

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIAN FAITH

by Dave Greear

Greear's apologetics textbook presenting arguments for the Christian faith, outlining motivations for studying evidences including strengthening believer faith, evangelistic outreach, and equipping witnesses. He warns against dangers like intellectual pride and ignoring the Holy Spirit's role in conversion.

14 Chapters

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00 Greear - Evidences of the Christian Faith

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01: Introduction

EVIDENCES OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH A study of Christian Apologetics But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: (1 Peter 3:15).

Introduction: The English word "apologetics" comes from the Greek word apologia which refers to a verbal defense or an answer. It is the word translated "answer" in 1 Peter 3:15 and is used seven other times in the New Testament. Thus, apologetics refers to the defense of the Christian faith against all intellectual attacks. Apologetics can include scientific, theological, and philosophical arguments in support of God, the Bible, and the Christian faith. The term "evidences", although often used interchangeably with apologetics, refers more to the practical and concrete side of apologetics, as opposed to the philosophical side. The practical and concrete side is what we will primarily focus on in this study. Thus the title, "Evidences of the Christian Faith."

1. Motivations for Studying Christian Evidences 1. To strengthen the faith of believers 2. To expose unbelievers to the claims of the gospel by educating them about the evidences of the Christian faith. When this is done some, under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, will turn from their sins and turn to Christ in faith. Although many will still choose to reject Christ, it won't be because of ignorance. 3. To equip believers to witness more knowledgeably and more effectively in a world that is increasingly more hostile to the Bible and Christianity. 4. The Bible commands it (See 1 Peter 3:15; Jude 1:3; Colossians 4:6; etc.). 5. Early Christians (particularly the apostle Paul) used it to defend the faith (Acts 4:33; Acts 14:15-17; Acts 26:9-22; Romans 1:20; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, etc.).

2. Dangers in Studying Christian Evidences 1. The danger of intellectual pride and using evidences only to win arguments (See Colossians 4:6; 2 Timothy 2:24-25). 2. The danger of becoming cold and intellectual when sharing our Christian faith. Although Christianity is based on objective facts, we must appeal to men's emotions and wills as well as their intellects. It is possible to persuade the mind while leaving the heart unaffected. Remember, the gospel appeals to the intellect, the emotions and the will! 3. The danger of leaving out the Holy Spirit's work in conversion (Unless the Holy Spirit draws a man, the greatest apologist in the world will be unable to persuade him to accept Christ as Lord and Savior - John 6:44).

02: The Existence of God

The Existence of God In order to defend the Christian faith, one must obviously start with the premise that there is a God! Although this sounds elementary, it is extremely important, because an individual with an atheistic world-view will be unpersuaded by the objective facts underlying Christianity. He will simply attempt to interpret these facts within his atheistic framework. For instance, an atheistic geologist will interpret the fact that we find billions of dead things buried in sedimentary rocks (i.e., laid down by moving water) all over the earth as the proof of death, bloodshed, and the survival of the fittest over millions of years. In contrast, a Bible-believing geologist, having a belief in God, will interpret this same objective fact as evidence for the Genesis flood, which does seem to provide a better explanation for this phenomenon [1]. The atheistic scientist, however, will not even consider this alternative because of his pre-conceived notion that there can be no God. Therefore, it is important to begin a study of Christian evidences with arguments in favor of the existence of God. For if one does not have a theistic world-view then Christianity will be meaningless to Him. We must admit, however, that the existence of God cannot be proven by the scientific method. Since God cannot be "tested" or "observed" one must necessarily resort to some sort of philosophical arguments in order to argue for God's existence. Furthermore, there must always be an element of obedient faith involved before the evidence for God's existence is accepted. One can be overwhelmed by the arguments for God's existence and still have an unbelieving heart. This is because many men correctly discern that if there is a creator-God, then they would be accountable to Him. Many of these individuals, especially in our humanistic society, are unwilling to submit themselves to such a God. Therefore, for many, the existence of God is a question of the will and not of the intellect. "A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still" [2]. However, for those who are willing to believe and are sincerely searching for the truth, there is abundant evidence for the existence of God.

Traditional Arguments for the Existence of God The ontological argument Ontology is the study of being. This argument, which is purely philosophical (and purely philosophical arguments never prove anything) states, in essence, that the existence of the idea of God (i.e., He is the greatest of all conceivable beings) can only be explained if He really exists [3]. This is probably the least convincing of the traditional arguments because skeptics can rightly reply that it is logically possible that nothing ever existed, including God. The moral argument This argument states that due to the fact that all men possess a "moral impulse" and at least a relative or subjective awareness of right and wrong, there must be an ultimate and absolute standard of morality. This ultimate standard would, of course, be God. Otherwise, what defines right and wrong, good and bad, etc.? Certainly moral behavior does not always pay off in this life. Why then do men even try to live morally? The teleological argument Teleology is the study of goals or ends. This argument focuses on the orderliness and apparent design in nature and the universe that seems to imply design and a designer. For instance, if we were to find a watch lying on a beach, we would probably not assume that it just evolved out of the sand. We would rightly assume that it had been made by an intelligent designer and somehow transported to that particular spot. Similarly, the

orderliness of nature and the universe point to an intelligent designer because orderliness is always indicative of intelligent design and not chance, random processes. British astronomer Sir Fred Hoyle states concerning the possibility of the spontaneous generation of life:

"The chance that higher life forms might have emerged in this way is comparable with the chance that a 'tornado sweeping through a junk-yard might assemble a Boeing 747 from the materials therein.'" [4] Returning to the watch analogy, a non-Christian Ph. D. in biochemistry writes:

"The eerie artifact-like character of life and the analogy with our own advanced machines has an important philosophical consequence, for it provides the means for a powerful reformulation of the old analogical argument to design which has been one of the basic creationist arguments used throughout western history going back to Aristotle and presented in its classic form by William Paley in his famous watch - to - watchmaker discourse.

According to Paley, we would never infer in the case of a machine, such as a watch, that its design was due to natural processes such as the wind and rain; rather, we would be obliged to postulate a watch-maker. Living things are similar to machines, exhibiting the same sort of adaptive complexity and we must, therefore, infer by analogy that their design is also the result of intelligent activity." [5]

"...Is it really credible that random processes could have constructed a reality, the smallest element of which - a functional protein or gene - is complex beyond our own creative capacities, a reality which is the very antithesis of chance, which excels in every sense anything produced by the intelligence of man?" [6] The first and second laws of thermodynamics also support the teleological argument.

1. The first law (Law of conservation of energy) states that the total quantity of energy in the universe is always constant-it can neither be created or destroyed. (See Nehemiah 9:6)

2. The second law states that the amount of unavailable energy or "entropy" is always increasing. In other words, the universe is running down and constantly becoming more disorderly. (See Psalms 102:25-27) The second law contradicts evolutionary cosmogonies (theories of origins) because matter does not naturally become more orderly. In fact, the universe started orderly but is now running down! In addition, since the universe is not dead yet, it must have had a beginning. Therefore, the second law proves that the universe must have been created. The first law, however, stipulates that it could not have created itself! Therefore, there must have been a creator (Genesis 1:1). Therefore, God must exist! The cosmological argument Cosmology is the study of the "cosmos" or the world. It could also be stated as the law of "cause and effect". In reality, both the moral and teleological arguments are based on this argument. We know that every finite thing or effect must have a cause either within itself or beyond itself. However, something that is self-caused is impossible and contradictory. Furthermore, there cannot be an infinite regress of causes, because the whole series of causes would never have begun without some sort of "Prime Mover" or "First Cause". Therefore, we must conclude that there must have been an infinite, un-caused "First Cause" or "Prime Mover" who initiated the chain of secondary causes and effects. If we look at the world around us we can see the evidence of the scientific law of cause and effect. The vastness of the universe and the wonder of creation point to an infinite creator God. The Bible itself makes mention of this. For instance: The heavens declare the glory of God;

and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. (Psalms 19:1-3)

Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: (Romans 1:19-20) Traditional Arguments Against the Existence of God

Atheistic arguments Although theism must admit that there is no way to scientifically prove the existence of God, atheism must admit that there is no way to disprove His existence. Most atheists would likely acknowledge this fact, but would still scoff at the concept of an infinite, eternal, omnipotent God. Unfortunately, what they fail to realize (or admit) is that if we don't start with an infinite, un-caused God, then we must start with finite, un-caused matter! "In the final analysis atheism must hold the absurd conclusion that something comes from nothing, that is, that non-being is the ground upon which being rests. This seems highly unreasonable" [7]. Furthermore, for an atheist to assert dogmatically that there is no God, then he must be omniscient, and therefore God! Therefore, his assertion contradicts itself!

Agnostic arguments An agnostic is one who claims that the existence and nature of God is either unknown or unknowable. The first type presents no real threat to the claims of Christianity because it leaves open the possibility of finite knowledge about an infinite God. The second type, however, is contradictory and self-defeating because it makes a dogmatic statement about reality in order to deny the possibility of making dogmatic statements about reality! In other words, if nothing can be known about God, how did we come to that conclusion? One would have to be omniscient (and hence God) to make such a statement. Therefore, the agnostic has no basis to make the claim that nothing can be known about God. Furthermore, the fact that the agnostic himself exists is a fact he cannot deny without contradicting himself (i.e., a non-existent person can't deny anything). This should lead him to the conclusion that God could exist and, in fact (based on the cosmological argument), must exist.

Conclusion: We can confidently state that the evidence for the existence of God is overwhelming. As the Psalmist stated in Psalms 14:1 and Psalms 53:1, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."

03: The Uniqueness of Christianity

The Uniqueness of Christianity

Before a study of Christian evidences can be in any way beneficial, it must first be established that Biblical Christianity is indeed unique from all other philosophies or religions. For if it is not unique, there is no need to defend it. If it is not unique then it can not be the only way to God and it is, in fact, just another of man's many religions. The purpose of this lesson, then, is to establish the fact that Christianity is unique from all other philosophies or religions. In future lessons we will seek to examine its unique claims in order to objectively verify its validity. Biblical Christianity is unique from all other religions in the following ways: Its Exclusive Claims The following claims rule out the possibility that Christianity is only one of many ways to God. For if the claims are true, then all other religions are false. If, however, the claims are false, then Christianity cannot possibly be considered a "good religion" that can lead to God, because it has deluded and deceived people for nearly 2000 years. A religion that makes a false claim to be the only way to God is simply a false religion. These unique claims of Christianity are in direct opposition to some eastern religions (especially Hinduism) which are eclectic and all-inclusive. They teach that all religions can lead to God. Such religions are tolerant of all beliefs except the belief that says there is only one way to God and all else are false (i.e., Biblical Christianity). Examples of the Bible's exclusive claims are [1]:

1. The God of the Bible is claimed to be the only true and living God (See Jeremiah 10:10-12; Isaiah 43:10, Isaiah 44:6; John 17:3; etc.)
2. The Bible is claimed to be the only true, special revelation from God (See Isaiah 8:20; Jude 1:3; Revelation 22:18-19; etc.)
3. Jesus Christ is claimed to be the only way to God, salvation, and eternal life. (See John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Galatians 1:9; etc.) Its Objective Historical Basis

Unlike other religions, Christianity is not based on subjective experiences and feelings, but on objective, historical facts that are subject to examination and scrutiny. Other religions are based on the teachings of their founders. For instance, Islam is based on the teachings of Mohammed, and Buddhism on the teachings of the Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama). In contrast, Christianity is based on who Jesus was and what He did, not on His teachings (even though He was a great teacher). The truth of Christianity stands or falls on the validity of the creation, the fall of man, Christ's sacrificial death, and the resurrection. The records of these and other foundational events underlying Christianity are open for all to see in the pages of the Bible. They can be examined, investigated, and scrutinized on an objective basis. The same methods that could be used to determine the validity of any other historical person or event can be used to determine the validity of Biblical persons or events. Biblical Christianity, then, is not a "blind leap of faith" based only on subjective feelings, but is actually a leap into the light based on objective, historical facts that are accompanied by subjective confirmation to the individual believer by the witness of the Holy Spirit.

Proof of the objectivity of Christianity is seen in: The eyewitness accounts of the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Unlike the mythological accounts of miraculous events found in many ancient cultures, the events in the life of Christ were attributed to an individual who the witnesses knew personally in a time-space dimension. The existence of Jesus Christ can be proven just like the existence of Julius Caesar or Alexander the Great. He was no mythological figure! The writers of the New Testament were referring to the historical Jesus of Nazareth, of whom their readers would be familiar. Examples of the eye-witness accounts include: For as much as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, (Luke 1:1-3). The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: (Acts 1:1-3). And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. (John 20:30-31).

After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. (1 Corinthians 15:6-8). The fact that the apostles often appealed to the firsthand knowledge of their readers or listeners when presenting the gospel of Christ. If the claims of the apostles were not true, they could have, and would have, been easily refuted. For instance:

Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: (Acts 2:22). And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. (Acts 26:24-28)

Many of the remaining lessons in this study will be devoted to studying the "many infallible proofs" underlying the objective historical basis of Christianity.

There exists no document from the ancient world witnessed by so excellent a set of textual and historical testimonies, and offering so superb an array of historical data on which the intelligent decision may be made. An honest (person) cannot dismiss a source of this kind. Skepticism regarding the historical credentials of Christianity is based upon an irrational basis.[2] The Person of Christ The person of Jesus Christ is unique in all of history. No other prophet, teacher, philosopher or founder of any religion can in any way compare to the portrait painted of Jesus

Christ in the pages of the Bible. For instance, consider the following facts about Jesus Christ as outlined in the pages of the Bible: The Messianic prophecies anticipating His coming. Beginning with the first Messianic prophecy in Genesis 3:15, the Old Testament is filled with prophecies predicting Christ's lineage, birthplace, time of His coming, purpose of His coming, nature of His death, etc. hundreds of years before His appearance (For instance, see Genesis ; Genesis 35:10-12; Genesis 49:10; 2 Samuel 7:12-16; Isaiah 7:14; Isaiah 9:6; Isaiah 53:1-12; Micah 5:2; etc.). The same can not be stated for any other man in the history of the world. His virgin birth. The virgin birth of Christ was unique to all other births in fact and fiction. That God, Himself, could take up residence in a woman's womb, become a man, and be born of a virgin with no genetic connections to a human father is a thought unique to Christianity. His deity. On several occasions in the Bible Jesus Christ is claimed to be God incarnate (note Isaiah 7:14; Isaiah 9:6 [Immanuel="God with us"]; John 1:1, John 1:18; John 20:28; Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:16; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:8; 1 John 5:20; etc.). On other occasions, He claims deity for Himself (note Mark 2:5-11; Mark 14:61-64; John 8:58; John 10:30; etc.). Although others in the past have also made claims of deity, Jesus Christ claimed to be the all-powerful, creator God of the Old Testament. The Jews of His day recognized this claim because they crucified Him for "blasphemy" (John 19:7) and on at least two earlier occasions tried to stone Him for His claims of deity (John 8:58-59; John 10:30-33). In other words, in claiming His deity and Messiahship in the Jewish monotheistic context, He was claiming to have created the entire universe and to be the only true and living God. His sinless life. The Bible claims that Jesus Christ lived a perfect and sinless life (see Hebrews 4:15). Of who else in all of history can such a claim be made? His Resurrection. Although the evidences of Christ's resurrection will be discussed later in our study, it is significant to note now that the resurrection is the most unique feature of His life. The founders of all other religions are dead and buried. For instance Mohammed died in 632 A.D., Confucius in 479 B.C., and the Buddha 480 B.C. Not one of these men was ever resurrected or seen again by his followers. In many cases, the tombs of religious leaders such as these, or artifacts from their physical bodies are still worshipped or revered today. In Christ's case, His tomb is empty for all to see.

Salvation by Grace

Biblical Christianity is unique among all other religions in that it teaches that salvation is only by God's grace (unmerited favor) through faith apart from any merit of man (See Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; etc.). In other words, there is no way that man can merit, earn or work his way into heaven or into favor with God. All other religions, including cults with "Christian" names and apostate "Christendom" teach that salvation is either through works or through a combination of faith and works. Although the works required vary greatly from religion to religion, and although the ultimate destination (i.e., heaven, nirvana, etc.) likewise varies greatly, each religion is, in essence, seeking to merit favor with God or with gods. In each of these religions mankind is capable, through diligent effort, to meet a certain standard of righteousness and thus merit God's favor. In Christianity, however, God's standard of righteousness is perfect righteousness and holiness, and can therefore be met only by God Himself. Thus the necessity of God's direct intervention for mankind. This intervention takes the form of the sacrificial, substitutionary death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Examples of "salvation by works" include:

Islam. The Muslim who hopes to escape Allah's judgment must fulfill the Five Pillars of the Faith which are:[3] 1. Recitation of the creed ("There is no god but Allah and Mohammed is the prophet

of Allah") 2. Prayer offered five times daily towards the holy city of Mecca.

3. Almsgiving (Each Muslim is required to give 1/40 of his income as charitable contributions.) 4. Fasting from sunrise to sunset during the month of Ramadan.

5. A pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a lifetime. In addition to these five pillars, there is a sixth religious duty required of Muslims when the situation demands it. This duty is known as Jihad or "holy war". Muslim men are required to go to war in order to spread or defend Islam when necessary. Anyone dying in a Jihad is guaranteed eternal life.

Hinduism. In Hinduism, "salvation" (from the endless cycles of birth, death, and rebirth) can be attained one of three ways. They are:[4]

1. The way of knowledge or mystical insight - knowing that one is a part of the ultimate deity and not a separate entity. This, of course, is remarkably similar to the teaching of the New Age Movement.

2. The way of devotion- love and obedience to a particular deity.

3. The way of works which involves ceremonial ritual.

Catholicism. The Roman Catholic church teaches a sacramental system of salvation. It teaches that man must keep the seven sacraments [5] in order to receive "grace". The Catholic, however, defines "grace" as a measured commodity that can be gained by sacraments or lost by mortal sins. In other words, the sacramental system of salvation is very similar to a merit/demerit system. Furthermore, Catholicism teaches that most Catholics will spend time in Purgatory in order to "pay off" their sin penalty and merit God's favor. In other words, to the devout Catholic, Christ's atonement was not enough. Jesus only paid one half, and we must pay the rest! Catholicism is certainly not the only "Christian" group, however, that teaches a works salvation. Any church or "Christian" group that teaches "baptismal regeneration" or any type of "salvation by works" is not in agreement with the Biblical definition of salvation. Its Unique Book The Bible, which is the source of all true Christian beliefs and practices, is unique among all books, ancient or modern. The whole structure of Christianity rises and falls on the validity of the Bible as the Word of God. If the Bible can be shown to be a book of merely human origin or if it can be proven to contain errors, then Christianity is no better than any other religion. Because of the importance of this topic we will devote the entirety of chapter 3 to the study of the uniqueness of the Bible. Its Unique View of God

Theistic. Christianity, along with Judaism and Islam are the only major theistic religions in the world today. Theism can be defined as "the belief that there is a God both beyond and within the world, a Creator, and Sustainer who sovereignly controls the world and supernaturally intervenes in it." [6] Other views of God include:

* Deism-the belief that God created the world, but that He no longer intervenes in it (He is beyond but not within). The Deist believes that every thing operates on the basis of natural laws, and that miracles are impossible. However, to postulate a miracle of creation and then deny any possibility of further intervention by a God concerned enough to create in the first place, is inconsistent and illogical. Unitarians are a good example of modern deists.

* Polytheism-the belief in many gods. This position is illogical based on the law of cause and effect studied in the previous lesson. If there is more than one God, then none of the "gods" can be omnipotent, omnipresent, etc., and none of them can qualify to be the great "First Cause". The unity of the universe also argues against polytheism.

* Pantheism-equates God with the universe (He is within but not beyond). In other words, God is all and all is God. Pantheism is illogical first of all because there would be no one existing apart from the ultimate deity who could affirm that all were a part of God! In other words, how do they know they're a part of God? Who told them? In essence a pantheist is no different from an atheist, except for the fact that he arbitrarily attributes deity to the "all" of the universe. [7] Furthermore, pantheism makes God dependent upon the creation (the manifestation of Him or emanations flowing from Him) in order to reach His full, infinite potential. In other words the pantheistic god is an impersonal god driven by necessity rather than a personal God driven by love and volition. Finally, the pantheist must come to the absurd conclusion that opposites such as good and evil, being and non-being, etc. are all a necessary part of God. [8] Variations of pantheism include panentheism (the belief that God is in the world as a mind is in the body) and animism (the belief that physical objects possess a life or spirit of their own). Examples of pantheistic religions today include Hinduism, Buddhism, and the New Age Movement.

Trinitarian. Christianity is the only world religion with a theistic, trinitarian view of God. In other words God has only one nature, but He is expressed in the three persons of the trinity. As the Father He is the source of all being, as the Son He reveals Himself to mankind (He is the manifestation of the Father), as the Holy Spirit He indwells and empowers His creation so that we may "experience" God. Nature itself gives testimony to the triune nature of God. For instance, the universe is basically a tri-universe of space, matter/energy and time. [9] The universe is not made up of three different entities but each entity is itself the whole of the universe. In addition space, itself reminds us of the trinity. It is comprised of three dimensions. [10] The first dimension is the basic dimension by which space is identified. However, it can only be "seen" in two dimensions and "experienced" in three dimensions.

Good (See Genesis 1:31; Psalms 34:8-10) The Bible is the only source that satisfactorily explains the origin of evil. Genesis 3 makes it very clear that man, himself, is to blame for the problem of evil. Other religions must either postulate that evil came from God or is naturally a part of God.

Conclusion

Although we must admit that there are some similarities between certain aspects of Christianity and certain aspects of other religions, a close examination will reveal that Christianity is indeed unique and that any similarities with other religions are only superficial. Logically, if all men once knew about the true God as the Bible claims, we would expect to see elements of truth existing alongside of error in the world's man-made religions. Biblical Christianity, however, claims to be a relationship with the living God, not a man-made religion!

04: The Uniqueness of the Bible

The Uniqueness of the Bible In the last lesson we determined that Christianity was unique from all other religions, ancient or modern. In this lesson we will attempt to show that the Bible is unique from any other book, ancient or modern. This is a necessary step in our defense of the Christian faith, because Christianity is based entirely on the Bible as the Word of God. If the Bible can be shown to be just another religious book of human origin, then Christianity becomes meaningless. In future lessons we will attempt to test the Bible's reliability in order to determine whether it is really the Word of God as it claims. We will start in this lesson, however, by examining the unique features of the Bible. The Bible is unique from all other books or religious writings in the following ways: Its Exclusive Claims

Just as the Bible makes exclusive claims about Christianity, it makes some very exclusive claims about itself. These claims rule out the possibility that the Bible is just another "good" book. For if the Bible is not the Word of God as it claims to be, then it, like Christianity, is simply a fraud.

It claims to be divinely inspired (i.e., the Word of God). Both the Old and New Testaments are claimed to be the divinely inspired Word of God.

Old Testament claims:

Old Testament writers frequently claim to be recording the very words of the Lord. For instance such statements as "The word of the Lord came unto me, saying..." or "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying ..." are found throughout the Old Testament. If one would attempt to count these claims of inspiration in the Old Testament, he would come up with the following approximate figures: [1] * Pentateuch: 680 claims of inspiration * Prophetic books: 1,307 claims of inspiration * Historical books: 418 claims of inspiration * Poetical books: 195 claims of inspiration * Entire Old Testament: 2,600 claims of inspiration

Some of the best Old Testament passages on the inspiration of the Bible include: Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:2; 2 Samuel 23:2; Psalms 19:7-11; Psalms 119:89; Jeremiah 26:2 New Testament Claims: To the inspiration of the Old Testament. New Testament writers frequently acknowledge the divine inspiration of the Old Testament. For instance they often appeal to the authority of the Old Testament with such statements as "It is written...", "For the Scripture saith...", etc. In fact, there are over 320 quotations from the Old Testament recorded in the New Testament as well as over 1000 clear references to it. [2] Furthermore, it is obvious from the contexts that the writers of the New Testament believed that the Old Testament was the authoritative and accurate Word of God, not simply a collection of religious stories. For instance, Jesus Himself taught the truths of specific Old Testament events such as the creation (Matthew 19:4-5), Noah's flood (Luke 17:27), Jonah and the great fish (Matthew 12:40), etc. It is obvious from these accounts that Christ accepted the Old Testament as divinely inspired and historically accurate. To the inspiration of the New Testament. The New Testament also predicts the divine inspiration of itself when Christ promises to send the Holy Spirit to help the disciples remember His teachings and guide them into

"all truth" (John 14:26; John 16:13). This prediction explains why every book of the New Testament was either written by an apostle or confirmed by apostolic authority. Furthermore, at least one New Testament writer refers to another portion of the New Testament as "Scripture" (See 2 Peter 3:15-16). To the inspiration of Scripture in general. In addition to references to the inspiration of specific parts of Scripture, the New Testament contains great passages about the inspiration of Scripture in general. For instance 2 Timothy 3:15-16 and 2 Peter 1:19-21 are two of the clearest passages on the doctrine of inspiration. And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: (2 Timothy 3:15-16). This passage claims that all Scriptures are inspired (literally "God-breathed") by God. Thus, Holy Scripture has both divine and human authors. The ultimate origin, however, is clearly God. This is also seen in 2 Peter 1:20-21.

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (2 Peter 1:20-21). So from these passages we see that the Bible claims to have been directly inspired by God, while allowing for the talents and personalities of human authors. In other words, the Bible never claims to have been mechanically dictated from God, but it does claim to have been inspired fully and verbally. This type of inspiration is often referred to as verbal (i.e., every word) plenary (i.e., full) inspiration. Reformed theologian, B. B. Warfield gives a classic definition of this type of inspiration. The doctrine of plenary inspiration holds that the original documents of the Bible were written by men, who, though permitted to exercise their own personalities and literary talents, yet wrote under the control and guidance of the Spirit of God, the result being in every word of the original documents a perfect and errorless recording of the exact message which God desired to give to man. [3]

We would expect that a book that claimed to be "God-breathed" should also claim to be inerrant (without error) since God would certainly not be the source of a fallible or erroneous revelation of Himself. Indeed, the Bible does make such claims of itself. For instance, in John 10:35 Christ states that the Scriptures "cannot be broken". In Matthew 5:18 He stated that "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." In John 17:17 He said "thy word is truth". Old Testament passages such as Psalms 19:7 ("The law of the LORD is perfect...") and Psalms 119:89 ("For ever, O Lord, thy Word is settled in heaven") also teach the inerrancy of Scripture. It is interesting to note that both Christ and the apostle Paul based entire arguments on single words from the Old Testament Scriptures! (See Matthew 22:31-32, Matthew 22:45; John 10:35; Galatians 3:16). In Galatians 3:16, Paul based his entire argument on the fact that the word "seed" was singular and not plural in the Old Testament promises to Abraham! Obviously, both Christ and the apostle Paul held to the inerrancy of the Old Testament. Its claims to be the only special revelation from God. Not only does the Bible claim to be inspired of God, it also claims to be the one and only source of divinely-inspired special revelation from God. For instance Jude 3 tells us that the faith was "once delivered" (i.e., once for all; it never changes). Deuteronomy 4:2 and Revelation 22:18-19 contain warnings about adding to or taking from the Words of Scripture. Isaiah 8:20 is a warning that any true revelation must conform to previously revealed revelation in Scripture. Galatians 1:8-9 and 2 John 1:9-10 are warnings about those who would preach any gospel other than that proclaimed by the apostles. All of these warnings would

rule out the possibility of any extra-Biblical revelation from God. Furthermore, John 14:26 and John 16:13 are promises that the apostles will be guided into all truth. In other words, with the death of the last apostle (John) we should have a completed revelation from God. Even if for the sake of argument we allow for further revelation from God, this revelation must conform to the previously revealed Word of God. This is one way in which all other sources of "revelation" such as the Book of Mormon, the Koran, and other such religious works fall short, for they contradict the Bible and proclaim a different gospel. Its Unity The incredible unity and of the Scriptures is one of its most unique qualities. Consider the following facts:

- * It was written over a 1500-year span.
- * It was written by over 40 different authors who lived in different time periods and were from every walk of life. For instance, David and Solomon were kings, Peter and John were fisherman, Moses and Amos were shepherds, Luke was a physician, Paul was an ex-pharisee and a theologian, Matthew was a tax-collector, Daniel was a statesman, Joshua was a general, etc.
- * It was written from different places.
- * It was written in three different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Koine Greek).
- * It speaks of literally hundreds of controversial topics.

Yet, in spite of these facts, not once does the Bible contradict itself. Not once does one writer disagree with another. From cover to cover, the Bible exhibits a remarkable unity and continuity. It begins with the creation of the present world and ends with the creation of the new heavens and the new earth. In the midst it unfolds the great doctrines such as the nature of God, the doctrine of sin, the depravity of man, the doctrine of salvation, etc. From Genesis to Revelation, however, Scripture revolves around the central theme of the redemption of mankind. "The Old Testament is the preparation (Isaiah 40:3). The Gospels are the manifestation (John 1:29). The Book of Acts is the propagation (Acts 1:8). The epistles give the explanation (Colossians 1:27). The Book of Revelation is the consummation (Revelation 1:7). The Bible is all about Jesus." [4] In fact, it is impossible to fully understand the New Testament without understanding its Old Testament foundations (i.e., the creation, the fall of man, the Messianic prophecies, the law which revealed to man his depravity, etc.). Doctrines are introduced in elementary form and developed progressively throughout Scripture (for instance note the first gospel message in Genesis 3:15). Type is followed by antitype, prophecy by fulfilled prophecy. The Bible is such an amazing book that we can say: To account for such an amazing book with its continuity of development on natural means would demand a greater miracle than inspiration itself. [5] Its Fulfilled Prophecy

Although we will discuss the subject of fulfilled prophecy in great detail in chapter 8, it is significant to note here that the Bible is unique from all other religious books on this important point. Although there are other religious writings that have made vague forecasts, there is nothing comparable to the vast number of specific prophetic predictions found in the Bible. There are literally hundreds of Old Testament prophecies that have found their fulfillment in history. Furthermore, there are literally scores of Messianic prophecies that were fulfilled by the birth, life and death of Christ. It is interesting to note that the Bible itself gives the test for determining if a prophet is a true one or a false one. According to Deuteronomy 18:20-22 a prophet from God will always be infallible. In other words his prophecies will always come true. The Bible is the only Book in all of history that

provides such an objective way to verify its validity. In essence it challenges the reader to verify its validity through the means of fulfilled prophecy! Its Circulation The Bible has been read by more people, published in more languages, and circulated more thoroughly than any book in history. More copies of the Bible have been produced than any other book in history. Furthermore it has been translated into more languages than any book in history. Although these facts do not prove that it is the Word of God, they certainly do prove that it is unique! Its Survival

Survival through time. The Bible's remarkable ability to survive over the centuries also makes it unique from all other religious books or literature. For one thing there is far more manuscript evidence for the text of the New Testament than any other book in ancient history. In addition, we know that Jewish scribes used remarkable methods to ensure accurate transmission of the Old Testament manuscripts. These topics will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 4 (The Reliability of the Bible).

Survival through persecution. In addition to survival through time, the Bible has survived through intense periods of persecution. Roman emperors sought to destroy it (most notably Diocletian, who by royal edict in 303 AD, demanded that every copy of the Bible be destroyed). The Catholic Church often tried to suppress it from the common man by discouraging laymen from owning it or reading it (note for instance the Council at Toulouse [Southern France] in 1229: laity were forbidden to possess complete copies of the Bible and vernacular translations were forbidden). In one interesting note from history the noted French infidel, Voltaire, who died in 1778, predicted that Christianity would be extinct within 100 years of his time. But instead, within 50 years of his death the Geneva Bible Society used his house and printing presses to print copies of the Bible! [6] No other book in history has been so hated and so persecuted yet it still survives and thrives today.

Survival through criticism. Finally, the Bible has also survived through vicious attacks from higher criticism. For years the schools of higher criticism have attempted to dissect, disprove, invalidate and otherwise destroy the Bible by attempting to bring it to the level of all other man-made religious books. In the face of this relentless attack the Bible has stood remarkably resilient. Science, archaeology, and ancient history have proven the Bible correct time and time again. In this light, each of the theories of higher criticism about the human origins of the Bible are far harder to believe than the Biblical doctrine of inspiration. In essence, they are postulating a greater miracle than inspiration itself when they postulate that such a remarkable book with its fulfilled prophecies, unity, scientific and historic accuracy was composed solely by human effort. Its Account of Origins

All ancient or modern cosmogonies (theories of origins), with the exception of the book of Genesis, begin with some pre-existing matter or energy. Ancient cosmogonies often begin with a primeval chaos of fire or water which the forces of nature, personified as gods or goddesses, change into the present form of our universe. The modern evolutionary theories also begin with pre-existing matter and energy which evolve by "blind chance" into our present universe. The book of Genesis is the only history of origins that accounts for the origin of matter itself, and the only ancient cosmogony that can be analyzed in relation to modern science. Its Subject Matter The Bible is also unique from all other ancient books with respect to its subject matter. For one, it has the highest moral standards of any book in the ancient world. For another, it speaks authoritatively on matters

that are otherwise unknown or unknowable. Furthermore, it is the only book that gives a continuous history from the first man to the present era. It is also the only book that reveals a true purpose for all of history. Finally, it is unique in that it is totally unprejudiced when discussing mankind and his weaknesses. The Bible reveals mankind in his weak, sinful and depraved condition instead of exalting him. The weaknesses, sins and mistakes of the main characters of the Bible are recorded for all to see. What other religious book of human origin so accurately reveals the faults of its leaders, prophets, and founders?

Conclusion: In summation, we must conclude that the Bible is unique from all other religious books. Furthermore, we cannot deny the fact that it claims to be the one and only source of divine revelation. In future chapters we will put this claim to the test and examine the reliability of the Bible. If it does turn out to be reliable in the light of science, archaeology, textual criticism, ancient history, etc. then the honest, open-minded individual should recognize it as the inspired Word of God.

05: The Reliability of the Bible

The Reliability of the Bible In the previous lesson we examined some of the unique features of the Bible, including its exclusive claims to be the inspired, inerrant Word of God. In this lesson, we will attempt to put these claims to the test. Is the Bible really the inspired Word of God? This is not a trivial question, for if the Bible is not the inspired Word of God then Christianity is just another man-made religion. If the Bible is not reliable in facts of science and history, why should it be trusted in matters of theology? Therefore, in this lesson we will attempt to show that the Bible is completely reliable. Although it is neither a science book nor a history book, per say, it is nonetheless accurate in matters of science, history, and any other subject on which it speaks. We will now apply the following tests to determine the reliability of the Bible. The Biographical Test (conformation by historical text) This test seeks to examine the accuracy and reliability of the Biblical manuscripts in our possession. In other words, since we do not possess the original manuscripts, how accurate are the extant copies? Are they reliable witnesses to the original or have they been changed and corrupted over time?

Manuscript evidence for the New Testament. Any objective look at the evidence will quickly point out that the New Testament Scriptures were the most frequently copied books of the ancient world. There are presently over 5,300 known manuscripts of the Greek New Testament. In addition there are over 10,000 Latin Vulgate manuscripts and over 9,300 copies of other early versions. [1] This gives us a total of over 24,000 manuscript copies of portions of the New Testament that are known to exist today! No other book or document from the ancient world even remotely approaches these numbers. As a matter of fact, the closest competitor in all of ancient Greek and Latin literature is the Iliad by Homer which is attested to by 643 surviving manuscripts! More typical is Caesar's Gallic Wars which is attested to by 10 surviving manuscripts, the Roman history of Livy by 20, and the history of Herodotus by 8. [2] Even if we lacked the abundant manuscript evidence, the New Testament would also be preserved in the writings of the early church Fathers. One scholar (Sir David Dalrymple) engaged in a diligent study of the Scripture quotations by the early church Fathers and came to this conclusion:

...as I possessed all the existing works of the Fathers of the second and third centuries, I commenced to search, and up to this time I have found the entire New Testament, except eleven verses. [3] In addition to the sheer numerical evidence, we must take into account the interval between the composition of the book and the date of the earliest extant manuscript. The New Testament was composed between the years of 40-100 A.D. The earliest fragment found (the John Rylands' papyrus - a fragment of the gospel of John) dates from approximately A.D. 130. The earliest complete manuscripts of the New Testament (Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus) are dated to the 4th Century. Therefore, we have an interval of less than 50 years between the composition of the New Testament and partial manuscript copies of it, and an interval of less than 300 years between its composition and complete manuscript copies of it. Although this sounds like a considerable interval, it turns out to be remarkably small in comparison to other works of antiquity. The Iliad was composed around 900 B.C. and the earliest extant copy dates to about

400 B.C. (an interval of 500 years). Caesar wrote in the range of 100-44 B.C. and the earliest copy of his work dates from A.D. 900 (an interval of approximately 1000 years). Herodotus wrote in the range of 480-425 B.C. and the earliest copy of his work dates from A.D. 900 (an interval of approximately 1300 years). In spite of these numbers, no classical scholar would dare to question the authenticity of Homer, Caesar or Herodotus. Yet the Bible, with its overwhelming manuscript attestation, is constantly questioned and attacked!

Because of the remarkable number of existing manuscripts, the accuracy of the New Testament text is virtually assured. One scholar has calculated that of the approximately 20,000 lines of the New Testament, only about 40 lines (approximately 400 words) are seriously disputed by textual critics (less than 1%). In comparison, 764 of the Iliad's approximately 15,600 lines are in doubt (5%). The Mahabharata, the national epic of India, has approximately 26,000 of 250,000 lines in doubt (10%). [4] It is also important to note that the vast majority of the New Testament's disputed readings consist of trivial differences in spelling or style and not one of them affects a fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith. In summation, we quote one of the greatest authorities in New Testament textual criticism.

One word of warning, already referred to, must be emphasized in conclusion. No fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith rests on a disputed reading...

It cannot be too strongly asserted that in substance the text of the Bible is certain. Especially is this the case with the New Testament. The number of manuscripts of the New Testament, of early translations from it, and of quotations from it in the oldest writers of the Church, is so large that it is practically certain that the true reading of every doubtful passage is preserved in some one or other of these ancient authorities. This can be said of no other ancient book in the world. [5]

Manuscript evidence for the Old Testament. Unlike the New Testament we do not have the abundant manuscript evidence for the Old Testament. For one, we only have approximately 1000 manuscript copies of the Hebrew Old Testament in existence. Excluding the Dead Sea Scrolls, each of these manuscripts represents copies of the Massoretic text. This text, named after a group of Jewish scribes known as Massoretes, has been the more-or-less official text of the Old Testament since about A.D. 500. Although the Massoretes were careful to record variant readings in the margins, there were no Hebrew manuscripts outside the Massoretic text "family" with which to compare it until the 1940's. In spite of this fact we can be confident that the Massoretic text is remarkably accurate simply because of the great pains that the Jewish scribes took to ensure the pure preservation of the Old Testament text. Both before and after the Massoretes, Jewish scribes treated the text with the greatest imaginable reverence and developed intricate systems and rules about the transcription of manuscripts so as to avoid scribal slips. Any imperfect copies were condemned as unfit for use. The Massoretes actually numbered the verses, words and letters of every book. They would calculate the middle word and letter of each book. They calculated the number of times each letter of the alphabet occurred in each book. They did all of this and much more simply to preserve the accuracy of the Old Testament text. As a result of this meticulous care devoted to the transcription of manuscripts, older manuscripts were not considered more valuable to newer ones, especially since they would be more likely to become deformed or defaced. This may partially explain the lack of more ancient Hebrew manuscripts. In addition to the Massoretic Text, however, we have several copies of the Septuagint (Greek version of the Old Testament),

the Latin Vulgate, the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Syriac Version which were translated from sources older than the Massoretic text. Although there are minor variations in these versions, none is significant enough to affect any doctrine or event recorded in the Old Testament. Most importantly, however, we now have the Dead Sea Scrolls. Until the discovery of the Scrolls in the 1940's the oldest extant Hebrew manuscript of the Old Testament dated to about A.D. 900. Since the Old Testament was completed around 400 B.C, that comprised a gap of about 1300 years. However, with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls we now possess a number of partial Old Testament manuscripts which scholars date before the time of Christ! Even more importantly these scrolls confirm the accuracy of the Massoretic text. For instance, the famous Isaiah scroll has been dated at around 125 B.C. The text in this scroll is remarkably similar to the one found in the Massoretic text. For instance, of the 166 words of Isaiah 53, only 17 letters differ. Ten of these are simply a matter of spelling. Four more are stylistic changes that do not affect the sense. The remaining three letters comprise the word "light" which is added in verse 11, and does not greatly affect the meaning. [6] So, after 1000 years of transmission, there is only one three-letter word (out of 166 words) in question, and it does not alter the meaning of the passage. Therefore, we can conclude that the Old Testament text in our possession, like the New Testament text, is remarkably accurate. Old Testament scholar Gleason Archer states:

Even though the two copies of Isaiah discovered in Qumran Cave 1 near the Dead Sea in 1947 were a thousand years earlier than the oldest dated manuscript previously known (A.D. 980), they proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95 percent of the text. The 5 percent of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling. [7] The Internal Test The biographical test simply shows us that the Biblical text that we now possess is essentially that which was originally recorded. However, we must now ask how reliable were the original manuscripts? An accurate transmission of the original is irrelevant if the original manuscripts were unreliable in matters of science, history, theology, etc. Thus we can now use the internal test to determine if the original text is credible and reliable. When performing this test on any ancient document we must always give the benefit of doubt to the document under analysis and assume it is accurate until the author contradicts himself or disqualifies himself by known factual inaccuracies. The internal test seeks to evaluate only what the Bible says about itself in order to determine if it is internally consistent. For if it is full of contradictions then it cannot be reliable.

Applied to the writers of Scripture. First, the internal test can be applied to the writers of Scripture to see if they were reliable witnesses to the truth. The ability of a writer to tell the truth is very helpful information for any historian who is seeking to determine the reliability of an ancient document. Keep in mind that the biographical test has already established the fact that the New Testament documents we now possess are accurate transmissions of the original 1st Century manuscripts. Furthermore, both internal and external evidences point to the fact that the New Testament Scriptures were composed in the period of A.D. 50-100. [8] This is still within the generation of the eyewitnesses of the life of Christ, and means that the accuracy of the Scriptures was easily verifiable at the time of its composition. The sincerity of the writers. Some critics will charge that the Scriptures (especially the New Testament) were simply the result of a conspiracy to form a new religion or a new political movement. The writers of Scripture and the apostles themselves simply fabricated the miraculous elements of Jesus' life, especially His resurrection.

To answer this charge we can allude to several Scriptural facts. These include:

* The eyewitness testimonies to the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (see pages 9-10; Luke 1:1-3; Acts 1:1-3; John 20:30-31; 1 Corinthians 15:6-8; etc.)

* The fact that the apostles often appealed to the firsthand knowledge of their readers or listeners when presenting the gospel of Christ (see page 10; Acts 2:22; Acts 26:24-28). If the apostles were not telling the truth they could have, and would have, been easily refuted! All the Jews or Romans needed to do to stop Christianity once and for all was to produce the body of Christ!

* Hints of collusion are noticeably absent from the New Testament Scriptures. Each writer writes from his own independent perspective and includes the details that he thinks are important. As a matter of fact, the writers will sometimes appear to contradict each other, and only with careful study are these apparent contradictions resolved.

* The New Testament Scriptures are full of references to public figures, events, places, dates, etc. which can be easily verified. Why would the apostles make it so easy for outsiders to detect error or fraud if they were hiding a lie?

* Finally, history tells us that each of the apostles, except John, was eventually martyred for his convictions. Men will often die for a good cause, but not for a false one. It is inconceivable to assume that each of these men forfeited his life for a lie. The sanity of the writers. Other critics will argue that the New Testament writers were sincere but deluded. In other words they were all insane! To answer this argument we will appeal to the following facts.

* The sheer number of the eyewitnesses (over 500) argues against this theory.

* Once again, the fact that the apostles appealed to the firsthand knowledge of their listeners argues against this theory. The facts about the life of Christ were common knowledge in Jerusalem immediately after His resurrection! They were not subjective facts witnessed only by the apostles in dark corners or in mystical dreams.

* The Scriptures were not written by the type of men who were easily subject to hallucinations or deception. For instance, Paul was a highly-educated theologian, Luke was a competent physician, and Peter and John were pragmatic fisherman.

* The fact that so many people accepted their message in a world that was hostile to Christianity shows us that the people of the first century did not perceive the apostles as deluded or insane.

Applied to the content of Scriptures. The internal test can also be applied directly to the Scriptures themselves to see if they are internally reliable and consistent. In other words, if there are contradictions or errors in Scripture, then they cannot be reliable. For generations men have attempted to discredit the Bible by pointing to its alleged discrepancies and errors. However, the Bible has shown a remarkable ability to withstand such attacks until new evidence is found that inevitably supports the accuracy of the Scriptures. Therefore, there are countless passages once considered in error, that are no longer even questioned by liberal scholars. Furthermore, we must realize that two statements can be different from one another without being contradictory. Just because there is an apparent contradiction on the surface does not necessarily mean that an actual contradiction exists. Only when there is no possible explanation or solution to the apparent

contradiction can we assert that it is an error. In addition, we must always study the original languages to determine if our apparent contradiction is only a copyist's error or a poor translation of the original. Keeping these things in mind we will attempt to examine a few examples of the passages which can still be classified as "alleged discrepancies".

Alleged historical (or factual) discrepancies-Alleged historical discrepancies come from occasions when one Bible passage seems to contradict another in regard to a particular event, person, etc. A perfect example is the story of Paul on the Damascus road as recorded by Luke in Acts 9:7 and as related by Paul in Acts 22:9. Acts 9:7 states that the men on the road with Paul heard a voice, while Acts 22:9 says that they did not. However, there is a simple and natural interpretation for this alleged contradiction. Just as the men on the road saw the light but did not specifically see the Lord Jesus (as Paul did), they also heard the voice but did not understand the words which were spoken. Greek grammar supports this explanation. [9] In Acts 9:7 the men heard "a voice" in the genitive case. This case generally specifies or describes, so this verse specifies that the men heard a voice as opposed to hearing another sound. In Acts 22:9, the men did not hear "a voice" in the accusative case. This case is normally the case of content, so in this verse we learn that the men did not hear the content of the voice, namely the specific words being spoken. This is a perfect example of cases when the original languages can be used to solve apparent discrepancies in the English.

Alleged scientific discrepancies-Alleged scientific errors have been the favorite target of Bible critics for years. Many of these alleged "errors" are simply cases where scientists exalt their unproven and untestable theories (i.e., evolution) to a position of fact, and thus place themselves in a position to dogmatically proclaim the Bible to be in error. True science, however, has yet to contradict the Bible. An example of an alleged scientific inaccuracy is the case of the molten sea in 2 Chronicles 4:2. The sea is described as round with a diameter of 10 cubits (approximately 180 inches) and a circumference of 30 cubits (approximately 540 inches). Geometry tells us that the circumference of a circle is π (3.14) x diameter. In this case the circumference should equal 31.4 cubits (approximately 565.2 inches) rather than 30 cubits. Some Bible scholars simply explain away the discrepancies in the numbers by claiming that accurate measurements were not possible in that day. However, we should likely assume that if the people of that day had the capability to make a perfectly round structure of this size, then surely they had the capability to measure it with reasonable accuracy. A much better solution has been proposed by Dr. Harold Lindsell in his book *The Battle for the Bible*. [10] He notes that the molten sea was about a handbreadth (approximately 4 inches) in thickness. So there was both an outside perimeter from which the diameter was likely measured and an inside perimeter from which the circumference was likely measured. If we subtract 8 inches from the outside diameter of 180 inches we obtain an inside diameter of 172 inches. When this number is multiplied by π we obtain a circumference of 540.08 inches which is very compatible with the measured value to 540 inches. So we can conclude that the error here was in many scholars' understanding of the calculations, not in the Biblical data!

Alleged numerical discrepancies-Numerical discrepancies are one of the most frequently used tools by critics of the Old Testament. Many of these discrepancies can be attributed directly to scribal mistakes, since many of the symbols representing Hebrew numbers greatly resemble one another. Many times, however, we can find adequate explanations without resorting to scribal errors. For instance, 2 Samuel 24:24 records that David bought the threshingfloor of Araunah and

some oxen for 50 shekels of silver. In contrast, 1 Chronicles 21:25 states that he paid 600 shekels of gold. Although this seems to be a major discrepancy on the surface, there is a simple solution. The first passage states that David paid 50 shekels of silver for the "threshingfloor and oxen". In contrast, the second passage states that he paid 600 shekels of gold for "the place". "The place" probably refers to the whole hill of Moriah where the threshingfloor was located. In other words, David bought the threshingfloor and oxen for 50 shekels of silver, but he also paid 600 shekels of gold for the entire hill. It seems probable from other Scripture that David did purchase the entire hill since this was the very spot upon which the temple was later built.

Alleged ethical or moral discrepancies-Alleged ethical discrepancies are another tool often used by the critics. They will claim that passages such as Deuteronomy 7:2 and Joshua 10:40, where Israel is commanded to destroy every single Canaanite, including women and children, are unethical and contradict other Biblical passages such as the sixth commandment that forbids murder. They will claim that a good and loving God could not possibly have given the nation of Israel such a command. To answer this specific charge we should first point to Scriptures such as Genesis 15:16 and Deuteronomy 9:4-5 which show that the Canaanites were an extremely wicked civilization, ripe for God's judgment. Furthermore, if not totally destroyed, the immoral lifestyle and pagan practices of those who remained would be a bad influence on Israel. In the book of Judges this actually turned out to be the case. Also, the purity of the Jewish race and the Messianic line was at stake. The possibility of intermarriage with the surviving Canaanites (who were idolaters) was a definite problem. Most importantly, we must conclude that critics have no right to claim this act was morally wrong just because they can't seem to justify it in their own finite minds. Not all the "alleged discrepancies" of the Bible are so easily answered. In some cases we must simply admit that we don't have enough information to dogmatically assert a particular solution to a particular alleged discrepancy. However, there are possible explanations for each of the alleged discrepancies. [11] In hundreds of years of trying, critics have yet to prove the Bible contains an actual error, and considering its track record we have every reason to give it the benefit of the doubt! The External Test (conformation by outside sources) This test seeks to determine if there are outside sources that substantiate the accuracy and reliability of the document under question. In other words, do outside sources confirm the Biblical testimony or deny it? As we shall see, the Bible enjoys abundant conformation by external sources. We will examine some of these external sources more closely in later lessons. For now, however, consider that the accuracy of the Bible has been confirmed time and time again by the following independent and objective sources: A. Archaeology/ Ancient History B. Science C. Fulfilled Prophecy

Furthermore, the reliability of the Bible has been conformed by the subjective experiences of countless individuals who have placed their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Just as Saul of Tarsus, persecutor of Christians, was changed to Paul, apostle and missionary of Christ, so to have countless lives (including the author's) been changed (2 Corinthians 5:17) by placing their faith in Christ. This is overwhelming evidence to the fact that Jesus Christ is still alive and well today, and that the Scriptures which attest to Him are indeed accurate and reliable.

06: Archaeology and the Bible

Archaeology and the Bible The science of archaeology has proven to be a very valuable tool in better understanding, confirming and illustrating the Bible. Before about 1800 very little was known about the events, background, and setting of the Old and New Testament Scriptures. Therefore, it was nearly impossible to externally confirm the reliability of the Biblical record. You simply believed it or you didn't! As a result, it was very difficult to answer the critics' attacks on the historical accuracy of the Bible. Fortunately, in recent years archaeology has given us tremendous insight into the culture and lifestyles of ancient peoples. In addition our knowledge of ancient history, particularly relating to the Bible, has been greatly increased. This new information has served time and time again as an evidence of the reliability of the Bible. Quoting Nelson Gleuck, one of the greatest authorities in Biblical archaeology, "As a matter of fact, however, it may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference." [1] Archeological Evidences for the Reliability of the Old Testament

First let's consider the following expert testimonies. William F. Albright, widely recognized in his day as the greatest authority on Biblical archaeology, wrote:

There can be no doubt that archaeology has confirmed the substantial historicity of Old Testament tradition. [2] The excessive skepticism shown toward the Bible by important historical schools of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, certain phases of which still appear periodically, has been progressively discredited. Discovery after discovery has established the accuracy of innumerable details, and has brought increased recognition to the value of the Bible as a source of history. [3] Merrill Unger writes:

Old Testament archaeology has rediscovered whole nations, resurrected important peoples, and in a most astonishing manner filled in historical gaps, adding immeasurably to the knowledge of Biblical backgrounds. [4] Sir Frederic Kenyon says:

It is therefore legitimate to say that, in respect of that part of the Old Testament against which the disintegrating criticism of the last half of the nineteenth century was chiefly directed, the evidence of archaeology has been to re-establish its authority, and likewise to augment its value by rendering it more intelligible through a fuller knowledge of its background and setting. [5]

Regarding background information. Sometimes the value of archaeology is not in confirming a specific historic event but in confirming the setting and context of events portrayed in the Bible. The great value of archaeology has been to show, over and over again, that the geography, technology, political and military movements, cultures, religious practices, social institutions, languages, customs, and other aspects of everyday life of Israel and other nations of antiquity were exactly as described in the Bible. [6] Examples of this include:

* The "Black Stele" -At one time, one of the "assured results of higher criticism" was that the Pentateuch could not have been written by Moses because writing was not yet in existence in Moses' day. The critics assured us that the first 5 books of the Bible were put together centuries

later by a group of editors and were subsequently attributed to Moses (The Documentary Hypothesis). However, in 1901 the "black stele" was found which contained the detailed laws of Hammurabi's Code. The significant aspect of this find was that it was pre-Mosaic by at least three centuries. [7] Therefore, it proved that both writing and law codes were around centuries before Moses! Another archaeological find that confirms the existence of writing centuries before the time of Moses is the discovery of the Ebla Tablets in northern Syria in the 1960's. The Ebla kingdom was actually in existence approximately 1000 years before Moses (reaching its height around 2300 B.C.) [8]

* The Nuzi Tablets -This group of around 4000 cuneiform tablets, written in Akkadian, were discovered in the ancient city of Nuzi in modern Iraq. They have been dated at around 1500-1400 B.C. which means that they probably originated sometime during the patriarchal period of the Bible. These tablets have long fascinated Bible scholars because many of the customs and situations found there greatly resemble customs and situations found in the Bible. For example, one Nuzi text recording the adoption of Sennima, the son of Zike, by his father-in-law, Surihi-ilu, has many similarities with the events in the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. [9] In this text, Sennima is to become Surihi-ilu's heir if the latter dies without a son. This resembles the case of Abraham's servant Eliezer as recorded in Genesis 15. The text also states that if Surihi-ilu's daughter, Kelimninu, was childless then she was to find another wife for Sennima. Otherwise Sennima was not to take another wife. This has great similarities to Genesis 16, where Sarah gives Hagar to Abraham as a wife in order that she might bear Abraham children in Sarah's place. We also read that Rachel and Leah both gave their handmaids to Jacob for the purpose of bearing children in their place. Other Nuzi documents mention the legality of death-bed blessings, birthrights of the first-born, the possibility of selling birthrights, and many other items which help to confirm and illustrate the biblical record in Genesis.

Regarding historical people, places and events. In addition to providing helpful insight into background information of the Old Testament, archaeology has often confirmed the Old Testament record by providing secular testimony to Biblical people, places or events. For instance, consider the following examples. The identity of Belshazzar -For years many historians denied the historical character of Belshazzar who is referred to as the king of Babylon in Daniel 5. Historians could find no record of such a king. Nabonidus was known to be the king on the throne at the time of the Medo-Persian conquest of Babylon. However, in 1854 Sir Henry Rawlinson found an inscription, while excavating at ancient Ur, which stated that Nabonidus associated with him on his throne his eldest son, "Bel-shar-usur", and allowed him the royal title. [10] Furthermore, it was well known that Nabonidus was often out of the city of Babylon, spending most of his time in the city of Tema, Arabia. In fact, he was not in Babylon when it was taken by the Persians for he lived some time afterwards. This confirms the Biblical record very nicely. In Daniel 5:29, it is significant to note that Daniel is promised the "third" place in the kingdom which implies that Belshazzar was only the second in authority. Thus, what was once thought to be an obvious inaccuracy has turned out to be an evidence of reliability. The Hittites-For years historians said the Bible was in error because they could find no traces of the "Hittite" civilization mentioned in the Bible (over 60 references in the Old Testament). Today, however, we have abundant archaeological evidence for an advanced Hittite civilization that once vied with Assyria and Egypt for power in the ancient world. The discovery of the Hittite civilization is a perfect example of the danger of pronouncing the Bible in

error before all the facts are in!

Sargon-In Isaiah 20:1 we read of Sargon II of Assyria. There he is referred to as "the king of Assyria". Before modern archaeology, this single Biblical reference was the only place his name was mentioned in any ancient literature. This fact influenced many critics to conclude that the Bible was in error on this point, and that there was no Sargon, king of Assyria, as recorded in Isaiah. The critics were proven wrong, however, when Paul Emil Botta discovered the remains of Sargon's palace in 1843. In addition, discoveries made at Sargon's palace helped to verify and supplement the Biblical account of the fall of Samaria. From the account recorded in II Kings 17, it seems that Shalmaneser was the king who captured Samaria. In actuality, it was Shalmaneser who laid siege to Samaria. However, from inscriptions discovered on the walls of Sargon's palace it seems likely that Shalmaneser died before or shortly after completing the conquest, and it was Sargon, his successor, who took credit for capturing the city. While this information supplements the Biblical account, other information found there simply verifies it. One example is a quote from Sargon which states, "The town I rebuilt better than it was before and settled therein people from countries which I myself had conquered." [11] This agrees nicely with 2 Kings 17:24, which actually lists the nations from which Sargon brought people to settle Samaria. The Amarna Tablets-The Tell el-Amarna Tablets were found in 1886 in el-Amarna, an ancient capital of Egypt (Akhetaten). They date from the fourteenth Century B.C. and are from officials of Palestine and Syria who were upset because of the attacking Habiru (or 'Apiru). These tablets describe a disorganized turmoil among the states there and contain requests for Egyptian assistance and troops. These letters seem to portray precisely the situation in Palestine resulting from the Israelite invasion under Joshua (especially since the dates of the tablets correspond with conservative dates for the exodus and conquest of Canaan). Many scholars, including the famous William F. Albright, [12] equate the term Habiru with the Biblical term Hebrew which was first used of Abraham in Genesis 14:13.

Jericho-The excavation of the ancient city of Jericho has also served to confirm the reliability of the Biblical record. The walls of the city which dated from around Joshua's time (the city had been rebuilt several times so there were many different "walls") showed evidence of violent destruction as depicted in Joshua 6. Most significantly they had fallen outward down the slope of the mound. This is significant because city walls normally fall inwards, not outwards. As one archaeologist working at the site stated, "As to the main fact, then, there remains no doubt: the walls fell outwards so completely that the attackers would be able to clamor up and over their ruins into the city." [13]

These are just a handful of the archaeological finds confirming the accuracy of the Old Testament Scriptures. Whole books could be and actually have been written on the subject.

Archaeological and Secular Evidence for the Reliability of the New Testament

First let's consider the following quotes from Sir William Ramsay, one of the greatest archaeologists in history. In his life he did extensive archaeological work in Asia Minor (modern Turkey). Entering into this work he was an unbeliever who was thoroughly convinced that the book of Acts was the product of the 2nd Century (a theory taught in the German schools of higher criticism). As a matter of fact, one of his goals was to prove that the history given by Luke was inaccurate. However, his beliefs were drastically changed as his archaeological finds proved that

the book of Acts was accurate to the minutest detail. As a result Sir William Ramsay became a Christian. He writes:

I may fairly claim to have entered on this investigation without prejudice in favour of the conclusion which I shall now seek to justify to the reader. On the contrary, I began with a mind unfavorable to it...but more recently I found myself brought into contact with the Book of Acts as an authority for the topography, antiquities, and society of Asia Minor. It was gradually borne upon me that in various details the narrative showed marvelous truth. In fact, beginning with a fixed idea that the work was essentially a second century composition, and never relying on its evidence as trustworthy for first century conditions, I gradually came to find it a useful ally in some obscure and difficult investigations [14]

Luke is a historian of first rank; not merely are his statements of fact trustworthy...this author should be placed along with the very greatest of historians. [15] More evidences pointing to the reliability of the New Testament include:

Secular testimonies to New Testament persons. Among several other examples which could be cited, we have these secular witnesses to the existence of Christ.

Josephus was a Jewish historian and a contemporary of Christ. His works are full of references to New Testament characters such as the Herods, the Roman emperors, the high priestly families of Annas and Caiaphas, the Pharisees, the Saducees, etc.. Especially interesting is the following passage.

...so he assembled the sanhedrin judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others... (Antiquities XX 9:1) In an even more explicit but disputed passage he states:

Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works - a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from, are not extinct at this day. (Antiquities XVIII 3:3) The Roman historian, Cornelius Tacitus (A.D. 55? - after 117) wrote concerning Nero:

Hence to suppress the rumor, he falsely charged with the guilt, and punished with the most exquisite tortures, the persons commonly called Christians, who were hated for their enormities. Christus, the founder of the name, was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the reign of Tiberius: but the pernicious superstition, repressed for a time broke out again, not only through Judea, where the mischief originated, but through the city of Rome also (Annals XV .44). [16]

Archaeological testimony to New Testament people, places, and events. Several examples could also be given under this heading, but three of the more interesting are: In the 19th century, Acts 14:6 was consistently presented as an example of a historical error in the book of Acts. The reason for this is that the verse portrays Paul and Barnabas as entering the province of Lycaonia

when they came to Lystra and Derbe. The problem with this was that Iconium, the city they had fled from, was also in Lycaonia. However, this is one of the passages Sir William Ramsay checked for the historical accuracy of Acts. His archaeological finds showed that Iconium was made a part of Phrygia only during A.D. 37-72, both before and after this it was part of Lycaonia. [17] Thus we find that Luke's statement was written in the one and only period of history that it would be accurate! At one time, Luke was thought to be totally inaccurate regarding details surrounding the birth of Christ in Luke 2:1-3. The critics once argued that there was no census, Quirinius was governor of Syria at a later date and that citizens did not have to return to their homelands. However, archaeology has shown that the Romans did hold censuses every 14 years. Furthermore, it is now known that Quirinius was likely governor of Syria twice, once around 6 A.D., but the other around 7 B.C., which would correspond to the time of the census of Luke 2. Finally, a papyrus was found in Egypt which gives directions for a Roman census and orders all people away from home to return in preparation of the coming census. [18] In 1962, two Italian archaeologists dug up a Latin inscription in the town of Caesarea. It read "Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judea, has presented the Tiberium to the Caesareans." [19]

Conclusions: We can conclude that the external test of archaeology/ancient history has shown the Bible to be completely reliable and accurate. Not once has an archaeological discovery contradicted a Biblical reference! Once again, this demonstrates the incredible reliability of the Bible.

07: Science and the Bible Part 1

Science and the Bible (Part 1) For many years now, critics have contended that the Bible is full of scientific inaccuracies and errors reflecting the naivete of the ancient authors. Others, including some professing "Christians", would argue that since the Bible is a religious book, it need not be accurate in matters of science, history, etc. Therefore, when the Bible speaks of scientific matters, it can be interpreted spiritually or allegorically instead of literally. Both of these views must be rejected by the logical Bible believer, however. As we have seen earlier (lesson 3), the Bible claims to be the inspired, inerrant Word of God. If it is what it claims to be then it cannot contain errors of any kind. If it is not what it claims to be then it cannot even be trusted in matters of theology, much less science and history. Therefore, we must conclude that although the Bible is not a science book, per se, it is nonetheless accurate when it speaks on matters of science. The Bible and modern science do not contradict one another, but in fact supplement one another very nicely. Although the Bible does not use modern scientific terminology it does speak of basic scientific principles in everyday language that should be comprehensible to most readers. Let us examine some of the Biblical references to the sciences.

Natural Laws and Sciences in the Bible The Bible is full of references to natural laws and processes. Furthermore, there are many branches of modern science that are touched on in Scripture long before their discovery by modern science. Examples include:

Astronomy. Before the discovery of the telescope, references such as Jeremiah 33:22 (As the host of heaven can not be numbered) and Genesis 22:17 (which compares the stars of the heaven to the sand of the sea in multitude), must have seemed like serious mistakes. Men had always been fascinated by the stars and many had tried to count them. Ptolemy came up with 1,056. Tycho Brahe counted 777, while Johannes found 1,005. The maximum number of stars visible to the naked eye is around 4,000, if one counts every star that is visible from every point on the globe. [1] All would agree that 4000 is certainly not an "innumerable" number, and certainly not a number to be compared to the number of sand grains on the sea shore! However, with the discovery of the telescope, came the discovery of countless more stars. Scientists now estimate that the universe contains at least 1026 stars, which is a number that reflects the same order of magnitude as the number of sand grains on the earth. [2] The universe itself is implied to be immeasurable in Jeremiah 31:37. Even today, with our sophisticated telescopes, this Biblical statement is still true. Another interesting verse is 1 Corinthians 15:41 that tells us that "one star differeth from another star in glory." Although at one time this may have seemed like a mistake, we now know that no two stars are alike. As far as our solar system is concerned, some Biblical references such as Psalms 19:6 are claimed to be scientifically inaccurate since they seem to describe the sun as revolving around the earth. However, we must keep in mind that even in our modern, scientific culture we use the phrases "sunrise" and "sunset", without being accused of scientific inaccuracies. They are simply everyday expressions that everyone understands. Furthermore, we now know that our sun is no more fixed in space than the earth is. It is revolving around an unknown center of the Milky Way galaxy. Therefore, all motion is relative motion anyway, and the best way to describe it is to

arbitrarily select a point of assumed zero velocities and measure all velocities relative to that point. [3] So, once again, in relation to astronomy the Bible is found to be accurate.

Biology. The circulation of blood was not discovered until 1616. Yet thousands of years previous to William Harvey's great discovery, the Bible said in Leviticus 17:11 that "the life of the flesh is in the blood." Only recently has science grasped the full impact of this verse. We now know that life does depend upon the blood to supply the food, water, and oxygen that cells of the body must have to survive. Another significant aspect of Biblical biology is the origin of life itself, as described in Genesis 1-2. This will be discussed briefly in the next chapter.

Geology. Only a few centuries ago most scientists believed in a flat earth. Today, many critics still believe that the Bible teaches such a concept. However, it is fascinating to note that not one verse of Scripture teaches such a concept even though the Bible was written thousands of years before Columbus' discoveries. As a matter of fact in Isaiah 40:22, the Bible describes God as sitting "upon the circle of the earth". This verse definitely seems to imply the sphericity of the earth. An even more fascinating verse is found in Job 26:7, where God is said to hang the earth "upon nothing". Even today, scientists do not know why gravitational forces work as they do. They can explain how it acts but not why! Thousands of years before Newton discovered gravity, however, the Bible describes the earth as resting on nothing (also see Job 38:6). Another reference to Biblical geology is Job 14:18-19 where rock erosion is described. The most significant aspect of Biblical geology, however, is the account of Noah's flood. If this account is accurate, then it must necessarily be the cause of nearly all the major geological formations and layers that we witness today. In addition it would be the cause of the fossil record, as well as our coal and oil reserves. It is significant to note that in 2 Peter 3:4-6 we have God's condemnation of the modern, evolutionary theory of uniformitarian geology. This will be discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter.

Hydrology. The field of hydrology ("science of water") has many Biblical references. For example the water cycle (the process by which water vapor is condensed and precipitated as rain or snow, drained off the land through a system of streams, rivers, etc. until it eventually reaches the sea, and is finally returned to the skies through evaporation) is mentioned in both Ecclesiastes 1:6-7 and Isaiah 55:10. This is significant because the water cycle was not demonstrated scientifically until recent times. Evaporation itself is alluded to in Psalms 135:7 and Jeremiah 10:13.

Thermodynamics. The first and second laws of thermodynamics are two of the most basic and established laws of science. The first law, which can be referred to as the Law of Conservation of Mass-Energy, states that the total quantity of mass/energy in the universe is always constant. It can neither be created nor destroyed. This law is hinted at in many Scriptures including Nehemiah 9:6, 2 Peter 3:7, Colossians 1:17, and Hebrews 1:3. The second law states that the amount of unavailable energy or "entropy" is always increasing. In other words, the universe is running down and constantly becoming more disorderly. This principle is taught in Psalms 102:25-27 and Romans 8:20-22, among other places. It is interesting to note that these fundamental laws of science harmonize very nicely with the creation/fall of man account in Genesis 1-3. In contrast, they render the theory of evolution, which must have the creation of matter/energy out of nothing and increasing order without the help of any outside intelligence, totally infeasible and unscientific.

Supernatural Events in the Bible (Miracles)

Many critics will argue that the Bible is necessarily unscientific because of all the miracles that are recorded in its pages. They will argue that since miracles are scientifically impossible, they simply cannot occur. Therefore the Bible must be unscientific and full of errors. Fortunately this argument is easily answered because it simply begs the question. By definition, a miracle is a supernatural event that cannot be explained by the laws of science. It is not an antinatural event, which would necessitate a contradiction, but rather a supernatural event, which necessitates the intervention of a supernatural cause. In other words a miracle is not an assertion that the same causes produce different results (in contradiction to scientific principles) but that a new cause has intervened (i.e., God) to produce a new and different result. The real question at issue then is not science but theism! If a theistic God exists, then certainly miracles must be possible. In an atheistic, deistic, or pantheistic world view miracles are indeed impossible. Therefore, any investigation into the validity of a miracle must be a historical one not a scientific or philosophical one. In other words one should ask did the miracle occur, not could it occur, and based upon the reliability of the Bible (as studied in lesson 4) we have no valid reason to doubt the reality of the recorded Biblical miracles. If one assumes that miracles cannot occur then he has started with an a priori assumption that there is no God (refer to lesson 1 for arguments on the existence of God). In the Bible there are basically two types of miracles. They are:

Miracles of creation. These types of miracles can be defined as occasions "when God has seen fit to set aside even His basic laws of conservation and decay, and to perform special acts of creation of matter or energy (in contradiction to the first law of thermodynamics) or special acts of instant increases of order in closed systems (in contradiction to the second law)." [4] These miracles could be classified as "Grade A" miracles. One author has counted 89 of these "Grade A" miracles in the Bible. [5] Examples would include the raising of the dead, Jesus feeding the 5000, Jesus walking on the water, and the blind men whose sight was restored by Christ.

Miracles of providence. These type of miracles are "accomplished strictly within the framework of the two basic laws but involves special control or adjustment of one or more natural processes for a specific purpose at a particular time." [6] In other words these miracles can be explained using natural laws. They are statistically possible but statistically improbable. Such unusual events can be classified as "miracles" if they can be best explained by "invoking the supernatural". [7] In other words, based on the moral and theological contexts, would there be a good reason for God to cause this "miracle" to occur at this particular time. One author has counted 127 of these "Grade B" miracles of providence in the Bible. [8] Examples include the plagues of Egypt, the three and a half year drought and subsequent rain in the days of Elijah, the Philippian earthquake, and the abnormal catch of fish by the disciples. In one final note, we must always be leery of extra-Biblical miracles. Although God is certainly able to perform miracles today, we must be on guard against accepting every miraculous claim as from God. First of all, we must realize that Satan and his demons are powerful creatures capable of minor miracles and major deception. Secondly, we must realize that miracles can be counterfeited by human agency (as with the magicians in Exodus 7). Therefore we must examine all miracles with two tests. First, are the witnesses trustworthy and reliable and, second, does the alleged miracle support the clear teaching of Scriptures? We can be sure that any miracle professed to verify false teaching or that is associated with immoral conduct is not from God.

Conclusion: From this study we can conclude that the Bible and true science do not contradict. Certainly the Bible does contradict the man-made pseudo-scientific theories of origins and organic evolution. These matters, however, will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 7. For now, however, let it suffice to say that science, like archaeology, has proven to be an external confirmation of the reliability of the Biblical record.

08: Part 2 (Scientific Evidences for Creation)

Science and the Bible - Part 2 The Scientific Evidences for Creation

Having studied "Science and the Bible" in a previous lesson, we will specifically examine how the Biblical account of origins, as contained in the book of Genesis, measures up to legitimate science. This is obviously important if we want to defend the faith, for if the Bible is scientifically inaccurate in Genesis, how do we know that it is theologically accurate in Genesis or any other portion? Thus, in this lesson we will examine the scientific evidences that support special creation as opposed to the Darwinian theory of evolution. First, however, we will examine two different philosophies regarding the current creation/evolution debate.

First, there is the humanistic philosophy which states "Evolution is science, but creation is religion." This statement has been used over and over again by the evolutionary establishment, but unfortunately for them it can easily be shown that creation is at least as scientific as evolution and evolution is at least as religious as creation. Note the definition of science as given in the Oxford Dictionary: A branch of study which is concerned either with a connected body of demonstrated truths or with observed facts systematically classified and more or less colligated by being brought under general laws, and which includes trustworthy methods for the discovery of new truth within its own domain.

Evolution cannot be "demonstrated", "observed" or tested by the scientific method; therefore, it cannot properly be called a science. Note the following admissions from a non-creationist and an evolutionist. By its very nature, evolution cannot be substantiated in the way that is usual in science by experiment and direct observation. Neither Darwin or any subsequent biologist has ever witnessed the evolution of one new species as it actually occurs. [1] Our theory of evolution has become as Popper [Sir Karl Popper, one of the world's leading philosophers of science] described, one which cannot be refuted by any possible observations. Every conceivable observation can be fitted into it. It is thus 'outside of empirical science' but not necessarily false. No one can think of ways to test it. Ideas, either without basis or based on a few laboratory experiments carried out in extremely simplified systems, have attained currency far beyond their validity. They have become part of an evolutionary dogma accepted by most of us as part of our training. [2]

Note the use of the word "dogma" in describing evolution. Does this sound like science or religion? One of the tests of a good scientific theory is potential falsifiability, for if it is impossible to falsify it, then it is also impossible to confirm it. In other words, a good scientific theory will be one in which experiments can be conceived to test the validity of the theory. This simply cannot be done with the general concepts of creation or evolution. Both are non-falsifiable theories since the events associated with origins were unique and unrepeatable. There were no human witnesses to these events and they cannot be simulated in the laboratory.

Evolution can be defined as a belief about the past based on the words of scientists who don't know everything, who were not there, and who are trying to explain how the evidence, which only exists in the present, got there. (Ken Ham, Creation Scientist) In addition both concepts can be modified to accommodate new facts. Therefore, it is simply folly to assert that evolution is more scientific than creation. The only basis for this statement is that creation must evoke the supernatural and is, therefore, outside the boundaries of legitimate science. This argument, however, is simply begging the question because it makes an a priori assumption that there is no God or supernatural. This does indeed rule out creation from a pre-conceived philosophical viewpoint, but certainly not from a scientific one! This brings us to our next point, namely the religious nature of evolution. Consider the following quotes from evolutionists. The fact of evolution is the backbone of biology, and biology is thus in the peculiar position of being a science founded on an unproved theory - is it then a science or a faith? Belief in the theory of evolution is thus exactly parallel to belief in special creation - both are concepts which believers know to be true but neither, up to the present, has been capable of proof. [3]

It is a religion of science that Darwinism chiefly held and holds men's minds...The modified, but still characteristically Darwinian theory has itself become an orthodoxy, preached by its adherents with religious fervor, and doubted, they feel, only by a few muddlers, imperfect in scientific faith. [4] As further proof, consider the first two affirmations of the Humanist Manifesto:

1. "Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created."
2. "Humanism believes that man is a part of nature and that he has emerged as the result of a continuous process." [5]

Evolution is obviously a vital part of the religion of humanism. Likewise, the rapidly growing New Age Movement, a man-centered religion, rests upon the evolutionary foundation. Therefore, to argue that evolution is pure science without religious implications is also pure folly.

Now let us consider the creationist philosophy with regards to the creation/evolution debate. This philosophy states that the creation model and the evolution model should be compared scientifically to determine which offers the best explanations of origins. As mentioned earlier, both theories can be modified to accommodate new facts and neither can be proven by the scientific method. However, both theories, before modification, do postulate certain evidences that should be observable in our world today, and these evidences are radically different (for instance abundant intermediate links in the fossil record versus no intermediate links in the fossil record). Therefore, we can weigh the current scientific evidence and determine which theory is more plausible based on the facts, not pre-conceived philosophy.

Scientists who go about teaching that evolution is a fact of life are great con-men, and the story they are telling may be the greatest hoax ever. In explaining evolution, we do not have one iota of fact. [6]

Neither of the 2 fundamental axioms of Darwin's macroevolutionary theory-the concept of continuity of nature, that is the idea of a functional continuum of all life forms linking all species together and ultimately leading back to a primeval cell, and the belief that all the adaptive design of life has resulted from a blind random process-have been validated by one empirical discovery or scientific advance since 1859. [7]

Let us now examine some of the scientific evidence favoring the creation model of origins over the evolution model of origins.

Evidence from Thermodynamics [The First and Second Laws] The First and Second Laws of Thermodynamics are two of the most established and Fundamental Laws of science. The First Law (Law of conservation of energy) states that the total quantity of energy in the universe is always constant - it can neither be created or destroyed. The Second Law states that the amount of unavailable energy or "entropy" is always increasing. In other words, the universe is running down and constantly becoming more disorderly. Famous evolutionist Isaac Asimov stated: As far as we know, all changes are in the direction of increasing entropy, of increasing disorder, of increasing randomness, of running down. [8]

We can see the Second Law all around us today. A room left to itself will become dusty and dingy. A car that is not properly maintained will eventually run down. Scientists tell us that even our sun will eventually run down. The Second Law contradicts evolutionary cosmogonies (theories of origins) because matter does not naturally become more orderly. In fact, the universe is running down. In addition, since the universe is not dead yet, it must have had a beginning. Therefore, the Second Law proves that the universe must have been created. The first law stipulates that it could not have created itself. Therefore, there must have been a creator (Genesis 1:1)! All evolutionary cosmogonies, however, including the Big-Bang theory, break the First and Second laws. The Big-Bang theory postulates that in unobservable time matter/energy evolved out of nothing into an organized "cosmic egg" before the beginning of our present order. For some unknown reason this "cosmic egg" exploded, eventually resulting in our present universe. The biological theory of evolution also violates the Second Law because it requires organic matter to become more complex and organized without the intervention of any outside intelligence. This applies to both open and closed systems.

...there are no known violations of the second law of thermodynamics. Ordinarily the second law is stated for isolated systems, but the second law applies equally well to open systems...there is somehow associated with the field of far from equilibrium phenomena the notion that the 2nd law of thermodynamics fails for such systems. It is important to make sure that this error does not propagate itself. [9]

Contrary to what many evolutionists postulate, an outside energy source in an open system, such as the sun, does not solve this problem. Such an energy source is a necessary condition to break the Second Law, but it is certainly not a sufficient one. Raw unconverted energy from the sun, like a bull in a china shop, would do much more harm than good. Some type of conversion system, such as photosynthesis, must first be in place in order to convert the raw energy into useful energy. Secondly a control system must be in place to direct the energy in a progressive, constructive direction (such as the genetic code on a DNA molecule). Intelligence is the key to increasing complexity, not energy!

Evidence from Microbiology [The Impossibility of Spontaneous Generation and The Complexity of Life] The statistical impossibility of the spontaneous generation of life has always represented one of the greatest problems for the theory of evolution. Evolutionists have traditionally taught that organic molecules, such as amino acids, arose from a "primordial soup" of complex chemicals. These organic molecules subsequently evolved into simple proteins which eventually evolved into

organisms capable of reproduction. However, as one well-known scientist has stated: The chance that higher life forms might have emerged in this way is comparable with the chance that 'a tornado sweeping through a junk-yard might assemble a Boeing 747 from the materials therein.' [10] The reason for a statement such as this is simply the incredible complexity of life at the microbiological level. For example, Michael Denton, a non-Christian molecular biologist, writes: Is it really credible that random processes could have constructed a reality, the smallest element of which - a functional protein or gene - is complex beyond our own creative capacities, a reality which is the very antithesis of chance, which excels in every sense anything produced by the intelligence of man? Alongside the level of ingenuity and complexity exhibited by the molecular machinery of life, even our most advanced artifacts appear clumsy. We feel humbled, as neolithic man in the presence of twentieth-century technology. [11] A Boeing 747 is a collection of 4.5 million non-flying parts, arranged in an intricate design such that it can fly. A typical cell contains several billion non-living molecules such as proteins, DNA, and RNA all arranged in intricate design. According to Denton a typical cell contains ten million million atoms. Its life depends on the integrated activity of ten or even hundreds of thousands of different proteins. In addition, the genetic code found in the DNA molecule is unbelievably complex. The DNA molecule, which is the molecule of heredity, is necessary to code for proteins, the molecules of structure and function. Amino acids must be arranged in certain exact sequences, just like letters in a sentence, to form protein molecules. Without DNA molecules to provide instructions, amino acids would never join together to form proteins. However, the opposite is also true. DNA is not built without protein machinery (specifically enzymes). Therefore our dilemma is which came first, the DNA or the proteins? Both are necessary for reproduction and an organism not capable of reproduction would obviously not survive. The origin of the genetic code is the most baffling aspect of the problem of the origins of life and a major conceptual or experimental breakthrough may be needed before we can make any substantial progress. [12] Statistically, spontaneous generation is impossible. For example:

Dr. Duane Gish (Ph.D. in Biochemistry from Cal. Berkeley) states that the probability of a protein of only 50 amino acids forming (The simplest "living" organism would have at least 400 amino acids [13]) would be 1 in 1065. [14] Sir Fred Hoyle states:

Precious little in the way of biochemical evolution could have happened on the Earth. It is easy to show that the two thousand or so enzymes that span the whole of life could not have evolved on the Earth. If one counts the number of trials assemblies of amino acids that are needed to give rise to the enzymes, the probability of their discovery by random shufflings turns out to be less than 1 in 1040,000. [15] As a result of such calculations as these, Hoyle and some other evolutionary scientists (including Francis Crick, who shared a Noble Prize for the discovery of DNA's structure) have felt it necessary to postulate that life must have arisen somewhere in space and was subsequently translated to earth! Let us remember once again that even the simplest of cells contains billions of proteins, DNA, RNA, and other complex structures all arranged in an intricate design. Yet the evolutionist will insist that it takes faith to believe in creation! Evolutionist Richard Dawkins states: The more statistically improbable a thing is, the less can we believe that it just happened by blind chance. Superficially the obvious alternative to chance is an intelligent Designer. [16] Evidence from Biology [The Improbability/Impossibility of Evolution by Random Mutations and Natural Selection]

Another of the many problems for the evolutionist is the mechanism of the theory of biological evolution. In other words, how does it work? The standard answer is random mutations and natural selection. But is this standard answer a legitimate answer? To answer this question we must first distinguish between microevolution, which is an established fact of science, and macroevolution, which is an untestable and unverifiable theory (albeit referred to as fact by nearly every major science periodical and museum in the world). Microevolution refers to change within a given "kind" (i.e., Genesis 1:12; 21; 24-25) while macroevolution (i.e., Darwinism) refers to a change from one "kind" to another. We see the evidences of microevolution all round us. For instance, consider the many different types and varieties of dogs and cats (canines and felines if you prefer) in the world today. It is significant, however, that we see no "dats", "cogs", or any other transitional forms in our world today, for if we did we would evidence an example of macroevolution. It has long been known that natural selection (i.e., the survival of the fittest) can account for changes within a species. For instance consider the oft-cited example of the peppered moth of England. The dark colored moths were able to survive in the smoke-filled environments of the industrial revolution far better than the light ones. Although the number of dark-colored moths as opposed to light-colored moths increased drastically, the moths were, nonetheless, still peppered moths. Therefore, microevolutional changes within a species should not be used as a proof of macroevolutional changes from one species to another. Unfortunately, this is what many evolutionists do. Darwin, himself, was influenced greatly by microevolutional changes evidenced in the varieties of finches he observed on the Galapagos Islands. Honest evolutionists, however, will admit that microevolutional changes are irrelevant when it comes to evidence for macroevolution. For instance, Marjorie Grene, a leading philosopher and historian of science at the University of California, Davis, states: That the color of moths and snails or the bloom on the castor bean stem are 'explained' by mutation and natural selection is very likely; but how from single-celled (and for that matter from inanimate) ancestors there came to be castor beans and moths and snails, and how from these there emerged llamas and hedgehogs and lions and apes and men that is a question which neo-Darwinian theory simply leaves unasked. [17]

Furthermore, natural selection itself is nothing more than a tautology (a circular argument in which the conclusion restates the premise). Natural selection is in essence "the survival of the fittest". If one were to ask, "What survives?", the answer would be "The fittest survive." However, when one asks, "What are the fittest?", the answer is "Those who produce the most offspring." In other words, "Those who survive." Therefore, natural selection tells us nothing more than "survivors survive." [18]

Obviously natural selection cannot be used to explain the mechanism of biological evolution. Honest evolutionists will admit this:

Natural Selection is that some things leave more offspring than others; and, you ask, which leave more offspring than others; and it is those that leave more offspring, and there is nothing more to it than that. The whole real guts of evolution - which is how do you come to have horses and tigers and things - is outside the mathematical theory. [19]

Natural selection is actually a conserving mechanism. It can't create more information. It simply preserves what is already there. Varieties within species today actually represent a loss of genetic information, and macroevolution requires an increase.

If natural selection can't create more information, what does? The argument that mutations are the mechanism for evolution is equally void of scientific evidence. First of all mutations are relatively rare and, more importantly, when they do occur they are almost always harmful to the organism, not beneficial. Famous French zoologist and evolutionist Pierre-Paul Grasse puts it this way:

Mutations, in time, occur incoherently. They are not complementary to one another, nor are they cumulative in successive generations toward a given direction. They modify what preexists, but they do so in disorder... [20] The opportune appearance of mutations permitting animals and plants to meet their needs seems hard to believe. Yet the Darwinian theory is even more demanding: A single plant, a single animal would require thousands and thousands of lucky, appropriate events. Thus, miracles would become the rule: events with an infinitesimal probability could not fail to occur. [21] Information theory teaches us that when information is transmitted it either stays the same or gets more random.

Illustrations: Randomly changing the letters of a book or repeatedly copying an audio tape.

Besides all this, the incredible complexity of life leaves evolution by natural selection and random mutations statistically impossible. Michael Denton writes:

Evolution by natural selection is therefore, in essence, strictly analogous to problem solving by trial and error, and it leads to the immense claim that all the design in the biosphere is ultimately the fortuitous outcome of an entirely blind random process - a giant lottery. [22] The intuitive feeling that pure chance could never have achieved the degree of complexity and ingenuity so ubiquitous in nature has been a continuing source of skepticism ever since the publication of the Origin; and throughout the past century there has always been a significant minority of first-rate biologists who have never been able to bring themselves to accept the validity of Darwinian claims. [23]

It is simply unthinkable to assume that blind chance formed the human brain with its 12 billion brain cells and its 10^{15} connections, which according to Isaac Asimov was the most complex and orderly arrangement of matter in the universe. [24] Darwin himself realized that complex organs such as the eye presented tremendous difficulties to his theory. To suppose that the eye with all its inimitable contrivances for adjusting the focus to different distances, for admitting different amounts of light, and for the correction of spherical and chromatic aberration, could have been formed by natural selection, seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest degree. [25] The eye, like so many other complex organs is an integrated system that functions as a whole. Five percent of an eye does not equal 5% vision, it equals 0% vision. What good would a hole in front of the eye which allows light to pass through do, if there are no cells in the back of the eye to receive the light. What use is a lens that forms an image if there is no nervous system to interpret the image. How could a visual nervous system have evolved without an eye to give it information.

Finally, we see no examples of new forms evolving in our world today as a result of natural selection and random mutations. We do see many varieties being formed within existing species both naturally and artificially, but again this is due to a loss of genetic information (For example when a small percentage of a parent population is isolated from the original population). Clearly, however, we see no examples of transitional forms in our world today. The only logical alternative to evolution by natural selection and random mutations is, of course, special creation.

Evidence from Paleontology [The Fossil Record]

Since biology shows us no examples of transitional forms today we must look at the fossil record (the history of life in the past) to see if there are any transitional forms or "missing links" in man's "family tree". As we examine the fossil record, however, we discover that the missing links are still missing! Although the evolutionists are reluctant to admit this, in moments of honesty they will confess that the fossil record is full of gaps.

All paleontologists know that the fossil record contains precious little way in the way of intermediate forms; transitions between major groups are characteristically abrupt. [26] The extreme rarity of transitional forms in the fossil record persists as the trade secret of paleontology. [27] In any case, no real evolutionist, whether gradualist or punctuationalist, uses the fossil record as evidence in favour of the theory of evolution as opposed to special creation. [28] For instance, one of the most distressing problems the fossil record poses for the evolutionist is the "Cambrian Explosion" of life. Fossils of such complex forms as sponges, trilobites, jellyfish, sea worms, etc. appear suddenly in the Cambrian rocks without any traces of their evolutionary ancestors. Yet there should be an incredible number of intermediary forms between single-celled organisms (now said to be found in Pre-Cambrian rocks) and these creatures. In addition there is no trace of the evolutionary links between the invertebrates and the vertebrates (i.e., fishes). Again, there should be multiple intermediate forms. Neither is there any fossil evidence for the evolution from fish to amphibians. For instance, no forms with part feet and part fins have ever been found (except, of course, for artists' renderings found in text books and museums all over the world!)

Since the fossil record provides no evidence of other aspects of the transformation from fish to tetrapod, paleontologists have had to speculate how legs and aerial breathing evolved... [29] The next step in man's evolutionary development should be from reptile to mammal. Once again, we find no missing links in the fossil record.

Because of the nature of the fossil evidence, paleontologists have been forced to reconstruct the first two-thirds of mammalian history in great part on the basis of tooth morphology. [30] From small mammals primates supposedly evolved but we have no trace of this development either.

...the transition from insectivore to primate is not documented by fossils. The basis of knowledge about the transitions is by inference from living forms. [31]

Finally, in the evolutionary scheme we have the transition from ape to man. Let's look at the fossil evidence for a few of the well-known hominids [32] (a pre-human form in the line leading to man), beginning with two that the evolutionists would like to forget because they illustrate the obvious bias and pre-conceived notions involved with evolutionary anthropology and paleontology.

1. Piltdown Man was nothing more than a deliberate hoax. Someone took the jaw of an ape, filed the teeth down to resemble those of a human, added a human skull, chemically treated them to give the appearance of age and then buried them in a gravel bed where it was discovered by a team of anthropologists. The sad part was not that someone would pull a stunt like that, but that it fooled the world's greatest experts in anthropology and paleontology for 41 years!

2. The famous Nebraska man, used as evidence in the Scopes Trial, was constructed from a single tooth! From this one tooth pictures were drawn of an ape-man, family and all. In addition, the 13th Edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica recognized it as a legitimate human fossil. [33] As it turned out, further study revealed the tooth came from an extinct pig!

Now lets look at some more of the well-known "hominids."

Cro-Magnon Man: essentially identical to modern man with an average brain capacity that is actually greater than the average for modern man.

Neanderthal Man: today universally classified as fully human. In the past, however, these men were pictured as stooped over, semi-erect, sub-human cave men. This was due to the fact that the first specimen found was crippled with arthritis, and therefore evolutionists assumed that the stooped over appearance of the fossil was normal. Furthermore it has been discovered that these people suffered from rickets which causes bone softening and malformation. Today, however, it is known that these people walked fully erect and had an average brain capacity greater than modern man. [34]

Java Man: An ape-like skull cap was found in 1891 by Dutch physician Eugene Dubois in a gravel bed. A year later and 50 feet away he found an essentially human femur. He also added a few teeth to the collection and announced to the world that he had found the missing link. Before he died, however, he admitted that he had also found human skulls (the Wadjak skulls) nearby at approximately the same level, meaning that Java Man could not have been man's ancestor.

Ramapithecus: originally judged to be a hominid on the basis of a few teeth and a few fragments of a jaw. Yet, once again, this conclusion was based on insufficient and misinterpreted information, and has now been rejected based on more complete fossil fragments. Modern conclusions are that Ramapithecus was only an ape.

Australopithecus: These creatures are currently the best candidate for man's ancestor in evolutionary circles. They are associated with the work of the Leakey family and Donald Johanson (the discoverer of "Lucy"; the best specimen but still only 40% complete) in Africa. These fossils are very ape-like with a cranial capacity in the range of a modern gorilla, yet the Leakey's and Johanson insist that they walked upright based on very limited pelvic and limb fossils. However, even if these creatures did walk upright (and scientists by no means agree that they did [35]), this is not relevant since the modern pygmy chimpanzee (the "bonobo") spends much of its time walking upright. As a matter of fact, the pygmy chimp appears to be strikingly similar to "Lucy" in appearance and size as well. [36]

Most significantly, creationists believe that these creatures are simply extinct apes, while evolutionary anthropologists and paleontologists are by no means in agreement as to their identity. Two notable evolutionary scientists who have thoroughly studied the Australopithecine fossils and concluded that they are not missing links are Lord Solly Zuckerman (famous British anatomist), and Dr. Charles Oxnard (former Professor of Anatomy and Biological Sciences, University of Southern California, now Professor of Anatomy and Human Biology, University of Western Australia). Zuckerman concludes that they were apes, Oxnard, an extinct species that resembles an orangutan more than any other living form. [37]

Even more revealing than the truth about the individual "hominids", is a glance at a composite fossil chart showing all the supposed hominid fossils and their corresponding evolutionary ages (creationists do not accept these evolutionary dates due to many flaws, inconsistencies, and presuppositions involved in evolutionary dating methods). [38]

Such a chart will reveal that according to the evolutionists' dates, modern Homo Sapien fossil material (indistinguishable from modern humans) appears in the fossil record before the Australopithecines and the "hominids" in the genus Homo (Neanderthals, archaic Homo sapiens, Homo erectus, and Homo habilis). Australopithecine authority Charles Oxnard writes: The genus Homo may, in fact, be so ancient as to parallel entirely the genus Australopithecus, thus denying the latter a direct place in the human lineage. [39] Not only do true humans appear in the fossil record before any of the "hominids" but they are contemporary with them throughout their history! Obviously these "hominids" had nothing to do with human origins. It is significant that composite fossil charts will not be found in evolutionary journals and/or text books. It is simply too revealing! Furthermore, a thorough study of the different fossils in the genus Homo will reveal that according to evolutionary dating methods Homo Sapiens, Neanderthal, archaic Homo Sapiens and Homo Erectus all lived as contemporaries and none of them show any evidence of evolving from one form to another. (Many believe that Homo Habilis is a flawed taxon and that each of the fossils ascribed to it should be ascribed to other taxons. Regardless of the classification, these fossils are still contemporary with other Homo fossils.) In addition, it is significant to note that human fossils are often found in the same location and at the same level that, according to their morphology, should be in different evolutionary categories. [40] This obviously prohibits the possibility that one of these forms involved into another. The fossil record definitely seems to indicate that the Australopithecines were apes, and that Homo Sapiens, Neanderthal, archaic Homo sapiens and Homo Erectus were all different varieties of humans, capable of inter-breeding and living contemporaneously. What, then, can we conclude about the missing-links in man's family tree? One evolutionist states: The fossils that decorate our family tree are so scarce that there are still more scientists than specimens. The remarkable fact is that all the physical evidence we have for human evolution can still be placed, with room to spare, inside a single coffin! [41] Not to worry, however, evolutionists will continue to come up with new candidates for missing links as the former ones are discredited. In the 1980's, for instance, both a dolphin's rib and a donkey's skull were mistaken for hominid fossils! [42] The problem with a lot of anthropologists is that they want so much to find a hominid that any scrap of bone becomes a hominid bone. [43] The punctuated equilibrium theory of evolution which tries to explain the absence of intermediate links by the explanation that evolution occurred in "spurts" is unconvincing since it is only an argument from silence. It starts with the assumption that evolution has occurred and then interprets the fossil record in light of that initial assumption.

Evidence from Geology [Evidences for the "Genesis Flood"]

Just as there is a creation versus evolution debate in biology, there is a catastrophism versus uniformitarianism debate in modern geology. Uniformitarianism, which must be true if evolution is true, was founded in the 18th Century by men such as Charles Lyell (a lawyer) and James Hutton (an agriculturist with medical training). Their theory can be defined as the belief that the present is the key to the past. In other words, uniformitarians believe that geological processes we see today operate in the same manner and at the same rate as past geological processes. In contrast, catastrophism, which must be true if the book of Genesis (see chapters 6- 8) is true, postulates that past processes were different than present processes, and therefore, the past cannot be explained by the present. Catastrophists will generally accept the Biblical account of the Genesis flood as found in Genesis 6-8 as scientifically and historically accurate. For this reason

catastrophism can be referred to as "flood geology". Although neither "flood geology" or "uniformitarianism" (like creation and evolution) can be proven correct by the scientific method, the geological evidence we see today is explained far better by the "flood model". There are, in fact, several scientific evidences that point to catastrophism over uniformitarianism. As a matter of fact these evidences have led many geologists who wouldn't dare hold to catastrophism to adopt a neo-catastrophism that assumes geological features were formed in "spurts". In order to understand some of these evidences we must first comment briefly on the geologic column. The column, which is only a trend in the first place, is seldom, if ever, found as it is pictured in text books. Two-thirds of the world's land surface has five or fewer of the 12 major geologic systems represented and one-fifth of the world's land surface has three or fewer systems represented. In light of this, what are some evidences for catastrophism within the supposed geologic column?

Most of the earth's surface being covered by sedimentary rocks. These rocks, by definition, have been formed by the erosion, transportation, and deposition of sediments by moving water. It is obvious that all of the earth's present land surface has at one time or another been covered by water because of the worldwide presence of these fossil-bearing, water-deposited rocks. Furthermore, fossils of marine creatures are found world-wide, once again indicating that water once covered what is now the land surfaces of the earth.

There is no worldwide unconformity in the entire geological column except at its very base. (Henry Morris defines an unconformity as "an erosion surface interfacing between two formations whose strata are not conformable with one another. It, therefore, represents a gap in time of unknown duration, between the deposition of the formations below and above." [44]) Since unconformities represent time gaps between the geological layers, there is no worldwide time gap in the geologic column. Therefore, the whole geologic column, by deduction, represents a single, continuous depositional process. Such a process could only be explained by a worldwide hydraulic catastrophe. The existence of fossil graveyards. Vast fossil beds of fish, dinosaurs, mammoths, and other creatures have been found all over the world. In order for any fossil to form, the organism must be rapidly buried and subsequently turned to rock. In addition, the size of many of these graveyards and the vast variety of fossil remains within them requires a catastrophe of immense scale. The existence of polystrate fossils. These are fossils of large plants or animals, especially trees, that extend through several sedimentary layers (each layer should represent a vast period of time to the uniformitarian geologist). These sedimentary layers were obviously deposited rapidly. The existence of great coal deposits (one of the "fossil fuels"). These deposits were formed by enormous masses of vegetation that were swept together, buried, and subsequently carbonized by heat and pressure. We see no such coal formation going on today, so we can deduce that the coal beds were formed by some sort of past cataclysm. Furthermore, the fact that coal has been formed in the laboratory proves that long periods of time are not necessary for its formation. Further proof of this fact is the discovery of fossilized human artifacts and even a fossilized human skull in coal beds. [45] The numerous examples when the geologic column (which is only a "trend" in the first place) is out of order. In other words "older" rocks are on top of "younger" rocks and "older" fossils are on top of "younger" fossils.

Other Evidences include: [46]

1. The presence of short-term surface features such as ripple marks, rain drops, and animal tracks in sedimentary layers.
2. The deficiency of bioturbation (evidence of living communities and thus significant periods of time) in sedimentary layers.
3. The lack of soil layers in the geologic column.
4. Soft-sediment deformation (sediments that were bent or broken while still in a soft, unconsolidated condition). But what about the radiometric dating methods? The earth is supposed to be nearly 5 billion years old, and some of these methods seem to verify ancient dates for many of earth's igneous rocks. The answer is that these methods, are far from infallible and are based on three arbitrary assumptions (a constant rate of decay, an isolated system in which no parent or daughter element can be added or lost, and a known amount of the daughter element present initially) .

It is obvious that radiometric techniques may not be the absolute dating methods that they claimed to be. Age estimates on a given geological stratum by different radiometric methods are often quite different (sometimes by hundreds of millions of years). There is not absolutely reliable long-term radiological "clock". The uncertainties inherent in radiometric dating are disturbing to geologists and evolutionists... [47] As proof of the unreliability of the radiometric methods consider the fact that in nearly every case dates from recent lava flows have come back excessively large. One example is the rocks from the Kaupulehu Flow, Hualalai Volcano in Hawaii which was known to have erupted in 1800-1801. These rocks were dated by a variety of different methods. Of 12 dates reported the youngest was 140 million years and the oldest was 2.96 billion years. The dates average 1.41 billion years. [48] A few of the many evidences for a young earth outside the field of geology are:

1. The C-14/C-12 ratio in the earth system.
2. The decay of the earth's magnetic field.
3. The amount of atmospheric helium.
4. "Radio halos"
5. Short-period comets. [49] In addition, consider what famous evolutionist and Harvard professor Steven J. Gould has said about uniformitarianism.

Charles Lyell was a lawyer by profession, and his book is one of the most brilliant briefs ever published by an advocate...Lyell relied upon two bits of cunning to establish his uniformitarian view as the only true geology...The geologic record does seem to record catastrophes: rocks are fractured and contorted; whole faunas are wiped out. To circumvent this literal appearance, Lyell imposed his imagination upon the evidence. [50]

We see then that the geological theory of uniformitarianism has as little scientific evidence to support it as does the biological theory of evolution.

Conclusion: In conclusion, let us consider the possibility of a compromise solution to this debate between creationists and evolutionists. Is it possible that both are right? Could God have used the

vehicle of evolution in order to form the world? To answer this let us refer to the Scriptures themselves, which contain the only purely non-evolutionary cosmogony in existence, the book of Genesis. Scripture makes it very clear, in Genesis and throughout the Bible, that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). Death and bloodshed came about as a result of man's sin (Romans 5:12; I Corinthians 15:21-22). This is the very reason Christ had to die on the cross; to pay the penalty for our sins (Romans 5:8; I Corinthians 15:3). If, however, death, bloodshed and the survival of the fittest came before sin as evolution, theistic evolution, the day-age theory, and the gap theory teach then death is simply a normal "fact of life" and Christ's death becomes meaningless. Unfortunately, many evolutionists recognize this better than some "Christians".

Christianity has fought, still fights, and will fight science to the desperate end over evolution, for evolution destroys utterly and finally the very reason Jesus' earthly life was supposedly made necessary. Destroy Adam and Eve and the original sin, and in the rubble you will find the sorry remains of the son of God. Take away the meaning of his death. If Jesus was not the redeemer who died for our sins, and this is what evolution means, then Christianity is nothing. [51]

Although other theological arguments could be advanced against theistic evolution, time and space prohibit us from entering into further detail. Furthermore, the scientific evidence, as we have seen, points overwhelmingly towards creation and not evolution. What can we conclude from this? A non-Christian scientist who has honestly examined the evidence draws the following conclusion. Referring to the "design hypothesis" as opposed to the evolution hypothesis he states: On the contrary, the inference to design is a purely posteriori induction based on a ruthlessly consistent application of the logic of analogy. The conclusion may have religious implications, but it does not depend on religious presuppositions. [52]

These "religious implications" are something that we must all come to grips with. If there is a Creator, then we are all accountable to Him. Furthermore, the only place we can find out about such a creator God should logically be the one and only book which describes His creation with scientific and historic accuracy-The Bible.

09: Fulfilled Prophecy

Fulfilled Prophecy

One of the strongest objective evidences for the validity of Christianity and the reliability of the Bible is the phenomenon of fulfilled prophecy. The Bible is unique among all other religious books in this regard. Although a few other religious books have made prophetic predictions, none of these predictions has been specifically fulfilled like those in the Bible. In most cases these non-Biblical prophecies do not come true at all. In other cases, the prophecies consist of only nebulous and vague forecasts that may seem to be fulfilled in a general way. The Bible however, contains literally hundreds of specific prophecies that have been fulfilled in specific ways. Furthermore, the Bible actually sets itself up for objective verification based on the fulfillment or non-fulfillment of its prophecies. For instance in Isaiah 41:21-23 and Isaiah 46:10, the Lord challenges the false gods of Babylon to prove themselves by predicting future events. In Deuteronomy 18:20-22, the test of a true prophet is infallibility. In other words if a prophet is from the Lord, his prophecies will always come true. Therefore, when studying Christian evidences it is vitally important that we include the topic of fulfilled prophecy, which is perhaps our best defense against the attacks of Bible critics.

Prophecies Regarding the Jewish Nation

One of the strongest evidences that the Bible is inspired of God is simply the existence of the Jewish nation. They are unique in all of history. What other nation in the history of the world has lost their homeland, been scattered throughout the rest of the world and been persecuted mercilessly, while still maintaining their national identity? No one has ever heard of a German Philistine, a Russian Moabite, or an American Edomite, because these ancient nations have all been absorbed into other cultures. Yet we have all heard of German Jews, Russian Jews, and American Jews. What's the difference between the Jewish nation and these other ancient nations? The answer is simple. God's promises and God's predictions concerning the Jewish nation are the difference. Back in Genesis 12:2-3 and Genesis 13:14-15 God promised a man by the name of Abram that He would make a great nation from his descendants, that through him all nations of the earth would be blessed, and that the "promised land" would belong to his descendants forever. Later in history after this nation was in the promised land, God warned them about the dangers of disobedience. They were promised blessings for obedience but predictions of persecution, suffering, and world-wide dispersion were made in the event that this nation turned their backs on God (for instance see Deuteronomy 28:64-66; Jeremiah 24:9; Hosea 9:17). Unfortunately, this is exactly what happened. It happened initially with the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, and it happened again with the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. In spite of this, however, God had no intentions of disregarding His promises to Abraham. Therefore, He promised that He would not totally destroy this disobedient nation and predicted a future regathering and restoration (see Jeremiah 30:11; Ezekiel 37:21; Isaiah 11:11-12, etc.). Today, contrary to all odds, we see that the nation of Israel once again possesses the "promised land" even though they are currently

there in unbelief. Some day, however, they will recognize that the one they crucified nearly 2000 years ago was indeed their promised Messiah and they will turn to Him in repentance and belief (Zechariah 12:10).

Prophecies Regarding other Nations

Tyre and Sidon. In Ezekiel 26, we read of several specific prophetic predictions against the city-state of Tyre. They include:

1. Nebuchadnezzar will destroy the mainland city (8).
2. Many nations will come against Tyre (3).
3. The city will become a bare rock (4) 4. Fisherman will spread their nets over the site (5).
5. The debris of the city will be thrown into the water (6).
6. The city will never be rebuilt (14,21). As you might expect, each of these predictions was completely fulfilled in history. Interestingly enough, they were not fulfilled at the same time and place. Here's how they were fulfilled. [1]

1. Nebuchadnezzar did indeed destroy the mainland city of Tyre in 573 B.C. after a 13-year siege. However, upon entering the city he found that the majority of the people had fled by ship to the island city of Tyre about 1/2 mile off the coast.

2. History has also proven this prediction to be true. After Nebuchadnezzar's invasion, the island city was destroyed by Alexander the Great in 332 B.C. Towards the end of this attack Alexander assembled a navy from nations he had conquered. He had ships from Sidon, Aradus, Byblus, Rhodes, Cyprus and other nations help him in his campaign against Tyre. Although never recovering fully from this blow, the city recovered somewhat only to be destroyed again by Antigonus in 314 B.C. During the Middle Ages the city was captured by the Moslems. During the Crusades it was taken by the Crusaders only to be recaptured by the Moslems. At this point it was turned to ruins and remains so to this day. So there have indeed been many nations come against Tyre.

3. This prediction was fulfilled when Alexander started his campaign against the island fortress. Since he had no navy at first, he began to construct a causeway from the mainland to the island using the debris from the mainland city. This operation also fulfilled the fifth prophecy which predicted that the debris of the city would be thrown into the water.

4. The fulfillment of this prediction can be observed today. The only thing left on the site of the original city is a small fishing village. Even today fisherman can be seen drying their nets upon the rocks.

5. This was fulfilled precisely as Alexander's engineers used the stones, timber and other debris from the mainland city to construct the ramp to the island.

6. This prophecy has also been fulfilled. Although ancient Sidon still exists, and although a modern city of Tyre exists a few miles down the coast, the ancient city has never been rebuilt after her complete destruction by the Moslems in A.D. 1291. In contrast to her sister-city, Ezekiel does not

predict destruction for the city-state of Sidon. He does, however, predict pestilence, much bloodshed, and the sword on every side (Ezekiel 28:22-23). History has certainly verified this prediction. Although the city of Sidon still stands today, it has had one of the bloodiest histories of any city in history. For instance in 351 B.C. the Sidonians rebelled against their Persian monarch. Unfortunately, their own king, in order to save his own life, betrayed them to the Persian king. As a result 40,000 Sidonians shut themselves up in their own homes, set fire to them, and died in the flames. In the days of the Crusades Sidon was captured three times by the Crusaders only to be recaptured three times by the Moslems. In modern times it has been the scene of conflicts between the Druses and the Turks and the French and the Turks. "Although Sidon has continued to exist as a city down even into the present, she has suffered more warfare and bloodshed than almost any other city in history." [2]

Thus, we see that the Bible is proven to be entirely accurate. Tyre has been destroyed permanently while Sidon has been destroyed and rebuilt several times and still exists today.

Edom/Petra. The Edomites were the descendents of Esau and their capital was the rock fortress of Petra. Six different Old Testament prophets make specific prophetic predictions about the fate of ancient Edom. One apologist has listed 9 of these specific predictions and has proceeded to detail their fulfillment in history. [3] The nine specific predictions are:

1. Edom will become a desolation (Isaiah 34:13)
2. It will never be populated again (Jeremiah 49:18)
3. It will be conquered by heathen nations (Jeremiah 49:14-15)
4. It will be conquered by Israel (Ezekiel 25:14)
5. It will have a bloody history (Ezekiel 35:5-6; Isaiah 34:6-7)
6. Edom will be made desolate as far as the city of Teman (Ezekiel 25:13)
7. Wild animals will inhabit the area (Isaiah 34:13-15)
8. Trade in the area will cease (Isaiah 34:10)
9. Spectators will be astonished (Jeremiah 49:17)

Again these prophecies were fulfilled over a long period of time. They were fulfilled as follows:

1. The first prophecy has clearly been fulfilled as Edom is nothing more than a desolate wilderness today.

2. The second has clearly been fulfilled as well. 3. The third prediction was fulfilled in the sixth century A.D. when the area was conquered by the Moslems.

4. The fourth prediction undoubtedly seemed far-fetched at the time because the Jews were still in the midst of the Babylonian captivity. However, approximately 4 centuries later (after the Jews gained a measure of independence in the Maccabean wars) thousands of Edomites were slain and forced to submit to Jewish circumcision after successful invasions led by Judas Maccabeus and John Hyrcanus.

5. The fifth prediction has been thoroughly fulfilled. Edom was invaded and plundered by Assyria, by Babylon, by the Nabataeans who migrated into Edom between the sixth and fourth Centuries B.C. [4], and finally by the Jews during the Maccabean wars.

6. This prediction has been remarkably fulfilled as Teman (called Maan today) is the only city of ancient Edom that is not deserted. It is located on the eastern border of the ancient nation.

7. The seventh prediction has been witnessed in modern times by travelers visiting the ancient ruins of Petra. Eagles, owls, serpents, scorpions, and other wild animals are abundant among its

ruins.

8. In ancient days Edom was a crossroads of the trade routes. Great caravans used to pass through her lands. Today, however, only a few travelers seeking to view the ruins of ancient Petra are found in her vicinity.

9. "Astonishment" is an apt word to describe the feelings of those visiting Petra today. After being lost for over 1000 years it was rediscovered in 1812. Today one can see the remains of the many buildings carved out of the reddish colored mountain. One can also witness that the city was practically impregnable with only one narrow canyon-like entrance which could easily be defended by only a small band of men. Today this once-great fortress is full of rubble, debris and scorpions! One traveler stated:

Petra is a place which astonishes and baffles, but above all fascinates. Your first visit is an event in your life. Elemental feelings stir; again you know what awe is and humility. You have a sense of God's work through man and without man. If you have never experienced the sensation before, here at last you come under the spell of mystery. The place seems so remote, so unrelated to its surroundings...so undiscovered and so undiscoverable. What other city has been lost for a thousand years and at last, when stumbled upon by accident, has had still so much of its glory left with which to astonish the amazed traveler. [5] The odds of all these predictions being fulfilled by blind chance are astronomical. Yet they were all fulfilled precisely as the Bible predicted. It is interesting to note that Bible critics used to criticize the Biblical references to Edom because she had been completely forgotten in secular history. However in the 19th Century, references to the Edomites were found in both Assyrian and Egyptian records. In addition, the ancient capitol of Petra was stumbled onto by Swiss traveler J. L. Burckhardt. Now in the 20th Century we recognize not only the existence of ancient Edom but also the incredible accuracy of the Biblical prophecy concerning her. Once again the Bible is proven right, and the critics are proven wrong!

These are just two of many examples that could be included under this section. Space prohibits us from examining fulfilled prophecies regarding other ancient nations. For those interested, however, it would be a fascinating study to examine the fulfilled prophecies regarding the nations/cities of Samaria, Nineveh, Babylon, Gaza-Ashkelon, and several others. [6] Prophecies Regarding World History Many examples could also be given under this heading. However, we will use only two examples.

Daniel's sequence of empires. A remarkably accurate view of world history is recorded in the book of Daniel in the form of two dreams: Nebuchadnezzar's in Daniel 2 and Daniel's in Daniel 7. Both dreams predict the future history of the world as it will be influenced by four successive empires. These dreams have been remarkably fulfilled by the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires. Furthermore, more specific aspects of Daniel's prophecies, as found throughout the book of Daniel, have been specifically fulfilled in these empires. For instance, Daniel 11 with its detailed accounts of the wars between "the kings of the North" and "the kings of the South" (fulfilled in the struggles between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids) has baffled the critics. It had to be written after the fact, they argue, ignoring all internal and external evidences for the traditional date of Daniel (i.e. around 530 B.C.). [7]

Isaiah's Prophecy of Cyrus. One of the most fascinating of the Bible's many fulfilled prophecies is Isaiah's prophecy naming Cyrus as the king who will permit the temple and the city of Jerusalem to be rebuilt (Isaiah 44:28 and 45:1). At the time of Isaiah's prediction (approximately 700 B.C.) the city and the temple didn't need to be rebuilt because they were still standing (they were destroyed in 586 B.C. by the Babylonians)! However, in approximately 539 B.C. a Persian king by the name of Cyrus conquered Babylon and decreed that the Jews could return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. So, in essence, Isaiah predicted that a man named Cyrus, to be born over a hundred years later, would issue the command to rebuild the temple which would not be destroyed until over a hundred years later! Once again the odds of this prediction coming true by random chance are too astronomical to even consider.

Prophecies Regarding the Messiah

Genesis 3:15 represents the first of many Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament. Its New Testament fulfillment is recorded in Galatians 4:4 and other references. As the Old Testament unfolds we learn more and more about the coming Messiah through further (progressive) revelation. For instance, we learn in Genesis 22:18 that the Messiah would be of the seed of Abraham. In Genesis 35:10-12 and Numbers 24:17 we learn that He will be of the seed of Jacob. In Genesis 49:10 we learn that He will be of the tribe of Judah. In 2 Samuel 7:12-16 and Jeremiah 23:5 we learn that He will be from the house of David. In Micah 5:2 we learn that He will be born in Bethlehem. In Isaiah 7:14 we learn that He will be born of a virgin, and that He will, in fact, be God incarnate (also see Psalms 2:7 and Isaiah 9:6). In Daniel's incredible prophecy of the 70 weeks (Daniel 9:24-27) we learn the exact time of His coming. [8] Each of these Messianic prophecies as well as several others [9] were literally fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. The odds of this happening by random chance are inconceivably small. One scholar (Peter Stoner in his book *Science Speaks*) has chosen only eight of these Messianic prophecies (see below) and has calculated that the odds of one man fulfilling all eight of these prophecies is 1 in 10^{17} : [10] 1. Born at Bethlehem (Micah 5:2) 2. Preceded by a messenger (Isaiah 40:3) 3. Entered Jerusalem on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9) 4. Betrayed by a friend (Psalms 41:9) 5. Sold for 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12) 6. The silver subsequently thrown in God's house and used to buy the potter's field (Zechariah 11:13) 7. He was silent before his accusers (Isaiah 53:7) 8. His hands and feet were pierced (Psalms 22:16)

Stoner illustrates this number by imagining that one took 10^{17} silver dollars and placed them on the state of Texas. They would cover the entire state two feet deep. If we were then to mark one of the silver dollars, blindfold a man, and have him travel as far as he wishes to pick one silver dollar, the odds of the man picking the marked dollar would be the same as the odds of all eight of these prophecies coming true in any one man. Therefore, we can say with confidence that Jesus Christ was truly the promised Messiah first prophesied of in Genesis 3:15!

Stoner later considers 48 Messianic prophecies and concludes that the odds of them all being fulfilled in any one man is one in 10^{157} . This number is inconceivably larger than 10^{17} and attempts to picture it (as Stoner does) simply boggle the mind. A number of this magnitude cannot be properly pictured by our finite minds, and no one should dare say that all 48 of these Messianic prophecies were fulfilled by chance! However, these 48 prophecies by no means represent all the Messianic prophecies fulfilled in Christ. There are actually over 90 Old Testament prophecies

quoted by New Testament writers in a Messianic sense [11] as well as over 300 Old Testament references to the Messiah that were fulfilled in Jesus Christ of Nazareth. [12] In this regard, it is significant to remember that the historic date for the completion of the Old Testament is around 450 B.C. Lest one should argue against this date and claim that each of these prophecies was written after the fact, we must remember that the Dead Sea Scrolls (dating from before the time of Christ - approximately 100 B.C.) contain fragments from nearly every Old Testament book. Furthermore, the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, was completed around 250 B.C., proving that the Hebrew Old Testament was complete well before the time of Christ.

Conclusion: From this evidence, we must conclude that Jesus Christ must have been the promised Messiah of the Old Testament. As such, He is unique in all of history, because no other religious leader (including Mohammed, Buddha, Confucius, etc.) in the history of the world has had specific prophecies fulfilled by his coming. Furthermore, we must conclude that the phenomenon of fulfilled prophecy (which is unique to the Bible) is yet another of the external tests that confirm the reliability of the Bible and of the Christian faith.

10: The Deity of Christ

The Deity of Christ In this lesson we will seek to examine the important implications and ramifications of our previous lessons. We have seen that the Bible is an incredibly reliable book. The reliability of the existent text can be confirmed by the biographical test (manuscript evidence). In addition, the reliability of the Biblical text can be confirmed by both internal (internal consistency) and external tests (science, archaeology, fulfilled prophecy, etc.). We have examined many of these tests in previous lessons and found the Bible to be remarkably reliable. With this foundation, we will now seek to examine the main character of this historically reliable book: the One whom the Old Testament pointed to and the New Testament revealed - the Lord Jesus Christ. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Jesus Christ was unique in all of history. No other man in history fulfilled literally scores of specific prophesies anticipating His birth, life, and death. No other man in history lays claim to a virgin birth, a sinless life, and a resurrection from the dead. Yet Jesus Christ lays claim to all of these things, and one more. He claims to be God! This is a truly remarkable claim, especially in the Jewish context in which it was made. We must remember that Jesus was not claiming to be "god" in a pantheistic, or even a polytheistic context, but in a strongly monotheistic Jewish context. To claim deity in such a context was to claim that one was, in actuality, the very creator of the world and the only true God. Perhaps the most remarkable part of this claim is its implications, for it is either true or it is not. His Own Claims of Deity

Direct Claims of deity. There are several instances in the gospels where Jesus directly claims to be God. He claimed deity by:

1. Claiming equality with the Father

I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him, Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, make thyself God. (John 10:30-33) But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God. (John 5:17-18)

It is significant to note that the Jews never referred to God as "my Father". Christ, on the other hand, did often and sought to distinguish His unique relationship with the Father from the relationship with the Father that all believers enjoy (note John 20:17). Lest one should argue that Christ was not claiming deity in these passages, we should note the Jews' reaction. It is rather obvious that they thought He was claiming to be God, and it is also obvious that He made no attempt to correct their interpretations of His statements! Certainly He had good reason to correct them if a correction were in order, for in both instances they tried to kill Him because of His claims. It is interesting to note in Leviticus 24:16 that the penalty for blasphemy, which would include claims of deity, was stoning!

*Also note John 5:23-24; John 8:19; and John 14:1, John 14:9.

2. Claiming to be YHWH ("Jehovah" or "LORD") The name YHWH (pronounced Yahweh) was the covenant name of God in the Old Testament. As such it is always used of God, never of men or false gods (unlike adonai or elohim). This name was so holy to the Jews that they would not even pronounce it. In public reading the name Adonai was substituted for it. The name declares God's self-existence and basically means "I am". As such, it is related to the passage in Exodus 3:14 where God reveals Himself to Moses as "I AM THAT I AM". Therefore, it is very significant when Christ declares Himself to be the "I Am" (Greek - ego eimi). In essence, He was claiming to be the pre-existent and self-existent creator of the world. To the Jews this would be nothing short of blasphemy unless the one making such a statement were actually God. For instance note John 8:58-59.

Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

Again it should be obvious that the Jews recognized Him to be claiming deity. In other places Christ claimed:

"I am the bread of life..." (John 6:35) "I am the light of the world..." (John 8:12) "I am the good shepherd..." (John 10:11-14; compare with Psalm 23) "I am the resurrection and the life..." (John 11:25) "I am the way, the truth, and the life..." (John 14:6) "Unless you believe that I am He, you shall die in your sins" (John 8:24)

Note also John 4:26; John 6:41, John 6:48, John 6:51; John 8:18, John 8:28, John 8:58; John 10:7, John 10:9; John 13:19; and John 15:1.

These are incredible claims for any man to make, much less a Jewish man in a Jewish context where his listeners were familiar with the implications of "I Am"!

3. Claiming to be the Messiah In passages such as Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 9:6, Micah 5:2 and Zechariah 12:10 the Old Testament pointed to the deity of the Messiah. Therefore, when Jesus claimed to be the promised Messiah (or Christ from the Greek kristos), He was claiming to be God. Instances where He directly claimed to be the Messiah include: The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am [he]. (John 4:25-26) But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. (Matthew 26:63-65) But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death. (Mark 14:61-64) The last two passages were from Jesus' trial before the high priest. In these passages, He directly professes to

be the Messiah and He applies Daniel 7:13, a Messianic passage, to Himself. Like the previous examples we have seen, those who heard these claims left no doubt as to how they interpreted them. The high priest tore his robes and accused Jesus of blasphemy while the entire council condemned Him to death. Anyone who would dare argue that Jesus never claimed to be God must postulate that all the Jewish leaders of the 1st Century misunderstood Jesus' statements (made in a Jewish 1st Century context) while they in the 20th Century interpreted them correctly!

Indirect claims of deity. In addition to directly claiming to be God, Jesus said and did several things that indirectly implied his deity. For instance:

1. He claimed to have authority to forgive sins. In passages such as Matthew 9:2-7 and Mark 2:5-11 Jesus claims to have authority to forgive sins. In both of these passages, however, He was accused of blasphemy, because the Jews recognized that only God had this authority.

2. He claimed to be the judge of the world. In John 5:21-22, John 5:25, John 5:27, John 5:29 Jesus claims to have the authority to raise the dead and judge the world. However, the Old Testament Scriptures made it very clear that only God could raise the dead (1 Samuel 2:6; Psalms 2:7) and judge men (Joel 3:12; Deuteronomy 32:35).

3. He spoke with authority. It is significant to note that when Jesus taught He never quoted from or referred to other men in support of His positions. He always spoke with His own authority (See Matthew 7:29). This was in great contrast to the scribes and Pharisees of the day who always quoted other rabbis when making a point. Jesus, however, never changed His mind, had afterthoughts, or added corrections to His messages. He never guessed, supposed, speculated, or spoke with any type of uncertainty whatsoever. As a matter of fact, He often placed His own words on the level with God's (see for instance Matthew 5:21-22).

4. He accepted worship. On at least 9 occasions, Jesus both received and accepted the worship of others (for instance see Matthew 8:2, Matthew 14:33 and John 20:27-29). This is significant, because the Old Testament specifically forbade the worship of anyone but God (Exodus 20:1-4; Deuteronomy 5:6-9). Even angels refuse to be worshipped (Revelation 22:8-9). Jesus, however, never rebuked those who worshipped Him. In Thomas' case, He even commended his act of worship (John 20:29).

C. S. Lewis puts these remarkable claims of Christ in their proper perspective when he writes:

Among these Jews there suddenly turns up a man who goes about talking as if He was God. He claims to forgive sins. He says He has always existed. He says He is coming to judge the world at the end of time. Now let us get this clear. Among pantheists, like the Indians, anyone might say that he was a part of God, or one with God: there would be nothing very odd about it. But this man, since He was a Jew, could not mean that kind of God. God, in their language, meant the Being outside the world who had made it and was infinitely different from anything else. And when you have grasped that, you will see that what this man said was, quite simply, the most shocking thing that has ever been uttered by human lips. [1] Other Testimonies to His Deity He is called God. In several instances in the New Testament, Jesus is directly called God. For instance:

1. John writes: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1) No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom

of the Father, he hath declared him. (John 1:18) [Note: The English word Son is the Greek word theos (i.e., "God")] 2. "Doubting" Thomas proclaimed: And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. (John 20:28)

3. Paul stated: And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. (1 Timothy 3:16) Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; (Titus 2:13) 4. The writer of Hebrews states: But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. (Hebrews 1:8)

He is worshipped as God. In addition to the several specific examples of worship that were mentioned earlier, New Testament authors proclaim that Christ should be worshipped by all men and angels. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Php 2:10-11, Compare with Isaiah 45:23) And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. (Hebrews 1:6)

He is referred to as the creator. Genesis 1 and 2 make it very clear that God created the world. However, the New Testament ascribes the creation to Jesus Christ.

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. (Hebrews 1:6) Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; (Hebrews 1:2) The name YHWH is applied to Him. One fascinating testimony to the deity of Jesus Christ is that Old Testament passages referring to Yahweh are frequently applied to Christ in the New Testament. For example, compare the following New Testament quotes with their Old Testament sources.

1. Matthew 3:3 and Isaiah 40:3 2. John 12:41 and Isaiah 6:1 3. Ephesians 4:7-8 and Psalms 68:18 4. Hebrews 1:6 and Psalms 97:7 5. Hebrews 1:10-12 and Psalms 102:25-27 In conclusion, we must state that the evidence is overwhelming that Jesus Himself, and the writers of the New Testament believed He was God. One cannot escape this conclusion. As reformed theologian B. B. Warfield states: The very abundance and persuasiveness of the evidence for the deity of Christ greatly increases the difficulty of stating it adequately...The deity of Christ is in solution in every page of the New Testament. Every word that is spoken of him, every word which he is reported to have spoken of himself, is spoken on the assumption that he is God...Because the deity of Christ is the presupposition of every word of the New Testament, it is impossible to select words of the New Testament from which to construct earlier documents in which the deity of Christ shall not be assumed. The assured conviction of deity is contemporary with Christianity itself. There never was a Christianity, neither in the times of the Apostles nor since, of which this was not a prime tenet. [2] Implications of His Claims

There is a great diversity of opinion today when it comes to the question, "Who was Jesus Christ?" There may be a small minority who still consider Him only a legend. However, the abundant historical evidences for His existence, and the impact His life has had on the world rule out this possibility for all but the most close-minded of critics. Nearly all critics today will admit that a man

by the name of Jesus of Nazareth at least existed. Many will say that Jesus Christ was a prophet or a good teacher, but certainly not God. Others still will say he was one of many gods or perhaps a lesser god in relation to the supreme God. Christians, of course, say He was God manifest in the flesh. So the diversity of opinion today is as great as it was in Jesus' day when He asked his disciples "Who do men say that I the Son of man am?" (Matthew 16:13).

If one thinks logically, Jesus' own claims of deity rule out all but three possibilities for the question, "Who was Jesus Christ?" Let us remember that this man claimed to be God! Furthermore, His claims were either true or false. If they were true then He was exactly who He said He was. He was and is LORD! If His claims were false, however, then He can't possibly be considered a prophet, good teacher, or lesser god. If He knew His claims were false, then He was nothing more than a liar. Furthermore, He was a hypocrite as He taught others to be honest. He was a fool because He died because of His claims. Most importantly, however, He was the greatest deceiver who ever lived, on par with the demons of hell, because He taught others to trust Him for their eternal destiny, and countless millions have done just that. If, however, Jesus' claims were false and He didn't realize it, then He was nothing more than a lunatic. A man who claims to be God when He is not is severely deluded indeed!

Those, then, are our three choices. Jesus Christ was either Lord, liar, or lunatic. He leaves us with no other alternatives. C. S. Lewis put it this way:

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish things that people often say about Him: "I'm ready to accept Him Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God." That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic - on a level with a man who says he is a poached egg - or else he would be the devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. [3]

Conclusion: Each of us must decide for ourself whether Jesus Christ was Lord, liar, or lunatic. When making this decision we should keep in mind many of the evidences supporting and underlying His claims that we have examined in previous lessons. For instance, the fulfilled prophecies that pointed to His life substantiate His claims of deity. Furthermore, the accounts of His miracles and His sinless life as recorded in the most unique and reliable book in the history of mankind support His claims of deity. The fact that His disciples, those who knew Him best, went to their graves proclaiming His deity support His claims of deity. In addition, we must consider the nature of His teachings. How could a man who was the source of the highest ethical and moral teaching known to man be at one and the same time either a liar or a lunatic? Especially when those closest to Him never picked up on it. Finally, and most importantly, His resurrection proved once and for all that His claims of deity were accurate. Because of its importance we will specifically examine the resurrection in the next lesson.

If, after examining the evidence, we conclude that Jesus is Lord then we must decide if we will accept Him or reject Him. The consequences of this decision are enormous. For this same man who claimed to be God also stated, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the

Father, but by me" (John 14:6). In Acts 4:12 it is stated of Him, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." So if He is who He said He was, then He is the only way to God, salvation, and eternal life. Therefore, each of us needs to answer the question stated in Matthew 22:42, "What think ye of Christ?"

11: The Resurrection

Christ's Resurrection As mentioned in Chapter 2, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the many distinguishing features that separates Christianity from every other religion. Other religions are based on the philosophy of life or ethical teachings of their founders. Christianity, in contrast, is based on historical events that occurred in a literal time-space dimension. The most important of these events, without question, was the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The whole of Christianity rises or falls on the validity of the resurrection. If it can be proven that Christ did not rise from the grave on the third day, then Christianity is nothing more than a fraud. Church historian Philip Schaff states, "The resurrection of Christ is therefore emphatically a test question upon which depends the truth or falsehood of the Christian religion. It is either the greatest miracle or the greatest delusion which history records." [1]

Paul himself says in 1 Corinthians 15:14, "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." As a matter of fact, Christianity would have been killed in the womb if not for the resurrection, for the resurrection was the very core of the apostolic preaching. It was the one event that transformed a group of frightened and defeated followers of Jesus of Nazareth into a zealous, bold, and unstoppable group of witnesses who "turned that world upside down" (Acts 17:6). Therefore, in order to defend the faith one must defend the validity of the resurrection. That task will be the object of this lesson as we will attempt to examine the resurrection from a legal perspective as if we were in a court of law.

Before looking at the "facts of the case", however, it is important to briefly review some of the material alluded to in the previous lessons. Without this background, our study of the resurrection would prove fruitless. First we must recall that the New Testament manuscripts are by far the most accurate and most reliable of all documents of the ancient world (see Chapter 4). Furthermore, the Scriptures have proven to be accurate, time and time again, when judged by the external tests of archaeology, science, and fulfilled prophecy. These are the same documents that record the eye-witness testimonies of Christ's resurrection. Secondly, we must remember from Chapter 6 that we cannot approach the Scriptures with a pre-conceived notion that the supernatural is impossible. Such a naturalistic philosophy simply begs the question in regards to the resurrection of Christ because it starts with the notion that a bodily resurrection is impossible. Since the resurrection, like creation or evolution, cannot be proven by the scientific method, it must be examined on a historical basis, not a scientific one. In other words, "Did it happen?" not "Could it happen?" If the facts prove that it did happen, then obviously it could have happened! Unfortunately many critics have the attitude of "my mind is made up so don't confuse me with the facts!" The resurrection should be examined historically just as any other event in history can be examined.

Finally, from Chapter 8, we must remember the prophecies that anticipated Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. From Old Testament passages such as Genesis 3:15; Psalms 16:9-11; Psalms 22:14-25; Isaiah 53:1-12; and Zechariah 12:10 one could conclude from the Old Testament that

the Messiah must needs die and rise again. This is no insignificant point, for if Jesus really did fulfill these prophecies by rising from the dead then He was indeed the promised Messiah and God manifest in the flesh just as He claimed to be.

Direct Evidence (The Facts of the Case) Pre-Resurrection Facts 1. Jesus predicted that He would rise from the dead

One of the most remarkable aspects of the resurrection is that Christ actually predicted that He would rise again on the third day. Passages such as Matthew 12:38-40; Matthew 16:21; Matthew 17:9, Matthew 22:1-23; Matthew 20:18-19; Matthew 26:32; Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22-27; and John 2:18-22 show us that Jesus fully expected to rise from the dead and staked His entire ministry on it. For in both Matthew 12 and John 2 He emphasized that His resurrection would serve as a sign to validate His Messianic claims. Therefore, if He did not rise from the dead all of His amazing claims of deity (referred to in the previous lesson) were false. If, He did rise from the dead, however, then it proves that His claims were true and that He was both Messiah and the Son of God. Furthermore it shows us that God had accepted His sacrifice for our sins. A dead Savior is of no use to anyone!

2. Jesus was crucified and died

Logically, before one can rise from the dead they must first die, and there is overwhelming evidence found in the gospel narratives that Jesus actually died. Consider the following:

Before being crucified Jesus was beaten with a whip known as a flagrum. It consisted of a long sturdy handle with long leather thongs attached to it. Sharp pieces of bone and lead were woven into these thongs. A victim of crucifixion was scourged by being beaten across the bare back and shoulders with such a flagrum. Often the victim was near death before the beating stopped. Such a beating would leave the back as an unrecognizable mass of torn and bleeding tissue.

After suffering the whipping Jesus was inflicted with a crown of thorns that was pressed into His brow.

According to the Gospel accounts, Jesus was already so weak at this time that He was unable to carry His crossbar to the crucifixion sight as was the custom.

After suffering all of this, He was forced to endure one of the most agonizing and cruel types of death ever known to man. It was such a cruel death, that Roman citizens were exempt from it. It was usually reserved for slaves or enemies of the state. Long nails were driven through the wrists and through the feet. The victim then suffered agonizing pain as he was forced to raise Himself in order to exhale and bring in life-giving oxygen. It is a well known fact that the Romans were efficient executioners. Crucifixion victims did not escape with their lives!

According to John 19:34 one of the soldiers thrust a spear into Christ's side to make sure of His death. According to this verse a mixture of blood and water came out of the wound. The unusual nature of the blood and water mixture is underscored by the fact that John goes to great extents in verse 35 to confirm that He, the writer of the book, had witnessed this phenomena personally. Medically, this shows evidence of death by rupture of the heart. [2] 3. Jesus was buried

After His death the gospel accounts clearly reveal that Jesus was buried by Joseph of Arimathea with help from Nicodemus (See John 19:38-42). We read in John 19 that He was buried according to Jewish custom, being wrapped with linen cloths mixed with about 100 pounds worth of myrrh and spices. Traditionally, in such a burial, the entire body was wrapped, except for the head which was wrapped with a separate piece of cloth. After the preparation, the body of Christ was placed in Joseph's private tomb. Several women witnessed His burial and the location of the tomb (Luke 23:55; Mark 15:47). The tomb, itself, was likely hewn out of rock and would have been cold, dark and damp.

4. Security precautions were taken to guard Jesus' body The Jewish leaders went to great extents to guard the body of Jesus, because they remembered His predictions that He would rise on the third day. According to the gospel accounts they had a large stone (likely 1.5-2 tons [3]) rolled in front of the entrance, sealed the tomb with the governor's seal (which, in essence, protected the contents of the tomb by nothing less than the power of the Roman empire), and stationed a guard (most likely a Roman guard) to guard the entrance to the tomb.

Post-Resurrection Facts 1. The tomb was empty This was the most obvious and important evidence for the resurrection. The gospels record that there were several eyewitnesses to this fact on the first Easter morning (see Luke 24:3, Luke 24:12). In John 20:8, we read that the empty tomb is what caused John to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead. Adding credibility to the eye-witness accounts of Jesus' followers is the fact that the Jewish authorities also had to believe that the tomb was empty. There can be no doubt that if they could have produced a body they would have. That's all they would have needed to do to end incipient Christianity once and for all. Let us remember that Christ's resurrection was first trumpeted in Jerusalem, not in a remote corner of the earth. In Jerusalem one could simply walk to the burial sight and exam it for Himself! Yet we have no voice recorded in all of ancient history that claimed Christ's body was still in the tomb. Tom Anderson, former president of the California Trial Lawyers Association says,

Let's assume that Christ did not rise from the dead. Let's assume that the written accounts of His appearances to hundreds of people are false. I want to pose a question. With an event so well publicized, don't you think that it's reasonable that one historian, one eyewitness, one antagonist would record for all time that he had seen Christ's body: 'Listen, I saw that tomb - it was not empty! Look, I was there, Christ did not rise from the dead. As a matter of fact, I saw Christ's body.' The silence of history is deafening when it comes to testimony against the resurrection. [4] Dr. John Warwick Montgomery, formerly dean of the Simon Greenleaf School of Law, adds:

It passes the bounds of credibility that the early Christians could have manufactured such a tale and then preached it among those who might easily have refuted it simply by producing the body of Jesus. [5EndNotes.html#Ch10Note5]

It is true that the chief priests bribed the soldiers to say that the disciples had stolen the body as they slept, but this, in itself, is evidence that the chief priests recognized that the tomb was empty!

1. The stone was moved

It is fascinating to note in Mark 16 and Luke 24 that on the first Easter morning the women found the large stone rolled away from the entrance of the tomb. They had been concerned about finding someone to move the stone for them (Mark 16:3). Obviously a stone that size was not easily

moved, even if it were in a groove. Likely, it had been rolled down an incline, while in a groove, before it came to rest in front of the tomb. To roll it back up the incline would require much effort and would produce much noise! As a matter of fact the Greek word used in Mark 16:4 (anakulio) could be interpreted "to roll up". More significantly, the word used in John 20:1 (airo) means "to pick something up and carry it away." This verse seems to imply that the massive stone had been picked up and moved a distance away from the sepulcher.

2. The guard had fled

It is very significant that the Roman guard had fled the scene. This is one of the hardest parts of the accounts to explain away, because Roman guards simply did not go AWOL. They were one of the most disciplined military units in the history of mankind. They simply did not desert their posts or sleep on guard. A group of 16 were supposed to be able to protect 36 yards against an entire battalion. Yet this guard had either deserted its post, which was an action punishable by death, or they had fled after witnessing the angel and the empty tomb. The later is the obvious explanation. It is interesting to note that the chief priests bribed this guard instead of chastising them for their failure. There must have been something that made it obvious that the guard was in no way responsible for the removal of the stone. Perhaps the location of the stone made it obvious that human hands had not moved it!

3. The grave clothes were undisturbed

In John 20:1-10 we have a fascinating description of the grave clothes that had been wrapped around the Lord. It seems that when Peter and John entered the tomb they saw the grave clothes undisturbed. Furthermore, the piece that had wrapped His head was lying neatly in a place by itself. This is very significant because it would be quite a difficult and messy task to remove the grave clothes which were mixed with myrrh (a gummy sticky substance) and approximately 100 pounds of spices. One would expect the grave clothes to be torn and scattered about inside the tomb. Instead, John 20 seems to imply that they were still in the form of a body, only slightly caved in and without a body. This may explain the statement in John 20:8, "...and he saw, and believed." This sight would be enough to make a believer out of anyone!

4. Several witnesses saw the resurrected Lord

This, of course, would be the most convincing line of evidence in any court of law. It is a fact that over 500 people witnessed the resurrected Jesus Christ with their own eyes at varying times and places. Christ appeared to Mary Magdalene (John 20:14), the other women (Matthew 28:9-10), to the apostles without Thomas (John 20:19-24), to the apostles with Thomas (John 20:26-29), to the Emmaus disciples (Luke 24:13-33), to James (1 Corinthians 15:7), to a multitude of 500 (1 Corinthians 15:6), and to Paul (Acts 9:3-6). One of the most significant aspects of this line of evidence is simply the large number of the eyewitnesses. If only one or two of the disciples claimed to witness the resurrected Lord there might be room for doubt, but to claim that over 500 people from various walks of life who witnessed the risen Lord at various times and under various circumstances were all deluded or deceived is preposterous. Dr. Edwin M. Yamauchi, associate professor of history at Miami University in Ohio emphasizes:

What gives a special authority to the list [of witnesses] as historical evidence is the reference to most of the 500 brethren being still alive. St. Paul says in effect, `If you do not believe me, you can

ask them.' Such a statement in an admittedly genuine letter written within 30 years of the event is almost as strong evidence as one could hope to get for something that happened nearly 2000 years ago. [6]

Adding further to the credibility of these witnesses was their use of the resurrection as the cornerstone of the apostolic preaching. The apostolic message was dependent on the validity of the resurrection, to which they referred time and time again. If their witness was false, there is no doubt that someone would have refuted it.

Acts 2:32-This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

Acts 3:15-And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

Acts 17:31-Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead

Acts 1:3-To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

Since testimony from a hostile witness is even more valuable than testimony from a friendly one, it is significant to note that Saul of Tarsus (later the apostle Paul) and most likely James, the half-brother of the Lord, were not believers (see John 7:5) when Jesus appeared to them. The fact that they later became believers even adds to the credibility of their testimony. The Circumstantial Evidence In addition to the direct evidence, there is much indirect and circumstantial evidence that points to the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. The existence of the Church The very existence of the church is witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. As mentioned earlier, the only thing the Jewish or Roman authorities needed to do to kill incipient Christianity from the very beginning was to produce a body. For unlike many other religions, Christianity was not spread violently by the sword, but peaceably by the preaching of the gospel in the midst of much opposition and persecution. The resurrection was the very core of this gospel message and the apostles appealed to the fact of the resurrection as common knowledge time and time again. If there had been anyone alive who could have refuted these apostolic claims, there can be no doubt that the Jewish authorities would have found them and used them. One writer observes that `to try to explain this (the church) without reference to the resurrection is as hopeless as trying to explain Roman history without reference to Julius Caesar." [7] Sunday as a day of worship The fact that the early church, composed of mainly Jews, changed their day of worship from the Sabbath (Saturday) to Sunday is an incredible testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Such a change would have been anathema to such men before the resurrection for the charge to honor the Sabbath was part of the Ten Commandments. Therefore, we can say that the Christian church celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ 52 times a year! That is quite a testimony. The lives of the disciples

One of the greatest circumstantial evidences for the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the changed lives of the disciples. Something transformed this frightened and dejected group of disciples into the fearless and powerful group of apostles who boldly preached Jesus throughout the entire known world of their day. What was responsible for this change? There can be only one answer.

They witnessed the resurrected Lord and their defeat was instantly transformed into victory. Furthermore, they finally grasped the fact that the Messiah must first suffer and die, before He would reign. It should be obvious that each of these men believed that they had witnessed the resurrected Lord because history tells us that each of them went to their grave proclaiming the resurrection and all but one of them were martyred for their faith in Christ. Although it is true that men will sometimes die for an unworthy cause if they are convinced it is worthy, it is unthinkable to assume that 11 men were martyred for a cause they all knew was unworthy. Surely some of them would have admitted the resurrection was a fraud, if they indeed knew it to be a fraud. Only a fool would die for a lie! The late Simon Greenleaf (Royal Professor of Law at Harvard University) wrote: The annals of military warfare afford scarcely an example of the like heroic constancy, patience, and unblenching courage. They had every possible motive to review carefully the grounds of their faith, and the evidences of the great facts and truths which they asserted... [8]

Saul of Tarsus

Another fascinating circumstantial evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ was the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. Saul was a "Pharisee of the Pharisee's" and bitterly opposed Christianity and persecuted Christians. Yet something happened to change this persecutor into a "persecutee". The very same man who went all over Judea persecuting Christians as Saul of Tarsus went all over the known world preaching Christ as the apostle Paul. Furthermore, this man suffered more in his service for Christ than perhaps any other man in the history of the world. He was beaten, whipped, stoned and left for dead, ridiculed, mocked, imprisoned, etc. yet he never flinched in his service for the Lord. What caused the change? There can be only one answer. According to Acts 9:3-6 and I Corinthians 15:8 he saw the resurrected Lord on the road to Damascus. This was an experience that he never forgot. It so changed his life that in I Corinthians 9:16 he stated that he was "under compulsion" to preach the gospel.

Transformed Lives A final circumstantial evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the transformed lives of Christians throughout the centuries. Just like Saul of Tarsus, the lives of countless millions have been transformed by placing their faith in the resurrected Christ. The actions and attitudes of anyone who truly places their faith in Christ will never be the same (2 Corinthians 5:17). The author of these notes is a living example. He changed my life and He can change yours as well! Only a living Savior can have the power to change lives! The Inadequate Theories Attempting to Account for the Evidence

Having examined the evidence, one must next determine what actually happened on that first Easter morning. Did Christ actually rise from the dead or is there a natural explanation that will also account for the evidences previously examined? As would be expected, liberal scholars have proposed several naturalistic theories attempting to explain away the resurrection. But do they really account for the evidence? J.N.D. Anderson, head of the Institute for Advanced Legal Studies in the University of London writes, A number of different theories, each of which might conceivably be applicable to part of the evidence but which do not themselves cohere into an intelligible pattern, can provide no alternative to the one interpretation which fits the whole. [9] With that in mind, let's briefly examine a few of the alternative theories about the resurrection. The Legend Theory This theory postulates that the events surrounding the resurrection never really happened. They were all concocted at a later date. However, this theory becomes next to impossible if it is

admitted that the eye-witnesses themselves are the ones that originally recorded and circulated the resurrection accounts. For this theory to hold any water it must be proven that the Gospel accounts were actually composed much later by those who were not eye-witnesses. (How Christianity could have ever gotten started in the first Century under such a scenario we are not told.) However, those critics who have tried to date the New Testament documents 100 years or more after the time of Christ have failed miserably time and time again. Even many liberal scholars admit that the Gospels are first Century manuscripts. Therefore, the Gospel accounts could have been easily refuted if they were not accurate. Besides, few honest historians, conservative or liberal, would deny the fact that an individual named Jesus actually lived. Most would even agree that he was crucified. Unfortunately, however, many would deny the resurrection and try to explain away the Biblical accounts. Theologian F.F. Bruce states that "the historicity of Christ is as axiomatic for an unbiased historian as the historicity of Julius Caesar. It is not historians who propagate the 'Christ-myth' theories." [10] Paul L. Maier, professor of ancient history at Western Michigan University writes:

Arguments that Christianity hatched its Easter myth over a lengthy period of time or that the sources were written many years after the event are simply not factual. [11] The theft theory

There are really two versions of this theory. One says the disciples stole Christ's body from the tomb. The other claims that the authorities stole the body. The first version was the official Jewish explanation of the first Easter morning as recorded in Matthew 28:12-15. Both versions, however, are easily refuted. First, if the disciples stole the body they would have had to get around the Roman guard. This means that they either over-powered the Roman guard (this thought is so preposterous it needs no refuting; a single Roman soldier could have likely dealt with the entire group of disciples!) or snuck past them while they slept (the official explanation - see Matthew 28:13). As mentioned earlier, however, sleeping on duty was a crime punishable by death for a Roman guard. Furthermore, to think that the disciples rolled away the 1-2-ton stone and unwrapped the body laden with about 100 pounds of spices without waking a single member of the guard is incredible indeed! Besides that, if the soldiers slept through the whole episode, how did they know the disciples stole the body? Their testimony obviously would not stand up in any court of law! Finally, the fact that each of these disciples went to his death proclaiming the resurrection, all but one being martyred, is substantial evidence that they were not hiding a lie. The other possibility that the authorities stole the body makes no sense on a logical basis. Why would the Roman and/or Jewish authorities provide the early Christians with the evidence they needed to proclaim the resurrection (i.e., an empty tomb)? They were fully aware of Jesus' Messianic claims and the implications that an empty tomb had upon these claims! If they had the body, they would no doubt have produced it in order to kill incipient Christianity in the cradle. The wrong tomb theory This theory tries to explain away the evidence by asserting that everyone went to the wrong tomb that first Easter morning. In other words, the witnesses really did see an empty tomb, but it was not the right tomb. The proponents of this theory must first postulate that the women coming to anoint Jesus' body early Sunday morning accidentally went to the wrong tomb. This scenario seems very unlikely, however, since they had taken note of the location less than 72 hours earlier (Matthew 27:62; Mark 15:47; Luke 23:55). Furthermore, the tomb was a private tomb, not part of a public graveyard where one tomb could easily be mistaken for another (Even if no one else remembered where the tomb was surely Joseph of Arimathea, the owner, knew the location!). The theory must

also speculate that Peter and John, as well as the Jewish authorities, went to the wrong tomb, since all of these men concurred that the tomb was empty (The Jewish authorities would not have bribed the guard if they thought the tomb was still occupied!). Most importantly, however, the theory must assume that the angel at the tomb announcing the Lord's resurrection was in error (or else that the Biblical records are in error about the angel)! One cannot make this assumption without denying the inspiration and authority of the Word of God, and once again inserting a pre-conceived, philosophical notion into the historical process. The hallucination theory This theory attempts to explain away the resurrection by claiming that the witnesses only thought they saw the resurrected Christ. In other words, they were all hallucinating. This theory obviously lacks merit when it is compared with the recorded eye-witness testimonies. First, as medical science will tell us, the average person is not typically subject to hallucinations. Only particular types of people such as paranoid or schizophrenic individuals are prone to hallucinations. In contrast, the eyewitnesses of the risen Lord consisted of many different types of people from many different types of backgrounds (ranging from pragmatic fisherman to a highly educated Pharisee). Furthermore, the sheer number of the eyewitnesses virtually eliminates any possibility of hallucinations. Since hallucinations are personal events it is extremely improbable that any two people will experience the same hallucination at the same time. Yet, there were many eyewitnesses to the Lord's resurrection, including a group of 500+ at one time (1 Corinthians 15:6). To assume that all these people experienced the identical hallucination is preposterous! Finally, the fact that the gospels picture the disciples as being dejected and defeated after the Lord's death argues against this theory. Hallucinations are much more likely to occur among individuals who have a hopeful expectancy about a certain event, person, etc. The Lord's followers (in spite of His predictions of resurrection) had certainly not grasped the necessity of His death and the certainty of His resurrection. The women coming to the tomb on the first day of the week were coming with spices to anoint His body. They certainly weren't expecting to encounter an empty tomb and a resurrected Lord! The swoon theory This theory, popularized by 18th Century rationalists, incredibly postulates that Jesus never really died! In essence, it speculates that while on the cross, Jesus suffered greatly from shock, loss of blood, and intense pain. As a result he fainted (or "swooned"), causing all those around Him to believe He had died. The ignorant disciples who lacked medical knowledge then buried Him alive. He was subsequently revived in the cold sepulcher and somehow got out and appeared to His disciples. The disciples then mistakenly postulated that He had been resurrected rather than merely revived. The theory is really so incredible that it should need no refuting for anyone with a logical mind. Nonetheless, let us consider what this theory must postulate. It must say that Jesus was beaten mercilessly by the Romans resulting in a condition that left Him so weak that He could not even carry His own cross bar to the sight of the crucifixion. Following this, spikes were driven through His hands and feet and He was subjected to one of the most hideous forms of execution known to man. He had a sword thrust into His side resulting in an outpouring of blood and water. He was confirmed dead by the Roman executioners - who were extremely efficient at their gruesome task. He was then wrapped in cloths mixed with approximately 100 pounds worth of spices. He was then placed in a cold, damp tomb where He subsequently revived, and in his weakened condition, removed the 100 pounds of spices, rolled away the massive stone blocking the entrance to the tomb without disturbing the Roman guard, and made His way back to His disciples. Then, in spite of the fact that His body was still beaten and broken beyond description, they somehow mistakenly thought that

He had been resurrected! One man has aptly stated concerning this theory, "It would be more miraculous than the resurrection itself." [12]

Conclusion: After reviewing the evidence, there seems to be only one logical solution to the question of what actually happened that first Easter morning. All the evidence points to the conclusion that Jesus Christ literally arose from the dead just as He had predicted. The alternative theories (including those not mentioned) are nothing more than shallow attempts to explain away the resurrection, which those with pre-conceived notions against the possibility of miracles find impossible to believe. The alternative theories, however, are impossible to believe for anyone with a logical mind, because they simply do not fit the facts! For anyone claiming that the facts are not facts but historical inaccuracies we remind him of the overwhelming manuscript evidence for the text of the New Testament as well as its close proximity chronologically to the resurrection itself. Surely someone from the ancient world would have been able to refute the resurrection had the accounts of the resurrection as recorded in the Gospels been inaccurate!

12: Implications of Christian Evidences

Implications of Christian Evidences

Having examined the "Evidences of the Christian Faith", I would now like to challenge the reader to make a decision. Do you accept these evidences or reject them? It is an eternally important decision that you must make for yourself. You must be the judge! I, the author, am a firm believer in "individual soul liberty" and I don't believe that any man's beliefs can be "forced" upon another. As an American citizen I believe that every man has the right to believe as he chooses and to worship God the way he sees best. At the same time, however, I am fully persuaded that Jesus Christ is LORD, and that He is the only way to God, salvation, and eternal life. Therefore, I want to challenge each reader to consider the claims of Jesus Christ, the evidences that back up His claims, and the eternal implications of His claims! Even if you have serious doubts about the validity of His claims, consider the consequences if you are wrong! The consequences alone (eternal separation from God in the Lake of Fire) should motivate every man to at least consider the validity of Jesus' claims. Furthermore, if you are still struggling with many questions I would like to challenge you with the following thought. Although it is wise to ask questions and to investigate Christ's claims for yourself, those who think they must have every single question answered before trusting Christ will never do so! No finite human will ever know all the answers about an infinite God and his workings in the world. God has only revealed what we need to know! That is why at some point any man who is convicted by the Holy Spirit and wants to become a Christian must take a step of faith. It's not a blind step into the dark, however. It's a step into the light that is backed up by the objective truths as revealed in the Bible and the subjective affirmation of these truths by the conviction of God Himself in the person of the Holy Spirit. For any that would like to study further on the subject of Christian evidences, an annotated bibliography listing many of my sources is provided at the back of the book. The reader is encouraged to search out these sources for additional and more detailed information. The author makes no claims of originality on these subjects!

If you are already convinced about the validity of Jesus' claims, however, then you have another decision to make. Intellectually accepting the claims of Christ does not make you a Christian or save you from your sin. Neither does an emotional religious experience or any type of work (be it a prayer, baptism, sacraments, church attendance or any other "good work") performed with the hope of meriting God's favor. One can only become a Christian by repenting of his sins and turning to Christ in faith. But don't take my word for it! I would encourage you to consider the following truths from God's Word. Please feel free to look them up for yourself if you have access to a Bible.

All men are sinners and have offended a holy Creator God. Consider the following passages:

* As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. (Romans 3:10-11) * For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; (Romans 3:23) For a more detailed account, the reader is encouraged to read the first

three chapters of Romans. In these chapters, the apostle Paul makes it very clear that all men (be they heathens who have never heard of the true God, or be they religious people such as the Jews of Paul's day who knew much about the true God) are sinners and stand condemned before the holy, righteous God. Since God is holy, righteous, and just He can not allow sin to go unpunished. Paul makes it clear that all men have rebelled against God and no man can excuse his actions due to his culture, background, status in life, etc. Even those who have never heard the gospel have rejected the witness of God's creation (also see Psalms 19:1-3) that testifies of his eternal power and deity (Romans 1:20). In layman's terms the Bible teaches in Romans 1-3 that all mankind is under the wrath of God! No man can merit God's favor or make things right with God on his own. Consider the following passages.

* But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. (Isaiah 64:6)

* For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

* Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; (Titus 3:5) In every man-made world religion there is some standard of righteousness (righteousness essentially means conformity to a standard or meeting one's obligations, in this case before God) or ethical conduct whereby man, by diligent effort, can merit favor with a god or gods (be they theistic, polytheistic, pantheistic, or otherwise). As a result he can enter heaven, nirvana, or whatever state he seeks to enter. The Bible teaches, however, that God's standard of righteousness is perfection, and that no man can meet it. Therefore, mankind can not reconcile himself to a holy God. The reader is encouraged to examine Romans 3-4 to see Paul's arguments against the possibility of justification (declared to be in a state of righteousness before God) by works. These chapters make it very clear that man can do nothing to earn his own salvation or work his way to heaven. The results or punishment for our sins is death. This includes both physical death and the "second death" which is the eternal separation from God in a place of punishment referred to as "the lake of fire". Consider the following passages.

* For the wages of sin is death... (Romans 6:23)

* Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (Romans 5:12)

* Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. (Romans 1:32)

* But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. (Revelation 21:8) From Genesis (Genesis 2:17) to Revelation, the wages of sin has been death. All men since Adam and Eve are sinners by birth and by choice. Therefore, all men must pay this penalty. Fortunately, however, the story does not end here. If it did, man would have no hope.

Christ died for our sins so that we wouldn't have to pay our own "death penalty". He was then buried, and rose again on the third day. This is often referred to as the "gospel" or "good news". As a result of this good news every man can now have his sins forgiven and receive God's free gift of eternal life.

* For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: (1 Corinthians 15:3-4) * But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

* For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16) * ...but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

* For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Even though God hates sin and must punish sinners, He still loves sinners and doesn't desire them to "perish" (2 Peter 3:9). That's why He intervened in our behalf by sending the Lord Jesus, His "only begotten Son" to die in our place. Jesus Christ was the God-man, completely God and completely man. As a result He was perfect and sinless, and therefore qualified to pay our sin penalty for us by his substitutionary death on the cross (2 Corinthians 5:21). His resurrection from the grave proved that God had accepted his sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a result of Christ's shed blood on the cross, the believer can have his sins forgiven and his life completely cleansed (1 John 1:7). In addition to having his sins forgiven, the believer receives Christ's perfect righteousness ("the righteousness of God") when he becomes a Christian. This is a judicial transaction whereby the believer is justified (declared righteous) before God. In God's eyes the new believer is positionally just as righteous as Jesus Christ even though practically he is not yet perfect and will still struggle with sin. This truth explains how a believer becomes reconciled with God and can thereby enter heaven upon death. God sees Christ's righteousness and not the believer's sins. The reader is encouraged to read Romans 5 for a more thorough explanation of Christ's substitutionary death.

We can accept God's free gift of eternal live by repenting of our sins and trusting Christ as our Lord and Savior.

* Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out ... (Acts 3:19)

* Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts 20:21)

* That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (Romans 10:9-10).

* For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. (Romans 10:13)

* He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. (John 3:36)

* And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, ... (Acts 16:30-31)

We clearly see from these passages that salvation is not in a religion, a plan or a prayer, but in a person, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a free gift (Ephesians 2:8-9) that all of us must choose to accept or reject. Although Christ died for all men, he did not create robots that would be forced to believe and obey. He gives each of us a choice. In essence, that's what salvation is from man's perspective; a volitional choice to turn from our sins (repentance) and to turn to Christ (faith). Faith (belief or trust) and repentance are often used interchangeably when the gospel message is presented. Some passages mention repentance while others speak of faith. Acts 20:21 mentions both. Obviously they are synonyms that are used of different aspects of a believer's conversion. Repentance emphasizes the "turning from" and faith emphasizes the "turning to". You can't have one without the other. Saving faith will always include repentance and vice versa. What this means then is that a simple intellectual consent to the truths of the gospel does not constitute saving faith. Neither does simply reciting "the sinner's prayer". We must remember that sin is rebellion against God, and before we can receive the forgiveness of our sins from Christ our Savior we must be willing to bow our knee (in humble repentance) to Christ our Lord! This does not mean we must first reform our lives before we can be saved, for this would be salvation by works. Rather it means that we are willing to give up our sins and let Christ change our lives by reforming us from the inside out! It seems too simple, but that's what the Bible teaches. All one must do to be saved is to truly trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. The reader is encouraged to read John 3 for the Lord's explanation of "the new birth".

If you still would like to study further, I would encourage you to read the entire Gospel of John and/or the first ten chapters of Romans. If, however, you are already convinced that you need to repent of your sin and trust Christ, you can do it right where you are. I would encourage you to simply pray to God, admitting to Him that you are a sinner, in need of His gracious salvation. Tell Him that you truly believe that Christ died for your sins, was buried, and rose again, and that you would like to repent of your sins and turn to Christ in faith. Don't worry about the exact words, because it's not a prayer that saves you anyway, it's the repentance and faith that is in your heart! The prayer is simply a way of expressing your desire to God.

13: Annotated Bibliography

Apologetics Bibliography Geisler, Norman L. Christian Apologetics. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976. A highly philosophical work that surveys various tests for truth, various world views (deism, pantheism, panentheism, atheism and theism), and the unique claims of Christianity within a theistic world view. It is difficult reading, but highly educational for those interested in the more philosophical side of Christian apologetics.

Martin, Walter. The Kingdom of the Cults. Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1985. A very thorough work evaluating the teaching and beliefs of the major cults and world religions from a Biblical frame work. It exposes the errors of each of these groups in the light of Scripture. Probably the most valuable work on cults available today.

McDowell, Josh. The Best of Josh McDowell - A Ready Defense. San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life Publishers, 1990. A compilation of several of the author's works on apologetics. It deals with such topics as the reliability of the Bible, the deity of Christ, Christianity versus other religions, the uniqueness of Christianity and some of the most asked questions about Christianity. Since some of the information is condensed from the original works the reader is always provided with the source volume if he desires more detail on a particular subject.

McDowell, Josh. Evidence that Demands a Verdict. San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life Publishers, 1972.

One of the most thorough works on the practical side of Christian apologetics. It is more or less a compilation of the author's notes recorded in outline format. As such it features quotes from numerous sources in addition to some original work from the author. It covers a broad gamut of topics, including most of those covered in this work. Special emphasis is given to the person of Christ and His claims of deity.

McDowell, Josh. More Evidence that Demands a Verdict. San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life Publishers, 1975. A follow-up to the author's original work that focuses particularly on higher criticism and its relentless attacks upon the Bible. This work provides the reader with answers to the critics that help confirm the accuracy and reliability of the Word of God.

McDowell, Josh. The Resurrection Factor. San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life Publishers, 1981. A thorough defense of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The author examines the historical evidences supporting the resurrection and concludes that it can be proven without a reasonable doubt that Jesus Christ did rise from the grave.

Morris, Henry M. Many Infallible Proofs. El Cajon, CA: Master Books, 1974.

Another thorough work on the practical side of Christian apologetics. Probably the best overview of each and every aspect of Christian evidences that the reviewer has seen. Nearly all subjects discussed in these notes are included in this work.

Morris, Henry M. Science and the Bible. Chicago: Moody Press, 1986. An explanation of the scientific evidences for the divine inspiration and authority of Scripture. Includes information on creation/evolution, the flood, archaeology/ancient history, and fulfilled prophecy.

CREATION SCIENCE BIBLIOGRAPHY Ackerman, Paul D. It's a Young World After All. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1986. The book contains several scientific evidences of a young earth and recent creation.

Baker, Sylvia. Bone of Contention - Is Evolution True? Australia: Creation Science Foundation, 1986.

Very concise (magazine format) but thorough overview of the whole creation/evolution debate. Includes information on natural selection, the fossil record, the age of the earth, and dating methods.

Denton, Michael. Evolution: A Theory in Crisis. Bethesda, Maryland: Adler & Adler, 1986.

Very significant book because it is written by a non-creationist. The author is not a Christian and therefore the book cannot be dismissed by evolutionists as "religious". The author, a molecular biologist, exposes the enormous problems of Darwinian evolution, especially emphasizing the incredible complexity of life.

Gish, Duane T. Evolution: The Challenge of the Fossil Record. El Cajon, California: Master Books, 1985.

Written by a Ph.D. in biochemistry from the University of California, Berkeley. This book provides what is likely the best critique of the supposed fossil evidence for evolution. Dr. Gish shows that the fossil record points overwhelmingly towards creation and not evolution.

Gish, Duane T. Creation Scientists Answer Their Critics. El Cajon, California: Institute for Creation Research, 1993. In this work Dr. Gish defends creation scientists against some of the vicious attacks by those who support the theory of evolution. He answers many of the criticisms raised against creation science in the last decade or so. He also gives examples of the distorted and inaccurate pictures of creation scientists that have been painted by evolutionists. This is a must book for anyone wanting to keep up to date with the current creation/evolution debate.

Ham, Ken. Genesis and the Decay of the Nations. El Cajon, California: Master Books, 1991. An excellent work addressing some of the implications of the creation/evolution debate. Portrays the book of Genesis as the foundation on which the rest of Scripture must stand. Emphasizes the importance of defending Genesis against the lies of evolution.

Ham, Ken, Snelling, Andrew, and Wieland, Carl. The Answers Book. Australia: Creation Science Foundation, 1990. The book answers 12 of the most asked questions about Genesis and the creation/evolution debate. It answers questions regarding the dinosaurs, Cain's wife, the gap theory, the Ice Age, etc.

Johnson, Phillip E. Darwin on Trial. Downer's Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1991. A powerful book written by a University of California Berkley law professor. It deals with the logical and philosophical areas of the debate. Evolutionists will once again have problems dismissing this

book since it is not written from a "religious" standpoint, but rather from a legal one.

Lubenow, Marvin L. *Bones of Contention*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992. This work is a creation assessment of human fossils. As such, it is likely the most complete and accurate assessment of the alleged "missing links" between apes and men. It shows us that the "missing links" in man's family tree are still missing!

Morris, Henry M. *The Beginning of the World*. El Cajon, California: Master Books, 1977. A scientific study of Genesis 1-11. Concise and easy to read chapters make this an ideal source for Bible studies.

Morris, Henry M. *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984.

One of the best and most thorough books on every aspect of the creation/evolution debate. Emphasizes the relationship between the Biblical record and each important field of modern science. Stresses the incredible harmony of the Bible with true science.

Morris, Henry M. *The Genesis Record*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976. A scientific and devotional commentary on the entire book of Genesis. Probably the best available help for those interested in studying Genesis. Both Biblical and scientific aspects of Genesis are discussed. Although Dr. Morris is a scientist by trade, he is not a bad theologian either!

Morris, Henry M. *The Long War Against God*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989. A fascinating study on the history of the creation/evolution conflict. Shows that evolution did not begin with Darwin. Dr. Morris traces mankind's rebellion and evolutionary thinking back to the tower of Babel, bringing out many fascinating implications of this rebellion through the ages. The book also shows the dominance and influence of evolutionary thinking in all aspects of society and in harmful aspects of human behavior.

Morris, Henry M. *Scientific Creationism*. El Cajon, California: Master Books, 1985. An excellent reference book on all the major scientific aspects of the creation/evolution debate. Would make an excellent textbook on scientific creationism. The final chapter discusses the Biblical account of creation as well as the various theories that have been formulated to try and harmonize evolution and the Bible.

Morris, Henry M. and Parker, Gary E. *What is Creation Science?* El Cajon, California: Master Books, 1987. A thorough introduction to creation science. The book contains no Biblical references, and as such could be used as a textbook. Once again, the evolutionist would have trouble refuting this book on the basis of "religious bias," seeing that it does not use Biblical arguments. Rather it presents creationism as a scientific study.

Morris, John D. *The Young Earth*. Colorado Springs: Master Books, 1994. A thorough examination of the evidences for a young earth written from a geologist's perspective. It includes both geologic evidences and evidences from world-wide physical processes. It also includes a very helpful discussion on the radioisotope dating methods, their weaknesses, and their inherent assumptions.

Snelling, Andrew, ed. *The Revised Quote Book*. Australia: Creation Science Foundation, 1990. In a court of law testimony from a hostile witness is always more valuable than testimony from a friendly one. Thus we see the importance of this work. It contains 130 quotes about evolution from

leading evolutionary scientists, proving that in moments of honesty even the evolutionists recognize the problems with their theory. The editors assure the reader that the quotes have been both checked for accuracy and checked to see that they were not taken out of context. (magazine format) Whitcomb, John C. and Morris, Henry M. The Genesis Flood. Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1961. The original work that led the way for the modern creation science movement. First printed in 1961, it is still the best work on the Biblical and scientific evidences for and implications of the worldwide flood. The best treatment of "flood geology" as opposed to uniformitarianism.

Whitcomb, John C. The World that Perished. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988.

Somewhat a sequel to The Genesis Flood. It answers some of the objections raised to the original work and provides additional scientific information on the flood and its implications. note: The preceding bibliography is not intended to be exhaustive. It simply represents some of the best sources on apologetics known to the author. Most of these works were used in the preparation of these notes. However, many of the works cited in the footnotes are not included in the bibliography.

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