning God created the heavens and earth. . . and God created man in his own image. . ." (Gen. 1:1, 27). No fact of science has disproved this declaration.

Caring parents should tell their children evolution is only an unproven theory. Faith in the Divine creation should not be surrendered for an unproven theory. It is Secularism's attempt to explain the origin of life without a divine Creator. It is their faith. You are not obliged to accept it.

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## CONFESSIONS OF EVOLUTIONISTS

It is commonly believed that all men of science accept Evolution as a scientifically proven theory. The following confessions reveal just the opposite. An old adage says, "An honest confession is good for the soul, but bad for the reputation." When you are tempted to give up your faith in the Bible for evolution, think of these admissions:

\* **Charles Darwin**: "When we descend to details, we can prove that no one species has changed (i.e. we cannot prove that a single species has changed): nor can we prove that the supposed changes are beneficial, which is the groundwork of the theory" (*Life & Letters of C. Darwin*, Vol. II p. 210). "I am conscious that I am in an utterly hopeless muddle. I cannot think that the world, as we see it, is the result of chance; and yet I cannot look at each separate thing as the result of design..." (*Ibid.* Vol II, p. 146).

\* **Herbert Spencer**: "...Life under all its forms has arisen by a progressive, unbroken evolution; and through the immediate instrumentality of what we call natural causes. **That this is a hypothesis, I readily admit. That it may never be anything more, seems probable.** That even in its most defensible shape there are serious difficulties in its way, I cheerfully acknowledge" (*Principles of Psychology*, Vol. I, pp. 465-466, footnote).

\* **T. H. Huxley**: "I by no means suppose that the transmutation hypothesis is proven or anything like it." (*Life & Letters of T.H. Huxley*, Vol. I, p. 252).

\* **Louis T. More**: "The more one studies paleontology, the more certain one becomes that **evolution is based on faith alone**" (*The Dogma of Evolution*, p. 160).

Well did **Paul Lemoine** say, "Evolution is a sort of dogma in which the priests no longer believe but that they maintain for the people" (*French Encyclopedia*, 5-82-8). Surely, "The god of this world (Satan) has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ... should not dawn upon them." (II Corinthians 4:4).

Evolution is a faith, not a fact. When men refuse to have God in their knowledge, God gives them up to a reprobate mind (Rom. 1:28). When men exchange the truth of God for a lie, they worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:25).

\* **Henry Fairfield Osborn** said, "In truth, from the period of the earliest stages of Greek thought man has been eager to discover some natural cause of evolution, and to abandon the idea of supernatural intervention in the order of nature" (*The Origin and Evolution of Life*, p. ix).

\* **H. S. Shelton** wrote, "I must therefore say quite bluntly that I regard the hypothesis of special creation as too foolish for serious consideration" (*Is Evolution Proven?* p. 137).

\* **A. L. Kroeber**, at the Darwin Centennial said, "Overwhelmingly, biologists had been accepting evolution because there was nothing else for them to do; but they had not proved it to their own satisfaction" (Sol Tax, Editor, *Evolution of Man*, p. 2).

\* **Richard Goldschmidt**: "Darwin's theory of natural selection has never had any proof except from *a priori* considerations, yet it has been universally accepted..." (*The Material Basis of Evolution*, pp. 211-212).

\* **Thomas Dwight** has exposed the dissimulation of the Evolutionary brotherhood, "The tyranny of the *Zeltgeist* in the matter is overwhelming to a degree of which outsiders have no idea, not only does it influence (as I must admit that it does in my own case) our manners of thinking, but there is the oppression as in the days of the "terror." How very few of the leaders of science dare tell the truth concerning their own state of mind! How many feel themselves forced in public to do a lip service to a cult they do not believe in!" (*Thoughts of a Catholic Anatomist*, pp. 20-21).

Only Truth can make man free (John 8:32). God's Word is Truth (John 17:17). Evolutionists have not established the truth of their theory.

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## GIFTS CHARLES DARWIN'S THEORY HAS GIVEN HUMANITY (Dialog With a Darwinian)

Darwinian evolution has been with us since 1859 when Charles Darwin's famous book, **The Origin of Species** was published. But the origin of evolution can easily be traced back to the Greek philosophers of the 7th century B. C. H. F. Osborn wrote, "When I began the search for anticipations of the evolutionary theory...I was led back to the Greek natural philosophers and I was astonished to find how many of the pronounced and basic features of the Darwinian theory were anticipated even as far back as the seventh century B.C. (From **The Greeks to Darwin**, p. ix). Evolution even played an important role in the theology of ancient Buddhism and Taoism. Evolution is the common expression of rebellious, fallen men, past and present, who have rejected God as their Creator, Lord and Master.

Charles Darwin was fortunate to live in the age of the printing press which allowed his book to be produced in large numbers and quickly circulated around the world.. When his book appeared, unbelievers in the world of science and academia immediately declared it to be the final word on the origin of not only of the various forms of life, but of the cosmos, government and human conduct as well. It quickly displaced the Christian concept of creation and has now succeeded in banning it from all public education, the world of science and government. None in those fields can challenge Darwin's still unproven theories without penalty.

While all young people are thoroughly indoctrinated in the theory of evolution, from kindergarten through the university, they are not told of the unsavory gifts the proponents of this theory have bequeathed to mankind.

First it gave us the **Eugenics Movement**. "Evolutionary models of natural selection and dysgenic (bad) hereditary practices in society also contributed to eugenic theory"(**Scientific Origins of Eugenics**). "The word 'eugenics' was coined by Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911) to denote scientific endeavors to increase the proportion of persons with better than average genetic endowment through selective mating of marriage partners." Selective breeding is commonly used in animal husbandry where only the strong and healthy are allow to breed. The weak and defective are removed lest they multiply and weaken the whole of the herd or flock. The subtitle of Darwin's book, **Origin of Species** is "**The Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life.**"

"The practice of eugenics was first legally mandated in the United States in Indiana, resulting in the forcible sterilization, incarceration, and occasionally euthanasia of the mentally or physically handicapped, the mentally ill, and ethnic minorities (particularly people of mixed racial heritage), and the adopting out of their children to non-disabled, Caucasian parents. Similar programs spread widely in the early part of the twentieth century, and still exist in some parts of the world..." (**Medicine Net. Com**).

Among the champions of the eugenics movement was Margaret Sanger, founder of Planned Parenthood. This unholy approach was widely accept throughout America and Europe. Thousands were forcibly sterilized to keep them from reproducing. The Eugenics movement was based squarely on Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest. Its natural outgrowth was the idea of superior and inferior races which continued to flourish long after the Eugenics Movement was discredited.

The horrors of institutionalized eugenics was revealed in **Nazi Germany during World War II** where several million people, judged to be undesirable because of physical, mental or emotional problems, were executed and entire racial groups such as Jews and Gypsies were systematically exterminated. The Nazi program was built on the Darwinian model. Sir Arthur Keith wrote, "To see the evolutionary measure and tribal morality being applied rigorously to the affairs of a great modern nation, we must turn again to Germany of 1942. We see Hitler devoutly convinced that evolution produces the only real basis for national policy. ...The German Fuhrer, as I have consistently maintained, is an evolutionist; he has conscientiously sought to make the practices of Germany conform to the theory of evolution" (Sir Arthur Keith, **Evolution and Ethics**, p. 28).

Hitler's military ally was Benito Mussolini, Fascist dictator of Italy. "Mussolini's attitude was completely dominated by evolution. In public utterances, he repeatedly used the Darwinian catchwords while he mocked at perpetual peace, lest it should hinder the evolutionary process" (Robert. E. D. Clark, **Darwin: Before and After**, p. 115).

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the founders of Communism, "accepted evolution almost immediately after Darwin published **The Origin of Species**. Marx felt his own work to be the exact parallel of Darwin's. He even wished to dedicate a portion of **Das Kapital** to the author of **The Origin of Species** (Jacques Barzun, **Darwin, Marx, Wagner**, p. 8). As Communism spread its tentacles among the nations of the world it imposed its evolutionary views on all its subjects. Today, Marxism is very popular in America's world of secular academia and evolution is the great Zeitgeist to which one must subscribe or be rejected

The **sexual revolution** which has wrought so much damage to the moral fiber of millions of individuals and families is a natural extension of the evolutionary view that man is only a highly evolved animal and that morals and ethics themselves are constantly evolving. So also is the **pro-abortion movement** that encourages abortion for every pre-born child thought to have some defect. Abortion advocates are known to push their agenda among poor minority groups.

James Garfield said, "Ideas control the world." Victor Hugo concluded that "A fixed idea ends in madness or heroism. Solomon said, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; But the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12). We have seen the shameful, destructive record of Darwin's idea, his theory of evolution. Its influence on the human race has brought untold misery, death and ruin. The evidence is sufficient that any person with a modicum of conscience should be ashamed to promote and recommend it to students. John Waddey

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\* For an in depth discussion of Evolution's destructive influence see **The Long War Against God** by Henry M. Morris, Baker Book House.

A Response from Mr. Ben Morrish:

**Dear Mr. Waddey:** Eugenics is a form of artificial selection, and as such has nothing to do with Darwinian evolution, which is based primarily on natural selection. Artificial selection was well known centuries before Darwin, as you surely know since you mention animal husbandry in your article.

Also, anyone who thinks Darwinian evolution tells us anything at all about right and wrong, what we should or should not do, is committing the naturalistic fallacy - wrongly equating "happens in nature" with "good." Darwinian natural selection is amoral, not immoral (or moral for that matter).

Hitler made no reference to Darwinian evolution. He made numerous references to the Christian God, and had "Gott mit uns" embossed on the SS's belt buckles. It is frankly absurd to blame Darwinism for Hitler's atrocities. Much of the Nazi

"justification" for the persecution of Jews came from the Bible.

The sexual revolution is cannot reasonably be blamed on Darwinism - the sexual revolution was mainly due to the increased availability of cheap, effective contraception.

When talking about the Nazis you mistakenly assumed that Darwinism tells us what we should (and should not) do. If you genuinely hold that belief about Darwinism, how can you blame Darwinism for the increase in sex with contraception, when contraception explicitly aims to reduce reproduction? How can you blame Darwinism for the pro-abortion movement?

If you believe that Darwinism tells us what we should do, then you should expect Darwinists to be highly vocal critics of contraception and abortion, since use of these reduces the number of offspring an individual will produce in their lifetime, i.e. it reduces their reproductive "fitness"!

But as mentioned previously, Darwinism in fact tells us nothing about how we should or should not behave.

You say "None in those fields can challenge Darwin's still unproven theories without penalty". This is wrong. None in those fields can challenge Darwin's still unproven theories without EVIDENCE.

So far, no-one has come up with either a credible scientific alternative to the neo-Darwinian model, or compelling scientific evidence against the validity of the neo-Darwinian model. **Ben Morrish**

**Mr. Waddey's response:**

**Dear Ben:** As is often the case in discussions of ethics and morals you provided answers but not to the points I raised.

- \* Certain people were persuaded by Darwin's books that man is only a highly evolved animal.
- \* They were convinced that the survival of the fittest is nature's law and a good one.
- \* Considering themselves to be among the fittest, they sought to control and deny the reproductive possibilities those they considered to be weak and undesirable.
- \* The Eugenics Movement is an ugly blemish in our nation's history. It became a national program in the Third Reich and was pursued with unrelenting determination.
- \* To believe that Hitler acted from Judeo-Christian motives is either a fairy tale or propaganda. The historical roots of his social policies based on a superior race cannot be denied or hidden.
- \* You are correct in saying that Darwin's theory does not assign right or wrong to conduct. By teaching that man is only an animal that originated by chance, students draw the natural conclusion that therefore there is no Creator, no Divine Power and hence no higher law of morality. It is easy to conclude that to kill a person you consider to be undesirable or inferior is no different than killing a rat or a roach. The Nazis commonly referred to their victims as roaches and swine.
- \* This same amorality and reduction of man to the level of an animal who reacts to his primal instincts just as animals do, has indeed fueled the destructive sexual revolution. Those influenced by God submit their conduct to a higher standard than that of dogs and cats. They understand the destructive consequences of amoral conduct.

I notice that you prefer to limit your defense to "neo-Darwinism." Why may I ask do you qualify the kind of evolutionary theory you defend? Could it be because the earlier forms of Darwinism were found to be defective and thus needed to be revised? We do know that many eminent scientists have repudiated the earlier forms of Darwinism. Your theory is based not on science, i.e. something that can be tested in a laboratory and duplicated. It is an unproven theory set forth to answer the question of origins for unbelievers. It meets their need of excluding the possibility of a Creator to whom they refuse to be amenable. Since so many in the fields of science and academia prefer the "no-Creator" approach, they shout down and shut the door to anything the advocates of Creation might offer. With their eyes shut tight and their ears

well plugged they don't hear a bit of evidence offered for intelligent design in the universe. They look in the mirror and congratulate themselves for being an accidental blob of molecules with no purpose and a value no greater than an ant. Eternal random chaos is much more agreeable to their faith system.

It is indeed a fact that a scientist who dares to believe that a Higher Power created the cosmos finds it almost impossible to find a job in our secular universities and other fields where Darwinism reigns supreme. Nor would his books be accepted and published by the text book industry. If they cannot fault his education credentials, they fault his faith. Such is verboten in their domain!

John Waddey

## 27.

### **FULFILLED PROPHECY**

In his memorable Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matt. 5:17).

Prophetic material fills a considerable portion of our Bible, more than most folks realize. Of the Old Testament's "23,210 verses, 6,641 contain predictive material, or 28 1/2 percent". Out of the New Testament's "7,914 verses, 1,711 contain predictive material or 21 1/2 percent". So, of the entire Bible's "31,124 verses, 8,352 contain predictive material or 27 percent of the whole". /

Surely one of the great proofs of the inspiration of the Scripture is the hundreds of fulfilled prophecies. One of the strongest types of evidence for Jesus' divine origin and mission is the more than 300 prophecies relating to his life and mission. No other area of study can be more exciting and rewarding than that of Biblical prophecies and their fulfillment. To that study we not direct our attention.

#### **PROPHECY DEFINED**

To understand the subject of prophecy, we must first understand what a prophet was and what he did. The best definition is a demonstration, and that we have in the case of Moses and Aaron. "And Jehovah said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a God to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet; Thou shalt speak all that I command thee; and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh" (Ex. 7:1-2). This is amplified earlier in Exodus 4:15-16. "And thou (Moses) shalt speak unto him (Aaron), and put the words in his mouth... And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people, and it shall come to pass, that he shall be to thee a mouth, and thou shalt be to him as God." Thus a prophet was a "mouthpiece" or a spokesman for God. David explained his role in recording God's will in II Samuel 23:2: "the Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, And his word was upon my tongue." Some have mistakenly thought the prophets were primarily future tellers, but the careful student recognizes that they were fundamentally proclaimers of God's will, preachers of his message, and to a much lesser degree fore-tellers. This is exhibited by Paul in I Corinthians 14:3: "But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men edification, and exhortation, and consolation."

William Webster defines prophecy as "God's communication to the church to be her light and comfort in time of trouble and perplexity."<sup>2</sup> Dr. Pye Smith describes prophecy as "a declaration made by a creature, under the inspiration and commission of the omniscient God, relating to an event or series of events, which have not taken place at the time the prophecy is uttered, which could not have been certainly foreknown by any science or wisdom of man."<sup>3</sup>

The Apostle John declares that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10). By that, he means that Jesus stands as the principle theme and ultimate goal of prophecy.



## VARIOUS TYPES OF PROPHECY

Prophecy is not all of one type or kind. A discerning student will note at least six different categories of prophecy recorded in Scripture. In passing, we note that **false prophets** were busy issuing their uninspired predictions. Thus we have in Jeremiah 28:1-4 a false prophecy of Hananiah who predicted that the Hebrews would be freed from Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian yoke in two years, i.e., by about 594. He was rebuked by Jeremiah and discredited by the failure of his prediction. Moses had earlier said "when a prophet speaketh in the name of Jehovah, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which Jehovah hath not spoken: the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously..." (Deut. 18:22).

There are **general prophecies** which predict blessings or curses in broad general terms with few if any details. For example, Isaiah 14:1, "For Jehovah will have compassion on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land." The context helps us to see this as a prediction of restoration after the Babylonian exile. Numerous prophecies are of this category.

Some prophecies are **specific** as to details. Thus in Isaiah 44:28 God wrote "of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying of Jerusalem, She shall be built; and of the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid." These words were written no later than 700 B.C. Cyrus led the Medes and Persians to world dominance in 538 and commissioned the restoration of the Jewish nation in 536. Daniel's majestic prophecy of 70 weeks predicted with great accuracy the years of the public ministry of Messiah and his death in the midst of his 34th year. Accompanying his death would be the end of sacrifices and oblations of the Mosaic system, and the reconciliation of sinners. Following these events would be the destruction of the Jewish state by the Romans (Dan. 9:24-27).

Many prophecies are written in **highly figurative and poetic language**. For example, the description of the character and conduct of those in Messiah's kingdom: "And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together. And a little child shall lead them... They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah." (Is. 11:6-9). Premillennialists continue to misapply this and expect a literal change in the nature of the beasts. The key is found in the 9th verse: They (disciples of Messiah) shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain (Messiah's kingdom).

Some prophecies have a **dual application**, i.e., they had a fulfillment for that contemporary age and a remote or distant fulfillment when Messiah came. The clearest illustration of this is seen in Nathan's promise to David. "When thy days are fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, that shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son: if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men..." (II Sam. 7:12-14). In I Chronicles 22:6-11, David tells us that Solomon was the first object of this prediction. He says "the word of Jehovah came to" him saying Solomon "shall build a house for my name; and he shall be my son, and I will be his father..." In Acts 13:33-34, Paul tells us that Jesus was the ultimate recipient of "the holy and sure blessings of David." Numerous passages in the prophets we would interpret as mixed restoration (from Babylonian captivity) and Messianic promises. (See Isa. 35:1-10).

Comparing some of the fulfilled prophecies of the New Testament with their Old Testament counterparts, we can see a **typical use of prophecy**. "Joseph took the young child and his mother and departed into Egypt"... that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt did I call my son" (Matt. 2:14-15). The citation directs us to Hosea 11:1 which says, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." The context clearly applies that passage to ancient Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Matthew's use draws a comparison between the two events related to coming out of Egypt. No one reading Hosea would have the remotest idea it referred to the flight of Joseph's family, had not Matthew told us. Another similar application is found in Matthew 2:18. "A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children..." A look at Jeremiah 31:15 shows the verse initially had reference to the sorrow that came when the Babylonians ravaged Judah. The weeping in both cases was alike bitter.

Speaking of typical prophecy, we should briefly mention that great number of Old Testament people, institutions and events which the sacred writers said foreshadowed the Messianic Age. Paul wrote that the laws relating to meat, drink,

feast days, new moon and sabbath day were "a shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ's (Col. 2:16-17). The author of Hebrews describes the Mosaic ordinances as "a copy and shadow of the heavenly things..." (Heb. 8:5). Thus Melchizedek, the priest-king of Salem is typical of Christ, who is both king and high priest (Heb. 7:1-8:4). The Hebrews' deliverance from Egypt is typical of our salvation from sin (1 Cor. 10:1-6). Since these types and antitypes are generally considered as a separate order, we will pursue them no further.

### THE PURPOSES OF PROPHECY

At least five purposes of prophecy are easily discovered. By the very nature of his office, the prophet was a spokesman for God, **who revealed his will to the people**. Thus in Jeremiah 7:1-3, "The word that came to Jeremiah from Jehovah saying... Thus saith Jehovah... Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place." The details given included: "thoroughly execute justice;" "oppress not the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow;" "shed not innocent blood" and "walk not after other gods". Such prophesying made no prediction, but did make known the will of the Lord.

Prophecy gave the Hebrews **hope during the dark days of trial and tribulation**. When the Babylonian hordes were pressing the battle against Judah and the prospect of national collapse was imminent, Jeremiah comforted them with his predictions. "I will render unto Babylon and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea all their evil that they have done in Zion in your sight, saith Jehovah" (Jer. 51:24). "Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise again because of the evil that I will bring upon her... (Jer. 51:64). Though the nation would be taken into captivity, he promised, "thus saith Jehovah, After seventy years are accomplished for Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good work toward you, in causing you to return to this place"... home (Jer. 29:10). Of course we offer but a sampling.

The prophets **pointed God's people toward his coming Messiah and his kingdom**. More than 300 details of the glorious reign were given by those men of God. Isaiah wrote, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even forever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this" (Is. 9:6-7). "As the angel told John, the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10).

The ancient prophecies fulfilled in Christ's life and death provided convincing evidence that he was truly the Son of God come down from heaven. To the two disciples traveling to Emmaus, he said "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:25-27). Over and over again the Apostles appealed to the prophecies to establish Christ's claims. Peter said to Cornelius, "To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name everyone that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43).

Even today, the prophecies read and examined, will **create faith in the honest heart**. John concludes his life of Christ saying, "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God..." (John 20:30-31). Jehovah challenged the idolaters in Isaiah's day "...who hath showed this from ancient times; who hath declared it of old? Have not I, Jehovah? And there is no God else besides me..." (Is. 45:21). Fulfilled prophecy demands an omniscient God as its author.

### SOME RULES FOR INTERPRETING PROPHECY

- A. It is essential to understand the historical background of the prophet and his message.
- B. You will need to ascertain the meaning and significance of geographical references, proper names and events, plants and animals.
- C. Since all prophecy is not predictive, determine if the passage under consideration is didactic or predictive.

- D. If the scripture under consideration is predictive, has it already been fulfilled? Is its threat or promise conditional?
- E. Should an inspired New Testament speaker or writer declare that a given prophecy has been fulfilled in a specific way, that settles the matter.
- F. Search to see if the subject being studied is treated elsewhere in Scripture. If so, a comparative study is imperative. G. Be careful to keep the context in mind. Remember the flow of the passage which often transcends chapter and verse divisions.
- H. In studying the prophets be aware that some elements will be brief and temporary in their application.
- I. To properly understand the prophets, pay special attention to their poetic style which is highly figurative and full of metaphorical and symbolic expressions.
- J. The prophets do not generally observe our Western system of chronological arrangement. Their writings are arranged by subject rather than time sequence.
- K. Some prophecies have dual meanings and refer to different events--one near, the other in the distant future; the one temporal, the other spiritual.
- L. Predictions of blessings or judgments are often conditional and may or may not be fulfilled depending upon the response of the recipients. (Jer. 18:7-8) notes, "... if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them."

### **SOME EXAMPLES OF PROPHECIES ABOUT CITIES AND NATIONS**

Among the most remarkable of the many prophecies are those relating to the great cities and nations of antiquity. Space will only allow us to consider a few examples. We first notice God's predictions about the great Phoenician city of Tyre. Ezekiel, God's prophet of the Babylonian exile, wrote:

"Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold I am against thee, O Tyre, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth its waves to come up. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyre, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her a bare rock. She shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea... For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will bring upon Tyre Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, from the north with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and a company, and much people. He shall slay with the sword thy daughters in the field; and he shall make forts against thee, and raise up the buckler against thee. And he shall set his battering engines against thy walls, and with his axes he shall break down thy towers. ... And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise; and they shall break down thy walls and destroy thy pleasant houses; and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water. ... And I will make thee a bare rock; thou shalt be a place for the spreading of nets; thou shalt be built no more: for I Jehovah have spoken it, saith the Lord Jehovah (Ezek. 26:3-14).

Careful examination reveals the following particulars in Ezekiel's prediction:

- A. Nebuchadnezzar would destroy mainland Tyre (vs. 8).
- B. Many nations would participate in her final destruction (vs. 3).
- C. She would be left as a bare rock (vs. 4).
- D. Fishermen would spread their nets upon her site (vs. 5).
- E. The debris of the ruined mainland city would be cast into the water (vs. 12).
- F. She would be built no more (vs. 14).
- G. Tyre would never be found again (vs. 21).<sup>5</sup>

"If Ezekiel had looked at Tyre in his day and had made these seven predictions in human wisdom, there would have been only one chance in 75,000,000 of their all coming true."<sup>6</sup> It is a matter of historical record that all of Ezekiel's predictions were fulfilled as spoken.

Nebuchadnezzar attacked Tyre within three years of Ezekiel's writing. After a thirteen year siege, the Tyrians submitted. The bulk of her citizens fled to an island some half mile from the coast. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed mainland Tyre. The

island city remained for several generations. Alexander the Great called upon the Tyrians to surrender to him in 333. When they refused to do so, his troops demolished the ruins of mainland Tyre and with the debris built a causeway some 200 feet wide out to the island. Following a bitter battle the island fortress fell. The Greeks laid it to the ground. Although the city experienced numerous revivals over the centuries, she finally was ruined by the Moslems in 1291 and remains in that condition today. The site of the former commercial hub of the Mediterranean world is now a fishing village where the fishermen spread their nets.

## BABYLON

Late in the eighth century B.C., Isaiah wrote: "And Babylon... shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there. But wild beasts of the desert shall be there..." (Is. 13:19-21).

"I will also make it a possession for the porcupine, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith Jehovah of hosts" (Is. 14:23).

The following particulars are noted in this remarkable prediction:

- A. The world's greatest city would become like Sodom and Gomorrah (13:19).
- B. It would never again be inhabited (13:20).
- C. Arabs would not pitch their tents there (13:20).
- D. Shepherds would not frequent the locale (13:20).
- E. Wild creatures of the desert would inhabit the ruins (13:21).
- F. It would be covered with swampy marshes (14:23).

Babylon's massive walls stretched 14 miles in each direction and encompassed some 196 square miles. Its double walls were surrounded by a moat of 30 feet wide. The outer walls towered 311 feet high and were 87 feet thick. Its 100 gates were of solid brass. The Euphrates flowed under the walls. It was believed to be invincible. But in 538 the Persians diverted the Euphrates and marched their troops under these impregnable walls. The overconfident defenders were engaged in a drunken orgy and had left the inner gates unguarded. The city fell in a night without a struggle. After a lengthy period of decline and decay it was finally abandoned in the Seleucid period, 300-100 B.C. Strabo the Roman traveler visited the site in the reign of Augustus (27 B.C.-14 A.D.) and observed, "the great city has become a desert." Thus it remains to this day. The interested student would be profited by reading the article on present-day Babylon in **Evidence That Demands A Verdict**, pp. 314-320.

## MESSIAH

No study of fulfilled prophecy would be complete without a discussion of some of the great Messianic prophecies.

Perhaps the most spectacular of the Messianic predictions is Isaiah's spoken to King Ahaz in 734 B.C. "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Is. 7:14). No less an authority than Matthew details the fulfillment of this remarkable promise. After recording the words of the angel to Joseph, revealing the Holy Spirit as the cause and occasion of Mary's pregnancy, he adds: "And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for it is he that shall save his people from their sins. Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us" (Matt. 1:21-23).

Luke, himself a medical doctor, verifies in his record the unique circumstances of our Lord's virgin conception (See Luke 1:26-36).

Micah the Morashtite wrote, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, which are little among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting. Therefore

will he give them up, until the time that she who travaileth hath brought forth... And he shall stand, and shall feed his flock in the strength of Jehovah... he shall be great unto the ends of the earth. And this man shall be our peace" (Mic. 5:2-5a).

In this prophecy of Micah we see the following details:

- A. Messiah's place of nativity -- Bethlehem (vs. 2a).
- B. That Messiah would be a ruler in Israel (vs. 2b).
- C. He would be born of a woman (vs. 3).
- D. The Messiah would be a male (vs. 4).
- E. His reign would be universal (vs. 4).
- F. He would be a king of peace (vs. 5).

The fulfillment of this remarkable description of Messiah's birth and ministry is common knowledge to every Bible student.

Space fails us to consider the spectacular predictions of Isaiah 52:11 - 53:12 where Christ's suffering, death and victory are vividly portrayed. Also we would cite the eager student to the 22nd Psalm, where his death on the cross is foretold in great detail.

May the few examples we have reviewed serve to stir the appetites of our readers for a more extended study. Hopefully the background information and guidelines for interpretation will be helpful in properly discerning the meanings.

We should remember the words of Peter: "Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you... Even angels long to look into these things" (1 Pet. 1:10-12 NIV).

Surely this should inspire us to eagerly search the Scriptures and especially the prophets for the benefit of our own souls.

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#### FOOTNOTES

1. J. Barton Payne, **Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy**, p. 13.
2. Patrick Fairbairn, **Imperial Bible Encyclopedia** Vol. 5, p. 302.
3. **Ibid.**
4. Bernard Ramm, **Protestant Biblical Interpretation**, pp. 227-232.
5. Josh McDowell, **Evidence That Demands A Verdict**, p. 285.
6. **Ibid.**
7. **Ibid**, p. 317.

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## CHRIST AND THE TRUTH

To a world enslaved to sin, Jesus proclaimed, "And ye shall know *the truth* and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). To a world awash in error, Jesus announced, "I am the way and *the truth*, and the life" (John 14:6). In contrast with the world religions built on deceptive myths and fables, Christianity is built on God's Word, which her founder said "is truth" (John 17:17).

Jehovah is the God of truth (Deut. 32:4 KJV). Jesus is not only God's Son, he himself is the very essence of truth, the fountain-head of truth (John 14:6). He is the standard by which all moral and spiritual questions are to be judged. His church is "the pillar and ground of truth" (I Tim. 3:15). This means that the purpose of the church is to uphold and support truth.

Democracy offers us personal freedom, political freedom, economic freedom, but Jesus is the source of all vital truth. He makes us free indeed (John 8:36). He gives us freedom from error, sin, guilt and condemnation.

The truth delivered by Jesus will judge all people when we stand before Him to give account of our conduct (Acts 17:31; John 12: 48).

All sacred truth is summed up in Christ. He embodied it, he lived it before us. He revealed it to us (Heb. 1:2) and had it recorded for all generations yet to be born (John 16:12-13). His words of truth will never pass away (Matt. 24:35).

Christianity is the way of truth (II Pet. 2:2). The church's duty it to speak, to preach the truth in love (Eph. 4:15). As followers of Christ, we must love and obey the truth (II Thess. 2:10; 1:8). We are begotten spiritually by the word of truth (Jas. 1:18). We must live it out in our daily lives (II John 4). Our worship, to be acceptable, must be "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). As his servants, we must preach the truth of his gospel to every creature, that they might have the opportunity to believe, be baptized and be saved (Mark 16:15-16)

We worship the God of truth through Jesus, the embodiment of truth. We study, believe and obey his truth. All who love Jesus will love his truth which can only be found in the book we call the Bible.

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## IS TRUTH RELATIVE OR ABSOLUTE?

Contemporary thinking says, "What is right depends on the situation." Many believe "there is no body of eternal unchanging truth;" that "truth is relative and may vary from group to group or from time to time, having no objective standard." Is this right or wrong?

There are two standards of morality; man's and God's. History demonstrates that man's morality is governed by a changing code of relative values. This is because every code of human law falls short of absolute justice and equity. Whatever human intelligence designs or regulates must fall into the class of relative values. No human authority can tell us how to act so that the greatest good will come to the race.

God's laws are absolutely perfect. As creator of all, He knows what is best for the whole of mankind. Being all wise, He knows without experimentation what will work for the best. He sees the end from the beginning. His laws are not relative. They need no revising.

God has two kinds of laws. Natural laws and spiritual, moral laws. The laws of nature are absolute, and unchanging. The law of gravity is as true now as in the beginning, in America as in China. God's spiritual laws are as absolute and unchanging as the laws of nature. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35). "The word of the Lord abideth forever" (I Pet. 1:24-25). "Every scripture inspired of God is profitable for teaching for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (II Tim. 3:16-17). "The faith... was once for all (times) delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). God's "word is truth" (John 17:17). His word is final and complete. We are warned, "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee and thou be found a liar" (Prov. 30:6).

Today, conduct once considered wrong is excused. Every one and everything is blamed except the offender. This is the new morality. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man but the ends thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12). God's absolute standard of right and wrong must be accepted if our nation survives

All lying is wrong (Rev. 21:8). Stealing is wrong (Eph. 4:28). Sexual relations out of marriage are wrong (Heb. 13:4). Taking God's name in vain is sin (Ex. 20:7). Modern morality is really a system of immorality.

You ask, "How can I know right and wrong?" God's voice is the absolute authority. Jesus is the example of perfection. The Bible is the absolute Code of Truth. Read it. Believe it. Obey it. Be Saved!

## THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF CHRIST

Jesus asked his contemporaries, "What think ye of the Christ? Whose son is he? (Matt. 22:42). The Christian religion is built upon the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (Matt. 16:18); that he was born, not as you or I, but of a virgin, by the power of God, without a human father. Enemies of Christ have worked unceasingly to discredit this foundation doctrine. The most shocking fact is that many Protestant theologians and ministers are carrying Satan's flag. For example, this statement by Martin Rist, one-time professor at Denver's Iliff School of Theology, "Belief in the Virgin Birth is now untenable."<sup>1</sup> The Very Rev. James A. Pike, late Protestant Episcopal bishop of California, said, "The Virgin Birth is a myth."<sup>2</sup>

Are we who believe Jesus was the virgin born Son of God, justified in our faith? Let us examine the facts to see why we believe:

I. We look first to the Old Testament prophecies of the incarnation of Jesus and the virgin birth. These prophecies are windows through which God admits light on future events.

God said to Satan, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed, and he shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). The Lord here promises that the seed of, i.e., the child of the woman, shall destroy the devil, though he shall suffer at Satan's hands before his victory. Note that he says, **the seed of the woman**; nothing is said of the man! As the woman was first to sin, a woman also brought salvation into the world. Paul later wrote, that, "When the fullness of time came, God sent forth his son, born of a woman..." (Gal. 4:4).

Seven hundred years before the birth of Jesus, the Messianic prophet wrote, "Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold a **virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.**" Which means God with us (Is. 7:14). By giving the world a virgin born messiah, God eliminated the possibility that a counterfeit messiah could establish himself. Only a virgin born man would be able to lay claim to this office. Matthew quotes this verse as confirmation of his record of the birth of Christ (Matt. 1:22-23).

Isaiah wrote, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom..." (Is. 9:6-7). The king would be human, a child born of the lineage of David, yet he would be divine because he was called Mighty God and Everlasting Father.

Micah foretold a ruler in Israel whose goings forth, have been from of old, from everlasting (Mic. 5:2). Long before the babe was born, the Lord who came to live in that body had executed his work as the Word of God.

II. Now we turn to the New Testament to hear the testimony of those witnesses.

Luke tells us "the angel Gabriel was sent from God... to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph....and the angel said unto her. "Fear not Mary; for thou hast found favor with God. And behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High....And Mary said unto the angel, How shall this be, **seeing I know not a man?** And the angel answered and said unto her, **the Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall over shadow thee: wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God**" (Luke 1:26-38). Here Mary testifies that she was a virgin. The angel also foretold the sex of the child. Dr. D.M. Blair of the Medical Facility of the University of London observed that "The only circumstantial account of the virgin birth of our Lord is found in the one Gospel written by a medical man."<sup>3</sup> Luke's record is that of a physician and historian who had traced all things accurately from the beginning (Luke. 1:1-3). The historicity of his writings has been confirmed



Matthew records "Now the birth of Jesus was on this wise: When his mother, Mary, had been betrothed to Joseph, **before** they came together she was found with child of the Holy Spirit...." When Joseph was about to put her away privily....an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream saying, Joseph thou Son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit...and Joseph....did as the...Lord commanded him, and took unto him his wife and **knew her not till she brought forth a son**" (Matt. 1:18-25). Christ's genealogy in (Matt. 1:1-16) traces all the fathers who begat the sons in the family tree except in the case of Joseph. It is not said that Joseph begat Jesus, but that he was born of Mary. The earthly father's name is omitted and the mother's substituted.

Jesus himself taught that he was the "true bread of life **sent down from heaven**" (John 6:32-38) and in numerous cases he asserted that he was divine and no mere man!

Paul wrote, that God declared Christ to be the **Son of God** with power (Rom. 1:4) and again that, "God was manifested in the flesh...." (I Tim. 3:16 KJV). There is no dispute about the language used to declare the doctrine; it is either true or false. A chain is no stronger than its weakest link. If the Scriptures are untrustworthy in the matter of the virgin birth, we cannot trust them anywhere.

The following Christian leaders testify in writings still extant, that the church of the second century believed in the virgin birth. Aristides, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Justin Martyr and Ignatius. Ignatius, leader of the church in Antioch of Syria, died in 117 A.D. He wrote that they were "fully persuaded as touching our Lord, that He was truly of the race of David according to the flesh, but Son of God by the Divine Will and power, truly born of a virgin and baptized by John..." (**Letter to Smyrna** 1:1-20).

III. Things Dependent upon the Virgin Birth: The skeptical liberal who denies the virgin birth glibly assures us that this does not weaken the position of the Christian Faith. It is significant that the atheist who rejects the scriptural account of the virgin birth views his denial as a total overthrow of Christ's claims to deity. Paul said, by their fair words and smooth speech they deceive the hearts of the innocent (Rom. 16:18). Consider the following:

Jesus is either divine as pictured in the Bible or else he was the biggest imposter the world has ever seen. If he were born naturally as the liberals say, then we should apologize to the Jews and admit they were right when they accused him of blasphemy for making himself equal with God (John 5:18; 10:33)!

His Lordship: Time and again Jesus is referred to us Lord, yet the word **Lord** in both the Old and New Testament has to do with "The Supreme Being, the God of the Universe." If he were human born, he cannot be Lord. Grant his deity and all difficulties with the virgin birth disappear. In a person so supernatural, the virgin birth is the very way one would expect him to enter our world.

The Saviorhood of Jesus. His name means he shall save his people from their sins (Matt. 1:21). **No mere man** can save himself, much less anyone else, because he is also caught in the same quick sand of sin. Jesus can save us because he is divine. He has all the power of God at his disposal and he was sinless (Matt. 28:18; I Pet. 2:22). But this too, demands his virgin birth.

The Bodily Resurrection: Has any ordinary man ever been raised from the dead never to die again? Jesus was, but he was no ordinary man. He was God in the flesh, virgin born. "He who violently wrenches the narratives of the virgin birth from the New Testament in order to be consistent, must also uniformly expunge all other miracles and with them the Atoning death, the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the present mediatorial office of our Lord..."<sup>4</sup>

The second coming of Jesus cannot be if he were only human born. For then he surely died and today his dust is mingled with the soil of Palestine. But the virgin born, divine man has the power to come again.

If he is but a human, born of an earthly father, then he could not atone for our sins by his death on the cross.

If Christ is not the Word of God come down to earth, born of the Virgin Mary, then we have no hope for a resurrection and life after this life.

If Jesus was not virgin born, then either he was the production of pre-marital fornication on the part of Joseph and Mary, or the illegitimate son of some unknown father:

To reject the virgin birth as unscientific because it is so obviously a miracle would force us to also reject the whole Bible, God and Christ! All stand or fall together, miraculous!

The man who cannot accept the supernatural birth of Christ will find it virtually impossible to be a soul-winner for the Lord. He may quote Jesus and eulogize him, but he can never be zealous to present him to the world as the Apostles did. He cannot answer the questions that sinners ask.

IV. "The men who deny the virgin birth, who do so that they may the more easily be delivered from carrying the baggage of the miraculous, who shift the fatherhood of Jesus from the eternal God to the some sinful man are paying a dear price for their jaunty endeavor to accommodate the supernaturalism of Christianity to the poverty-smitten weakness of their own faith, and the noisy clamor of an unbelieving, spiritually ignorant and scoffing world."<sup>5</sup> The pre-existent Christ lived from the beginning with the Father. He himself was the great Creator (John 1:1-3) and is the great Sustainer of all things (Col. 1:17). Christ, the Creator, through the virgin birth, became flesh and took the form of a created being (John 1:14). Through his supernatural birth Christ (who is God) became man without ceasing to be God. Jehovah brought Eve into the world from the body of a man without a mother. He brought Jesus into the world from a woman without a human father. Even as the Lord's divine nature had no mother, so his human nature had no father.

Not one shred of evidence has been brought to light, either out of the earth or from the monuments or from the shelves of old libraries to disprove this doctrine. Not one single fact has been discovered by telescope or by the microscope, or the spectroscope, or any other instrument of science: not one scintilla of evidence has been found either in heavens above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth, to invalidate the biblical teaching of the virgin birth of Christ. It is true that no one else has been born in such a miraculous manner, but remember there has never been another Christ! There is nothing incredible in a supernatural being coming into the world in a supernatural way.

The liberals are like Hymenaeus and Alexander they have made shipwreck concerning the faith and they overthrow the faith of some (I Tim. 1:20). Those who still believe in God and the Bible should rise up in holy indignation and drive them out of their sanctuaries. If men wish to be atheists, let them leave the churches to be so!

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#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Denver Post, (Feb. 4, 1961)

<sup>2</sup> Time magazine, (Feb. 24, 1961)

<sup>3</sup> Smith, Wilbur, *The Supernaturalness of Christ* Boston, A.D. Wilde Co. 1954 p. 102

<sup>4</sup> Kelly, Dr. H.A. as quoted in Wilbur Smith, op cited, p. 101

<sup>5</sup> Haldeman, I. M. as quoted in *Seven Questions in Dispute*, Wm. J. Bryan, Revell, 1924

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## **JESUS IS THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD**

### **AND THE BIBLE IS GOD'S WORD**

John wrote his gospel that we "may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing (we) may have life in his name" (John 20:31). Christianity is founded upon the fact of Jesus' divine nature. The truth which Peter confessed at Caesarea Philippi must be affirmed by every disciple (Matt. 16:16; Rom. 10:9). We are not without evidence for our faith in the Lord.

Jesus' birth marks his divinity. The prophet predicted the virgin birth 700 years before the fact (Is. 7:14). Luke, a medical doctor, explains the details of how Mary conceived by the power of the Most High (Luke 1:30-35). Micah had foretold the city of his birth (Mic. 5:2-5).

His sinless life places Jesus in a unique category among men. Those who knew him best affirmed that he "did no sin," neither was guile found in his mouth" (I Pet. 2:22). Jesus openly challenged his enemies, "which of you convicteth me of sin?" (John 8:46). Pilate, his judge, confessed, "I find no crime in this man" (John 18:38).

Only a divine person could have done the works Jesus did. Nicodemus rightly concluded "no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him" (John 3:2). He raised the dead, walked on the water, changed water to wine, fed five thousand with a boy's sack lunch and had twelve times as much left as he started with. He cured all manner of diseases and cast out demons. His miracles were done in the presence of intelligent witnesses. They were done in different localities and circumstances which set them apart from the pseudo-miracles of our day. Even his enemies did not deny the reality of his miracles although they attributed his power to Beelzebub (Matt. 12:22-24). Would the Father have granted such power to an imposter?

His resurrection from the dead on the third day proves beyond doubt his deity. He was obviously dead when they took him from the cross. Had not the crucifixion done the job, the thrust of the Roman spear into his side would surely have ended his life. Witnesses handled his body, preparing it for burial. They left him in a tomb sealed and guarded by Roman soldiers. On the third day, the tomb was found open and the body gone.

It is an indisputable fact that the body was missing. The possibilities to explain the fact are these: (a) Either his friends took it; (b) His enemies took it or, (c) God took it.

His friends could not have taken his body. They were terrorized and fled from the angry mob and the Roman soldiers. The tomb was securely guarded by Pilate's troops who would pay with their lives if they let the body be taken (Matt 27:65-66). The enemies would not have taken the body. That was the last thing they wanted to do. They wanted his body dead in the tomb on the third day to disprove his claim and to dissuade the disciples from believing on him. They sealed the tomb and called for a guard to make sure the body stayed there. Had they stolen it they would have brought it forth as evidence when the word began to spread that he was risen. They smarted under the pointed preaching of the Apostles: "Ye by the hands of lawless men did crucify and slay (him): whom God raised up..." (Acts 2:23-24). But they could not produce the body to destroy their testimony. Hence we are left with the conclusion that God took him by raising him from the dead.

David, "being ...a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his loins he would set one upon his throne: he foreseeing this spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left unto Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption" (Acts 2:30-31). Christ himself promised repeatedly that he would "be killed, and the third day be raised up" (Matt. 16:21).

The credibility of the resurrection is demonstrated by the change effected in the lives of the Apostles. They risked their

all, suffering persecution, prison, and death for their belief in the resurrection of Jesus. They were not fanatics or wild men. They had seen him "alive after his passion by many proofs appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). They had touched his resurrected body (John 20:26-29). Eyewitnesses numbering more than five hundred could verify their report (I Cor. 15:4-8). Truly Christ "was declared to be the Son of God with power...by the resurrection from the dead..." (Rom. 1:4).

### **The Bible Is A Supernatural Book**

There is sufficient evidence to prove that the Bible is a supernatural book. The writers claim that God gave them their message. David wrote "The Spirit of Jehovah spoke to me and his word was upon my tongue" (II Sam. 23:2). Peter said that "men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Pet. 1:21). Paul wrote that "Every scripture is inspired by God, and profitable" (II Tim. 3:16 footnote).

Jesus said "the scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). The inerrancy of the Bible has been confirmed through the ages. Proud skeptics have questioned the Bible's reliability in hundreds of cases, only to see their objections smashed, one by one. Not one bonafide error has been established. The unity and harmony of its sixty-six books, written by forty authors over 1600 years and on three different continents demand inspiration and a divine mind to have guided its production. The brevity of its record is a mark of its inspiration. The spiritual history of the world is summed up in its 1300 pages. The life of humanity's greatest leader is told in 130 pages. The origin of the cosmos, all life forms, man, the family, sin and religion are reported in four pages. No human production has told so much in so few words.

The impartiality of the Scripture record demands a heavenly author. What book written by human wisdom tells the weaknesses and failures of its heroes? Yet the Bible spares none: be it Abraham, Moses, David or Peter.

The scientific foreknowledge of Scripture is impressive. Where did Isaiah get the wisdom to write in 700 B.C., "he sitteth above the circle of the earth?" (Is. 40:22). How did the author of Job know that God "stretched out the north over empty space, and hangeth the earth upon nothing?" (Job 26:7). How did Paul know in the first century that "all flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one flesh of man, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and still another flesh of fishes?" (I Cor. 15:39).

The remarkable power of the Bible to reform and elevate men and nations is proof of its heavenly origin. No other book has had such a positive and constructive influence upon humanity.

The amazing prophecies of the Bible proclaim its divine nature. Hundreds of specific predictions about men and nations have been fulfilled in history. The prophetic history of the Jews is set forth in Deuteronomy 28. Christ's life and suffering were vividly foretold in Isaiah 53, 700 years before the fact. Babylon's fate was predicted by Jeremiah in his 50th and 51st chapters. Ezekiel prophesied the destruction of Tyre in chapter 27-28. The establishment of God's spiritual kingdom, the church, was foretold in prophecy. That it would be established in the days of the Roman Empire was declared by Daniel 2:36-45. It would originate in Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:2-4). It would be accompanied by an outpouring of the Holy Spirit with supernatural manifestations was said by Joel in 2:28-32. These are only a small sampling of the hundreds of predictions made by Biblical writers and historically fulfilled. Since man is unable to successfully predict the future, we are driven to the conclusion that our Holy Book came from an omniscient God who knows the future as he does the present.

Peter exhorts us to be "ready always to give answer to every man that asketh (us) a reason concerning the hope that is in (us)" (I Pet. 3:15). To know something of these evidences of our faith will give us boldness and courage in setting forth our case. Moreover a study of the evidence will help us in building up (ourselves) in (our) most Holy faith (Jude 20).

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## THE DIVINITY OF JESUS

Jesus once ask his disciples, "Who do men say that the son of man is? And they said, some say John the Baptist; some Elijah; and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, **Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.** And Jesus answered and said unto Him, Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jonah; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and **upon this rock I will build my church.**" The Christian religion is founded upon the divinity of Jesus. It rests on the fact that he was not an ordinary man like you or me. Rather, he was a heavenly person. He was God, even as the Father and Holy Spirit are God. If it can be proven that Jesus was not a divine person, that he was merely a great man, then Christianity and all it stands for is of necessity a fraud and can be easily overthrown and destroyed. If Christ is not **God's Son in the full meaning of that term**, then the only bridge between man and God is destroyed--the only link between life and eternity is smashed, the only hope for sin cursed humanity sinks in the bottomless sea of despair. If Christ is not divine, we are of all creatures most pitiable. Knowing this, Satan and his henchmen have worked unceasingly through the ages to prove him an ordinary men, a created being! Some of Satan's most diabolical, yet diplomatic assistants, occupy august positions in our land.

Some are university professors who delight in destroying the faith of the young minds intrusted to them. They scoff at the Bible, it's teachings, the idea of God and the person of Jesus. There are men of science who leave their field of knowledge and seek to replace the Christian's belief in an all powerful Creator-God with the empty theory of evolution and a godless universe of mere matter. Many Protestant theological seminaries have willfully become tools in Satan's hand, indoctrinating young ministerial students with an infidelic idea that Jesus was simply a good moral man, a wise philosopher and a gifted teacher. They present him as merely a good man, born naturally as were we. They deny that he actually worked miracles. They insist that his disciples exaggerated the good he things he did. They say he was not quite perfect and died never to rise again. To them His death accomplished no more than President Lincoln's and His teachings must be revised to fit man's present educational level. All of this denial we reject as **atheism disguised as Christian theology!** Many of the historic Protestant churches have ministers who subscribe to this infidel creed. They are wolves in sheep's clothing! May God have mercy on the congregations which they minister.

Jesus stands unique in all the annals of human history because he is divine, the Son of the living God. **His birth marks his divinity.** Seven hundred years before he was born, the prophet Isaiah foretold, "The Lord himself will give you a sign; behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel" (Is. 7:14). Luke, the sacred historian, records the birth of Christ in these words, "the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee named Nazareth to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph..." "... the angel said, Fear not, Mary for thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shall bring forth a son and shall call his name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High...and Mary said unto the angel, How shall this be seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and power of the Highest shall over shadow thee: therefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:26-35) Jesus was Immanuel which means **God with us!**

**His sinless life proved Jesus to be supernatural.** Peter bore witnesses of Jesus that "he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (I Pet. 2:21). His enemies stood speechless when Jesus challenged, "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" (John 8:46). Judas confessed he had betrayed innocent blood (Matt. 27:4). And Pilate said, "I find no fault in this man" (John 18:38). Where is another man of any era, race or culture **who did no sin?**

**His manner of teaching and the message he delivered revealed his divinity.** In his great Sermon on the Mount, Jesus challenged their assumptions about the old Law of Moses and its code of conduct. He boldly declared "but I say unto you." In some cases his message was the opposite of Moses' Law! (Matt. 5:38-39). Matthew comments inclosing the record, "the people were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them, as one having authority" (Matt. 7:28-29). His

enemies sent a spy who returned awed, saying, "Never a man so spake" (John 7:46). Having completed his mission, Jesus claimed, "**all authority** has been given unto me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18). Thus we revere him as our Lord (Rom. 10:9).

**Jesus claimed divinity.** His enemies challenged him because he called God his own Father making himself equal with God. (John 5:18)

**Only a divine person could do the works that Jesus did.** Nicodemus confessed "no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him" (John 3:2). He changed water to wine, fed 5,000 with only a handful of food, he stilled the tempest, he walked on the water, he healed the sick, gave sight to the blind and raised the dead. Would "God have given such power to an imposter?"

**Many are the witnesses that testify Jesus was truly the Son of God.** John the Baptist bore witness that Jesus was the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29). God in heaven audibly spoke to Peter, James and John saying, "this is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased; hear ye him" (Matt. 17:5). The Apostles, after many months of living with him, confessed he was the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Even the soldier that participated in the crucifixion was forced to say, "Truly in this was the Son of God" (Matt. 27:54).

**When lifted up on the cross, the elements bore witness to His divinity.** "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour...and the veil of the temple was rent in two, from top to bottom and the earth did quake and the rocks were rent. And the tombs were opened and many bodies of the saints that had fallen asleep were raised and entered into the city and appeared to many" (Matt. 27:45-53). Never did another man die amid such remarkable happenings as did Jesus.

The overwhelming proof of **his majestic divinity was established by his resurrection from the dead.** "He was declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4). Paul told the wise philosophers of Athens that God would judge the world by Jesus and He has given assurance unto all men "in that he hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). He was raised never to die again (I Tim. 6:16)!

**Jesus is divine God even as the Father and Holy Spirit are divine.** "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God (the Father) and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God and all things were made through him...and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father..." (John 1:1-2; 14). Paul wrote that before Jesus' earthly advent, He "existed on an equality with God" (Phil. 2:5) and that "in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the godhead bodily" (Col 2:9). This we believe, and by this we live. It is our hope in death. It is the reality of our eternal salvation. We must ever be prepared to defend the grand truth when His enemies deny it or try to diminish the meaning thereof.

Jesus is Divine! He left his heavenly home; came to this low land of sin and sorrow; lived, taught, suffered and died that our sins might be forgiven (I Cor. 15:3). God raised Him from the dead and highly exalted him that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow..." and that every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord" (Phil 2:9-11) You must now decide "What shall I do with Jesus?"

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## THE BURIAL AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS

Had the story of Jesus ended on the cross we Christians would be of all men most pitiable. A dead Christ could save no one. We live rejoicing and face death with confidence and optimism because not only did Christ die for our sins, "he was buried... and...raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (I Cor. 15:3-4).

### The Burial

By the hands of lawless men the Jews did crucify and slay Jehovah's Son. The sun had begun its decline when the darkness rolled away to reveal the foul deed they had done. Those unctuous hypocrites who had murdered the innocent Savior were concerned lest the forthcoming Sabbath day be compromised by corpses hanging on the three crosses (John 19:31). They did not break the Master's legs as they did the thieves', but "one of the soldiers with a spear, pierced his side. And straightway there came out blood and water." John, the beloved Apostle, was eyewitness to this final act of violence (John 19:33-35). Jesus was dead already, but the spear pierced his heart and from the wound flowed blood and water. No one could deny the fact of his death.

The corpse was claimed by an unlikely person. Joseph of Arimathea was "a councillor of honorable estate," i.e., he was a member of the great Sanhedrian council that governed the religious affairs of the nation (Mark 14:43). Being a good and righteous man, he had not consented to the foul deed of his fellow Sanhedrists (Luke 23:50-51). With others of the faithful remnant, he was looking for the kingdom of God. Joseph had been impressed with Jesus' teaching but had not openly committed himself for fear of the Jews (John 19:38). Seeing the dastardly thing his brethren had done made Joseph ashamed that he had not taken his stand earlier. At great risk to himself, he boldly went to Pilate and requested permission to give the Master a proper burial. The Romans would have left the bodies impaled until devoured by beasts and birds of prey. The murderous Jews would have cast them into a pauper's grave. Granted his request by the Roman governor, Joseph took the lifeless body from the cross and wrapped it in a large linen cloth bought for that purpose (Mark 15:46).

Near the site of the crucifixion there was a garden containing a tomb, hewn out of stone. There they carried the body of Jesus. Nicodemus, a fellow officer of the Sanhedrin, met the funeral party at the tomb, bringing a hundred pounds (1200 ounces by Roman measurement) of myrrh and aloe for use in preparing the body for the grave (John 19:39). Roman pounds were twelve ounces. (1) He too, had been hesitant to publicly declare his allegiance to the Lord, but now he stepped forward to do what he could. The Jews did not embalm as did the Egyptians, or as we do today. Rather they wrapped the body in swathes of cloth laced with aromatic spices. In the beautiful forty-fifth Psalm, which the writer of Hebrews declared to be messianic, the writer says, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.... All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes and cassia..." (Ps. 45:6-8; Heb. 1:8). Likely they took the large cloth purchased by Joseph, tore it into strips and wrapped each member of the body, the head being wrapped in a separate napkin according to the burial custom of the Hebrews (John 19:40; 20:6-7).

The burial tomb was large enough for a man to stand inside (John 20:6). The body would have been laid on a ledge left projecting from the wall. Such tombs may yet be seen in the Holy Land. Isaiah had said of Messiah, "They made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death" (Is. 53:9). Though they crucified him with malefactors, he was buried as a prince. It was a new tomb where no dead body had yet been laid (John 19:41). The sacrifice for man's sin must not be defiled by ceremonial uncleanness (Lev. 22:4).

The sun was now near the horizon, the Sabbath would begin at 6:00 p.m. Even though their task was uncompleted, the mourning friends rolled the great stone against the door of the tomb and made their way home for the Sabbath rest.

## The Impossible Assignment

On the Sabbath day following, the chief priests and the Pharisees approached Pilate with a request to secure the body of Jesus lest it be stolen by his disciples (Matt. 27:62-65). They remembered with great anxiety his promise to rise again after three days. With the governor's permission they sealed the stone covering the entrance and posted a guard of soldiers (Matt. 27:63-67). The seal may possibly have involved stretching cords across the great stone and sealing them with wax imprinted with the governor's signet. Any disturbance would break the seal and be noticed (See Dan. 6:17). In this we see the providence of God in using his enemies to seal and watch the tomb so that it would be impossible to say that his disciples had stolen the body. Had the Lord's followers sealed and guarded the tomb, it would have left the event of his resurrection open to the suspicion of fraud.

"Pilate said unto them, ye have a guard, make it as sure as ye can" (Matt. 27:65). There are two ways of understanding his words: 1). An imperative: Do everything you can to make sure the body stays in the tomb," 2). Despairingly: "Make it as sure as you are able" given the spectacular events of his death and the miracles of his ministry. However we view the words, the assignment was impossible. The gates of Hades could not and would not prevail against him (Matt. 16:18). The divine promise to raise him had been made (Matt. 12:39-40). The proper time needed only to elapse and Heaven would fulfill its word.

## Three Days in The Tomb

Across the ages there has been confusion about the time involved in the Lord's entombment. This problem is seen in Matthew's record. "...and the third day he shall be raised up" (Matt. 20:19). "...as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. 12:40). He was crucified on Friday, the day of preparation for the great Sabbath day of the Passover (27:62). Death came sometime after the ninth hour (3:00 p.m.), when Jesus cried, "*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthan!*" (Matt. 27:46). He was buried before the Sabbath began at 6:00 (Luke 23:54). The body rested through the Sabbath but early on the morning of "the first day of the week," Mary Magdalene found the tomb open (John 20:1). Thus we can roughly calculate his entombment to have lasted: 1 hour on Friday, before 6:00 p.m.; 24 hours of the Sabbath; 12 hours or so on the first day; approximately 37 hours, in all.

Those who press for a literal interpretation of three days and three nights must find a way to have him in the grave seventy-two hours. D. R. Dungan in his fine textbook, *Hermeneutics*, observes, "If we take the **ordinals** among the Greeks, (first, second, third, etc.), they are always to be relied upon but if we have the indication in the use of **cardinals**, (one, two, three, etc.), we may feel sure that it is not as we would say it" (2) Albert Barnes notes that it was a maxim among the Jews that a part of a day was to be counted as a day in computing time. (3) Thus the Savior's prediction was that his death experience would be like that of Jonah's in the sea monster. The Jews evidently saw no contradiction in his prediction and the actual facts. Had there been a discrepancy, we can be sure they would have attacked his credibility the point; which they did not.

## The Empty Tomb

When Christ was laid in Joseph's tomb, nothing appeared more weak and doomed than the movement he had launched. The handful of disciples who were left were unlearned and ignorant men. They were discouraged and defeated. They had no base of power as the world views it. Their Master had died a most ignominious death and now lay enclosed in the tomb with millions who had died before him. The gates of Hades slammed shut when the great stone was rolled into its slot. Satan had won his most signal victory. All Hell rejoiced, the righteous wept.

"But early on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb and they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus" (Luke 24:1-3). Among the women who found the tomb opened were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James. Mary Magdalene immediately ran to Peter and John thinking the body had been stolen (John 20:1-2). Meanwhile, two angels appeared to the other women who lingered at the tomb, telling them, "He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said...go quickly, and tell his disciples..." (Matt. 28:7).



### **The Linen Clothes Lying**

Upon hearing the report of Mary Magdalene, Peter and John dashed away to see for themselves. John outran Peter and : "...stooping and looking in, he seeth the linen cloths lying," "...Simon Peter therefore also cometh, following him, and entered into the tomb; and he beholdeth the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, that was upon his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself..." (John 20:4-7). Lenski comments:

"What he sees is remarkable indeed: the linen bands (11:40) lying wholly undisturbed in their proper place with the body of Jesus gone out of them. "... This is the astounding phenomenon: "The linen bands lying. Nothing whatever had been done with them, they were merely lying. We are not to imagine that they had been unwound from the body as was done with the grave bands of Lazarus when he came to life. Neither had they been cut or stripped off in some other way. They lay just as they had been bound about the limbs and body, only the body was no longer in them, and thus the wrappings lay flat." (4)

Had robbers stolen the body they would have taken it with the bands in place. If his friends had taken it, they would not have taken time to unwrap it. Even had they done so, they would not have arranged the clothes as if they were around a corpse. This clearly is evidence of the strongest kind that Jesus simply passed out of his grave clothes with his resurrected body even as he entered into the locked room where the disciples were without having to open the door (John 20:19). That the cloth which covered his head was neatly "rolled up in a place by itself" (John 20:7) tells us that his removal was not the work of robbers. They would have tossed it aside in their haste. Christ or one of the angels evidently neatly rolled the cloth and laid it aside as a testimony of his resurrection.

While Mary Magdalene hurried back to tell Peter and John what she had seen, the other women entered the burial chamber and beheld two men in "dazzling apparel" (Luke 24:4). Later, Mary returned and saw "two angels in white, sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain" (John 20:11-12). This scene reminds us of the cherubim that adorned the mercy seat in the temple (Ex. 25:18-20). It was on the old mercy seat between the cherubim that the blood of the atonement was sprinkled each year (Lev. 16:14-16). Now the bier on which our Lord's crucified body was laid is our mercy seat. It speaks of forgiveness of sins and hope for life that is eternal.

### **They Disbelieved**

When the women "told these things unto the Apostles...these words appeared in their sight as idle talk; and they disbelieved" (Luke 25:11). Mark tells us that they disbelieved Mary Magdalene's testimony as well as that of the two disciples who saw him on the way to Emmaus. "And afterward he was manifested unto the eleven themselves as they sat at meat; and he upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them that had seen him after he was risen" (Mark 16:14).

It seems amazing to us that the Apostles found it so hard to believe in the face of the repeated manifestations of the risen Savior and the testimony of the peers who saw him. This however, is a vital part of the record and proof of his resurrection. This shows us conclusively that they had not conspired to concoct a story about Jesus being raised from the dead. "They were not convinced until it was impossible for them to deny it." (5)

In this they were no different than are we moderns. Being finally persuaded, they could not help but preach it to every creature, no matter the personal risk involved

### **The Power of the Resurrection**

Paul wrote, "Yea verily and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord... that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings becoming conformed unto his death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Phil. 3:8-10). The resurrection is truly one of the foundation pillars of Christianity.

## The Importance of the Resurrection

To the Corinthians, Paul emphasized the importance the resurrection. He reasoned, "If Christ hath not been raised" (1) Our preaching is vain; (2) Your faith in vain; (3) The Apostles are found false witnesses; (4) We are yet in our sins; (5) The dead have eternally perished; (6) We are of all men most pitiable, if Christ has not been raised (I Cor. 15:12-19).

## The Proof of the Resurrection

But Christ has been raised from the dead, and this is no fond wish or hope. There is proof! Luke states in Acts 1:1-3 that "he also showed himself alive...by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days..." The truth of Jesus' resurrection is substantiated by many witnesses, who testified that they saw him alive after his death! They were assured it was him!

\* On Sunday morning Mary Magdalene and another Mary went to the tomb. There was an earthquake and an angel of the Lord rolled back the stone door and showed them an empty grave. As they returned to tell the other disciples, Jesus met them saying, "all hail, and they came and took hold of his feet and worshiped him" (Matt. 28:1-10).

\* Later Jesus appeared unto Mary Magdalene alone at the sepulcher on the resurrection morning. He talked with her and she told the disciples, "I have seen the Lord, and that he had said these thing unto her" (John 20:11-18).

\* He appeared to Peter the afternoon of resurrection day (I Cor. 15:5; Luke 24:34) and ...

\* To the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-15), and they testified, "the Lord is risen... and they rehearsed the things that happened in the way, and how he was known of them in the breaking of the bread"

\* He appeared then to all the Apostles, save Thomas, on the resurrection evening, "Jesus came and stood in the midst and saith unto them, Peace be unto you... he showed them his hands and his side..." They testified, "We have seen the Lord" (20:19-25).

\* A week later he again appeared to the eleven Apostles. Thomas, who had doubted the story of the others was told, "reach hither thy finger and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand and put it into my side..." Thomas answered and said, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:26).

\* A few days afterward, Jesus appeared to several of the Apostles as they were fishing at the Sea of Galilee. He caused them to have a great catch of fish. He then invited them to share breakfast with him. "And none of the disciples durst inquire of him, Who art thou? Knowing it was the Lord" (John 21:1-23).

\* He appeared to above five hundred disciples at once (I Cor 15:6), and to the Apostles on an appointed mountain in Galilee. "And when they saw him, they worshiped him, but some doubted" (Matt. 28:16-20).

\* James saw him alive (I Cor. 15:7).

\* He then led his Apostles from Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives and blessed them and ascended into the heavens in their sight (Luke 24:50).

\* Saul of Tarsus, the persecutor of Christians, met the risen Christ face to face on the road to Damascus (Acts 22:6-9,14). The change in Saul and his work as the Apostle Paul established his claim to have seen the risen Lord.

These witnesses give us empirical evidence that should satisfy even the most skeptical soul.

\* They saw him to be the same man they had followed .

\* They saw him eat food as he had before.

\* They saw his wounds of crucifixion.

\* The voice they heard was the same one that had taught them before.

\* They felt his body and his wounds. It was not a dream, a ghost or an illusion. They saw Jesus alive after he was raised from the dead!

\* They say him on numerous occasions!

**The empty tomb gives testimony of his resurrection.** Joseph, Nicodemus, Mary Magdalene and other disciples tenderly took the body of Jesus from the cross, prepared it and laid it to rest in Joseph's new tomb. The chief priests and Pharisees, remembering his prediction, that he would rise on the third day, secured permission from Pilate and "went and made the sepulcher sure, sealing the stone, the guard being with them" (Matt. 27:66).

**Many witnesses testify that the tomb was found empty on Sunday morning.**

\* Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome went to anoint the body (as the custom was). They found and empty tomb (Mk. 16:1-8).

\* Peter and John, on hearing the report, ran and entered the tomb, finding it empty (John 20:2-6).

\* The Roman guard, whose lives were jeopardized by allowing the corpse to disappear, said it was gone (Matt. 28:11).

\* The Sanhedrin Council of the Jews verified that the body was gone, in that they paid much money to the soldiers to spread a lie that the disciples had stolen the body while they slept (Matt. 28:12).

**What happened to his body?** Either his friends, his enemies or God took his body from the tomb.

\* **His friends could not have taken it**, because the grave was sealed and a guard placed there to prevent just such a happening. They filled with fear and in hiding.

\* **His enemies would not have taken his body**, for it was that which they were trying to prevent. Thus we are left with but one conclusion;

\* **God raised his body** from death and took him from the tomb.

The evidence of his power over death during in his ministry convinces us that he had the power to rise from the dead. As he raised Lazarus before many witnesses, he could raise himself. Jesus said, "I lay down my life, that I may take it again... I have power to take it again (John 10:17-18).

The transformation wrought in the Apostles is proof of his resurrection. A few days before, they had deserted him and fled in fear of their lives. They cowered in a locked room in the city. Now, see them standing before that same mob who had murdered their Lord, and boldly proclaiming the resurrected Christ (Acts 2:14-36)

The prophet foretold Christ's resurrection. "I beheld the Lord always before my face... Because thou wilt not leave my soul unto Hades, neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption" (Ps. 16:8).

The inability of his enemies to produce the body so that they might disprove the Apostles' witness is proof of the resurrection. If they had stolen the body we can be sure that they would have publicly displayed it and destroyed their claim.

The impact upon Jerusalem of the resurrection gospel, demonstrated the factuality of Christ's being raised. Within a few days, over 5,000 men had become his disciples (Acts 4:4).

The influence of the resurrection gospel (Phil. 3:10) upon those who receive it and upon our world today is a positive testimony to its truthfulness.

### **What the Resurrection Means to Us Today**

\* The resurrection is the "axle and hub" of the gospel. Paul wrote, "I make known unto you the gospel which I preached unto you... Christ died for our sins... and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day..." (I Cor. 15:1-4).

\* The Apostle wrote that Jesus "was declared to be the Son of God with power... by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom.

1:4).

- \* It proves his testimonies to be reliable and true, thus,
- \* It demands our faith (Rom. 10:9). “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord and shalt believe in they heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Rom. 10:9).
- \* To the Romans Paul said, “Jesus...was delivered for our trespasses and was raised for our justification” (Rom. 4:5).
- \* His resurrection conquered death. “Death is swallowed up in the victory” (I Cor. 15:54).
- \* His resurrection assures our resurrection and immortality. Romans 8:11 says, “if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life to your mortal bodies.”
- \* The resurrection gives Christians comfort at the time of death. Paul writes, “concerning them that fall asleep...sorrow not even as the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him (I Thess. 4:13-18).
- \* God ...begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead...(I Pet. 1:3).
- \* The resurrection gospel is a powerful force for good in our lives. Paul speaks of the “power of his resurrection” (Phil. 3:10), and affirms we can do all things thorough him that strengthens us (Phil. 4:13).
- \* The disciples’ faith in the resurrection was responsible for the phenomenal growth of the early church.
- \* It made possible the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Jesus said, “If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you (John 16:7). Peter declared, “Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted...he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear” (Acts 2:33).
- \* The great day of judgment is dependent on the resurrection. The Lord has appointed a day in which he will judge the world...by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:31).

Without the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead, there can be no Christianity. No wonder Satan seeks to disprove it and keep people from believing it. He that rejects the resurrection must reject the whole of Christianity. True Christians believe Christ was actually resurrected from the dead and lives and reigns today. This is the good news of the gospel!

#### End Notes

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2. D. R. Dungan, **Hermeneutics**, Cincinnati, Standard Publishing Co., n.d. p.311
3. Albert Barnes, **Notes on the New Testament: Matthew and Mark**, Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1956, p. 134.
4. R. C. H. Lenski, **The Interpretation of St. John’s Gospel**, Minneapolis, Augsburg Pub. House, 1942, p. 1340-1341.
5. Albert Barnes, **Matthew and Mark**, p.391.

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## FAITH AND THE MIRACULOUS

Modern man wants a religion that will provide him comfort, fellowship, counsel and consolation. His education, pride and culture often drives him to question the existence of a personal God who created the universe and who on occasion intervenes in it. Especially does he resist the idea that God has rules that he expects man to obey and that he will punish those who rebel against his will.

Man much prefers to believe in a distant, uninvolved God who perhaps created matter but left all things to evolve without his attention or involvement. The idea of miracles he finds too hard to believe since he cannot see such things demonstrated today. The idea of a supernatural book, given to man from God, perfect in content, seems incredible to him. Jesus, he accepts and admires but he cannot bring himself to believe in his virgin birth, his perfection, his miracles, etc.

The question of miracles rests squarely upon the existence and nature of God. If there is no God there is no need to discuss miracles. When discussing this topic with skeptics and unbelievers we must first convince them it is entirely reasonable to believe in God. When discussing it with Christians we approach it on the assumption that they believe in the God revealed in the Bible. If God exists, He is by definition fully capable of doing all these miraculous things recorded in the Bible. The fact that God is almighty means that nothing is too hard for him (Gen. 18:14). If he cannot work in a supernatural way, then he is not God.

The cosmos has not always existed, else it would have run down and deteriorated into dust. The second law of thermodynamics says that all things are gradually wearing out and deteriorating. Just as bodies grow old and wear out so do the major things of the universe. The sun will gradually consuming itself. Great boulders are crushed and broken by glaciers, gravity, freezing, floods, wind and erosion. Someone or something had to have created the cosmos. That someone is God. The creation was a grand series of miracles occasioned by his spoken word (Ps. 33:6, 9). He tells us that "what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear" (Heb. 11:3).

When he created the cosmos and set it in motion God instituted an untold series of laws to govern all things in it, whether living or non-living. Once enacted, these rules are static, unchangeable and universal in nature and man must comply with them. The progress of civilization has consisted of man discovering these laws, conforming to them or learning how to temporarily overcome them. The ability to fly is one of these accomplishments. If God could create the cosmos and make the laws of nature that govern it, he would have no difficulty in suspending those rules suspending those laws when he so desired in order to punish his enemies or bless his people.

If he is God and he wanted man to do his will, he would have no problem communicating that will to humanity He designed language. It is no marvel that God then would communicate to man in the language he made. The writer of Hebrews reminds us that "God...hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son" (Heb. 1:1).

When we contemplate the miracles, of the Bible we need to distinguish between the three avenues through which God works in our world. **First** and most commonly, he governs the world by his natural laws. Thus Jesus said he sends the rain on the just and the unjust. Sunshine and rain, seed time and harvest bless all alike, be they saints or sinners (Matt. 5:45). Likewise disasters, caused by nature, are indiscriminate, harming both good and bad. **Second**, God manages the affairs of the world to work all things together for good to those who love him (Rom. 8:28). Thus he responds to the prayers of his children and sends judgements on the wicked. This we call Divine Providence. **Third**, God has on rare

occasions intervened in the affairs of man with miraculous demonstrations of his power. Among these were his judgements on Egypt, the opening of the Red Sea and his preservation of and provision for the Hebrews in their wilderness wanderings; His protection of his fledgling nation against their heathen enemies; the birth and ministry of his Son and the founding and initial expansion of the church. The miracles of the apostolic age faded and disappeared following the completion of the New Testament documents and the death of the Apostles (I Cor. 13:8-10). Their purpose had been accomplished.

While we affirm and defend the miracles revealed in the pages of the Bible, we do not see such miracles being performed by man today. We do not say that God cannot do such if he so desires, but observation tells us that the miracles claimed by modern faith-healers are poor imitations of the genuine miracles done by Christ and his Apostles. Compared with the mighty wonders recorded in Scripture they are found wanting and we reject them as counterfeit.

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## 35.

### ATTRIBUTES OF CHRIST'S MORAL SYSTEM

Unbelievers often attack the moral code of Christianity as faulty or at least as no better than that of Buddhism, Hinduism, etc. Most of them have no first hand knowledge of Christ's moral system. Their objections are based on assumptions. Hence, we must understand his moral teaching, teach it to others and defend it when it is attacked by his enemies (Phil. 1:16).

Christ's morality is revealed exclusively in the Scriptures. Neither nature, history nor philosophy provides a code of conduct that meets the needs of all men of all nations. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23). Whatever we do in word or in deed must be done in the name of the Lord (Col. 3:17). The wise disciple will hear the words of Jesus and do them (Matt. 7:24). It is the words of Jesus that we will answer to in judgment (John 12:48). Nothing in the history of the race has come remotely near the revealed moral code of Jesus. John Locke correctly said, "To give a man full knowledge of true morality, I would send him to no other book than the New Testament."

His morality calls upon men to be like Christ and his heavenly Father. Peter tells us that Christ left us "an example, that (we) should follow his steps" (I Pet. 2:21). Paul challenges us to imitate him as he imitated Christ (I Cor. 11:1). The very name "Christian" suggests one that is like the Christ. The Lord himself said, "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:47). Thus his morality calls for godliness, i.e., to be like God (Tit. 2:12).

The morality of Jesus is to be lived, not just debated and theorized. Philosophers and theologians often delight in speculating and theorizing with no thought of practical application. Our Lord demands that we be "doers of the word, and not hearers only" (Jas. 1:22). The man who only hears the word deludes himself. Jesus concluded his epochal Sermon on the Mount by saying, "Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21).

This moral code is universal and age lasting. The race being of a common origin, having a common set of problems and facing a common destiny, it is both reasonable and necessary that there be a common standard of righteousness by which all will be judged. We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God... (and) each one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:10-12). Thus the Lord's gospel is commissioned to be preached to every creature on the earth (Mark 16:15). Therefore "God... commandeth men that they should all, everywhere repent: inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained (Jesus)..." (Acts 17:30-31).

Christ's moral code is based on two great fundamentals. When asked which was the greatest commandment, Jesus

responded "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second, like unto it is this, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. 22:36-39). To love God ultimately, demands that everything we say or do be subordinated to his will. Above all else we desire to please him. Thus, a Christian seeks first God's kingdom and righteousness in every activity of life (Matt. 6:33). We deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow him (Matt. 15:24). Loving him, we gladly keep his commands (John 15:14).

Loving our neighbor as ourselves demands that we seek his best interest always. In all things, we will reflect an unconquerable good will towards him. Every social contact will be carried out with this noble aim in mind. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfillment of the law" (Rom. 13:10).

His morality **demands "mercy, and not (just) sacrifice"** (Matt. 12:7). Even as God has shown compassion and mercy in forgiving us, so must we reflect the same toward our fellow man who falls short of God's standard. "Judgment is without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy" (Jas. 2:13). The self-righteous will rush to stone the fallen sinner, the Christ-like person helps them to rise again even as Jesus did the woman taken in adultery (John 8:1-11).

Jesus' moral system is based upon **grace, mercy and another chance**. Under Moses' law, the man who violated the Sabbath died without mercy (Num. 15:32-36). Under Christ, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins..." (I John 1:9). We, too, must be willing to forgive our brother "seventy times seven," i.e., our mercy must know no end (Matt. 18:21-22).

Christian morality **sees the body as essentially good**. The ancient Greeks viewed the body as essentially evil; according to Plato, a prison-house of the soul. We glorify God in our bodies (I Cor. 6:20). We present our bodies unto God as living sacrifices (Rom. 12:1). We will have a resurrected body in eternity (I Cor. 15:42-44). This being the case, we are not to conclude that just because a given thing brings pleasure to the body, it is sinful. To the contrary, unless it is forbidden by God in precept or principle, we are free to enjoy the pleasures of life. This is the opposite of the ascetic view of Catholicism and some older Protestant groups, that all common pleasures are evil and therefore forbidden; that punish the body and deny it even the ordinary joys of life such as marriage, comfortable clothing, beds, and pleasant foods. Paul reminds us that all such "severity to the body" is "not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh" (Col. 2:23). Thus, Christ's moral code allows for us to enjoy every lawful happiness and joy of life. Marriage is to be held in honor (Heb. 13:4). All foods are to be received with thanksgiving (I Tim. 4:3-4). We are to rejoice in the Lord always" (Phil. 4:4). There is room for wholesome entertainment, games, parties and celebrations without sin or shame.

Our morality is **one of self-restraint and control**. Earlier we noted that ours is not a legal system of salvation by works, rather one of grace. By giving us principles by which to measure our conduct, the Lord granted unto us a far greater measure of autonomy than ever before. As a full-grown man, I am expected to exercise self-control in my moral life (II Pet. 1:6). Now, I strive for a high level of conduct, not just because there is a prohibition, but because I am God's child and must act becoming for my station. Many immature saints crave a list of dos and don'ts. Preachers are often pressured to tell them just how long the skirt should be, or how many dollars to give. David King says, "To ask for such a list is the easy way out. But rules only draw boundaries; they do not give directions. They may keep people from going astray, but they don't lead anyone anywhere." With Paul, we then will "buffet our bodies," and bring them into subjection (I Cor. 9:27). We do not depend on someone else to regulate our lives. Rather by the help of God's Holy Spirit we put to death the sinful deeds of the body (Rom. 8:13).

This morality **insists that I think not just of myself, but of how my conduct might affect others**. To the Romans Paul writes, "Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died" (Rom. 14:15). Again, "Let not then your good be evil spoken of (Rom. 14:16). "It is good not to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth" (Rom. 14:21). If we forget this rule and thus, sin against the brethren and wound their conscience when it is weak, we sin against Christ (I Cor. 8:12). There is no room for reckless selfishness in Christ.

Christian morality **gives God the glory for victories won**. We have no righteousness of our own - only that "which is through faith in Christ" (Phil. 3:9). All of our attainments are like filthy rags before our Judge (Is. 64:6). "By the grace of God I am what I am" (I Cor. 15:10). Never will we brag or boast of our attainments, or what we have done more than others. But for His grace, we might be the drunkard, prostitute or convict.

The morality of Jesus looks to heaven for its ultimate reward. Jesus taught "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven..." (Matt. 6:19-20). We desire a better country, that is a heavenly" one... for (God) hath prepared for us a city" (Heb. 11:16). It sometimes happens that the lot of the Christian is hard in this life. It may be suffering or sorrow, persecution or poverty, even untimely death. The skeptic chides, "Where is your God?" But we are taught that whatever our reward be here, we can expect "in the world to come eternal life" (Mark 10:30). So we rejoice in the beatitude, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised..." (Jas. 1:12).

The Lord's moral system proclaims a final day of judgment when all wrongs will be righted -- all that has been sown in this life shall be reaped (Gal. 6:7). "He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained..." (Acts 17:30). That judgment will expose the secrets of men (Rom. 2:16). "We must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body... whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10). There is a vain mind that thinks because a man escapes severe penalties in this life, he has beaten the system. In that awful day, he will hear his doom, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 26:41). The righteous will hear his Master say "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you..." (Matt. 25:34).

Truly the moral code of Jesus has stood the test of time. Men of every nation and rank have praised its grandeur. No other code has equaled its power to reform and elevate men and nations. It is as relevant for modern man as it was for the first century peasant. It is from heaven -- not from men. It's heavenly origin presupposes an Author of infinite mind with unlimited knowledge; totally just, right and good.

\* I am indebted to William Barclay for the heart of this lesson.

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## 36.

### CHRISTIANITY\* AND WESTERN CIVILIZATION

When Christ established his kingdom, Rome ruled the known world. That which was recognized as the civilized world included the nations of the Mediterranean basin and eastward to the Euphrates. The Romans had absorbed and incorporated the civilization of the Greeks and Egyptians. Rome imposed her culture on the people she conquered.

The prophet Daniel foresaw a day when the great world kingdoms' would crumble and God's kingdom would fill the earth (Dan. 2:44). When the church was established on earth, Rome was already in the early stages of decay and decline.

Christian missionaries were not content to limit their preaching to the refined people of the civilized nations. Taking Christ's Great Commission seriously (Mark 16:15), they pushed into those regions viewed as barbarian. In time, all of the European nations and the British Isles felt the civilizing and elevating influence of Christ. The first Christians to enter European soil were the Apostle Paul, Silas, Luke and Timothy (Acts 16:9-10). Before the first century was ended the first missionaries had reached Great Britain. In the fifth century, when Rome collapsed at hands of barbarian hordes, Christianity\* played a vital role in keeping the broken pieces of the old civilization from total dissolution.

The triumph of Christianity allowed the emergence of what we know as Western Civilization.

\* The teaching of Christ elevated the manners and conduct of the people under its influence.

\* Christianity introduced a new and much higher moral standard to the European people.



- \* Christianity taught the people the value of human life made in God's image (Gen. 9:6). They condemned the brutal practices of abortion, infanticide, torture and gladiatorial games.
- \* It ameliorated the plight of slaves, serfs and the poor. In Christ all were equally God's children (Gal. 3:26-29).
- \* From the influence of the Bible, new civil codes emerged in the various nations that were more just and constructive for the whole of their population.
- \* The Christian religion became a unifying influence for the tribes who had long been isolated enemies. It provided common ground for them to meet and build upon.
- \* Christian missionaries brought with them education, charity and concern for the sick and suffering. These ingredients of civilization they taught to their converts.
- \* Missionaries also brought with them a growing body of literature that challenged and enlightened the minds and thinking of the people who were emerging from the darkness of barbarism.
- \* As Christian missionaries traveled afar with their message, they encountered new and valuable ideas, methods and inventions which they took home for use by their people.
- \* Missionaries also brought with them many of the cultural achievements and advantages of their Mediterranean world, introducing them into the rustic societies of the North.
- \* For housing and training their workers, the Christians\* built communities where the residents could devote themselves to the study of God's Word and other topics of useful information. These communities became the libraries, schools and museums that collected and preserved valuable knowledge that helped the emerging societies.
- \* Students in these religious communities pursued their reading and research to the glory of their God. They studied not only the Bible, but nature as the handiwork of God. Their remarkable discoveries unlocked the mysteries of nature and glorified God. Little by little a body of information from ancient sources and from their own discoveries evolved that helped to lift their nations out of their low estate.
- \* Out of this Western Civilization came the world's greatest art, sculpture, architecture, literature and music, much of it expressing themes from the Bible, or to honor God and advance the cause of Christ.

Someone summarized the steps of our civilization from barbarism to civilization as follows: From polytheism to monotheism; From ignorance to education; From violence to peace; From lawlessness to a people governed by law; From tyranny to democracy; From injustice to justice for all.

Out of this milieu came the glorious civilization that has elevated the entire race of man. It has spread civilization around the world. The King James Version of the Bible refined and codified the English language making it the universal language for commerce and the spread of Western civilization.

Secularists argue that it was idolatrous Greece and Rome alone that gave birth to our civilization. To this view John Adams wrote, "As much as I love, esteem and admire the Greeks, I believe the Hebrews have done more to enlighten and civilize the world. Moses did more than all their legislators and philosophers."

Three great streams merged to produce this marvelous civilization of which we are part. From the ancient Greeks came the ideas of democracy and liberty. From the Romans came the ideas of empire, law and stability. From Christ came the concepts of the value of the individual, the sanctity of human life, the high moral code for citizens and rulers and rule by law rather than by force. Christianity provided the proper structure for life: God first, then family, then country.

While our Western civilization owes a great debt to Christianity, in time the new civilization became the vehicle that carried Christianity around the world. Not only is this seen in the English speaking nations such as England, America, Canada, Australia, etc, but in many of the third world nations where English has become the language of the market place

and where Christianity has found a welcomed home. This wholesome influence is still at work in Eastern Europe, Africa and India and the non-Islamic world.

Today, in the face of all the historical evidence, atheists and secularist of every kind are working either to deny Christianity its well-deserved place in the development of our civilization or to reject the whole concept of Western Civilization. Should they succeed what would they have? Atheism has tried its hand at building a society. The Communists made atheism a founding platform of the nations they controlled. It produced tyranny, oppression, poverty and persecution. Those Communist states of Russia and Eastern collapsed in part, because they were built on the sandy foundation of atheism. David said, "Except Jehovah build the house, they labor in vain that build it" (Ps. 127:1).

A. Schmidt wrote, "No other religion, philosophy, teaching, nation, movement, whatever, has so changed the world for the better as Christianity has done (**How Christianity Changed the World**, p. 9).

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\* In this essay we use the words Christian and Christianity in their broadest sense to include all who believe in Jesus, who subscribe to his religion and strive to advance their understanding of it. (The author).

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## 37.

### CHRISTIANITY'S CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY

Today, secular leaders in our nation look upon Christianity as worthless baggage that must be tolerated until such time as it can be discarded. This is most obvious in our courts and in the actions of the infamous activists of the American Civil Liberties Union and Americans United for the Separation of Church and State. Working together, they aspire to drive Christianity from the civic forum into and behind the doors of their meeting houses.

Lack of knowledge of our nation's history has left American citizens paralyzed in the face of this assault. The founders of our nation saw Christianity as a strong support of it and for that support there should be due appreciation.

Supreme Court justice Joseph Story wrote, "At the time of the adoption of the Constitution, and of the amendment to it, now under consideration (the First Amendment), the general, if not the universal, sentiment in America was, that Christianity **ought to receive encouragement from the State**...An attempt to level all religions, and to make it a matter of state policy to hold all in utter indifference, would have created universal disapprobation, if not universal indignation." (**A Familiar Exposition of the Constitution of the United States**. 1854, p. 259-261).

They understood the many valuable contributions churches make to the welfare and stability of our nation.

\* The church provides moral instruction to those under her influence. Without a basic foundation of morality no individual can be a good and productive citizen. With it, they can be model citizens.

\* The church provides moral reinforcement to society by teaching her people to obey every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake (I Pet. 2:13).

\* By her teaching of personal responsibility and accountability, the church provides prior restraint to those under her influence. The laws of the government seek to control behavior by threatening punishment for the transgression. Christians

are taught to restrain themselves and live law-abiding lives. Paul says, "That law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and unruly..." (I Tim. 1:9). Thus, while Christians contribute much to their government, their lifestyle requires very little from the government in return.

- \* The church provides conflict resolution for its members and those citizens who turn to her in times of conflict. Christians are taught to resolve their conflicts with the assistance of the church (Matt. 18:15-18).. They rarely need a civil court or the law to settle their disagreements.
- \* The church helps to calm and tame man's natural inclination to violence and revenge when he is wronged. She teaches her disciples to "Avenge not yourselves..." but give place to the civil magistrates that God has appointed for dealing with offenders (Rom. 12:19-13:7).
- \* The church teaches those in her ranks to be responsible citizens who provide for themselves and their dependents (I Tim.5:8).
- \* When her members fall upon hard times, the church opens her purse to help them through their crisis.
- \* The church provides healing and restoration to shattered lives. Countless millions of individuals have been helped by churches to overcome destructive habits such as alcohol and drug abuse. Unwed mothers have been counseled and helped in their time of need. Broken families have received counseling and guidance in recovering their unity. Many with emotional problems turn first to their church for counsel and understanding.
- \* Millions of homeless children have been cared for as have been the aged and the sick and suffering of humanity.
- \* The church teaches her members to love their neighbors as themselves (Matt. 22:39) and to help them with their trials and burdens (Matt. 7:12). This makes the community a nicer, more friendly place in which to live.
- \* Christians have founded scores of Christian Schools that have provided top quality education for children who have gone on to bless society by their good and productive lives. In doing this, society did not have to bear the expense of educating those youngsters.
- \* Christians are taught to earn their living and pay their taxes (Rom. 13:7). Rather than being a burden to society, virtually all Christians will be productive supporters of government and society.
- \* Christianity teaches its adherents to live at peace with all men (Rom. 12:18). It teaches them to think of all men as created by their God and in his image (Gen. 1:26). They are forbidden to show respect of persons (Jas. 2:9). People of every racial, social and national group have the full right to enter their fellowship and be respectfully treated as children of God (Gal. 3:26-29).
- \* Children, under the influence of the church, are taught to obey their parents (Eph. 6:1) and to be good citizens.
- \* All who come under the instruction of the church are taught that they are made in God's image and lest they bring shame on their God, they are expected to live a life commensurate with that holy state,.
- \* Christians are taught that only in marriage can man's sexual needs be legitimately fulfilled. They are reminded that marriage is honorable in all (Heb.13:4). This provides for stable homes in which children can be nurtured and prepared for adulthood. This domestic stability is essential for a stable society.

Recognizing the many valuable contributions of the church to society, past governmental leaders throughout our nation have declined to tax church property, they have encouraged churches to locate in their communities, they expressed appreciation for the help churches provided. Gifts given to churches were not taxed. Input from Christians and church leaders in things affecting community life was appreciated. This appreciation for the contributions of churches was expressed by George Washington "In all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, **religion and morality are indispensable supports**. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness....reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail, in exclusion of religious principle" (**Washington's Farewell Address**, Sept. 19, 1796).

President Woodrow Wilson wisely observed "A nation which does not remember what it was yesterday, does not know what it is today, nor what it is trying to do. We are trying to do a futile thing if we do not know where we came from or

what we have been about.”

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## 38.

### IS CHRISTIANITY THE BANE OR BLESSING OF WOMEN?

A recent article by Women’s Watch asks, “Does Religion Oppress Women? Of course, this affiliate of the National Organization for Women shouts, Yes! The conclusion reached is flawed on several counts.

\* The authors do not distinguish between Christianity, which elevates women, declaring male and female to be one in Christ (Gal. 3:28) and Islam and other religions that in fact do suppress women and treat them as inferiors. They are blinded by their commitment to “pluralism” which assumes all religions to be equally worthless.

\* The writers seem to have a special grudge against Christianity. They cite Elizabeth Stanton, “the Bible and the Church have been the greatest stumbling blocks in the way of women’s emancipation.” At the same time, they tell us that “Muhammad (along with Jesus)...called for the proper equitable treatment of all the children of God.” They tell us “some imams ...are leading a push for education and justice.” This of course is a way of saying that Christianity is really no better than Islam, maybe worse. Do you suppose even one of the females associated with Women’s Watch would like to live in Libya, Saudi Arabia or Iran?

\* The authors begin their piece by asking “Why are women still so oppressed throughout the world? They then proceed to blame religion, especially Christianity. Are American women as a whole oppressed by Christianity? That some women are abused by some men is true. It is also true that the typical woman abuser is not a practicing Christian. Christianity forbids the abuse of anyone (Matt. 7:12) and especially ones wife (Eph. 5:28-29). They forgot that some women abuse men and their own children. Inflicting harm and abuse on others is not the result of Christianity, but the absence of it in ones life!

\* Citing Ms. Stanton, they blame the Bible and church for every imagined ill a woman might suffer, including the pain and anguish of maternity and childbirth. If that were true then women who are atheists should be able to carry and deliver their babies without pain and anguish. Right?

\* Ms. Stanton, like other unbelieving crusaders, sought to make her case by attacking the Bible. After all the Bible doesn’t talk back to those who insult it.

\* Then they make extensive use of Jimmy Carter, the Sunday School teacher who does not accept what the Bible says about creation, male and female relations and the role of women in the leadership of the church. He cannot distinguish between the benevolent teachings of Jesus and those of Mohammed whose message calls for cutting off hands, stoning adulterers, polygamy and other forms of human abuse. If Jesus founded and is head of his church (Eph. 1:22), it seems reasonable to conclude the He had the right to determine how it would be led. Of course, Mr. Carter assumes he knows better than Jesus. He also includes in his condemnation the aborting of female babies. He evidently forgot that practice is epidemic in Communist China, whose primary religion is atheism. But whether folks abort male or female babies, it is Christians who oppose the practice and labor to save the lives of the victims. The folks associated with Women’s Watch are among the chief promoters of abortion on demand.

As a Christian, I thank God for my mother, my sister, my wife, my daughters and grand daughters. What a dreary place the world would be without women. They are made in God’s image and the source of life for all of us. Following Christ, we respect and honor them.

## HUMAN SUFFERING

Human suffering is as old and as wide-spread as the human race. It is commonly asked, why does God allow suffering? Atheists ask this, hoping to discredit faith in God. But many believers ask it, not having thought through the problem of suffering. We are prone to blame God for our misfortunes, especially those of a tragic nature. Consider the following sources or causes of man's suffering:

I. We are a fallen race, **living in a world under a curse** (Gen. 3:17; Rom. 8:20). When Adam and Eve disobeyed God's prohibition and ate the forbidden fruit, they sinned and brought death upon themselves, (at the time they were the entire human race), and all their descendants (Gen. 2:17, 3:22-24). They lost their immortality and decay and death began to consume their bodies. Pain now accompanied child-birth (Gen. 3:16). With the curse came birth defects, deadly viruses, bacteria, criminal violence and war, danger from wild animals, serpents, etc.

II. **Much suffering is self-caused.** Our own **carelessness** can cause us harm. If we are careless with fire we may be burned, or killed. Our possessions may be destroyed. If we are careless in our driving we may be involved in an accident. If we are careless with mechanical equipment we can suffer serious injuries. The same is true with electricity and firearms.

\* We can suffer as a result of **neglecting our health or safety**. I knew a man who was killed in a collision. His brakes were worn out. He had postponed having them repaired. He was unable to stop his truck and in the collision he died. Each year people die by gunshot because they neglected to empty the shells from the chamber before cleaning or handling their weapon. Multitudes neglect to see their doctor when they are having health problems. Others neglect to take the needed medicines. Some neglect to exercise. Because of their neglect, they suffer serious medical problems such as heart attacks, diabetes, strokes, etc.

\* Some suffer because they have **abused their bodies** by engaging in sinful practices. Alcoholics suffer, but they chose to drink the liquor. Drug addicts suffer from their abuse of drugs. Millions of people have suffered from their use of tobacco. Millions are suffering from and dying of AIDS, but 99:6 percent of them contracted the disease while engaging in sinful behavior.

\* Some suffer because they chose to **pursue risky activities**. Those who race cars, ride brama bulls, sky dive, ski in unsafe areas, dive in shark infested waters often suffer injuries or death. No one made them engage in such dangerous activities. Miners and those who volunteer for the military know the risks they face.

III. Some suffering is **caused by other people**. People suffer at the hands of assailants. We read of innocent people hit or killed by careless or illegal gunfire. Some suffer harm because of reckless drivers. A person's car might fail to respond and the driver be hurt in a wreck. Inspection shows that a manufacturer or repairman failed to do some vital thing that caused the wreck. Airplane crashes are sometimes caused by faulty repairs or the mistake of an air traffic controller. A manufacturer might pollute the water with his toxic residues. Those living nearby might be sickened by the tainted water.

IV. Some times we suffer **because of our ignorance**. For generations people used tobacco, not knowing its harmfulness to their bodies. We use to paint our houses with lead based paint. Now we know that such paint can be harmful to our health. For years asbestos was use in our homes and business and we were unaware of the dangers it posed. Frequently,

we learn that certain medications have been found to have harmful side-effects. We thought they were helping us.

V. Some suffering is the **result of accidents**. An accident is “an unexpected happening causing loss or injury which is not due to any fault or misconduct on the part of the person injured.... It is an event occurring by chance or from unknown causes (Webster). Accidents are unforeseeable and unavoidable. Everyone who lives long enough will suffer some harm from an accident. We trip over something on the floor. Or slip and fall on a wet or slick floor. We accidentally touch a live wire. A cable snaps and an elevator falls. Many accidents occur on our busy highways. A slight miscalculation can result in a terrible accident.

VI. Many people have suffered at the hand of **cruel or incompetent rulers**. **Flawed social and economic policies** of rulers can impose great hardships on those forced to live under them. Millions suffered under Communism.

VII. Much suffering is **caused by war**. Evil rulers precipitate wars in which millions suffer and many die. There is unintentional suffering caused when liberating armies strive to defeat the evil aggressor. A bomb dropped from a plane may be targeted at the aggressor’s troops but innocent people who are near by may suffer harm of death. We read of soldiers accidentally killed by “friendly fire.”

VIII. Over the ages millions have suffered from the **uncontrollable forces of nature**. Lightning strikes, floods, droughts, tornadoes, earthquakes, avalanches, snow and ice storms, frigid weather, heat waves, tsunami waves, wild fires, hail storms, crop failures and pestilence. These are all consequences of our living in a sin-cursed world.

IX. There are some cases where **the Creator and Judge of humanity acts to punish the wicked** for their crimes. “Thus saith the Lord...when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the evil beasts, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast!” (Ezek. 14:21). He smote evil Herod Agrippa I with worms and he died (Acts 12:23). Such power is still in His great hand.

In these categories we see three kinds of suffering. There is **that for which we ourselves are responsible**. There is **that which is caused by others**. There is suffering for **which no blame can be affixed**. We suffer as a consequence of that sin in Eden that loosed the flood of sickness, violence, suffering and death that has since plagued the world. Even innocent children suffer, not because of their own sins, but because of that sin that allowed the evil pestilence of death to escape. Since much of our suffering is the result of our own choices, we must realize that it is a necessary corollary to **our freedom of will**. Would we want to live in a world where we were not allowed to make our own choices about what we wanted to do? To be human, to be in God’s image, means that we will be vulnerable to consequences of our bad choices and decisions.

Suffering makes us realize the need for something better than this life offers. It causes us to yearn for a release from this temporal realm that we might live with our Father, free from the effects of the curse. God has made it possible for us to escape this realm of suffering. First, He had to absolve us of the guilt of our sins. To do that Jesus paid an awful price by suffering and dying on Calvary (I Cor. 15:3). He then created his church whose mission was to teach people how they could find forgiveness and be restored to God’s favor (Acts 20:28; Mark 16:15-16). Jesus returned to heaven to prepare a place for us where we could live with him in sinless happiness (John 14: 3). In that heavenly home there will be no pain, no sorrow, no death. The curse will have been removed (Rev. 21:1-5; 22:1-3).

While we struggle along in this life and deal with the pain and sorrow of the long road home, God has provided the Holy Spirit to be our Comforter (John 14:16-17). He has appointed his angels to be ministering spirits to those who are heirs of salvation (Heb. 1:14). He has given us the privilege to convey our burdens and needs to him in prayer. He promises

to hear and respond to the prayers of his children (John 15:16). He has provided for us friends, loved ones and fellow-Christians to help us with the sickness and suffering we must bear (Gal. 6:2). In making the earth, he supplied the ingredients for medicines that help us cope with our maladies. He designed our bodies with a built in defense system to ward off many of the germs that might sicken us. He made our bodies capable of healing and repairing themselves in many lesser cases and even in the most serious cases with the help of skilled physicians and appropriate medicines. He created some people with the ability to study and learn about the human body and the impact of disease and injuries on it search. They are able to search the world of nature for plants and chemicals that have the needed healing properties. Some are able to open the body and repair the damage that has been inflicted upon it. All of these are gifts our benevolent Father has given us.

Sometimes God intervenes in the most remarkable way to protect a person from harm, or to save his life in situations that seem hopeless to us. In ancient times He worked spectacular miracles by the hands of chosen men. Among those were miracles of healing. Today we do not see such spectacular divine demonstrations, but we do believe and confess that God does save us from harm and heals us of our afflictions by His providence.

So long as we live on this earth we will have to cope with the problems of suffering and death. A life free from these unhappy events will have to wait until that day when Christ takes us home to live in his father's house (John 14:3). There the curse will be no more. Gone will be sickness, suffering and death. (Rev. 22:3) Immortality will be ours and eternal happiness. For that we will forever thank and praise our Lord!

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## 40.

### **GOD AND THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN SUFFERING**

The atheist boasts loudest when he confronts the Christian with his argument that human suffering is proof that God does not exist. Any believer who confronts an unbeliever is almost certain to hear the following argument:

“You Christians say that your God is omnipotent, i.e., all powerful. You also claim that your God is omnibenevolent, i.e., wholly and perfectly kind and good. The atheist then reasons if your God is perfectly good he would not want his children to suffer. If he is omnipotent, he would not allow pain and suffering to happen. Since we see pain and suffering on every hand, affecting Christians as well as unbelievers, either your God is not wholly benevolent, or he is not omnipotent. In either case he cannot be what you claim for him to be.”

Our response follows thusly:

The conclusion atheists reach is faulty because it is drawn from faulty premises.

\* The atheist overlooks the fact that there are other attributes of God. Among them are His anger at man's sin and rebellion (Deut. 7:4) and His hatred of man's wickedness (Prov. 6:16). They fail to factor in the fact that He is a God of justice (Ps. 89:14). Justice demands that righteousness be rewarded and sin punished. Paul tells us, “behold then the goodness and severity of God...” (Rom. 11:22)

\* Atheists fail to consider the nature of man. God has endowed each us with volition. We are free to make choices and decisions in life but we must live with the consequences thereof. Much of our suffering is the consequences of bad choices. With our minds made in God's image, we are not limited to instinct as are birds and animals. We are not robots who are programmed to do certain things.

\* They also fail to consider the nature of the world God created. He made laws by which nature operates. They are predictable and dependable. These laws, like that of gravity, must be recognized and complied with else we will incur pain and sorrow. Much suffering results from careless or foolish behavior that is contrary to nature's laws.

\* Unbelievers do not recognize the impact that the sin of the first human couple has on us today.

The Creator made them perfect and placed them in a perfect paradise called Eden. Every need was supplied, with only one prohibition. They could not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The penalty of disobedience was death (Gen. 2:16). Satan, the evil antagonist of God and man, lured them to eat the forbidden fruit. The penalty followed their disobedience. They lost their innocence and their immortality. They and the earth on which they dwelt, fell under a Curse (Gen. 3:1-24). When they sinned, it was as if they had broken the vial that contained the virus and germ of every evil disease. It was as if the gate had been broken down that allowed every kind of wickedness to escape into their world. That Curse still rests upon the earth (Rom. 8:19-22). Thus Paul wrote, "Through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men..." (Rom.5:12).

\* The antagonists of God cannot admit that suffering has some value. It reminds us of the consequences of our sin. It helps to see the true value of things in this life. We often get so caught up in insignificant things that we forget what is really important. Suffering reminds us of our mortality and teaches us to number our days and make the best use of them. It purges us of many bad habits and ugly attitudes of life by making us see their destructiveness. Suffering, like physical training, makes us morally and spiritually stronger and better. It purges from our hearts and lives things that are harmful for us. It reminds us that God is the source of all our blessings (Jas. 1:17) and drives us to look to Him for comfort and help. It causes us to look toward a new life and home with God where the curse will be lifted and there will be no more suffering, pain, sorrow and death (Rev. 21:3-5; 22:3). David wrote, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I may learn thy statutes" (Ps. 119:71). Some have described this life as a training ground for the life that is yet to be. The training is sometimes rigorous, but if we listen to our heavenly coach, we will learn "that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward" (Rom. 8:18). Because they do not see instant rewards or punishments, atheists scoff at the Christian's view of God. They forget, that they themselves are bound by time to bless or punish those about them, but God has all eternity to do so and has shown us that is a vital part of his plan.

\* Enemies of God fail to understand that while God is omnipotent he too has ultimate volition. He can act or choose not to act in a given circumstance. Being sovereign, He can distribute his blessings as he chooses (Amos 4:7). He can punish the wicked man today and if the sinner repents of his wickedness, forgive him tomorrow. He can bestow a blessing and then take it away if the recipients do not show appreciation and gratitude for His kindness. With his omniscience He can distinguish between ignorance and insolence. He can discern between those who are sincerely trying to serve Him and those who are stubborn and rebellious. Job understood what they do not, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away" (Job.1:21).

We Christian live by faith in God (II Cor. 5:7). We endure the hardships of this life being confident that they are not worthy to be compared to the glory we will one day enjoy (Rom. 8:18). We know we have a heavenly Father who loves us and will reward us for faithfulness (Matt. 7:21). We look to God's Word and find comfort and consolation that enable us to face any problem, knowing that our Good Shepherd will watch over and care for us and in the end take us safely home (Ps. 23:1-4; John 10:11).

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## TO BELIEVE OR NOT TO BELIEVE

Three percent of our population profess to be unbelievers. **Atheists** deny the existence of God. **Agnostics** cannot make up their minds if God exists. **Infidels** reject Christ and Christianity and **skeptics** doubt the existence, claims and prerogatives of God, Christ and the Bible. Though few in number, unbelievers are very vocal and evangelistic and occupy strategic positions in academia journalism and the entertainment media.

**Why Some Refuse to Believe.** A few may be doubters by nature, but the overwhelming majority are converts, won primarily while enrolled in schools of higher learning. There, unbelieving professors preach their unbelief to their captive audience. Denial of God is generally preceded by a wish. Francis Bacon wisely observed, "Atheism is rather in the life than in the heart of man." Rebels feel confined and restricted by the thought of a Higher Power to whom they must answer, so they deny His existence. Plato rightly wrote, "Atheism is a disease of the soul before it becomes an error of understanding." David said, "The fool that said in his heart, "There is no God" (Ps. 14:1). The Hebrew term for *fool* is literally, "the man with a withered soul." Similarly, the denial is literally, "No God for me!" Jeremy Collier observed, "Atheism...is the result of ignorance and pride, of strong sense and feeble reason, of good eating and ill living..." Jacque Maritain wrote, "Absolute atheism is in no way a mere absence of belief in God. It is rather a refusal of God, a fight against God, a challenge to God." Voltaire said, "The atheists are, for the most part, impudent and misguided scholars who reason badly, and who, not being able to understand the Creation, the origin of evil, and other difficulties, have recourse to the hypothesis of the eternity of things and of inevitability."

**Why Are There So Few Atheists.** "There are so few atheists in the world because it takes more credulity to accept the atheistic position than most men can muster" (G. Kennedy). "To be an atheist requires an infinitely greater measure of faith than to receive all the great truths which atheism would deny" (Addison). Many who think they are unbelievers experience sudden conversion in the face of suffering or terror.

**Pity the Unbeliever.** "To see rare effects, and no cause, a motion, without a mover; a circle, without a center; a time without an eternity; a second, without a first; these are things so against philosophy and natural reason, that he must be a beast in understanding who can believe in them. The thing formed, says that nothing formed it; and that which is made, *is*, while that which made it *is not!* This folly is infinite" (J. Taylor). "Atheism is the death of hope, the suicide of the soul." An atheist is one step beyond the Devil, for even devils believe in God and tremble (Jas. 2:19). "An atheist is a disbeliever who prefers to raise his children in a Christian community" (P. Tuset). At death, an atheist is all dressed up with no place to go.

Although their surviving family would like to think their departed, unbelieving loved one is at peace somewhere, because of their unbelief, such hope is in vain. "Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto (God)" (Heb. 11:6). "Except you believe" in Christ you cannot be saved (John 8:24). God has given us solid grounds for believing. "The heavens declare the glory of God" (Ps. 19:1). The creation manifests God to us (Rom. 1:19-20). Faith will come by reading the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). Be thankful for the privilege to believe in the great God of the universe.

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## WHY DO THE HEATHEN RAGE?

King David was mystified by the hateful attacks of unbelievers against God, himself and God's cause. He pondered, "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" (Ps. 2:1). As a 21<sup>st</sup> century believer in Jehovah, you might wonder the same thing.

In the face of much evidence, unbelievers choose not to believe in or acknowledge God. To do so would be to admit their indebtedness to Him for their existence. For the provisions of their daily life they would owe Him. Most importantly, if they concede that God exists, they would be faced with the fact that, as their Creator, He has the right to demand certain things of them. He would be empowered to set the standard for right and wrong. This they cannot bear. Just the thought that they might have to stand before God in judgement (Rom. 14:11-12), terrifies them, so they deny Him and everything associated with him.

Unbelievers find it difficult to acknowledge the many wonderful things Christianity has done and continues to do for humanity. If they should acknowledge it, the next question is why do you oppose it? Why don't you lend it your support? This they do not want to do. So they rail against Christians and the church, trying to make the good look bad. At the same time they support many of the things Christians oppose, trying to make the bad look respectable (Is. 5:20).

Unbelievers are driven to rage against God by their guilty conscience. Just as the criminal defense lawyer seeks to discredit the truthful witness against his client, the unbeliever seeks to discredit God, Christ, the Bible and Christians whose existence is a testimony against them.

The marvel is, while the heathen rage against Jehovah, He loves them. He does not want them to perish (I Tim.2:5). While they vilified him and his cause, he sent his only begotten Son to die for them and make it possible for them to escape the punishment they deserve (John 3:16; Rom.5:6-9).

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## WHAT HAS ATHENS TO DO WITH JERUSALEM?

Quintus, Septimius Tertullian (160-220 A.D.) of Carthage in N. Africa was a prolific writer of the early church. His travels had carried him to Greece and Rome. He was at home in both Greek and Latin languages and literature. Among his many books is found a profound question that needs to be heard and answered today. Roman society was dominated by Greek culture and Greek philosophy dominated the intellectual environment of his day. When critics of the church compared her humble beginnings in Judea to Athens, or when converts were tempted to interpret the Christian message in light of Grecian philosophy, Tertullian asked them, "**What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?**"

To appreciate his question we must remind ourselves of the illustrious role Athens filled in that day.

- \* Athens was the fountainhead of Western civilization.
- \* Athens was the capital of Greece whose culture had imposed itself upon her Roman masters.
- \* Most of the civilized world had absorbed the culture of Athens and her people.
- \* The Athenians thought themselves to be superior to all others. They imagined themselves to be the epitome of education, culture and refinement. All others they considered barbarians. Their language they thought was the only one suitable for educated people. All other tongues to them were like the barking of dogs.
- \* Athens was the home of renowned philosophers and proud intellectuals (Acts 17:18).
- \* In Athens, human wisdom was highly exalted.
- \* Her schools were the best in the world.
- \* Athens was a city proud of her civic and governmental attainments.
- \* She gloried in her past history and attainments.
- \* The Athenians of Paul's day were very religious, but they did not know Jehovah (Acts 17:23).
- \* Athens was a city given over to idolatry. Petronius said her gods outnumbered her citizens.
- \* Hers was a city where humans beings made gods in their own image.
- \* Athens was a city that embraced a decadent, hedonistic life-style.
- \* Athenians were curiosity seekers who spent their time either to tell or hear some new thing (Acts 17:21).
- \* They viewed the preaching of the gospel by Paul as mere babbling (Acts 17:18).

What Tertullian was saying was, "What has Athens, with her pagan culture, her worldly philosophy, her idolatry, her arrogant pride, got to do with the religion of Jesus Christ?"

Fast forward to 21<sup>st</sup> century America. Look at the great universities where atheism, Marxism and every human philosophy thrive. Look at their schools of religion where Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, animism and witchcraft are all judged to equal with or even superior to Christianity. Observe their seminaries where liberal skepticism dominates and treats Christianity and the Bible as some ancient superstition.

Now consider those members of the Lord's church who after ingesting the anti-Christian fare of those secular schools come back to us seeking a place in our Christian schools. Filled with hubris and with shattered faith, they want to teach our young people the skeptical things they learned at their glorious alma mater. They are now the leading voices among our change agents. They are charting a course, that if successful, will wreck and destroy the Church of Christ. They have turned the schools where they dominate into "reeducation camps" where students are systematically poisoned against the church in which they grew up and then encouraged to go home and work for "change." Now I ask you, as did Tertullian the intellectuals of his day, "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" Given the damage these men have already done, ask yourself would we be better off had not one of them been given a position in our Christian schools? True, there are a few noble exceptions. But the damage the rest have done is massive and irreparable. If they want to be worldly, secular intellectuals let them go to their Athens. There they can spend their time in seeking something new or different (Acts 17:21).

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## REASONING WITH AN ATHEIST

Dear Rocky: Your lengthy tome is before me and I will now share my reflections on your thoughts.

- \* I am quite willing to affirm my belief that God exists. You are either unwilling or unable to state your case. Mere denial amounts to, "you said, he said." It proves nothing. I could deny that you exist. The Social Security Administration sometimes does this. When this occurs, a person must prove his identity.
- \* You cite the "problem of evil" as a basis for your belief in no god. Perhaps you would be willing to state in your next letter your argument based on the problem of evil. In his discussion with Dr. Thomas B. Warren, Christian, Dr. Anthony Flew attempted to do so and failed.
- \* I find it interesting that you have crafted your own set of standards that God must meet or else you will deny his existence. They appear more like excuses than reasonable arguments to prove that belief in God is untenable.
- \* You carefully dodged my argument on **what you would have to do and be in order to prove that no God exists**. The argument still stands untouched, just avoided.
- \* You claim that devotees of no-god live by a high standard of their own making and are benefactors of humanity. Would you be so kind as to name the orphan homes, homes for the aged, homes for unwed mothers, and hospitals devoted atheists have founded and funded for humanity? Are there any atheists who have left home and family to go to the primitive regions of the world to teach the people their belief in no-god, feed their hungry, build schools, hospitals, dig wells, show them how to produce more and better food, translate their spoken language into written form and lift them from their ignorance and savagery to become a civilized people?
- \* Since you deny a supreme being, it follows that you could not posit a Creator. Please tell me how you account for the origin of the cosmos? And of life on earth? Do you believe that something came from nothing, by its own effort? Do you believe that life came from inorganic material without intelligent assistance? Would you affirm that a cosmic explosion is a reasonable explanation for the ordered universe and the myriads of highly designed organisms and things we observe in nature?
- \* It is an unquestioned truth that "every effect must have an adequate cause." What is it that set our vast solar systems in motion? To understand this, place a ball on your kitchen table and wait for it to move. Absent some outside force, it will set there until it decays to dust. What is the force that set our world into motion?
- \* You concede that your faith in no-god does not elevate your values or behavior. Perhaps you can explain from whence your atheistic morals derive their conclusions about right and wrong, good and evil? Having done that, please explain why anyone should accept them since, according to your view, they are only the random consequences of mindless matter in motion?
- \* You opine that your moral intuitions are hardwired in you. Who hardwired them? Since you are only a highly evolved animal, why are your moral thoughts any better than those of a dog or cat?
- \* The Christian's faith in God is based on evidence presented in nature and in the Bible (Ps. 19:1; Rom. 10:17). The Bible imposes duties and responsibilities on those who chose to believe in and follow God's Son (John 14:15). Their faith and the moral code that accompanies it has blessed the human race and produced the highest and most humane civilization in human history.
- \* Slavery existed in all ancient nations...remnants of it still survive in China and some Buddhist and Muslim nations. The teachings of the Bible imposed humane duties and responsibilities on those who owned slaves. It regulated an existing social evil. All the while, the fundamental teachings of the Bible undermined and eventually brought about the collapse of the institution of slavery. It was the influence of Christianity that brought an end to Roman slavery. William Wilberforce, a devoted believer, is credited with breaking the back of the slave industry in England. Christians and churches

played a major role in helping to end slavery in America and in helping the freed slaves following their emancipation. Did any atheists distinguish themselves in this deliverance?

\* You mention an insane woman who drowned her children. She claimed that God, in a dream told her to do so. Do any atheists have mental problems? Do they sometimes commit atrocities? That someone dreams that God said or did not say something is no proof of anything about God. Today God speaks to humanity only through his Son, Jesus and the New Testament he gave us (Heb. 1:1-2).

\* You say we humans have the power to solve our own problems through reason and the scientific method. Two questions: What does your system provide regarding guilt for wrongs done? How would your scientific method solve the question of what to do with an evil murderer?

\* You mention that those of your persuasion have as their highest goal, this worldly happiness, freedom, etc, for all mankind? Has there ever been a human government founded on atheism that held such a view?

\* You say, "I can no more choose to change my mind than you can choose to relinquish your faith..." Should I conclude from this that you are a Determinist? Are you a preprogramed robot that looks like a man? If you cannot change your mind, then all your searching and questioning is wasted effort. You are no different than a tree that has been programed to bear acorns...if you cannot change. I chose to become a Christian. I can choose to deny Him or I can choose to be faithful unto death. The God who created me, made me in his image (Gen. 1:26) which, among other things, means that I have volition.

\* You have twice mentioned the Bible and the Koran, Christianity and Islam as of the same genre. To do this is a false comparison. It would be the same as me assuming that all atheists are the same as anarchists. As a Christian I will tolerate your unbelief and allow you freedom to live in my society without hindrance or limitations. If you go to a Muslim nation and proclaim your atheism, you would quickly learn the difference in Islam and Christianity.

\* You said that there are noble standards and goals of atheism. Would you please name some authors and their books wherein I can find expressed your atheistic moral and ethical code and suggestions for a good life of unbelief?

\* You say, "Our values, religion, ethical, political and social have their sources in human experience and culture. That being true, slavery, of which you often speak, was simply a part of that human experience and culture, not the fault of God or his Book.

\* You say, Many atheists believe in a far-reaching social program that stands for the establishment, throughout the world, of democracy, peace and a high standard of living..." Is this what Marx, Engels and Lenin had in mind for Russia and the world? Has there ever been such a utopia, founded on atheism, that turned out good? Where?

\* You say, Many atheists believe that life is precious. But I ask you why is your life more precious than a worm, a fly, a dog or a tree? If you are only the product of natural forces at work, a random bunch of atoms, then you can only claim to be a bit more evolved than those things. On what basis would you argue that a human life is precious, or more valuable than some other creature?

\* You say, "Whether or not one has a soul has nothing to do with morals." It has everything to do with morals! The foundation of our legal system assumes that man is different than animals; that he is accountable; that within him is something that gives him unique value and can be judged good or bad. Our laws look back to those revealed in the ancient Biblical code. On the doors of our Supreme Court building are engraved images of the two tables containing the Ten Commandments. Another image, within the hall, is of Moses, the Law-giver, depicted with the tables of stone.

\* As to the morality of supporting ones family, Scripture says, If any provide not for his own, especially those of his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel (I Tim. 5:8). To Christians, the life of a baby is equal in value to that of any other person, no matter how rich, powerful or intelligent. Christians have worked diligently for the last 35 years to bring an end to abortion on demand that has destroy no less than 50 million unborn babies...many in the final month of gestation. I have yet to hear of atheists who are pro-life. Do you know of such a group? The man who was executed for gathering firewood, was punished for violating the law under which he lived and to which he had pledged his obedience (Ex. 19:5-8). This seems harsh by our standards, but you said that good and evil are judged by the laws under which we live and by accepted social and cultural standards. Given that, on what basis do you fault this judgment?

\* You say, "The majority most definitely does not 'rule' when it come to truth." Wow! How does an atheist know what is truth? Is there such a thing in your world? You have earlier said we can know nothing with certainty. Where would

you go to find truth? Who decides when something is or is not truth? Christians have a workable answer. Show me yours.

\* You deny any interest in the atheist being his own god. Yet you do claim to be your own master, to be the final arbiter in deciding the value or morality of things. The most ancient and universal desire of sinful man is to be his own master...i.e., his own ruler or god. It was that desire that led the parents of the human race to violate the one prohibition their Creator had given them. When the Evil One tempted them his final and convincing argument was "Ye shall be gods." (This is the meaning of the Hebrew text). This is the basic motive of secular humanism. Rebellious people can't brook the thought of someone being their Master; that they have to answer to Him; that they must abide by his standards. So, they deny His existence. They deny His Book. They rail against His church. They deny a coming judgement with a heaven or a hell as the final destiny of man. They desperately hope they are right in their conclusions.

\* With a wave of your hand you would dismiss the horrendous crimes that occurred when atheists gained complete control of nations such as Russia, Cuba, China and Cambodia. This is a dodge. Tell me why they failed to produce godless paradise on earth? Why instead they produced mass misery and death?

\* You try to ignore my argument from the design evident throughout the universe. Where there is design there must be a designer. If you truly believe there is no design in the eye, then consider an automobile, an airplane or a computer. Of the millions of these that have existed was there one of them that was the result of random atoms colliding, or an explosion? If you are granted five billion years, would you expect to ever find one produced by the forces of nature? If not why? Need I remind you that they are the result of intelligent design.

\* You evidently believe that human body and brain with their many marvelous systems are terribly imperfect. Has any atheist produced a better model? Are they working on a plan for a better model. Now some unbelievers have proposed and even tried a program of eugenics that was supposed to produce a better species of man. Can you tell me what a better designed man, produced by an atheist, would be like?

\* You responded that God also designed cancer, ebola, etc. You evidently do not remember from your serious study of the Bible that with the introduction of sin, our world suffered disastrous consequences; the most painful of which is death (Gen. 2:17; 3:13-23). From the seed of the poppy good men can make a narcotic to ease the suffering of mankind. From the same material evil men can make drugs to enslave, degrade and impoverish people. In America, our government grants and guarantees freedom to all who live here. Some however abuse their freedom to commit criminal deeds. Consequently they are punished and their freedom is taken from them. God made us and gave us a wonderful, mind and body, a marvelous earth and great freedom.. Our sin has created many of our problems and exacerbated others. For this we cannot blame God.

\* When you approach the Bible as a hostile critic, scouring its pages to find something you think can be used to discredit it, you receive no benefit from your study and you certainly will not understand it. Atheists rage against things they do not understand or the reason why those things are. Rejecting that which could provide you forgiveness from guilt and show you how to enjoy a most wonderful life, you fail to understand that it will judge you in the last day (John 12:48).

\* As I read your letters, I can't help but wonder if you have ever considered the consequences you will face if your happen to be wrong? If, after a life-time of believing in God and living according to the standards He has provided in his holy book, I am found wrong, I will be none the worse for it. I will just vaporize. In the mean time I will have lived a productive live, free from guilt and shame, I will have done all the good I could to all the people I have been associated with. I will have lived a life of optimism, joy, happiness and hope. If I have been correct in my convictions and God does exist I will live on in another dimension in heavenly bliss and happiness. But if you are wrong? You will have to face the God you have denied and blasphemed in this life and give account for what you have said and done (II Cor. 5:10). You will at last confess Him and his Son but it will be of no avail since you refused to do so in this life (Phil. 2:10). This is your period of probation. If you waste it, you will hear Him say, Depart from me, I never knew you. You will be cast into a place of punishment more horrible than anything you can image in this life (Matt. 25:41). As your concerned neighbor, I ask you to think about these things.

With best wishes, I am,

John Waddey

## CORRESPONDENCE WITH A NEIGHBOR WHOSE FAITH IS SHIPWRECKED

Dear Friend: May I ask what was the occasion of your loss of faith? You say that you have considered every angle. Have you wrestled with such questions as the origin of life? The gaps between the diverse kinds of life such as cold-blooded and warm blooded? What is the explanation for the origin of language? I watched Dr. Anthony Flew, acknowledged to be the chief spokesman for atheism in England, flounder when confronted by our brother, Dr. Thomas Warren. Obviously beaten, he conceded he was a doubter, that he could not prove his proposition which was, "I know that God does not exist." A year or so ago, Flew publicly confessed that he now acknowledges there must be some higher power. I am assuming that you are a man of mature years. Have you considered what may lie beyond the curtain of death? What if you are mistaken in your conclusions? Without faith in God, you live without hope of anything more than the present. The cow or dog has as much to live for as do you. Their future is as bright as yours.

You question why we use medicine as well as prayer. Of course we use the medical facilities as we pray. Luke was a physician and a preacher. Paul encourage Timothy to use a little wine for his stomach's sake and his often infirmities (I Tim. 5:23).

Your assertion that we cannot prove that Jesus ever existed is rash. Do you believe that Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar or Cleopatra lived? We have easily as much proof for Jesus' life on earth. Luke is very careful to establish the time of his birth (Luke 2:1-2). We know his earthly parents by name, the town in which they lived, the village in which he was born. We have the written testimony of those who were his companions for 3 ½ years. The very calendar we use acknowledges that he was born at a particular time in human history. It divides history into the years before Christ and A. D., the year of our Lord.

I have encountered five kinds of atheists: (1) Those who have never heard the evidence for God; (2) Those whose faith has been shaken by the deceptive arguments of unbelievers; (3) Those whose life-style pushes them to deny that they will be accountable to a higher power; (4) Those who have come to hate the idea of God, preferring instead to be the master of their own fate...their own god and (5) Those whose intellectual attainments have filled them with pride and they feel it a thing to be proud of to deny the existence of God....to imply that only the weak, the small-minded and the ignorant believe such things. Perhaps there are others. I want to understand what drives an intelligent man to such a conclusion.

I write these lines as a friend, one who cares for your soul. It will be of little comfort when we face judgement and have only the failures of others to blame for our decision to turn our backs on the one who Created and sustained us....who sent his only Son to die for us.

Sincerely,

John Waddey

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## SECULAR MAN ON HIS KNEES

We live in a society that is increasingly secular. Schools have closed their doors to God, the Bible and Christianity. Broadcast media have pretty well done the same. Liberal politicians are determined to keep Christians and the church at arms length. The courts are even worse. But when secular man receives heavy blows that knock him to his knees, he still reaches out to Christians and the church to help get him back on his feet.

- \* When natural disasters strike and victims are many, secular people welcome with open arms groups such as Churches of Christ, Disaster Relief, the Salvation Army and other church volunteers. The victims of hurricane Katrina were glad the Christians came to their relief.
- \* When a town has a sizeable population of homeless people, they welcome a church sponsored "Rescue Mission" to provide food and lodging for them.
- \* When a community has a multitude of children who will be on the streets in the summer months, they welcome the summer camps that churches provide.
- \* When young people have "growing up problems," secular societies welcome the counseling and youth programs that churches offer.
- \* When racial tensions erupt in violence, community officials often recruit ministers of churches to go to the troubled communities to try to defuse the explosive situation.
- \* When some tragedy occurs such as a mine collapse, or a auto accident that claims several lives, secular people look to preachers and churches for comfort and consolation for survivors.
- \* When our nation is attacked by hostile enemies and when our sons and daughters must go to war, a secularist community wants ministers and their congregations to lift up prayers for their safety.

We can conclude that our secular neighbors, politicians, judges and pundits really are saying, "We don't like you Christians, we don't want you around to remind us of our godless lives and misconduct, but when we have a serious problem we do want you to serve us and help us take care of it. Don't expect thanks for gratitude from us, but do remain prepared to assist us when we need you."

Plutarch observed, "The worship most acceptable to God, comes from a thankful and cheerful heart." I guess that explains why it is so hard for secularists to be grateful for the benefits Christians and churches provide them.

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# **DOES GOD EXIST?**

## **CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN**

**JOHN WADDEY, CHRISTIAN**

**AND**

**AN ATHEIST**

(John Waddey's first article was published in The Arizona Republic newspaper. Mr. Ken Ganzer, an unbeliever, responded and Mr. Waddey replied to his objections).

## **TO BELIEVE IN GOD**

**John Waddey**

God is! He lives! He reigns! He cares for you! We live in a skeptical world. While there are few outspoken atheists, millions live with weak faith, not able to articulate intelligent reasons for their belief in God. Biblical faith is much more than a warm, emotional feeling that there might be someone up there somewhere! Faith comes from hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17). True faith is based on solid evidence. It is a logical, reasoned conclusion based on observation, experience and revealed truth.

\* Consider the cosmos. "The heavens declare the glory of God, the firmament showeth his handiwork" (Ps. 19:1). Look up on a starry night. Millions of witnesses radiating light and energy, hurtling through space with minute mathematical precision, cry out, "God made us!"

\* Look about you. The lowly weed, the primitive snail testify of a Creator. Man cannot make one of these living things. All men together with all their wealth, power, knowledge and technology cannot do so. It took a supernatural power to make them. Take a handful of dirt, a cup of water, a sample of air and analyze them. Their complex design and interrelationship with all things living speak of an all-wise intelligence we call God.

\* Before a mirror, view yourself. Your intricate eye, delicate ear, articulate tongue; your magnificent mind all are evidence of God's creation. Such does not and cannot happen by accident. Ask yourself, how did you learn to talk? Someone had to teach you! How did the first human beings learn to talk? An intelligent being had to teach them!

\* Look at your watch. Its existence demands an intelligent creator. Look at the design in every aspect of the creation. Design demands an intelligent Designer. Who decided that birds need hollow bones or that plants need bees for pollination?

\* Your capacity to love and hate, to choose good or evil, to feel remorse at wrong done, your desire to go to a better place when this life is over, all testify that you are made in the image of God. What animal has such ability?

Paul taught the Romans that by observing the things that are made we can clearly see God's everlasting power and divinity (Rom. 1:20). To enable us to understand and believe in God's goodness, his righteousness, his love for us and his will for our lives, God sent his Son to live among us. Jesus said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father (John 14:9). He also gave us a message in written form. We call it the Bible. It is a unique book, unlike any other ever written. It tells us the things we could never learn by observing nature. When read and believed, it produces faith in our hearts (Rom. 10:17). Belief and submission to God are essential to complete happiness. We are incurably religious. We "cannot live by bread alone" (Matt. 4:4). To stifle religious needs distorts our personalities. Believing in God, we can see and understand ourselves as we truly are; creatures wholly dependent upon God. It enables us to see purpose in life and the dignity of our fellow-man. Belief enables us to live in harmony with God (Heb. 11:6). It gives us a sure hope of life with God after this life is over. I believe, do you?

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## RESPONSE OF MR. KEN GANZER

Dear Sir: I would like to comment on and ask you some questions about your article "Evidence of God all around us" in the Arizona Republic. Your words are in quotes below:

"God is! He lives! He reigns! He cares for you!" Evidence please. For any of these ridiculous statements.

"Faith comes from hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17)." How can I hear god's word? Your god has never spoken to me, even though I prayed and prayed and prayed to your god for years, believing with all my heart, asking with all my strength, for any word, any sign. Nothing. Tell me, what does your god sound like? What does your god say to you? Why does your god ignore me? More importantly, why does your god ignore the countless suffering children around the world? Why would your god give me, an atheist, a great life, and let some believers and innocent children suffer horrible, agonizing deaths?

"True faith is based on solid evidence." If you had evidence, you wouldn't need faith, now would you?

"It is a logical, reasoned conclusion based on observation, experience and revealed truth." Ok. Let's consider your logic below. "Consider the cosmos. "The heavens declare the glory of God, the firmament showeth his handiwork" (Ps. 19:1) Look up on a starry night. Millions of witnesses radiating light and energy, hurtling through space with minute mathematical precision, cry out, "God made us!" Evidence please. I'd especially like evidence of this firmament you mention. And why would your god make the vast majority of the cosmos uninhabitable for us without special equipment that we have to create? Even most of the earth is uninhabitable to us without this equipment. Some design plan your god has.

"Look about you. The lowly weed, the primitive snail testify of a creator. Man cannot make one of these living things. All men together with all their wealth, power, knowledge and technology cannot do so. It took a supernatural power to make them. Take a handful of dirt, a cup of water, a sample of air and analyze them. Their complex design and interrelationship with all things living speak of an all-wise intelligence we call God." Just because humans can't do it doesn't mean your god did. Those aren't the only two choices. Your logic and reasoning are faulty. You know, an ant can make an ant. Does that mean your god is on the same level as an ant? C'mon.

"Before a mirror, view yourself. Your intricate eye, delicate ear, articulate tongue, your magnificent mind all are evidence of God's creation. Such does not and cannot happen by accident. Ask yourself, how did you learn to talk? Someone had to teach you! How did the first human beings learn to talk? An intelligent being had to teach them!" You must know, don't you, that the Argument from Design is one of the weakest arguments you could use? Just because something is intricate, delicate, articulate, and magnificent doesn't make it designed. Surely you know that the human eye alone is so poorly designed that any junior-level engineer can point out its shortcomings. If you're wearing glasses, you already know its shortcomings. And if you are arguing from design, then you must also accept that agonizing birth defects are part of the grand design. Is that what you're saying? That the bad design is also from your god? And who is claiming that the things you mentioned "happened by accident?" There are so many flaws and illogical statements in that one paragraph alone, I could spend hours on it.

"Look at your watch." Hold it right there. Surely even you can understand that watches aren't living and don't evolve. Poor analogy. Totally illogical. And even if it were good, it's easy to see that watches are made. We have plenty of evidence for that. Where's the comparable evidence for our creator? I can visit numerous watchmakers. Could you ask your god to visit me? The rest of that paragraph, too, contains several fundamental flaws in thinking. You get the gist of my questions and concerns. I'll skip ahead to this:

"He also gave us a message in written form. We call it the Bible. It is a unique book, unlike any other ever written. It tells us the things we could never learn by observing nature." What does it tell us that we can't observe? I know it tells us that the earth is flat, that rabbits chew cud, that insects have four legs, that bats are birds, that you can climb a mountain and see all the kingdoms of the earth, that two of every animal can fit on a boat, that people can live for hundreds of years. And that's just for starters. If this is what you're referring to, then I agree with you. It tells us things we could never observe in nature. One more question: How do you explain the lying and murderous nature of your god in the bible? Or is it OK not to take the bible literally in those verses?

Thanks for your time. I look forward to your responses.

Ken. Ganzer

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## REPLY OF JOHN WADDEY TO MR. GANZER

Dear Mr. Ganzer: Thank you for taking time to respond to my article published in the Republic, about **Evidences for Faith in God**. As you requested I will be happy to reply to your observations. Having twice read your rather angry missive, I feel compelled to ask, "If there is no God, why are you so angry at Him? And why are you so determined to prove that a non-existing phantom is such a bad thing?" Can you explain your rage against a non-entity and a book that has no meaning or value to you?

First of all, may I observe that strong, bombastic words prove nothing. I made my assertion that God exists and offered sufficient reliable evidence for faith in Him. You did not offer logically sound proof that my arguments were faulty. Your

endless questions neither refute my thesis nor establish yours. To be a creditable atheist you need to declare boldly that “you know that God does not exist” and then set forth logical and irrefutable arguments to establish your proposition.

From your letter I can deduct that you never enjoyed a saving relationship with God. You are filled with hatred for God and everything that relates to him and his will for mankind. You have a faulty understanding of faith, thus you have built a straw man which you have proceeded to pommel; all to no end. “Faith is the assurance of things hope for, a conviction of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1).

If you deny my assertion that the cosmos is evidence of a rational Creator, then state your evidence, not your theory, for the origin of the cosmos. You assert that the cosmos and earth are poorly made. Would you go on record that you could build a better system? If so why not do so? Your incapability refutes your presumptuous charge.

If man can't make an ant or a sun, you should tell me how they came into existence. All you have is a theory based on your prior assumption that you do not want to acknowledge a higher power to whom you are accountable. If the argument from design to a Designer is weak, then you should be able to refute it. Can you? Would you affirm that watches happen by accident? Or that books result from an explosion in a print shop?

Your baseless assertions about what the Bible says demonstrate that either you have never read it or that your reading was with a jaundiced eye and a lense tinted with militant hatred for its message. By the way, show me the verse that says the earth is flat. Before you commit yourself, you might wish to check Isaiah 40:22. Would you be so kind as put into words your proof that the animals saved on Noah's ark could not possibly have fit into his ship? This will be a challenging exercise for you.

Your final statement is pure blasphemy. You might be giving serious thought to what you will say to the Judge of mankind when He asks you to give account for charging Him with lying and murder. You might wish to take a look at II Corinthians 5:10 to help in your preparation.

I have enjoyed reading your declaration of your unbelief and the opportunity to respond to you. But I must say that your tirade against God reminds me of a rebellious teenager who is determined to renounce his parents and demonstrate that he is no longer their child.

In closing, may I gently remind you that in spite of your angry denunciation of Him, God still loves you and would gladly welcome you back to his family. Jesus died for rebels such as you and will extend his saving mercy to you should you ever repent and turn to him in humble, obedient faith. I send this response with a prayer that your anger will subside and your hardened heart melt while you have opportunity to change your course. There are not too many atheists left when they reach point of final departure. It a lonely group, “all dressed up and nowhere to go.” Should you ever wish to study God's Word so you can correctly understand it's wonderful message, I will be happy to assist you in that endeavor. Wishing you the very best in all things, I am sincerely,

John Waddey, a believer in the God of the Bible.

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**MR. GANZER'S SECOND RESPONSE TO MR. WADDEY**

Dear Sir: I am writing for three reasons. The most important is to ask you a favor. The second is to explain why I wrote to you before. And the third is to address some of the points you made in your response to me. So I'll take them in that order.

First, the favor. I wanted to tell you that I am deeply concerned about the presence of hunger in the world. Because of what I do and where I live, I see hungry people everyday. The suffering --not only physically but emotionally--is devastating. And I'm sure people in this country aren't suffering nearly as badly as the poor, hungry men, women, and (tragically) children in other countries.

As you know, I lack belief in your god or in any of the thousands of other gods humans have invented. But just because I've seen no evidence for a god and therefore lack belief in a god doesn't mean there isn't one (just as the converse--simply believing in something--doesn't make it so). So, on the off chance that there is a god, and on the off chance that you are in contact with this god, I would like to humbly make a request of you. Could you ask this god of yours to intervene and stop the hunger? Never mind the diseases and birth defects and hurricanes and tornadoes and floods. Tell your god I promise not to bring those up. Just the hunger. Start small even. Stop it for a week. Stop it in children only. It doesn't matter. Just something. We're desperate. I would be willing to do anything your god wanted in exchange for at least some children not being hungry anymore. I would go to church every Sunday. I would sell my possessions and become your god's biggest proselytizer. I would gladly burn in hell for eternity if your god would promise to stop people from being hungry now. I am begging your god to perform one of those loaves and fishes miracles again. We need help desperately. I will do anything. Could you ask your god for me? Please? This is the same request I ask all Christians I meet. So far, nothing has changed. I still see and help the same hungry children and others every day. But maybe you're different. Maybe your god will listen to you. So it's worth a shot. I feel very strongly about this. Please. Thank you. Oh, and I don't want to hear from your god that suffering is ok now because these people will be rewarded in heaven. Why does getting to heaven have to hurt so much? It's absurd. Tell your god that is simply unacceptable and if it continues your god will have to answer to me. (Is this why your god hasn't revealed itself to me? Because it's scared of me and what I'll say to it?) People have been dying of hunger for far too long. We suck at stopping hunger. We need help. Your god has the power to intervene, so please ask your god to do so. The bible says your god intervened regularly in the past. Why not now? I'll do anything in exchange. I don't want anything for me. Just stop the pain of hungry people. Tell your god to perform a miracle and we'll never know (so we don't have to worry about that pesky little interference with freewill excuse believers are so fond of). Please ask your god, ok? Thank you. Maybe with your help, this time will be different...

Now, to the second point. You seem to think I am angry AT your god. That is a tired old argument and is not true (as I would assume you know). But I don't know you, so I'll give you the benefit of the doubt. I'll assume you are simply ignorant on this point and set you straight. Then, if you ever use this argument again (or the others I'll address below), then I'll know you are not ignorant but intentionally trying to deceive. Saying I don't believe in your god because I'm angry at it is like telling you that you stopped believing in the tooth fairy because you're angry at it. If you can just get over your anger and believe, the tooth fairy will forgive you and visit you again. But you must stop your anger, have faith, pray hard (I mean REALLY hard), and the tooth fairy will appear to you. If you don't see the tooth fairy, you're not doing it right. Or instead of the tooth fairy, substitute Zeus, Osiris, Ra, Allah, Mithra, Krishna, Odin, Thor, Poseidon, Mercury, Santa Claus, or Darth Vader. See how silly this argument is? No, I am angry when people such as yourself use tired old arguments that have been thoroughly debunked and discredited. I am angry that you are deceiving people (I'm assuming unintentionally, but we'll see). And (as you can tell from my opening paragraphs) I'm angry that your religion allows you to so easily ignore all the suffering in the world and to go through incredible brain contortions to justify it.

It just takes a little research to see how old and discredited all your arguments are. I would highly recommend that you read a couple chapters of *The Blind Watchmaker* by Richard Dawkins. Then you'll see how poor and irrelevant your watch analogy is. He shows you why in easy-to-understand language. Or better yet, please, please, please read *Finding Darwin's God* by Kenneth Miller. Just the first few chapters if you like. This guy is like you, a believer. He starts by thoroughly

explaining and debunking all the tired arguments you're using. It's fascinating, and you'll learn a lot. But then he takes it a step further and shows how you can accept evolution and science and still believe in god. You'll really like it. Plus then you'll stop deceiving people with blatantly false arguments like the Argument from Anger, the Argument from Incredulity, the Argument from Ignorance, and the bad analogy of the watch. Just because you can't imagine how something is done doesn't mean a god did it (Argument from Incredulity). I'll show you one of the many reasons the watch analogy is absurd (besides the fact that watches don't evolve). You say I can't make an ant or the sun, so obviously god did it. OK, I can't make a good cheese omelet either. Does that mean god did it? Or does that mean the chef down the street is god? Or let's use your watch. I can't make your watch either. Are you saying god therefore did it? Or are you saying your watchmaker is god? See how silly these arguments are? And Richard Dawkins and Kenneth Miller (a believer like you) give far better explanations why this tired analogy is old, irrelevant, inappropriate, and deceitful.

Also, you seem to believe that if evolution (I assume that's what you mean by the theory you keep referring to) is false, that means your god is true. Can you see how faulty that reasoning is? It's a false dichotomy. Those aren't the only two choices, and proving one wrong doesn't make the other true. You stated it's only a theory. By that, am I to assume you also question the theory of gravity and the germ theory of disease? Like many believers, you don't understand the scientific definition of the word theory. I wish you would stop trying to deceive people (unintentionally I assume) with this argument. Evolution says nothing about how life began (that's abiogenesis). Evolution has nothing to do with the origin of life. It has to do with the origin of SPECIES (hence the book name). Millions of people accept evolution and a god. One doesn't rule out the other. So please stop deceiving people with this. Evolution is both fact (THAT it occurs) and theory (HOW it occurs). Now you know.

Your "higher power" as you refer to it is doing a shitty job for having such power. I'm a mere mortal and I can see the suffering and faults of this world. I don't understand why people such as yourself look at only the good things and say your god did it. Does the grand plan include birth defects? Why do you ignore the bad? Is it because the devil did those? Ah yes, another invisible evil fairy--one your god can't control it seems. Maybe you can explain the reasoning behind all this to me. And yes, I'm going on record and saying that, if I had your god's powers, I could do a far better job of creating a world than your god has done. No question. Give me your god's powers for a day, and things would be much better in this world. Even you could do better. And I think you know that.

You say I have a faulty understanding of faith. OK. I'm setting you straight about atheism below so set ME straight. What's a reasonable understanding of faith? You also are misinformed about the definition of atheism. You said: "To be a creditable atheist you need to declare boldly that "you know that God does not exist" and then set forth logically sound, and irrefutable arguments to establish your proposition." That demonstrates you do not understand the definition of atheism. Take apart the word. In Greek "a" means "without" or "not" (as in atypical) and "theos" means "god." From this standpoint, an atheist would simply be not a theist. Or someone without a belief in God...not necessarily someone who believes that God does not exist. According to its Greek roots, atheism is the absence or lack of belief in a god. That's it. It's really that simple. I lack belief in god(s). Lacking is different than claiming or denying. I simply lack belief. No claims, no denials, no bold declarations, no "knowing" (as you mistakenly stated above when you said "you KNOW that god does not exist"). That's agnosticism. Agnosticism is about knowledge. Atheism is about belief. Many atheists are also agnostic. Now some atheists do go on and claim that they believe there is no god. But that's the definition of explicit or strong atheism. Implicit or weak atheism is defined as lack of belief in god. They're the majority of atheists. So when you hear the word atheist, all you can assume is that they lack belief in god. If you want to know if they also claim there is no god, you have to ask them. So for you to say that I need to "declare boldly" and "set forth logically sound, and irrefutable arguments to establish your proposition" is illogical and not true. I don't have a "proposition." I simply lack belief in YOUR "proposition" because I lack evidence. No evidence means no belief. I don't need to make another proposition to lack belief in yours. So are you asking me to provide logically sound arguments that I lack belief? Are you calling me a liar? Or maybe you mean that I have to boldly declare and provide logically sound arguments that a god doesn't exist. That's silly (although possible depending on the definition of the god in question). In general, though, the person making the claim has the burden of proof, not the person who lacks belief in the claim.

If I tell you that an invisible pink unicorn is running the world, you'd expect me to provide proof...or at least evidence. You'd be taken aback if I answered your request to prove it exists by saying "prove that it doesn't." That's an absurd argument. You would have a very difficult time proving a negative. I don't think you COULD prove that an invisible pink unicorn (or is it a purple phantom?) isn't running the world. Does that mean you believe in it? See how absurd your argument is? I make the extraordinary claim about the unicorn or phantom, therefore I should provide extraordinary proof or evidence. The same with you and your god. Not the other way around. Simple logic. (Although, like I said, some gods can be logically proven to not exist. The Christian god, for example, is defined with many qualities that are logically not possible in combination. I'll find and send you that proof if you like. It can also be shown that the Christian god, assuming it exists, is not worthy of worship).

You also said there aren't too many atheists left when they reach the point of final departure. If you can make such an unsubstantiated assertion, so can I. I claim that there are NO religious people AFTER the point of final departure. Because, like before you were born, you will be unaware of anything after you die. You will have no brain, no senses, nothing to use to comprehend reality. When your brain stops, you cease to be you. No awareness. Just like in the billions of years before you were born. Religious or not, you cannot change that. Why would you think the period after death is any different than the state you were in before birth?

You also asked me for passages that show the bible says the earth is flat. Here they are: The devil takes Jesus to the top of a mountain and shows him "all the kingdoms of the world" (Luke 4:5). Or, in the book of Revelation (7:1), John "saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth." Or Daniel's tree is tall enough to see "to the end of the earth" (Dan. 4:10-11). Or god will gather up the people of Judea "from the four corners of the earth" (Is. 11:12). Seems to me that the earth is flat and has four corners. A flat earth is the only way you can climb a mountain and see all the kingdoms. You can't even do that from Everest today. Or the tree could see to the end of the earth only if the earth is flat. Pretty good interpretation, huh?

Actually, I am just doing what believers do regularly: interpret what the words are really saying. In fact, you offered to help me correctly understand the bible's messages. So I assume my way of interpretation is not right, but your way of interpretation is. So, clearly we can all interpret passages of the bible. You should know that you can find passages in the bible to support just about any position you want to take. For example, here's one. How would you interpret this: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father, his wife and his children, his brothers and sisters--yes, even his own life--he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26). A Christian told me that, in this case, and in this context, hate means love. Or hate means "like less." Or hate was a translation error. See what I mean? In one verse, I'm supposed to take the words literally. In others, I'm not. It's all up to your interpretation. Do you hate? Do you have to hate to be your god's disciple? I didn't think so. You have to interpret the passage to your liking. I've given sound reasons for my interpretation, so I feel confident that the bible says the earth is flat. You know, I wonder if we're reading the same bible. Your questions and comments make me think you have a different version (or maybe you haven't read it all. Or maybe you're ignoring the bad again).

For instance, you seemed to question whether your god lied and murdered. Are we reading the same bible? You know, the one where your god murders nearly every living thing (humans and animals) in a giant flood? Or where your god murders nearly everyone in Sodom and Gomorrah? Or where your god murders first-born Egyptian boys? Do you want all the other examples? Not to mention unbelievable statements about rape, incest, and slavery. And the lies. Let me know and I'll send you a (really long) list.

And your comment about all animals fitting in the ark. No one is arguing "that the animals saved on Noah's ark could not possibly have fit into his ship." (Assuming any of this actually occurred, which is a huge leap). But anyway, whatever animals he got on the ship, no one is arguing that they fit. As I'm sure you know, what's being argued is that they represent all the animals of the earth. Surely, you cannot believe this. It's a metaphor or something right? One of the (many) passages we can interpret any way we want to make the story work in our minds and with what we know of today's world? Please,

tell me you don't believe this event actually occurred. If you do, I can help you see the error of your thinking.

You also questioned whether I've even read the bible. I think you'll be surprised to learn that I encourage EVERYONE to read the bible. It's the best way to see how absurd the whole religion is. Reading the bible from end to end is what started me on the road to atheism. Reading all those terrible passages, all the ones that people like you conveniently skipped in Sunday school and when I was an altar boy. Once you REALLY read the entire bible, you begin to understand how implausible it all is (and how badly your god comes across). That's how I started many, many years ago. And since then, I've only discovered more to support my position that, given what we know today, and given how many gods humans have invented, and given how Christianity copied from earlier religions, and given the dozens of other creation myths, and given how they can't be reconciled with each other, and given all the mistakes and contradictions and horror in the bible, well..given all that, it makes sense to lack belief in gods as defined today, no matter what religion we're talking about.

Well, it looks like I've already launched into addressing your points. I've enjoyed our discussion. You know, you and I are very much alike in one way. There are thousands of gods you lack belief in. I happen to lack belief in just one more than you. The bottom line for me is this: there's no evidence that your god is running the show, or that your god (or any god) even exists. No evidence, no belief. Show me evidence and I'll no longer lack belief in such an extraordinary claim. But in all these years, your god has not revealed itself to me in any way. So I have to conclude that your god, if it exists, does not want to reveal itself to me at this time. Your god doesn't seem too concerned that it hasn't made itself known to me. If your god is not too concerned about it, why should I be? Why should you?

Thanks for reading! Let me know what you think of Kenneth Miller's book.

Ken Ganzer.

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## **MR. WADDEY'S SECOND REPLY TO MR. GANZER**

Dear Mr. Ganzer: Thanks for taking time to respond to my letter.

You are deeply concerned about hunger and suffering in the world. Because we Christians believe in God, we devote a great deal of our time and energy to relieving the suffering and hunger of the world. I personally have helped to raise funds from Christians to relieve hunger and suffering, not only at home or among friends and family, but in third world nations as well. Across the ages Christians have founded hospitals, orphanages, homes for the mentally ill, leprosariums, homes for unwed mothers, rescue missions for the homeless and homes for troubled children. We have worked for prison reform, more humane care for the mentally ill and aged....not to speak of schools for giving the poor skills to earn a better living. We continue to send multitudes of medical missionaries to underdeveloped nations to help people find relief from their suffering. Perhaps you could list similar projects you and your atheistic brothers have built and maintained? Surely you have such a compilation.

The cause of hunger and suffering cannot be blamed on God. The earth He made was good (Gen. 1:31). It provided every need of humanity. But when man chose to rebel against his Creator, he brought a curse upon himself and his world. Where once was a paradise, now there are thorns and thistles and we must earn our living in the sweat of our faces (Gen.3:17-19). Beyond this, observation will demonstrate that most of the suffering of humanity is the direct result of the sinful practices of other humans. Greed and avarice makes people want more for themselves than they could ever use and makes them uncaring for the needs of suffering people. In some cases governments are dominated by leaders and governing philosophies that bring poverty and suffering on their subjects. Look at the suffering atheistic Communism brought to Russia, China and all of their client states. Look at the misery the leaders of wartime Germany and Japan brought on their



subjects and the nations they overran. That is the work of sinful men, not of God. His code, if followed, would have us all “work that which is good towards all men” (Gal. 6:10). It is interesting that unbelievers were outraged and determined to block President Bush’s plan to encourage Faith Based Groups to work to relieve the suffering in our country. WHY? If they relieve suffering you should rejoice.

It is good that you acknowledge that your brand of atheism is the “weak” kind. Why not just come clean and call it agnosticism. You choose not to believe in God. Your choice is *a priori* and not based upon evidence. It is made by refusing to look at and consider the evidence that surrounds you. Jesus described such a spirit saying, “seeing, they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand...their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest haply they should perceive with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart, and should turn again, and I should heal them” (Matt. 13:13-15). Strong, prominent atheists have been willing to publicly undertake the task of proving that they know God does not exist. Dr. Anthony Flew tried and so did Dr. Wallace Matson. They faced Dr. Thomas Warren, a Christian, and both not only failed miserably in their endeavor, they both were forced to concede that they were really agnostics for they could not be sure of the non-existence of God. The two debates are available in published form should you wish to read them.

You say “I would be willing to do anything your god wanted in exchange for a least some children not being hungry anymore. I would go to church every Sunday....” Would you? Around the world God’s children are relieving the suffering of humanity. My good friends, Dr. Tom Drinnen and Dr. Henry Farrar, left lucrative medical positions in this country and went to Africa and worked in difficult circumstances to relieve suffering, give health and life to thousands of children and adults. They are only two of thousands who have done similar service in the name of Christ. Can I expect to see you in church next Sunday?

Whether you understand or accept the fact or not, this earth is not intended to be our permanent home. The God who created us, designed our habitation and rules over it, has prepared a home with Him in his abode...called heaven (John 14:1-3). That home is a reward for those of the human race who have chosen to love and serve God in this life. No responsible person will be forced to enjoy that reward who has not chosen to do so. For example, you want no part of God or heaven. Thus it would be cruel and wrong to force you to go to such a place. You would be miserable and totally out of place there....at least in your present state of mind. Wouldn’t you?

Again, you may not believe or accept the fact, but all of us are made tougher and stronger by the hardships we encounter and endure. Hardships help us clear our vision and see what is truly important and valuable and what is transitory and ephemeral. Even you have likely had such mind-clearing experiences.

Again you blaspheme when you write, “Tell your god that is simply unacceptable and if it continues your god will have to answer to me. (Is this why your god hasn’t revealed itself to me? Because it’s scared of me and what I’ll say to it?)” You remind me of school yard toughs who boasted of what they were going to do to someone they despised...and then when he appeared they melted away like snow before the sun. The God who gave you life can easily take it away. More than one blasphemer has perished miserably. Herod the Great, his grand son, Herod Agrippa, both discovered that it was reckless to fight against God (Acts 12:20-23). So did your patron saint, Madeline M. O’Hare.

Regarding the *theory of evolution*, you ask if I question the theory of gravity or the germ theory? Surely you can see the difference. It is *the law of gravity*. It can be demonstrated and replicated over and over again. So also with the fact that germs are the cause of disease. But your beloved theory of evolution cannot be proven nor can it be replicated. Can it? In the privacy of their own closets and strictly among fellow believers in no-god, evolutionists make remarkable confessions. A. L. Kroeber, at the Darwin Centennial said, “Overwhelmingly, biologists had been accepting evolution because there was nothing else for them to do; but they had not proved it to their own satisfaction” (*Evolution of Man*, p. 2). Richard Goldschmidt wrote, “Darwin’s theory of natural selection has never had any proof except from a priori

considerations, yet it has been universally accepted..." (**The Material Basis of Evolution**, p. 211-212). Louis T. More states, "The more one studies paleontology, the more certain one becomes that evolution is based on faith alone" (**The Dogma of Evolution**, p. 160). Emanuel Radl writes, "It is true that the theory (of evolution, JHW) has not received any clinching proof" (**History of Biological Theories**, p. v-vi). Your prophet, Darwin, wrote, "...I never feel surprised at any one sticking to the belief of immutability (opposite of evolution, JHW) ...I remember too well my endless oscillations of doubt and difficulty" (**Life and Letters**, Vol. II, pp. 210-211).

Regarding birth defects and other tragedies of life. Perhaps you should differentiate those which are cause directly by sinful conduct of others. A sinful man batters his pregnant wife, thus damaging her unborn child. An expecting mother chooses to ingest alcohol or drugs and thus damages her developing child. A greedy research scientist or drug company rushes a money- making drug to the market that causes damage to the developing child. The rest still fall in the category of consequences of Sin being introduced into the world by man himself, contrary to the will of God. Yes, it was the Adversary of Man, variously called Satan or the devil who tempted man to violate God's simple and generous law...and who clearly was delighted with the results the violation brought.

You rashly boast that you "could do a far better job of creating a world than " God has done. Why not take the powers you do presently have and demonstrate your ability to improve on just one tiny aspect of God's world. Create one new life form. Turn one little reptile into a mammal. Write a better book than the Bible.

In my first letter, I explained to you that Christian faith is based on evidence, on revealed facts. "Faith comes by hearing the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). "The heaven declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork" (Ps. 19:1). Faith is the "assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). It is not the warm fuzzy feeling of an unthinking mind that so many call faith. But you, my friend, have a strange faith. You believe that something came from nothing....a scientific impossibility. You believe that order came from disorder without any rational guidance or workmanship. You believe that rocks and dirt became a living something....without any proof at all for your faith. You believe that irrational life gave birth to rational life...with no proof. If you have trouble believing, why do you choose the harder path?

As to your self-made definition of your atheism. My dictionary defines an atheist as, "one who denies the existence of God." An agnostic holds "the belief that the existence of any ultimate reality (as God) is unknown and probably unknowable." Such a person is "non-committal" (Webster). The proposition is, God either does or does not exist.. The law of excluded middle eliminates all but these two possibilities. There can be no true agnosticism, only a useful dodge to avoid trying to prove the unprovable. You write that it is "possible" to "provide logically sound arguments that a God doesn't exist." If so, just do it! You will impress the world with your acumen and find a place in Guinness Books of Records as the first person to do so.

Now if you can present proof that "the Christian God...is defined with many qualities that are logically not possible in combination." Please do so. Also demonstrate that God is unworthy of worship.

Your supposed proof about the flat earth falls flat. Remember God gave us his will in a book written in human language that our human minds could comprehend. We still talk about folks coming from the four corners of the earth, not at all believing or meaning that the earth is flat or square. It is an idiom. We freely use hyperboles in our speech and no one thinks of pressing them to absurd meanings. For example we speak of a man being a giant... meaning only very tall...taller than the average man. We describe a man "as big as a mountain" meaning very heavy. We describe our nation's armed forces as scattered around the world...not meaning in a solid chain around the globe. Give God the same freedom of expression as you afford yourself. Unscrupulous lawyers can pick at, twist and distort the testimony of an innocent man and make him appear guilty, but he is not. They can discredit a throughly credible witness by doing the same. That is what your approach to the Bible does. Give the Bible the same type of interpretation you would extend to a poet or

biographer and you will be amazed at how much sense it will make to you. Luke 14:26 is explained by Matt. 10:37. "If anyone cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children and brethren and sister, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" means, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me..." Matthew gives the meaning you have missed. I recall a college teacher helping us to properly interpret the Classical writers...that's the same approach one must have in studying Scripture if he truly and honestly desires to understand its message.

Regarding the Great Deluge in Noah's day, you fail to make a proper distinction between murder which is an unlawful act of violence committed against another with malice beforehand and the judicial execution of those guilty parties who are worthy of death. You do not charge with murder a judge or jury who find a murderer guilty of his crime and sentence him to death. He brought his death upon himself. God gave the corrupt and evil population of Noah's day 120 years of probation (I Pet. 3:20; Gen. 6:3), in which to change their lives and make preparation to escape the impending judgement, but they, like you, did not believe in God. They paid a severe price for their disbelief and misconduct. I would still like for you to tackle the mathematical probabilities of how representatives of all the known creatures could be housed in an ark of dimensions you cannot determine with absolute certainty. Should you ever feel brave enough to do so I will be glad to assist you in reaching your conclusions.

You say you have read the Bible. Others read it and find it the most wonderful and beneficial thing they have ever read. It all depends on one's point of view. A buzzard and a humming bird flew over the same acre of ground. The buzzard found two dead rats, and a dead lizard. The hummingbird found thousands of lovely fragrant flowers. They were looking for different things.

One of the mistakes you make in your reactions against Christianity is in confusing Roman Catholicism and other corrupted varieties of faith with the pure simple Christianity given by Christ and revealed in the New Testament. I offer no apologies for the evils of corrupt churches and wicked pretenders who hide behind the cloak of Christ.

You complain that God has not revealed himself to you in any way. He has but you have closed your eyes, stopped your ears and hardened your heart and refused to see the truths he has revealed (Matt. 13:13-15). A man with his eyes cannot see the beauty of an orchid. With his ears stopped he cannot hear the beauty of a symphony, nor can you see the glory of God displayed all about you. In this same vein, "since you hate God so fervently, why should he reveal anything to you?"

Again I close with a reminder that in spite of your antagonism towards Him, your blasphemies and harsh accusations, God is your creator and because he loves you, He is not willing that you should perish, but has done all in his power to bring you to repentance (II Pet. 3:9). Should you ever wish to know more of his love and his will for your life, I will be honored to sit down with you and help you learn his will from the Scripture he has given.

Wishing you the very best and hoping your will one day be free from your shackles of unbelief, I am

Your friend and neighbor,  
John Waddey

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