

REASONS to BELIEVE



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PREFACE

About 22 million adults in the United States classify themselves as atheists or agnostics—perhaps you are one of them. On the other hand, there are over 220 million adults who believe in a God of some sort—maybe you are one of them. Regardless of which view you currently hold, we can all agree that the time has come for an open discussion about the question of God’s existence, the Bible, and Jesus Christ—the pillars of Christianity. To be up front with you, we believe in God and the Bible, and we hope that everyone who reads this material comes to that same conclusion. We are not trying to sneak arguments in on you, pretending they are not really arguments. This is a book written purposefully to persuade you

to believe in God, the Bible, and Jesus if you don't, and to encourage you in that belief if you do.

Why should you read this book if you don't believe in God, knowing that it is written to change your mind? That is a fair question. The simple answer is, because if you are an honest person seeking the truth, reading this book can only help you. If what it says is not the truth, then you have sharpened your mind by discerning between good and bad arguments. If you read it and find that it is the truth, then you have discovered valuable information that can change your life.

Whether you believe in God or not, we think that everyone can respect our approach to the subject. The approach we have taken is to give reasons why we believe as we do. What is so profound about that? In truth, it is often the case that people don't give real reasons for their beliefs. They may tell you why they believe something, or they may offer a motive for the belief, but they don't give reasons.

A **reason** is when an aspect of reality is coupled with proper thinking that demands a certain conclusion. A motivation does not necessarily have anything to do with proper thinking or reality. For instance, what if a person says, "I believe there is a God, because my mother told me there is one, and she is the nicest lady I know." Is that a reason? No. The fact that a person's mother is nice has nothing ultimately to do with whether what she says is true or false. Again, consider someone who says that a certain belief is

true, “because it makes me feel better.” That is not a reason. It can be a motivation for believing something, but it is not proper thinking based on reality that leads to a certain conclusion.

Let us contrast unreasonable motivations with valid reasons. If a person says, “I believe there is a God, because I saw Him and He spoke to me,” that is a valid reason. The person is appealing to something about reality (seeing and hearing God), and reasoning that if he did see and hear God, then God must exist. Of course, whether or not the person actually saw God should be questioned. But if he really did, then the reason is valid and the conclusion that God exists follows. Again, suppose a person says, “I believe the Bible is God’s Word, because it accurately predicts the future and is never wrong.” Humans cannot accurately predict the future and be correct 100% of the time. Any being that could do so must be all-knowing. Therefore, if the Bible actually does predict the future, that is a valid reason to conclude that God inspired the book. Again, whether or not the Bible predicts the future accurately is the crux of the argument. But if it does, then we have discovered a “real” reason to believe it is inspired.

It is true that many Christians and many atheists hold to their beliefs because of unreasonable motivations. To be candid, it is likely true that all of us hold to some beliefs without proper reasons. Since you are reading this book, however, we assume that you are trying to find valid reasons for your beliefs.

With that in mind, let us reason together about the beliefs we currently hold about God, the Bible, and Jesus Christ.

7 *Reasons to Believe in God*

HOW can you know that God exists? You can't see, hear, touch, smell, or taste Him. You can't weigh Him like you can a five-pound bag of potatoes. You can't put Him under an electron microscope to show your friends what He looks like on an atomic level. You can't experiment on Him with probes and scalpels. You can't take a picture of Him to show your neighbor that He's not just an imaginary friend. You can't magically make Him appear in the classroom of an atheistic professor who is challenging students to prove that God exists. So how can you know that God exists?

Although atheists contend that God does not exist, and agnostics allege that there is a very high probability that He does not exist, theism is the rational belief that there is a God. A sincere pursuer of truth who follows the available evidence will come to the logical conclusion that God exists. Admittedly, this belief in the 21st century is not the result of seeing God's Spirit or touching His actual essence. What we have at our fingertips, however, is a mountain of irrefutable, indirect, credible evidence that testifies on God's behalf. Consider seven lines of evidence that

warrant the conclusion that an eternal, supernatural Creator (God) exists.

I. MATTER DEMANDS A MAKER

EVERY MATERIAL EFFECT MUST HAVE A CAUSE THAT CAME BEFORE IT (OR WAS SIMULTANEOUS TO IT) AND IS GREATER THAN IT. THE UNIVERSE IS A MATERIAL EFFECT. THEREFORE, THE UNIVERSE MUST HAVE A CAUSE THAT CAME BEFORE IT AND WAS GREATER THAN IT.

NO rational person denies the fact that matter exists. The Universe and every atom that makes it up is a reality. The logical question to ask is, “Where did it all come from?” From the Milky Way to the most-distant galaxy in the Universe—what was the cause? What made matter?

A study of the material Universe reveals that every physical effect must have an adequate antecedent or simultaneous cause (an idea known as the Law of Cause and Effect or the Law of Causality). The American flag that stood erect on the surface of the moon in 1969 was neither eternal nor without a cause. Its existence on the Moon demands a sufficient cause. The robotic rovers that have rolled across the surface of Mars since the early 21st century are the effect of adequate causes. No one believes that they popped into existence from nothing or that they are the result of any number of ridiculous, insufficient

causes that could be suggested (e.g., an accidental explosion in a junk yard on Earth sent metal objects spiraling toward Mars that assembled themselves into the robotic rovers). Simply put, all material effects demand adequate causes.¹

So what caused the Universe and all of the matter in the Universe? The theory that atheistic evolutionists have advanced for several decades now, which supposedly best explains our existence from a purely naturalistic perspective, is known as the Big Bang. Allegedly, about 14 billion years ago **all** of the matter and energy in the Universe was concentrated in a tiny ball of matter that exploded, causing the eventual formation of galaxies throughout the Universe.

The obvious problem with this inadequate explanation is that even if the Big Bang actually happened (and sound science argues against such a theory),² a person must still explain **whence came the “original” ball of matter**. It must have an adequate cause. What do some leading atheists and agnostics around the world argue about the cause of matter? Atheistic cosmologist Stephen Hawking stated on national television in 2011, “**Nothing** caused the Big Bang.”³ In the book *The Grand Design* that Dr. Hawking co-authored, he and Leonard Mlodinow asserted: “Bodies such as stars and black holes cannot just appear out of nothing. **But a whole universe can.**”⁴ In 2006, Todd Friel asked Dan Barker, one of America’s leading atheists, “Do you really believe that something

came from **nothing**?”⁵ Barker responded with a simple, “Yes.”⁶

The observable truth is, however, in nature, matter and energy are neither created nor destroyed. Scientists refer to this fact as the First Law of Thermodynamics. Though evolutionists have alleged that the Universe began with the explosion of a ball of matter several billion years ago, they never have provided a reasonable explanation for the cause of the “original” ball of matter. **“Nothing” is not** a reasonable explanation. In 2007, the pro-evolutionary *New Scientist* magazine ran a cover story titled “The Beginning: What Triggered the Big Bang?” in which the publication attempted to explain the origin of the Universe. But consider the last line of the featured article: “[T]he quest to understand the origin of the universe seems destined to continue until we can answer a deeper question: **why is there anything at all instead of nothing?**”⁷ The implication of such a question is quite clear: if at any time in the past “nothing” existed, then nothing should exist today. The fact is, a reasonable, naturalistic explanation for the origin of the “original” ball of matter that supposedly led to the Universe does not exist. One of the world’s leading atheists, Richard Dawkins, has basically admitted such.

In a panel discussion in 2012 on Australian national television, Dr. Dawkins was asked “how it is that something as enormous as the universes came from nothing?” Notice what Dawkins admitted: “Of course

it's **counterintuitive** that you can get something from nothing. Of course **common sense** doesn't allow you to get something from nothing. That's why it's interesting. It's got to be interesting in order to give rise to the universe at all. Something pretty mysterious had to give rise to the origin of the universe."⁸ Indeed, atheism's explanation for the origin of matter does not agree "with what seems right or natural."⁹ According to Dawkins' own admissions, the idea of getting something from nothing in nature defies "common sense." It is far from "sound and prudent judgment based on a simple perception of the situation or facts."¹⁰

What's more, atheists cannot logically argue that the Universe is eternal. It seems that relatively few scientists even propose an eternal Universe anymore. (In fact, there would be no point in attempting to explain the "beginning" of the Universe in a Big Bang if atheists believed it always existed.) Furthermore, the Second Law of Thermodynamics, which states that matter and energy become less usable over time, has led most scientists to conclude that the Universe has not always existed (else we would be out of usable energy).¹¹ The fact is, the Universe had a beginning. Alex Vilenkin, cosmologist from Tufts University, pressed this fact in his book titled *Many Worlds in One*: "It is said that an argument is what convinces reasonable men and a proof is what it takes to convince even an unreasonable man. With the proof now in place, cosmologists can no longer

hide behind the possibility of a past-eternal universe. There is no escape: they have to face the problem of a **cosmic beginning**.”¹²

At one time in the past, the material Universe did not exist. Then, at some point, matter came into existence. But since matter is not eternal and cannot create itself from nothing, then something outside of the material realm must have brought matter into existence.

In short, matter demands a Maker. The evidence clearly indicates that the cause of the Universe is inexplicable without a supernatural Being. Something has to be eternally powerful, but we know it cannot be natural or material. Romans 1:20 says: “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His **eternal** power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.” Without some type of eternal power, our Universe cannot exist, and the atheistic answer that our Universe created itself from nothing is the furthest thing from either a scientific or a rational explanation.

2. LIFE DEMANDS A LIFE GIVER

IN THE MATERIAL UNIVERSE, LIFE ARISES FROM PREVIOUSLY EXISTING LIFE OF ITS OWN KIND. LIFE CANNOT SPONTANEOUSLY GENERATE FROM NON-LIVING CHEMICALS. THUS, A SUPERNATURAL, INTELLIGENT MIND MUST HAVE CREATED LIVING ORGANISMS.

LIFE does not pop into existence from nothing. Neither the puppy at the pound nor the bacteria on the doorknob spontaneously generated. Every scientist, whether theist or atheist, knows this observation to be true.

In biology, one of the most widely recognized laws of science is the Law of Biogenesis. “Biogenesis” is composed of two words—“bio,” which means life, and “genesis,” which means beginning. Thus, this law deals with the beginning of life. And it simply says that in nature life comes only from previous life of its own kind. Over the years, the truthfulness of this law has been documented by thousands of scientists, one of the most famous of whom was Louis Pasteur. His work dealt a crushing blow to the notion of spontaneous generation.

In 1933, evolutionist John Sullivan admitted that “it became an accepted doctrine that **life never arises except from life**. So far as the actual evidence goes, this is still the **only** possible conclusion.”¹³ Okay, but that was 1933. As we move further into the 20th

century the obvious question was: “Is it still the only possible conclusion?” What have we learned since the days of Louis Pasteur in the 19th century and John Sullivan in the first half of the 20th century? Observational science has reached the same conclusion experiment after experiment, year after year. The eminent evolutionist George Gaylord Simpson and his colleagues observed that “there is no serious doubt that **biogenesis is the rule, that life comes only from other life**, that a cell, the unit of life, is always and exclusively the product or offspring of another cell.”¹⁴ Evolutionist Martin Moe noted that “a century of sensational discoveries in the biological sciences has taught us **that life arises only from life**.”¹⁵ More recently, staunch evolutionist Neil Shubin conceded the following in his book titled *Your Inner Fish*:

I can share with you one true law that all of us can agree upon. This law is so profound that most of us take it completely for granted. Yet it is the starting point for almost everything we do in paleontology, developmental biology, and genetics. This biological “law of everything” is that **every living thing on the planet had parents**. Every person you’ve ever known has biological parents, as does every bird, salamander, or shark you have ever seen.... To put it in a more precise form: every living thing sprang from some parental genetic information.¹⁶

The importance of Shubin’s concession must not be missed. He recognizes that the actual scientific information verifies that life in the natural world must come from previously existing life. And yet he refuses

to carry that fact to its proper conclusion: that life could not have sprung from non-living chemicals. Materialistic evolution cannot adequately account for or explain the most basic laws of science, not the least of which is the Law of Biogenesis.

If it is the case that the “only possible conclusion” which scientific evidence demands is that in nature “life never arises except from life,” then, pray tell, **how did the first life come into being?** Did it somehow break the most fundamental **natural** law of biology and arise “naturally” from non-life? Or is there another possibility? The truth is, there **is** another possibility (which science has not disproved), but it is one that evolutionists such as John Sullivan admitted that “scientific men find **very difficult**” to accept.¹⁷ According to Sullivan, “So far as the actual evidence goes,” biogenesis “is still the only possible conclusion. But...**it is a conclusion that seems to lead back to some supernatural creative act.**”¹⁸ Do not miss the point: real, true, operational science indirectly supports a “supernatural creative act,” which implies a supernatural Creator.¹⁹

Evolutionist and Harvard University Professor George Wald similarly admitted in an article he wrote titled “The Origin of Life” that ultimately there are two options for life’s origin: (1) spontaneous generation; and (2) “the only alternative, to believe in a single, primary act of supernatural creation. There is no third position.”²⁰ Sadly, “Most modern biologists, having reviewed with satisfaction the downfall of the spontaneous

generation hypothesis” are “unwilling to accept the alternative belief in special creation.” So, rather than follow the evidence where it ultimately leads (to a supernatural Creator!), atheists would rather put their confidence in a theory that was disproven long ago. Antony Flew, who for five decades was the world’s leading atheistic thinker, was forced in the end to conclude: “The only satisfactory explanation for the origin of such ‘end-directed, self-replicating’ life as we see on earth is an infinitely intelligent Mind.”²¹

3. DESIGN DEMANDS A DESIGNER

ANYTHING THAT EXHIBITS COMPLEX, FUNCTIONAL DESIGN DEMANDS AN INTELLIGENT DESIGNER. THE UNIVERSE EXHIBITS COMPLEX, FUNCTIONAL DESIGN. THEREFORE, THE UNIVERSE MUST HAVE A DESIGNER.

EVERYDAY observation reveals and confirms the obvious fact that complex, functional design demands a designer. Paintings demand painters. Poems demand poets. Architecture demands architects. And on and on we could go. Everyone knows that cars and computers, pianos and projectors all require engineers, technicians, and tuners for them to exist and function properly. But what about the Universe as a whole? Can it be described accurately as “designed”? If so, what could such design imply about its origin?

No honest, informed person can deny the fact that the Universe is extremely fine-tuned and functionally complex. From the Earth's precise orbit around the Sun to a shorebird's 15,000-mile yearly migration pattern and the amazing digestive system of the human body, literally millions of examples of fine-tuned design in nature could be pondered. But consider just one example involving electrons and protons. The ratio of the mass of an electron to a proton is 1:1836, which means that a proton is 1,836 times more massive than an electron. Even with this mass difference, however, electrons and protons have the same electrical charge. Scientists suggest to us that if the electrical charge of the electron were altered by one part in 100 billion, our bodies would instantly explode.²² Is such precision indicative of precise design? Most certainly.

The truth is, atheists frequently testify to the “design” in nature. Australian atheistic astrophysicist Paul Davies has admitted that the Universe (which according to atheists is the result of mindless, naturalistic, random processes) is “uniquely hospitable,” “remarkable,” and “ordered in an intelligible way”²³ He even admitted to the “fine-tuned properties” of the Universe. In a 2008 *National Geographic* article titled, “Biomimetics: Design by Nature,” the word “design” (or one of its derivatives—designs, designed, etc.) appeared no less than seven times in reference to “nature’s designs.” The author, evolutionist Tom Mueller, referred to nature’s “sophistication” and

“clever devices,” and praised nature for being able to turn simple materials “into structures of fantastic complexity, strength, and toughness.”²⁴ After learning of the uncanny, complicated maneuverability of a little blowfly, Mueller even confessed to feeling the need to regard the insect “on bended knee in admiration.”²⁵ Why? Because of its “mysterious” and “complicated” **design**. The fact is, as evolutionist Jerry Coyne admitted, “Nature resembles a well-oiled machine.... The more one learns about plants and animals, the more one marvels at how well their designs fit their ways of life.”²⁶

But how can you get design without purpose, intelligence, and deliberate planning? The first three definitions the *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary* gives for “design” (noun) are as follows: “1a: a particular **purpose** held in view by **an individual or group**...b: **deliberate purposive planning**... 2: a mental project or scheme in which means to an end are laid down; 3a: a **deliberate** undercover project or scheme.”²⁷ After defining “design” as a drawing, sketch, or “graphic representation of a **detailed plan**...,” the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* noted that design may be defined as “[t]he **purposeful or inventive arrangement** of parts or details.”²⁸ A design is preceded by “deliberate purposive planning,” “a detailed plan,” or an “inventive arrangement.” A design is the effect, not of time, chance, and unintelligent, random accidental explosions (what nonsense!), but of the purposeful

planning and deliberate actions of an inventor or designer. Literally, **by definition**, design demands a designer; thus the designed Universe demands a Designer.

According to Paul Davies: “Our universe seems ‘just right’ for life. **It looks as if...a super-intellect has been monkeying with physics.**”²⁹ Similarly, well known skeptic Michael Shermer conceded, “The reason people think that a Designer created the world is because **it looks designed.**”³⁰

Indeed, both honest observation and rational thought should lead every truth-seeking individual to the same conclusion that the psalmist came to 3,000 years ago: “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork” (19:1). “The whole earth is full of His glory” (Isaiah 6:3). Both the heavens and the Earth testify day after day and night after night to anyone and everyone who will listen (Psalm 19:2-4). “Lift up your eyes on high, and see Who has created these things” (Isaiah 40:26).

Since the Universe exhibits complex, functional design, and (by definition) complex, functional design demands a designer, then the Universe must have an intelligent designer. This argument for God is logically sound and observationally true. A person can know (without a doubt) that God exists if for no other reason than that the Universe’s design demands a Designer. “For every house is built by someone, but He Who built all things is God” (Hebrews 3:4).

4. INTELLIGENCE DEMANDS AN INTELLIGENT CREATOR

ANYTHING THAT POSSESSES INTELLIGENCE MUST HAVE BEEN CAUSED BY SOMETHING INTELLIGENT. ORGANISMS SUCH AS ANIMALS AND HUMANS POSSESS INTELLIGENCE. THEREFORE, ANIMALS AND HUMANS MUST HAVE BEEN CREATED BY AN INTELLIGENT BEING.

INTELLIGENCE is defined as “the capacity to acquire and apply knowledge;”³¹ “the ability to learn or understand things or to deal with new or difficult situations.”³² It is not difficult to identify certain things that have some measure of “intelligence,” while recognizing other things that have no intelligence. Man obviously has an extremely high level of intelligence. He has constructed spaceships that he can guide 240,000 miles to the Moon while both the Earth and the Moon are in motion. He has built artificial hearts that can extend the lives of the sick. He continues to construct computers that can process billions of pieces of information a second. He can write poetry, calculate where Mars will be 50 years from the present, and build everything from pianos to video game consoles. Man is an intelligent being.

Although there is a great chasm between mankind and the animal kingdom, animals do possess a measure of intelligence. Dogs can learn to sit, stay, roll over, and play dead. Dolphins can learn to jump through hoops on command. Birds can make helpful

“tools” from twigs in order to accomplish some basic tasks. A few years ago, two colorful, eight-legged cephalopods, known as cuttlefish, graced the cover of the journal *New Scientist*. The authors referred to this amazing sea creature as a “sophisticated,” “inventive,” eight-legged “genius” with “intelligence” and a “secret code.”³³

According to atheistic evolution, billions of years ago “nothing” caused a tiny ball of matter to explode. Then, billions of years after this Big Bang, galaxies began to form from lifeless, mindless, unintelligent particles floating around in space in massive clouds of dust. Allegedly, Earth eventually evolved from such a dust cloud. Hundreds of millions of years later, intelligent animals and humans evolved.

What humans have consistently observed in nature, however, is that intelligence demands previous intelligence. The reason that humans in the 21st century are intelligent is because our ancestors were intelligent. The reason that animals have some measure of intelligence is due to intelligent creatures that came before them. Dust does not give way to organized dust particles that have “the capacity to acquire and apply knowledge.” Water does not think. The mindless mud that evolutionists contend gave way to intelligent life on Earth is nothing but a delusional tale unsupported by everything we know from observation and experience. Neither “nothing” nor inorganic matter ever produces intelligent creatures. So how did the first intelligent creatures come to inhabit the Universe?

Just as the first life demands a supernatural life Giver, so the first intelligent beings demand a self-existent, miracle-working Creator of intelligence.

5. MORALITY DEMANDS A MORAL LAW GIVER

IF OBJECTIVE, MORAL VALUES EXIST, THEN GOD EXISTS. OBJECTIVE MORAL VALUES SUCH AS GOOD AND EVIL, JUSTICE AND INJUSTICE, DO EXIST. THEREFORE, GOD EXISTS.

WHY do people generally think that some actions are “right” and some actions are “wrong,” regardless of their subjective opinions? Why do most people believe that it is “evil” or “wicked” (1) for an adult to torture an innocent child simply for the fun of it? (2) for a man to beat and rape a kind, innocent woman? or (3) for parents to have children for the sole purpose of abusing them sexually every day of their lives? Because, as evolutionist Edward Slingerland noted, humans have metaphysical rights—rights that are “a reality beyond what is perceptible to the senses”³⁴—and “rely on moral values.”³⁵ The fact is, most people, even many atheists, have admitted that real, objective good and evil exist.

Although objective morality may be outside the realm of the scientific method, every rational person can know that some things are innately good, while other things are innately evil. Antony Flew³⁶ and Wallace Matson,³⁷ two of the leading atheistic philosophers

of the 20th century, forthrightly acknowledged the existence of objective morality in their debates with theistic philosopher Thomas B. Warren in the 1970s. Atheist Michael Ruse admitted in his book *Darwinism Defended* that “[t]he man who says that it is morally acceptable to rape little children, is just as **mistaken** as the man who says that $2 + 2 = 5$.”³⁸ Philosophers Francis Beckwith and Gregory Kousser said it well: **“Those who deny obvious moral rules—**who say that murder and rape are morally benign, that cruelty is not a vice, and that cowardice is a virtue—do not merely have a different moral point of view; they **have something wrong with them.**”³⁹

Most rational people do not merely feel like rape and child abuse may be wrong; they **are** wrong—innately wrong. Just as two plus two can really be known to be four, every rational human can know that some things are objectively good, while other things are objectively evil. However, reason demands that objective good and evil can only exist if there is some real, objective point of reference. If something (e.g., rape) can be legitimately criticized as morally wrong, then there must be an objective standard—“some ‘higher law which transcends the provincial and transient’ which is other than the particular moral code and which has an obligatory character which can be recognized.”⁴⁰

Recognition by atheists of anything being morally wrong begs the question: How can an atheist logically call something atrocious, deplorable, evil, or

wicked? According to atheism, man is nothing but matter in motion. Humankind allegedly evolved from rocks and slime over billions of years. How could moral value come from rocks and slime? Who ever speaks of “wrong rocks,” “moral minerals,” or “corrupt chemicals”? People do not talk about morally depraved donkeys, evil elephants, or immoral monkeys. Pigs are not punished for being immoral when they eat their young. Komodo dragons are not corrupt because 10% of their diet consists of younger Komodo dragons. **Killer** whales are not guilty of murder. Male animals are not tried for rape if they appear to forcibly copulate with females. Dogs are not depraved for stealing the bone of another dog. Moral value could not arise from rocks and slime.

The fact that humans even contemplate morality testifies to the huge chasm between man and animals and the fact that moral value could not have arisen from animals. Atheistic evolutionists have admitted that morals arise only in humans. George Gaylord Simpson, one of the most recognized atheistic evolutionists of the 20th century, confessed that “[g]ood and evil, right and wrong, **concepts irrelevant in nature except from the human viewpoint**, become **real** and pressing features of the whole cosmos as viewed morally because **morals arise only in man**.”⁴¹ Atheists admit that people (i.e., even “atheists”) have “their own **innate** sense of morality.”⁴² No rational person makes such admissions

about animals. “**Humans,**” not animals, “rely on moral values.”⁴³

The moral argument for God’s existence exposes atheism as the self-contradictory, atrocious philosophy that it is. Atheists must either (1) reject the truthfulness of the moral argument’s first premise (“If objective moral value exists, then God exists”) and illogically accept the indefensible idea that objective morality somehow arose from rocks and reptiles, or (2) they must reject the argument’s second premise (“Objective moral values exist”), and accept the insane, utterly repulsive idea that genocide, rape, murder, theft, child abuse, etc. can **never once** be condemned as objectively “wrong.” What’s more, if atheism is true, individuals could never logically be punished for such immoral actions, since “no inherent moral or ethical laws” would exist.⁴⁴

If there is no God, then there is no objective basis to say that some things are right and others are wrong. Reason demands that objective good and evil can only exist if there is some real, objective reference point outside of nature. The only reasonable answer to an objective moral law for humans is a supernatural, moral law Giver.

6. THE BIBLE'S SUPERNATURAL ATTRIBUTES DEMAND A SUPERNATURAL AUTHOR

IF ANYTHING IN THE WORLD EXHIBITS QUALITIES THAT ARE SUPERNATURAL, THEN THERE MUST BE SOMETHING SUPERNATURAL. THE BIBLE EXHIBITS CHARACTERISTICS SUCH AS PREDICTIVE PROPHECY THAT ARE SUPERNATURAL. THEREFORE, A SUPERNATURAL MIND MUST EXIST, AND THE BIBLE MUST BE THE PRODUCT OF THAT MIND.

CHRISTIANS do not believe that God exists simply because the Bible teaches that He does. Nor do Christians believe that the Bible is the Word of God simply because the Bible claims to be inspired by God. Anyone can make claims about whatever they wish. Simply because a person claims to have revelation from a supernatural Creator doesn't make it so. However, if the Bible possesses attributes that are super-human, then the Bible proves itself to be of supernatural origin, and has indirectly proven the existence of the supernatural Author. American atheist Dan Barker alluded to the legitimacy of this argumentation for God's existence in 2009 when he explained that one of the things which could falsify atheism would be if God spoke to man and gave him specific information about future events.⁴⁵

Indeed, one extremely valuable line of evidence that confirms that the Bible is the inspired Word of

God is the presence of accurate, predictive prophecy contained in its pages. Not only are the prophecies of the Bible fulfilled in minute detail with complete accuracy, but these fulfillments are often accomplished centuries after the prophecies were made. Even the skeptic understands that if this is the case, a supernatural agent must be responsible for the writing of the Bible. That is why the skeptic attempts to discredit the prophecies by claiming that they were written after the events, or by claiming that they were not fulfilled in detail. By attempting to disparage the prophecies using these methods, the skeptic admits that if the prophecies were written centuries before the events, and if they are fulfilled in detail, then a supernatural agent is responsible for them. As the prophet Jeremiah wrote: “As for the prophet who prophecies of peace, when the word of the prophet comes to pass, the prophet will be known as one whom the Lord has truly sent” (28:9). Completely accurate, fulfilled prophecy is a characteristic that verifies the divine inspiration of the Bible.

In the next chapter, we provide (among other proofs of the Bible’s divine inspiration) detailed examples of biblical prophecies that were fulfilled and which demand a supernatural explanation (see specifically pages 31-37). The fact is, “no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:20-21). And, if men were inspired **of God** to write

the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16), then God exists. In short, the Bible's supernatural attributes logically demand a supernatural Author.⁴⁶

7. THE HISTORICAL, MIRACLE-WORKING, RESURRECTED JESUS DEMANDS A SUPERNATURAL EXPLANATION

IF EVEN ONE PERSON WERE TO PERFORM SUPERNATURAL FEATS, SUCH AS RAISING THE DEAD AND FULFILLING PROPHECY, THEN A SUPERNATURAL BEING MUST EXIST. JESUS CHRIST DID PERFORM SUPERNATURAL FEATS IMPOSSIBLE TO PERFORM IN A PURELY MATERIALISTIC WORLD. THEREFORE, A SUPERNATURAL BEING [GOD] MUST EXIST.

HUMAN beings can do many amazing things. They can run 26.2 miles without stopping. They can show remarkable courage in the face of great danger. They can even walk along a tightrope hundreds of feet above the ground. But there are certain things that are humanly impossible. Humans cannot walk on water unassisted, give sight to the blind, instantly reattach severed ears with only their hands, or raise the dead. If ever such a “man” existed, his life would logically testify to the existence of a supernatural Being.

Atheists understand the rationality of this argument. Dan Barker is on record as saying, “If Jesus were to materialize” and work any number of miraculous

deeds, atheism would be disproven,⁴⁷ and thus theism would be established as a fact. The truth is, the very proof that Barker and other atheists reason about was provided 2,000 years ago when God put on flesh and came to Earth in the form of man. And He did not merely claim to be God; He did what a reasonable person could expect if God were ever to prove His divinity on Earth—He fulfilled precise prophecies and worked supernatural miracles, including coming back from the dead Himself.⁴⁸ The life and works of Jesus testify to the existence of a supernatural Being.

In 2012, renowned atheist Richard Dawkins was questioned about his unbelief in God. Specifically, he was asked, “What proof, by the way, would change your mind?” He quickly responded by saying, “That is a very difficult and interesting question because, I mean, I used to think that if somehow, you know, great, big, giant 900-foot high Jesus with a voice like Paul Ropeson suddenly strode in and said, ‘I exist and here I am,’ but even that, I actually sometimes wonder if that would...”⁴⁹ So, though Dr. Dawkins raises the possibility of the legitimacy of disproving atheism with a 900-foot high, hypothetical Jesus, He continually rejects the historical, miracle-working, resurrected-from-the-dead Jesus Who walked the Earth 2,000 years ago. Sadly, such irrational, hard-hearted unbelief is nothing new. Even some in the very presence of Jesus in the first century, who testified to the supernatural feats that He worked, rejected Him (cf. John 11:45-53; 12:9-11). Thus, it should not be

surprising that many will reject the Lord God today despite the evidence for His existence.

CONCLUSION

ATHEISTS are fond of claiming that their way of thinking is logical, reasonable, and intellectual. Yet atheism irrationally says that everything came from nothing. Atheism says that an explosion caused exquisite order. It says that random chances produced precision and that life popped into existence in nature from non-life. Atheism contends that a well-designed Universe could come about without a Designer. Atheism says that fish and frogs are man's distant forefathers and that intelligence is ultimately the result of non-intelligence. Atheism alleges that either man is on the same moral plane as a moose, or he actually evolved a sense of morality from amoral mice. While trying to convince others he is galloping confidently atop a stallion called Common Sense, atheism stumbles on the back of a donkey called Foolishness.

Theism, on the other hand, is absolutely rational. Why? Because (among other things) (1) matter demands a Maker; (2) life demands a Life Giver; (3) design demands a Designer; (4) intelligence demands an Intelligent Creator; (5) morality demands a Moral Law Giver; (6) the Bible's supernatural attributes demand a Supernatural Author; and (7) the historical, miracle-working, resurrected Jesus demands a supernatural explanation (which demands God).

Indeed, the Christian can say with all confidence, “I know that God exists.” As former atheist Antony Flew so eloquently concluded: “I must say again that the journey to my discovery of the Divine has thus far been a pilgrimage of reason. I have followed the argument where it has led me. And it has led me to accept the existence of a self-existent, immutable, immaterial, omnipotent, and omniscient Being.”⁵⁰

3 Reasons to Believe the Bible is from God

THE Bible is the most popular book that has ever been printed. It was one of the first books mass produced on Gutenberg's printing press in 1455. To estimate a total number of Bibles and portions of it that have been produced and distributed worldwide throughout history would be virtually impossible, but the number stands well over 10 billion, since the United Bible Society alone has distributed over nine billion in the past 70 years.¹ Without dispute, the Bible is the best selling book of all time worldwide.²

Why is the Bible so popular? The reason most often given is that those who are printing, distributing, and reading the Bible believe it is the inspired Word of God. Most people who read the Bible do not think it is good advice from mere men. Nor do they think it is a book of fairy tales written for entertainment. Instead, they believe the Book they are reading is the product of the one true God.

Oftentimes, when people are asked to give reasons that support their belief that the Bible is from God, they say that the Bible claims to be from God. It is certainly true that the Bible contains numerous

statements that claim inspiration. Second Timothy 3:16-17 states: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God...” In fact, anyone who wants to search the entire Bible will discover that it contains more than 2,700 instances in which divine inspiration is claimed (e.g., “God said;” “the Lord said;” “by revelation He [God] made known”).

Yet, even though we would expect to find that any book produced by God would claim divine inspiration, **such a claim does not prove anything in and of itself.** It is a necessary trait of inspiration, but it is not a sufficient trait. Various books claim to be inspired by God (such as the *Quran* and the *Book of Mormon*), but simply because a book or writing claims divine inspiration is not positive proof of its inspiration. Any person could stand in front of an audience and claim to be the President of the United States of America. In fact, he could make that claim over 2,700 times. But his multiple claims to the presidency would fail to prove his case unless he could provide more adequate and sufficient evidence.

When Jesus revealed Himself to the world as the Son of God at about the age of 30 (Luke 3:23), He did not expect people to believe Him simply because **He said** He was the Messiah. On the contrary, Jesus said, **“If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him”** (John 10:37-38).³ If the Messiah was not to be trusted merely

based upon **claims** of messiahship, neither should the Bible. Again, though the claim of inspiration is important (and expected if the Bible is the Word of God), **mere claims prove nothing**.

Those who penned the Bible did not expect the world to receive their writings as God's Word simply because they claimed they were. The Bible writers insisted that their writings were not based on imaginary, unverifiable people and events, but instead were grounded on solid, verifiable facts. The apostle Peter wrote: "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty" (2 Peter 1:16). In his introduction to the book of Acts, Luke stated that Jesus "presented Himself alive after His suffering by **many infallible proofs**, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). The Bible writers understood and insisted that the information they penned was accurate and factual, and should be accepted, not based on a lack of evidence or a "leap in the dark," but on an abundance of verifiable proof.

So what proof do we have to confirm the Bible's supernatural origin? Why should an honest truth-seeker come to the conclusion that the Bible is the special revelation from the Creator of the Universe? In short, the main, overarching reason that the Bible is demonstrated to be of divine origin is because **the Bible writers were correct in everything they**

wrote—about the past, the present, and even the future.

Eighteenth-century English poet Alexander Pope succinctly noted in “An Essay on Criticism” what every rational person knows all too well—**“to err is human.”**⁴ Even though we may set high standards for ourselves and learn all that we can, and even though we may put as many safeguards in place as is humanly possible, mistakes will be made; ignorance will be revealed; errors will occur. As great of a historian as Herodotus was, he sometimes erred. As brilliant of a man as Aristotle was, he was terribly incorrect at times.⁵ As accomplished a writer as was the 8th-century B.C. Greek poet Homer, sometimes “even good old Homer nods.”⁶ It simply is **humanly** impossible to be correct about everything a person says or writes. **“With God,”** however, “all things are possible” (Mark 10:27).

If an all-knowing, all-powerful God exists (and there is ample proof that He does—see Chapter 1), then such a God could produce written revelation for His human creation that was flawless in its original production. He could guide uneducated men to write about events that occurred hundreds or thousands of years before their time with complete accuracy. He could “move” (otherwise) ordinary men to write flawlessly about any number of contemporary people, places, and things (2 Peter 1:20-21). He could even guide man to write about future events with perfect accuracy. In truth, the all-encompassing reason (which shall be

dissected into three parts) that a person can come to the rational conclusion that the Bible is “given by inspiration of God” is because the writers of the Bible were amazingly accurate...about **everything**.

REASON #1: PREDICTIVE PROPHECY

ON Tuesday, September 11, 2001, a horrible tragedy shocked the United States of America when terrorists attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Amid the tragedy, a rumor circulated that Nostradamus, a supposed fortuneteller, had predicted the turn of events. Web sites with information on Nostradamus received thousands, even millions of hits. After all was said and done, the rumored prediction was discovered to have been fabricated and misunderstood; Nostradamus had not predicted the future. But it was obvious from the public’s response that anyone who can accurately predict the future is more than just a little special. The prophet Jeremiah wrote: “Who is he who speaks, and it comes to pass, when the Lord has not commanded it?” (Lamentations 3:37). The prophet’s point was clear: no one accurately foretells the future unless God informs him of it. Therefore, if the Bible accurately predicts the future, we can know that it is from God.

The fact is, the Bible contains numerous prophecies that ancient history has shown to be perfectly fulfilled in every detail. Consider a few examples. [NOTE:

For many other instances that space restraints will not allow, please consult Apologetics Press's book *Behold! The Word of God* or visit the "Inspiration of the Bible" section of www.apologeticspress.org.]

The Fall of the City of Tyre

According to history, the Phoenician city of Tyre stood as one of the most ancient and prosperous cities in history. During a visit to the temple of Heracles in Tyre in the 5th-century B.C., the historian Herodotus inquired about the age of the temple, to which the inhabitants replied that the temple was as old as "Tyre itself, and that Tyre had already stood for two thousand three hundred years."⁷ According to the early 20th-century Hebrew and Greek scholar, Wallace Fleming, in his book *The History of Tyre*, "As early as 1400 B.C., Tyre was not only a great city but was considered impregnable."⁸

In the early 6th-century B.C., however, the prophet Ezekiel mentioned several events that were to occur in Tyre as punishment for the city's arrogance and merciless actions (26:1-14,19-21). The prophet predicted: (1) Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, would build a siege mound against the city; (2) many nations would come against Tyre; (3) the city would be broken down, scraped like the top of a rock, and the stones, timber, and soil would be thrown in "the midst of the water;" (4) the city would become a "place for spreading nets;" and (5) the city would never be rebuilt.

History reveals that everything Ezekiel prophesied about Tyre came to pass.

- Nebuchadnezzar “besieged Tyre for thirteen years in the days of Ithobal, their king.”⁹ The king of Babylon severely damaged the mainland as Ezekiel predicted, but the island city remained primarily unaffected.
- Regarding the prediction that “many nations” would come against Tyre, in 392 B.C., “Tyre was involved in the war which arose between the Persians and Evagorus of Cyprus” in which the king of Egypt “took Tyre by assault.”¹⁰ Sixty years later, in 332, Alexander the Great besieged Tyre and crushed it. In fact, Tyre was contested by so many foreign forces that Fleming wrote: “It seemed ever the fate of the Phoenician cities to be between an upper and a nether millstone.”¹¹ Thus, Ezekiel’s prophecy about “many nations” remains as a historical reality that cannot be successfully gainsaid.
- By 333 B.C., Ezekiel’s 250-plus-year-old prophecy that Tyre would be destroyed and its building material cast into the midst of the waters had yet to materialize. But that situation soon changed. Ancient historian Diodorus Siculus, who lived from approximately 80-20 B.C., wrote extensively of Alexander the Great’s dealing with Tyre.¹² Secular history details Alexander’s destruction of Tyre, which coincides precisely with Ezekiel’s prophecy concerning what would happen to the city’s building materials. As Ezekiel

had predicted, the stones, timber, and soil of the mainland city were thrown into the midst of the sea in an unprecedented military maneuver,¹³ which allowed Alexander to create a land bridge upon which his army could come across to defeat the island city of Tyre. For Ezekiel to have accurately “guessed” this situation would be to stretch the law of probability beyond the limits of absurdity.

So accurate were the prophecies made by Ezekiel that skeptics are forced to suggest a later date for his writings. Yet, such a later date cannot be maintained, and the admission of Ezekiel’s accuracy stands as irrefutable evidence of the prophet’s divine inspiration. With the penetrating gaze that can only be maintained by the Divine, God looked hundreds of years into the future and instructed Ezekiel precisely what to write so that in the centuries following the predictions, the fulfillment of every detail of the prophet’s words could be denied by no honest student of history. “When the word of the prophet comes to pass, the prophet will be known as one whom the Lord has truly sent” (Jeremiah 28:9).

The Fall of Babylon and the Rise of Cyrus

Imagine taking a trip to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and visiting the State House where the Constitutional Convention took place in 1787. During the tour, your guide points to a document dating back to just this side of the Convention—about the year 1820. The piece of parchment tells of a man named George W.

Bush from Austin, Texas who would be President of the United States within the next 200 years. But how could someone know that a man named George W. Bush would be born in the United States? And how could someone know more than a century before Mr. Bush ever was born that he would be President of the United States? Furthermore, how could someone in 1820 know that a man from Texas (named George W. Bush) would be President of the United States when Texas wasn't even part of the Union yet? Such a prophecy truly would be amazing! Yet, obviously no such prediction was ever made. Amazingly, the Bible makes a comparable prediction, which was fulfilled with complete accuracy.

In the 8th-century B.C., Isaiah vividly described how God would destroy the powerful kingdom of Babylon, “the glory of kingdoms” (13:19). Writing as if it had already occurred (commonly known as the “prophetic perfect,” frequently employed in the Old Testament to stress the absolute certainty of fulfillment), Isaiah declared Babylon would fall (21:9). He then prophesied that Babylon would fall to the Medes and Persians (Isaiah 13; 21:1-10). Later, he proclaimed that the “golden city” (Babylon) would be conquered by a man named Cyrus (44:28; 45:1-7). (This prophecy is remarkable, especially since Cyrus was not even born until almost 150 years after Isaiah penned these words.) Not only did Isaiah predict that Cyrus would overthrow Babylon, he also wrote that Cyrus, serving as Jehovah’s “anointed” and “shepherd,” would

release the Jews from captivity and assist them in their return to Jerusalem for the purpose of rebuilding the Temple. All of this was written almost two centuries before Cyrus conquered Babylon (539 B.C.).

Amazingly, secular history verifies that all of these events came true. There really was a man named Cyrus who ruled the Medo-Persian Empire. He did conquer Babylon. And just as Isaiah prophesied, he did assist the Jews in their return to Jerusalem and in the rebuilding of the Temple.

Jeremiah also predicted the destruction of Babylon, the most powerful nation in the world at the time the predictions were made (Jeremiah 50-51). He predicted that Babylon's water would be dried up, and its soldiers would be drunken and sleep a perpetual sleep. The precision of his predictions was remarkably verified when Cyrus redirected the Euphrates River and entered Babylon through the opening where the river usually entered. The entrance was left unattended because the Babylonians were getting drunk at a festival celebration.

Messianic Prophecies

Throughout the pages of the Old Testament there are over 300 prophecies about a coming Messiah. Each one of these prophecies is fulfilled in minute detail in the life of Jesus Christ. While it is true that most people's lives can only be chronicled after they have lived it, the life of Jesus was chronicled before He arrived on Earth. In addition, a host of the prophecies

concerning Christ were intentionally specific and could not have been arranged by a mere human who was falsely claiming to be the Messiah. For instance, the Old Testament told where the Messiah would be born (Micah 5:2), a situation that cannot be manipulated by the one being born. The circumstances of the Messiah's death were detailed, even down to His burial, which provides another instance in which the deceased could not have connived a fulfillment.

In contrasting the God of Israel with the pagan idols of old, the prophet Isaiah issued a challenge to those who believed in the potency of their pagan deities. Isaiah said this about the idols: "Let them bring forth and show us what will happen; let them show the former things, what they were, that we may consider them.... Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods" (41:22-23). According to Isaiah, any deity that could consistently forecast the future would be recognized as a true God, while any unable to tell the future should be relegated to the rubbish pile of false religions. In order to prove that the God of Israel was the true God, Isaiah quoted this from the mouth of God: "I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done" (46:9-10). Truly, Isaiah's God could tell the future. The fall of Tyre and Babylon, the reign of Cyrus, and the coming Messiah are but a few of the more prominent examples. When evidence is honestly considered, the truth seeker must admit

that the prophecies contained in the Bible show that it was penned by the inspiration of God.

REASON #2: SCIENTIFIC ACCURACY AND FOREKNOWLEDGE

WHILE the Bible does not present itself as a scientific or medical textbook, it is only reasonable that if God really did inspire the books of the Bible, they would be completely accurate in every scientific or medical detail found within their pages. Furthermore, all scientific and medical errors that fill the pages of other ancient, non-inspired texts should be entirely absent from the biblical record. Is the Bible infallible when it speaks about scientific disciplines, or does it contain the errors that one would expect to find in the writings of fallible men in ancient times?

The Egyptians were renowned in the ancient world for their progress in the field of medicine. Dr. Samuel Massengill, early 20th-century pharmaceutical chemist, noted that “Egypt was the medical center of the ancient world.”¹⁴ Herodotus recorded that it was king Darius’ practice “to keep in attendance certain Egyptian doctors, who had a reputation for the highest eminence in their profession.”¹⁵ Among the ancient documents that detail much of the Egyptian medicinal knowledge that has survived, the Ebers Papyrus (discovered in 1872) ranks as one of the foremost sources.¹⁶ It consists of a host of medical

remedies purported to heal, enhance, and prevent. “Altogether 811 prescriptions are set forth in the papyrus, and they take the form of salves, plasters, and poultices; snuffs, inhalations, and gargles; draughts, confections, and pills; fumigations, suppositories, and enemata.”¹⁷ Among the hundreds of prescriptions, we find disgusting treatments that caused much more harm than good. For instance, under a section titled “What to do to draw out splinters in the flesh,” a remedy is prescribed consisting of “worm blood, mole, and donkey dung.”¹⁸ Remedies to help heal skin diseases included such things as cat dung, dog dung, and a hog’s tooth.¹⁹ It seems that the Egyptians were among the first to present the idea of “good and laudable pus.”²⁰ While it must be noted that some of the Egyptian medicine was helpful, the harmful remedies and ingredients cast a sickening shadow of untrustworthiness on the entire Egyptian endeavor as viewed by the modern reader.

Admittedly, the Bible is not devoted to long lists of medical prescriptions. The Bible writers did not intend to write a medical textbook. There are, however, especially in the first five books of the Old Testament, numerous rules for sanitation, quarantine, and other medical procedures that were to govern the daily lives of the Israelites. Interestingly, the harmful remedies and ingredients prescribed by other ancient civilizations are missing entirely from the pages of the Bible. In fact, the Pentateuch exhibits an understanding of

germs and disease that the “modern” medical community did not grasp until relatively recently.

Germ, Labor Fever, and Biblical Sanitation

In 1847, an obstetrician named Ignaz Semmelweis was the director of a hospital ward in Vienna, Austria. Many pregnant women checked into his ward, but 10-18% of those women never checked out. About one out of every six that received treatment in Semmelweis' ward died of labor fever.²¹ Autopsies revealed pus under their skin, in their chest cavities, in their eye sockets, etc. Semmelweis was distraught over the mortality rate in his ward, and other hospital wards like it all over Europe. Australia, the Americas, Britain, Ireland, and practically every other nation that had established a hospital suffered a similar mortality rate.²² If a woman delivered a baby using a midwife, then the death rate fell to only about 3%. Yet if she chose to use the most advanced medical knowledge and facilities of the day, her chance of dying skyrocketed immensely!

Semmelweis had tried everything to curb the carnage. He turned all the women on their sides in hopes that the death rate would drop, but with no results. He thought maybe the bell that the priest rang in the wee hours of the morning scared the women, so he made the priest enter silently, yet without any drop in death rates. As he contemplated his dilemma, he watched young medical students perform their routine tasks. Each day the students would conduct

autopsies on the dead mothers. Then they would rinse their hands in a bowl of bloody water, wipe them off on a shared, dirty towel, and immediately begin internal examinations of the still-living women. Medical doctor and historian Sherwin Nuland commented concerning the practice: “Because there seemed no reason for them to wash their hands, except superficially, or change their clothing before coming to the First Division, they did neither.”²³ As a 21st-century observer, one is appalled to think that such practices actually took place in institutes of what was at the time “modern medical practices.” What doctor in his right mind would touch a corpse and then perform examinations on living patients—without first employing some sort of minimal hygienic practices intended to kill germs? But to Europeans in the middle-19th-century, germs were virtually a foreign concept.

Semmelweis then ordered everyone in his ward to wash his or her hands thoroughly in a chlorine solution after every examination. In three months, the death rate fell from 18% to 1%. Semmelweis had made a groundbreaking discovery...or had he? Almost 3,300 years before Semmelweis lived, Moses had written: “He who touches the dead body of anyone shall be unclean seven days. He shall purify himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh day; then he will be clean. But if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not be clean” (Numbers 19:11-12). Germs were no new

discovery in 1847; the biblical text recorded measures to check their spread as far back as circa 1500 B.C.

Germ and the Water of Purification

When Old Testament instructions are compared to the New Testament explanations for those actions, it becomes clear that some of the ancient injunctions were primarily symbolic in nature (e.g., John 19:31-37). With the presence of such symbolism in the Old Testament, however, it is important that we do not overlook Old Testament instructions that were pragmatic in value and that testify to a Master Mind behind the writing of the Law. One such instruction is found in Numbers 19, where the Israelites were instructed to prepare the “water of purification” that was to be used to wash any person who had touched a dead body.

At first glance, the water of purification sounds like a hodge-podge of superstitious potion-making that included the ashes of a young cow, hyssop, cedar wood, and scarlet. But this formula was the farthest thing from a potion intended to “ward off evil spirits.” On the contrary, the recipe for the water of purification stands today as a wonderful example of the Bible’s brilliance, since the recipe is nothing less than a procedure to produce an antibacterial soap.

When we look at the ingredients individually, we begin to see the value of each. First, consider the use of ashes. The chemical known as lye is one of the main ingredients in many soaps today. In fact,

lye, in high concentrations, is very caustic and irritating to the skin. In more diluted concentrations, it can be used as an excellent exfoliate and cleansing agent. Various lye-soap recipes reveal that, to obtain lye, water often is poured through ashes. The water retrieved from pouring it through the ashes contains a concentration of the chemical. Moses instructed the Israelites to prepare a mixture that would have included lye mixed in a diluted solution, which would have been ideal for stopping the spread of germs.

What about the specific ingredients for the water of purification? Hyssop contains the antiseptic thymol, the same ingredient that we find today in some brands of mouthwash.²⁴ “Cedar wood has long been used for storage cabinets because of its ability to repel insects and prevent decay. In oil form, applied to the human body, it is an antiseptic, astringent, expectorant (removes mucus from the respiratory system), anti-fungal, sedative and insecticide.”²⁵ The Israelites were instructed to toss into the mix “scarlet,” which most likely was scarlet wool (see Hebrews 9:19). Adding wool fibers to the concoction would have made the mixture the “ancient equivalent of Lava® soap.”²⁶

Thousands of years before any formal studies were done to see what type of cleaning methods were the most effective; millennia before American pioneers concocted their lye solutions; and ages before our most advanced medical students knew a thing about germ theory, Moses instructed the Israelites to

concoct an amazingly effective recipe for soap that, if used properly in medical facilities like hospitals in Vienna, would literally have saved thousands of lives.

Quarantine

The Old Testament record added another extremely beneficial practice to the field of medicine in its detailed descriptions of maladies for which people should be quarantined. The book of Leviticus lists a host of diseases and ways in which an Israelite would come in contact with germs. Those with such diseases as leprosy were instructed to “dwell alone” “outside the camp” (Leviticus 13:46). If and when a diseased individual got close to those who were not diseased, he was instructed to “cover his mustache, and cry, ‘Unclean! Unclean!’” (13:45). It is of interest that the covering of one’s mustache (“upper lip”—ASV) would prevent spit and spray from the mouth of the individual to pass freely through the air, much like the covering of one’s mouth during a cough.

In regard to the understanding of contagion that is evident in the quarantine rules in the Old Testament, Roderick McGrew noted in the *Encyclopedia of Medical History*: “The idea of contagion was foreign to the classic medical tradition and found no place in the voluminous Hippocratic writings. The Old Testament, however, is a rich source for contagionist sentiment, especially in regard to leprosy and venereal disease.”²⁷ Here again, the Bible exhibits amazingly accurate medical and scientific knowledge

that surpasses any known human ingenuity available at the time of its writing.

Many physicians who have compared Moses' medical instructions to effective modern methods have come to realize the astonishing value and insight of the Bible. As 20th-century pharmacologist and Hebrew scholar, Dr. David Macht of Johns Hopkins University, once wrote: "Every word in the Hebrew Scriptures is well chosen and carries valuable knowledge and deep significance."²⁸ Indeed, the accurate medical practices prescribed thousands of years before their significance was completely understood provide excellent evidence for the divine inspiration of the Bible.

REASON #3: THE OVERALL FACTUAL ACCURACY OF THE BIBLE

SUPPOSE we were to ask a group of historians to author the most up-to-date history of the United States of America on the market. Suppose we gave them years to finish it and unlimited resources to use for their research. At the end of that period, with their newly published volume in hand, could we be confident that they had accurately recorded the significant dates and information perfectly? No, we could not. In fact, within just a few years, as every decent publishing company owner knows, we would need a second edition. Within a decade, so much new information would have come to light that a third or

fourth edition would be necessary. And within 20 years, we most likely would need a completely new book if we wanted to preserve history accurately. But when we look into the 66 books of the Bible, we find perfect historical accuracy that has never needed updating or correcting.

Every single statement of the Bible that can be historically checked or verified has shown that the Bible writers never once made a mistake. The fact that the books of the Bible are perfectly accurate indicates that an intelligence beyond human ability must have been involved in the composition of the books.

The Accuracy of Acts

Sir William Ramsay was a one-time unbeliever and world-class archaeologist. His extensive education had ingrained within him the keenest sense of scholarship. But along with that scholarship came a built-in prejudice about the supposed inaccuracy of the Bible (specifically the book of Acts). As Ramsay himself remarked:

[A]bout 1880 to 1890, the book of the Acts was regarded as the weakest part of the New Testament. No one that had any regard for his reputation as a scholar cared to say a word in its defence. The most conservative of theological scholars, as a rule, thought the wisest plan of defence for the New Testament as a whole was to say as little as possible about the Acts.²⁹

As could be expected of someone who had been trained by such “scholars,” Ramsay held the same view. He eventually abandoned it, however, because

he was willing to do what few people of his time dared to do—explore the Bible lands themselves with an archaeologist’s pick in one hand and an open Bible in the other. His self-stated intention was to prove the inaccuracy of Luke’s history as recorded in the book of Acts. But, much to his surprise, the book of Acts passed every test that any historical narrative could be asked to pass. In fact, after years of literally digging through the evidence in Asia Minor, Ramsay concluded that Luke was an exemplary historian. Lee S. Wheeler, in his classic work *Famous Infidels Who Found Christ*, recounted Ramsay’s life story in great detail,³⁰ and then quoted the famed archaeologist, who ultimately admitted:

The more I have studied the narrative of the Acts, and the more I have learned year after year about Graeco-Roman society and thoughts and fashions, and organization in those provinces, the more I admire and the better I understand. I set out to look for truth on the borderland where Greece and Asia meet, and found it here [in the book of Acts—EL/KB]. You may press the words of Luke in a degree beyond any other historian’s, and they stand the keenest scrutiny and the hardest treatment, provided always that the critic knows the subject and does not go beyond the limits of science and of justice.³¹

Luke, the writer of the book of Acts, is now widely acknowledged as an extremely accurate historian in his own right—so much so that Ramsay came to believe in Christianity as a result of his personal examination of the precision of Luke’s historical

record. What legitimate reason is there to reject Luke's amazingly accurate testimony? As Wayne Jackson summarized:

In Acts, Luke mentions thirty-two countries, fifty-four cities, and nine Mediterranean islands. He also mentions ninety-five persons, sixty-two of which are not named elsewhere in the New Testament. And his references, where checkable, are always correct. This is truly remarkable, in view of the fact that the political/territorial situation of his day was in a state of almost constant change.³²

The Pilate Inscription

The last few days of Jesus' life were the most tragic of any in human history. Amidst all the violence, there stood one man who had the power to stop all the torture. One man could call off the Roman soldiers and save Christ from being crucified. His name—Pontius Pilate, the Roman official who governed the area of Judea at the time of Christ's death. The story of the crucifixion can hardly be told without mentioning the name of this Roman official who sentenced Christ to death—even though Pilate knew He was innocent (John 18:38; 19:4,6).

Although the Bible mentions Pilate on several occasions, his name could not be found among the archaeological evidence. For hundreds of years, no stone inscriptions or other physical evidence could be produced to support the idea that a man named Pilate had anything to do with either Christ or Judea. Because of this, many mocked the Bible and claimed

that creative biblical writers concocted Pilate from their own fertile imaginations. After all, if Pilate was such a prominent leader, wouldn't there be some kind of archaeological evidence to verify his existence?

Critics were silenced when, in 1961, an Italian archaeological team working at Caesarea found a stone tablet that measured 32 inches high, by 27 inches wide, by 8 inches thick. On this slab, now known as the "Pilate Inscription," were the remains of this simple title: "Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judea"—almost the exact same title as the one given to him in Luke 3:1. This, then, became yet another find to remind us that the more we uncover the past, the more we uncover the truth that the Bible is indeed the Word of God.³³

The truth is, numerous archaeological finds have verified the Bible's accuracy. As the renowned archaeologist Nelson Glueck wrote, "It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference. Scores of archaeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or exact detail historical statements in the Bible."³⁴ Truly, the perfect historical accuracy, without the tell-tale mistakes that are found in works written by mere humans, testifies to the Bible's divine origin.

CONCLUSION

NO series of books in human history has maintained the supernatural consistency that is present within the pages of the Bible. From the

first book of Genesis to the last book of Revelation, approximately 40 men penned individual treatises that combine to form the best-selling, most widely distributed, perfectly unified, flawlessly written book ever produced. Mere human genius never could have produced a work with such predictive prophecy, scientific foreknowledge, and overall factual accuracy. Common sense demands an adequate explanation. The only rational conclusion, which is in keeping with the evidence at hand, is that the Bible is “given by inspiration of God.”

5 *Reasons to Believe in Jesus*

WARS come and go. Battles are won and lost. Businesses are bought and sold. Nations rise and fall. Scientific discoveries are made on a daily basis. These and other pertinent events influence human history in a myriad of interesting ways. But none of them is as influential as a powerful personality. Real history is written in names: Napoleon, Stalin, Hitler, Gandhi, Marx, Washington, Lincoln. After all, people make wars, start businesses, forge new nations and cause their collapse. The events instigated by people are by-products of their personalities interacting with their surroundings, other people, and their ideas. In all of human history, one name, one Man, has risen to the top of every list of influential personalities—Jesus Christ.

Because of His influence, the life and teachings of Jesus have been more closely scrutinized than any life in human history. This scrutiny has resulted in a

number of different reactions. Some have concluded that Jesus was a liar who deceived countless thousands of people in the time in which He lived, and billions since. Some have approached a study of His life with an attitude of skepticism, only to arrive on the other side of their spiritual and intellectual journey as firm believers in the deity of Christ. A number of people have chosen the middle ground, in which they acknowledge that Jesus was an amazing teacher and a good man, but they deny that He was the Son of God.

Though Jesus has been the most analyzed Person ever to walk the Earth, still the most common response to the life of Jesus is simply apathy. It seems the majority of the billions of people who have lived since the early first century have approached the Person of Jesus neither intently nor earnestly. They have given little attention to the details of His life. Sadly, if most people who have lived since the death of Jesus Christ were asked what they thought about Him, they would have to respond, "I don't know. I've never really given Him much thought."

What about you? Have you given the Person of Jesus serious thought? If not, we humbly ask you to look carefully at the evidence for Jesus' divine nature. If you are a follower of Jesus and call yourself a Christian, do you know why? What do you say to others when they ask you why you call yourself after Jesus Christ and live according to His will? What

proof can you offer that demonstrates Jesus was God incarnate?

TWO PRIMARY REASONS FOR UNBELIEF IN JESUS

PEOPLE have rejected Jesus as the Heaven-sent, virgin-born, prophesied Messiah ever since He walked the Earth. Recall, for example, at the beginning of Jesus' ministry how He entered the synagogue in His hometown of Nazareth and read publicly from the Old Testament book of Isaiah:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon **Me**, because He has anointed **Me** to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent **Me** to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 4:18-19).

Following this reading, Jesus closed the book, sat down, and “began to say to them, ‘Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing’” (4:21). Though the Jews initially marveled and questioned how the promised Messiah could actually be the son of a carpenter in Nazareth, upon further hearing, they “rose up and thrust Him out of the city...that they might throw Him down over the cliff” (4:28). This encounter was only the beginning of instances in which countless individuals rejected Jesus. Though some would come to believe in Him, most did not.

The majority of people in the world today reject Jesus as Lord and God for two primary reasons. First, millions refuse to accept Jesus as God-incarnate

because they reject the notion of God altogether. If God does not exist then Jesus never existed as “the Word...God” Who stepped out of eternity and “became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:1,14). It makes no sense to contend that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the **living God**” (Matthew 16:16), if God is dead. If a supernatural, eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, living spirit Being is merely a figment of the imagination of man, the first-century Jesus of Nazareth was delusional at best and a liar at worst. In considering this fundamental reason for the rejection of Jesus, Christians must prepare themselves to defend the primary proposition that “We believe Jesus is God-Incarnate, which is possible **because we know God exists.**” We are not suggesting using circular reasoning to defend the deity of Christ; rather we are acknowledging the basic fact that Christ could not be God, if God does not exist. Therefore, a person can ultimately come to the conclusion that Jesus is “my Lord and my God” (John 20:28) **only** if he first knows that God, indeed, exists.¹

Second, it would be futile to defend the supernatural nature of Jesus as depicted in the Bible without first recognizing the fact that many reject the Bible altogether as a supernatural revelation from God to man. Billions of non-Christians around the world may believe in some sort of god, but they still discount the Bible as being inspired by the Creator. Most unbelievers admit that Jesus of Nazareth lived, but they reject Jesus, the Christ, as He is revealed in both the

Old and New Testaments. The fact is, however, if an all-knowing, all-powerful God exists (and there is ample proof that He does; see chapter 1), then such a God could easily inspire a book that would help mankind come to know “that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God” (John 20:31), “the Savior of the world” (John 4:42; 1 John 4:14). So what is the proof that the Bible is of supernatural origin? Why should an honest truth-seeker come to the conclusion that the Bible is the special revelation from the God of the Universe? In short, the main, overarching reason that the Bible can be demonstrated to be of divine origin is because the Bible writers were correct in everything they wrote—about the past, the present, and even the future—which is **humanly** impossible.²

The two primary reasons for the rejection of Jesus as the Son of God are thus shown to be false. By taking these criticisms and turning them on their heads, they actually provide the two foundational pillars for belief in Christ—(a) God exists and (b) the Bible is His Word. The next sensible question to ask is, “What evidence does the Bible give for the deity of Jesus?”

I. JESUS FULFILLED THE OLD TESTAMENT MESSIANIC PROPHECIES

WHILE it is true that most people’s lives can only be chronicled after they have lived them, the life of Jesus was miraculously chronicled (by

divine inspiration) long before He arrived on Earth. Such Messianic prophecies are proof of both the divine inspiration of the Bible as well as the divine nature of Jesus. The reason that Jesus, the apostles, and the New Testament prophets spent so much of their time teaching and preaching from the Old Testament Messianic prophecies is because **Jesus was proven to be the Christ by His fulfillment of these prophecies** (cf. Luke 24:25-26,44; Acts 8:30-39).

Jesus fulfilled in minute detail over 300 prophecies that relate to the coming of the Messiah. Space prohibits a listing of all of these prophecies, but a representative sampling is appropriate. The Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem in Judea (Micah 5:2) of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14; cf. Genesis 3:15—"her Seed"). He would be a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Judah (Genesis 22:18; 26:4; 49:10; Numbers 24:17). He was to be a regal monarch (Psalm 89:3-4; Isaiah 9:6-7; Psalm 110:1) and at the same time a suffering servant (Isaiah 53). He was to be betrayed by a friend (Psalm 41:9) for 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:13). The Lord's Ruler would come into Jerusalem riding on the foal of a donkey (Zechariah 9:9). He would be buried with the rich (Isaiah 53:9). During His suffering, His clothes would be distributed to those who cast lots for them (Psalm 22:18). His attackers would pierce Him (Zechariah 12:10). Even though His physical suffering would be severe, His bones would not be broken (Psalm 34:20). And in spite of

His death, His physical body would not experience decay (Psalm 16:10). This small sampling of precise prophetic details is only a fraction of the many Old Testament prophecies that exist. The prophecies were specifically designed to be an efficient mechanism by which the Jewish community could recognize the Messiah when He arrived.

When all of the pieces of the Messianic puzzle are put together, one individual stands out as the only person who fulfilled every single prophecy in minute detail—Jesus Christ. The life and activities of Jesus Christ, as recorded in the New Testament documents, brilliantly blend the theme of a regal monarch and a suffering servant into one magnificent portrait of the triumphant Jesus. He was the sacrificial Lamb at His death on the cross, Who became the triumphant Lion of Judah in His resurrection from the grave. The lineage of Jesus Christ is meticulously traced in order to show that He qualified as the Seed of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, of Judah, and of David (Matthew 1; Luke 3:23-38). The narrative detailing His birth verifies that He was indeed born in Bethlehem of Judea, from which city the Messiah would arise (Luke 2:1-7). The birth narrative also intricately portrays the pre-existence of Jesus before time began, fulfilling the prophecy that the Messiah existed before King David (Matthew 1:18-25; cf. 22:41-46; John 1:1-5,14). Furthermore, Jesus did, in fact, enter Jerusalem riding on the foal of a donkey (Matthew 21:1-11).

The New Testament narratives depicting the death of Jesus Christ verify that Jesus was betrayed by His friend and sold for exactly 30 pieces of silver (Matthew 26:14-16). At His death His bones were not broken, soldiers cast lots for His garments, and His side was pierced with a spear (John 19:33-37; Matthew 27:35). During His suffering, He was numbered with the transgressors as Isaiah 53 predicted by being crucified between two thieves, and at His death He was buried in the tomb of a wealthy man as was also foretold (Matthew 27:57). This type of verification could continue for many pages. The life of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, as depicted in the New Testament documents, was designed to fulfill the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament.

Due to this overwhelming congruence of the life of Jesus Christ with the predictive Messianic prophecy of the Old Testament, some have suggested that Jesus was an imposter who was able, by masterful manipulation, to so artificially organize His life as to make it look like He was the Messiah. Such a contention cannot be reasonably maintained in light of the fact that many of the prophecies were far beyond His control. Obviously, it would be impossible for a person to arrange who his ancestors were or where he would be born. Furthermore, it would be near impossible to coordinate events so that He could make sure that He was crucified among thieves, while also buried in the tomb of a rich man. How could the betrayal price of Judas be manipulated by Jesus?

And how, pray tell, would Jesus have managed to arrange it so that soldiers cast lots for His clothing? The idea that Jesus manipulated all of these events to make it appear as if He was the Messiah not only is indefensible, but it also speaks to the fact that Jesus obviously was the fulfillment of the Old Testament, Messianic prophecies.

Others have objected to Jesus as the Messiah based on the idea that the New Testament documents are not reliable, and were artificially concocted to describe things that Jesus never really did. This objection also falls flat in light of the actual evidence. It cannot be denied that the New Testament has proven itself to be the most reliable book in ancient history (along with the books of the Old Testament). When it records people, places, and events that are checkable using archaeological means, those people, places, and events invariably prove to be factual and historic. Again, the abundant evidence verifies that the New Testament is accurate and factual. Many of the Messianic prophecies documented in the New Testament do not describe anything inherently miraculous. There was nothing miraculous about Jesus being buried in a rich man's tomb. Nor was there anything miraculous about Jesus riding into Jerusalem on the foal of a donkey, or being betrayed by His friend for 30 pieces of silver. These events are, if not ordinary, at least very plausible, everyday events that theoretically could have happened to anybody. And yet, due to the fact that such everyday events

had been predicted about the Messiah **hundreds of years before the arrival of Jesus**, the fulfillment of the events becomes one of the most amazing miracles recorded in the Bible. It is no wonder that Jesus, the apostles, and the early church used fulfilled Messianic prophecy as one of their foundational pillars of proof for the deity of Christ.

2. JESUS WORKED MIRACLES

IN view of the fact that miracles have served as a confirmation of God's revelation since time began (Exodus 4:1-9; 1 Kings 18:36-39; Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4), it should be no surprise that "when the fullness of time had come" (Galatians 4:4), and the promised Messiah, the Son of God, came to Earth for the purpose of saving the world from sin (Luke 19:10), that He would confirm His identity and message by performing miracles. Centuries before the birth of Christ, the prophet Isaiah foretold of a time when "the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.... [T]he lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing" (35:5-6). Although this language has a figurative element to it, it literally is true of the coming of the Messiah. When John the Baptizer heard about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples to Jesus asking if He was "the Coming One" of Whom the prophets spoke. Jesus responded to John's disciples by pointing to the people whom

He had miraculously healed (thus fulfilling Isaiah's Messianic prophecy), saying, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: the blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matthew 11:4-5; cf. Mark 7:37). Jesus wanted them to know that He was doing exactly what "the Coming One" was supposed to do (cf. Isaiah 53:4; Matthew 8:17), and what the Jews expected Him to do—perform miracles (John 7:31; cf. John 4:48; 1 Corinthians 1:22).

In a sense, Jesus' miracles served a different purpose than those wrought by Moses, Elijah, or one of the New Testament apostles or prophets. Unlike all other miracle workers recorded in Scripture, Jesus actually claimed to be the prophesied Messiah, the Son of God, and His miracles were performed to prove both the truthfulness of His message **and** His divine nature. Whereas the apostles and prophets of the New Testament worked miracles to confirm their message that **Jesus** was the Son of God, Jesus performed miracles to bear witness that **He** was, in fact, the Son of God. In response to a group of Jews who inquired about whether or not He was the Christ, Jesus replied,

I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me.... I and My Father are one.... If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may

know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him (John 10:25,30,37-38).

Similarly, on another occasion Jesus defended His deity, saying, “[T]he works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me” (John 5:36). While on Earth, Jesus was “attested by God... with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him” (Acts 2:22, NASB). And, according to the apostle John, “Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but **these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God**, and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:30-31). As would be expected from the One Who claimed to be God incarnate (cf. John 1:1-3,14; 10:30), Scripture records that Jesus performed miracles throughout His ministry in an effort to provide sufficient proof of His divine message and nature.

Jesus’ Signs Were Many and Varied

Mankind is expected to believe that Jesus is the Son of God not because He performed **one or two** marvelous deeds during His lifetime. To the contrary, the Gospel accounts are saturated with a variety of miracles that Christ performed, not for wealth or political power, but that the world may be convinced that He was sent by the Father to bring salvation to mankind. As Isaiah prophesied, Jesus performed **miracles of healing** (Matthew 8:16-17). He cleansed

a leper with the touch of His hand (Matthew 8:1-4) and healed all manner of sickness and disease with the word of His mouth (cf. John 4:46-54). One woman who had a hemorrhage for 12 years was healed immediately simply by touching the fringe of His garment (Luke 8:43-48). Similarly, on one occasion after Jesus came into the land of Gennesaret, **all** who were sick in **all** of the surrounding region came to Him, “and begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched it were made perfectly well” (Matthew 14:34-36; Mark 3:10). Generally speaking, “**great multitudes** came to Him, having with them the lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others; and they laid them down at Jesus’ feet, and He healed them” (Matthew 15:30). “He cured **many** of infirmities, afflictions...and to **many** blind He gave sight” (Luke 7:21). Even Jesus’ enemies confessed to His “many signs” (John 11:48).

Jesus not only exhibited power over the sick and afflicted, He also showed His **superiority over nature** more than once. Whereas God’s prophet Moses turned water into blood by striking water with his rod (Exodus 7:20), Jesus simply willed water into wine/grape juice (*oinos*) at a wedding feast (John 2:1-11). He further exercised His power over the natural world by calming the Sea of Galilee during a turbulent storm (Matthew 8:23-27), by walking on water for a considerable distance to reach His disciples (Matthew 14:25-33), and by causing a fig tree to wither away at His command (Matthew

21:18-22). Jesus' supernatural superiority over the physical world (which He created—Colossians 1:16) is exactly what we would expect from One Who claimed to be the Son of God.

Jesus performed miracles that demonstrated His **power even over death**. Recall that when John the Baptizer's disciples came to Jesus inquiring about His identity, Jesus instructed them to tell John that "the dead are raised" (Matthew 11:5). The widow of Nain's son had already been declared dead and placed in a casket when Jesus touched the open coffin and told him to "arise." Immediately, "he who was dead sat up and began to speak" (Luke 7:14-15). Lazarus had already been dead and buried for four days by the time Jesus raised him from the dead (John 11:1-44). Such a great demonstration of power over death caused "many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did" to believe in Him (John 11:45).

Jesus Rose from the Dead!

Jesus' own resurrection from the dead was the climax of all of His miracles, and serves as perhaps the most convincing miracle of all. Indeed, Jesus was "declared to be **the Son of God** with power...**by the resurrection from the dead**" (Romans 1:4). The New Testament book of Acts stresses the fact of Jesus' resurrection almost to the point of redundancy. Acts 1:22, as one example, finds Peter and the other apostles choosing an apostle who was to "become a

witness” of the resurrection of Christ. Then, on the Day of Pentecost, Peter insisted in his sermon to the multitude that had assembled to hear him that “God raised up” Jesus and thus loosed Him from the pangs of death (Acts 2:24). And to make sure that his audience understood that it was a physical resurrection, Peter stated specifically that Jesus’ “flesh did not see corruption” (Acts 2:31). His point was clear: Jesus had been physically raised from the dead and the apostles had witnessed the resurrected Christ. [Other passages in Acts which document that the central theme of the apostles’ preaching was the bodily resurrection of Christ include Acts 3:15; 3:26; 4:2,10,33; 5:30; 10:40-43; 13:30-37; 17:3,31-32.] Furthermore, the entire chapter of 1 Corinthians 15 (especially verse 14) verifies that the preaching of the apostle Paul centered on the resurrection of Christ.

Jesus Worked Wonders that are Not Being Duplicated Today

What’s more, neither the modern alleged “faith healer” nor the 21st-century scientist is duplicating the miracles that Jesus worked while on Earth 2,000 years ago. Pseudo-wonder workers today stage seemingly endless events where willing participants with supposed sicknesses appear and act as if they are being healed of their diseases by the laying on of hands. Nebulous aches and pains and dubious illnesses that defy medical substantiation are supposedly cured by prominent “faith healers” who simultaneously are

building financial empires with the funds they receive from gullible followers. Oral Roberts, Benny Hinn, and a host of others have made many millions of dollars off of viewers who naively send them money without stopping to consider the real differences between the miracles that Jesus worked and what they observe these men do today.

Jesus went about “healing every sickness and every disease” (Matthew 9:35). His miraculous wonders knew no limitations. He could cure anything. Luke, the learned physician (Colossians 4:14), recorded how He could restore a shriveled hand in the midst of His enemies (Luke 6:6-10) and heal a severed ear with the touch of His hand (Luke 22:51). He healed “many” of their blindness (Luke 7:21), including one man who had been born blind (John 9:1-7). He even raised the dead simply by calling out to them (John 11:43). What modern-day “spiritualist,” magician, or scientist has come close to doing these sorts of things that defy natural explanations? Who is going into schools for the blind and giving children their sight? Who is going to funerals or graveyards to raise the dead? These are the kinds of miracles that Jesus worked—supernatural feats that testify to His identity as the Heaven-sent Savior of the world.

3. JESUS NEVER SINNED

WHEN God instructed the Israelites to sacrifice the Passover Lamb, He explained that

the animal must be without spot or blemish. The lamb could not be lame, have a disease, or be too old. Only a “perfect” sacrifice would be acceptable. As our Passover Lamb, Jesus provided the perfect sacrifice (1 Corinthians 5:7). His perfection was not outward in His flesh, but was the inward perfection of a sinless life. Peter, one of Jesus’ closest followers, wrote that Christians have not been redeemed “with corruptible things, like silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:19). The Hebrews writer explains that Jesus was tempted in every point just as we are, yet Jesus remained “without sin” (4:15).

Though many of Jesus’ enemies who attacked Him while He was on Earth, and many who attack Him still today, have accused Jesus of sinning, they have failed miserably to give a single instance of wrong doing. Jesus’ bold and unanswered challenge continues to ring across the centuries: “Which of you convicts Me of sin?” (John 8:46). The answer to that question for almost 2,000 years has been a resounding, “No one.” Every honest-hearted person who looks at the personality of Jesus, and compares it to his or her own, must admit that the Christ possesses a confidence in His own sinlessness that is beyond that of any mere human. While it may be true that cult leaders or other arrogant humans claim to be sinless, having never made a moral misstep, it is rather easy to show actions in their lives that prove them to be wrong. In fact, is it not the moral leaders

who admit their own weaknesses who are the most admired? Yet, Jesus could not admit any moral failings, because He had none. He explained to His enemies, “Yet you have not known Him [God], but I know Him. And if I say ‘I do not know Him,’ I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him **and keep His word**” (John 8:55). Jesus’ moral perfection speaks volumes about His divinity.

4. JESUS FORGAVE SINS

SUPPOSE a man who murdered his neighbor had lived a guilt-ridden life for years. Finally, he decided to tell one of his friends what he had done so many years before. The friend listened carefully and said, “You are a murderer, but I forgive you, don’t worry any more about it.” What good would it do for the man’s friend to forgive him? For a person who was unrelated to the crime, and has no official authority to forgive the crime, means nothing. We understand that forgiveness can only be offered by a person who has been wronged, or who has the official authority to forgive others. That is why the fact that Jesus presumed to forgive sins is so amazing.

In Mark 2, we find the story of a paralyzed man who was lowered into a room in front of Jesus. Jesus looked at the man and said, “Son, your sins are forgiven you” (Mark 2:5). Many of those within earshot of Jesus’ statement were appalled at His pronouncement. They demanded (by way of

rhetorical question): “Who can forgive sins but **God alone?**” (Mark 2:7). And they were right: no one but God can forgive sins, which was Jesus’ point. If He had the power to cause the paralyzed man to walk, He also had the power to forgive his sins. And if He had the power to forgive his sins, and no one can forgive sins but God, then Jesus must be God. The fact that Jesus demanded (and demonstrated) that He had the power personally to forgive any person of all sins, sets Him apart from any other character in human history.

5. JESUS ACCEPTED WORSHIP

THE Bible reveals time and again that God alone is to be worshiped (Exodus 20:3-5; 2 Kings 17:34-36; Acts 14:8-18). The Bible also reveals that man must refrain from worshiping angels. When the apostle John fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who had revealed to him the message of Revelation, the angel responded, saying, “See that you **do not do that**. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. **Worship God**” (Revelation 22:9; cf. Revelation 19:10). Angels, idols, and humans are all unworthy of the reverent worship that is due only to God. As Jesus reminded Satan: “It is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him **only** you shall serve’” (Matthew 4:10).

Unlike good men and good angels who have always rejected worship from humanity, Jesus accepted worship. If worship is to be reserved only for God, and Jesus, the One “who knew no sin” (2 Corinthians 5:21), accepted worship, then the logical conclusion is that Jesus believed that He was Deity. Numerous times the Bible mentions that Jesus accepted worship from mankind. Matthew 14:33 indicates that those who saw Jesus walk on water “worshiped Him.” John 9:38 reveals that the blind man whom Jesus had healed, later confessed his belief in Jesus as the Son of God and “worshiped him.” After Mary Magdalene and the other women visited the empty tomb of Jesus, and the risen Christ appeared to them, “they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him” (Matthew 28:9). When Thomas first witnessed the resurrected Christ, he exclaimed, “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28). Later, when Jesus appeared to the apostles in Galilee, “they worshiped Him” on a mountain (Matthew 28:17). A few days after that, his disciples “worshiped Him” in Bethany (Luke 24:52). Time and again Jesus accepted the kind of praise from men that is due only to God. He never sought to correct His followers and redirect the worship away from Himself, as did the angel in Revelation or the apostle Paul in Acts 14. Nor did God strike Jesus with deadly worms for not redirecting the praise He received from men as He did Herod, who, when being hailed as a god, “did not give praise to God” (Acts 12:23).

Jesus once stated during His earthly ministry, “[A]ll should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him” (John 5:23; cf. 5:18; 10:19-39). While on Earth, Jesus was honored on several occasions. His followers **worshipped** Him. They even worshiped Him after His ascension into heaven (Luke 24:52). Unlike good men and angels in Bible times who rejected worship, Jesus unhesitatingly received glory, honor, and praise from His creation. Truly, such worship is one of the powerful proofs of Jesus’ deity (cf. Revelation 5).

DID JESUS DENY HE WAS GOD?

IN spite of all the evidence presented thus far, some have suggested that Jesus did not claim to be divine. They contend that He simply believed He was a prophet, but not the Messiah who was the Mighty God (Isaiah 9:6). They rest their case on passages that, simply put, they have misinterpreted. Briefly notice the following two examples.

On one occasion, a wealthy young man ran to see Jesus and asked Him, “Good teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” Jesus responded by saying, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but One, that is, God” (Mark 10:17). According to the skeptical view, Jesus is denying that He is God. But a closer look at Jesus’ comment reveals just the opposite to be the case. Notice that Jesus never denies

that He is the “good teacher.” He simply makes the comment that there is only one Who is truly good, and that is God. Thus, if the young man’s statement is true that Jesus is the “good teacher,” and there is only one Who is “good” and that is God, then Jesus must be God.

On another occasion, Jesus prayed to the Father: “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17:3). Supposedly, by calling the Father, “the only true God,” Jesus excluded Himself from being Deity. There are at least two main problems with this interpretation of Jesus’ statement. First, it would contradict numerous other passages in the Gospel of John. In fact, the primary point of the book is to testify to Jesus’ deity. Second, the verse can be better understood in light of the fact that Jesus was not contrasting Himself with the Father; He was contrasting the many false, pagan gods with Jehovah, the only true God. Furthermore, if Jesus’ reference to the Father being “the only true God” somehow excludes Jesus from being Deity, then (to be consistent) Jesus also must be disqualified from being man’s Savior. Jehovah said: “Besides me there is no savior” (Isaiah 43:11; cf. Hosea 13:4; Jude 25). Yet, Paul and Peter referred to Jesus as our “Savior” several times in their inspired writings (Ephesians 5:23; Philippians 3:20; 2 Timothy 1:10; 2 Peter 1:1,11; 2:20; etc.). Also, if Jesus is excluded from Godhood (based on a misinterpretation of John 17:3), then,

pray tell, must God the Father be excluded from being man's Lord? To the church at Ephesus, Paul wrote that there is "one Lord" (4:4), and, according to Jude 4 "our only Owner and Lord" is "Jesus Christ." Yet, in addition to Jesus being called Lord throughout the New Testament, so is God the Father (Matthew 11:25; Luke 1:32) and the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:17). Obviously, when the Bible reveals that there is only one God, one Savior, one Lord, one Creator (Isaiah 44:24; John 1:3), etc., reason and revelation demand that we understand the inspired writers to be excluding everyone and everything—other than the members of the Godhead.

CONCLUSION

ALMOST 2,000 years ago, a zealous Jew by the name of Saul fought against Christianity with all his might. He believed Jesus Christ to be a fraud and His followers to be deluded. He chased them from city to city, imprisoning them, and participating in their deaths. Then Saul saw "the light." Jesus appeared to him and Saul realized the horrible mistake He had made. Saul's honest heart was so impressed by the evidence available to him that he converted to Christianity and became a powerful force in spreading the Gospel.

And so today, those who come to the person of Jesus Christ with open and honest hearts find powerful evidence to believe He is God. He fulfilled all the

Old Testament prophecies regarding the Messiah. He performed many different kinds of miracles to validate His message. He predicted His own death and resurrection. He accepted worship. He lived a morally perfect, sinless life. And he boldly demanded that He had the power on Earth to forgive sins. When a person follows all of this evidence to its correct conclusion, he or she will bow before Jesus the Christ and proclaim, just as the apostle Thomas did, “My Lord and My God” (John 20:28).³

4 Reasons to Do More Than Just Believe in Jesus

THE Bible, in a multitude of passages, affirms that people are saved by, through, because of, or on account of, their faith. Paul wrote in the epistle to the Romans: “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (5:1). Two chapters earlier, Paul declared: “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law” (3:28). The writer of the book of Hebrews concluded that “without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (11:6). In Ephesians 2:8-9 we read: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” With this tiny sampling of verses about faith, it is easily seen that every person who is saved must have faith. But what is biblical faith?

The word translated “faith” in each of the above verses derives from the Greek noun *pistis* (the verb

form of which is *pisteuo*). Greek lexicographer Joseph Thayer said that the word *pistis* in the New Testament is used of “a conviction or belief respecting man’s relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and conjoined with it.”¹ When the verb form *pisteuo* is used “especially of the faith by which a man embraces Jesus,” it means “a conviction, full of joyful trust, that Jesus is the Messiah—the divinely appointed author of eternal salvation in the kingdom of God, conjoined with obedience to Christ.”²

The word *pisteuo* is often translated by the word “believe.” For instance, in Acts 10:43, the apostle Peter wrote of Jesus: “To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes (*pisteuo*) in Him will receive remission of sins.” The apostle Paul wrote: “It pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe (*pisteuo*)” (1 Corinthians 1:21). Paul, in Romans 10:11, made a similar statement when he declared: “For the Scripture says, ‘Whoever believes (*pisteuo*) on Him will not be put to shame.’”

These verses, **taken by themselves**, seem to suggest that any person who maintains a mere mental conviction that Jesus is the Son of God has eternal life. Many people throughout the centuries have taken such a position. For example, Albert Mohler, in discussing his particular denomination, stated: “We cherish the gospel of Jesus Christ as the means of salvation to all who believe. We know that there is

salvation in the name of Jesus and in no other name. Sinners come to Christ by faith, and are justified by **faith alone.**”³

It is to those last two words that we must direct our attention—“faith alone.” Mohler (and most of the denominational world) teaches that a person can be, and is in fact, saved by faith alone, or faith only. This idea of “faith only” was popularized by Martin Luther in the sixteenth century. The Catholic Church of Luther’s day had grown corrupt, and was prescribing a host of unscriptural ways to obtain forgiveness. Forgiveness could be obtained, according to the Catholic Church, by purchasing indulgences, and a soul could be “bought” out of Purgatory if the proper funds flowed into the Church’s coffers. In reaction to this “works-based” plan of forgiveness, Martin Luther developed his idea of a “faith-only” plan of salvation. He took this idea so far, in fact, that when he translated Romans 3:28, he inserted the word *alone* into the text so that it would read, “We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith **alone** apart from the works of the law,” even though the word **alone** is not found in the original text.⁴ This “faith only” doctrine has become a principal tenet in the thinking and teaching of most denominations.⁵

FOUR PRIMARY LINES OF REASONING THAT DEMONSTRATE THE BIBLE DOES NOT TEACH A “FAITH ONLY” OR “BELIEF ONLY” PLAN OF SALVATION

God Requires More

FIRST, numerous Bible passages insist that something other than a mere belief in Christ is necessary to obtain salvation. Concerning confession, Paul declared: “For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:10). Jesus Himself stated: “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 10:32-33). These verses demand that a person must not only **believe** in Christ, but also **confess** His name verbally, in order to obtain salvation and remain in a saved condition.

The same can be said of repentance.⁶ In Luke 13:3, Jesus declared to His audience: “Unless you repent you will all likewise perish.” After healing the lame man at the temple in Jerusalem, Peter told his audience to “repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out” (Acts 3:19). Paul preached the Gospel to the pagan Athenians, saying, “God... commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world” (Acts 17:30-31). In truth, the difficult action

of repenting of sin is required of all who desire to obtain salvation through Christ.

Another item that the New Testament writers included as necessary for salvation is obedience. Hebrews 5:9 states: “And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.” Peter made the statement: “For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God” (1 Peter 4:17). In the second epistle to the Thessalonians, Paul forewarned that Christ one day will execute judgment on those who “do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1:8).

The list of things required of a person in order to receive eternal life could go on: baptism (Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21), hope (Romans 8:24), and love (1 John 4:7-8) are just a small sampling. The point is: **none of these things, in and of itself, saves anyone.** Faith without confession does not save. Confession without hope cannot save. And obedience without love is powerless to obtain salvation. The “faith only” doctrine is in error because it bases its entire case for salvation on one aspect listed in the New Testament. Using that type of logic, a person could turn to 1 John 4:7-8—“Beloved let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God”—and say that love is the only thing necessary for salvation, apart from faith or repentance.

In several of these verses, we see the New Testament writers using one or more figures of speech. For instance, the figure of speech known as synecdoche, in which a part of a thing is used to describe the whole of the thing, is used often in passages that discuss salvation. D.R. Dungan wrote:

This is many times the case with the salvation of sinners. The whole number of conditions are indicated by the use of one. Generally the first is mentioned—that of faith—because without it nothing else could follow. Men were to call on the name of the Lord, in order to be saved (Romans 10:17); they must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31); they must repent of their sins (Acts 17:30); they must be baptized in the name of the Lord (Acts 22:16). But it is common to have one of these mentioned, without any statement to the presence of any other.⁷

E.W. Bullinger, arguably the most respected scholar in the world on figures of speech in the Bible, specifically mentioned 1 John 4:15 as an example of a biblical idiom. He commented that the phrase, “to confess,” in this verse means more than a simple verbal statement. The phrase “is used of abiding in the faith, and walking according to truth.”⁸

In truth, it would be possible to go to any number of verses and pick out one thing that the verse says saves a person. According to the Bible, love, faith, repentance, confession, baptism, and obedience are but a small sampling of the things that save. However, it would be dishonest, and poor Bible interpretation, to demand that “only” repentance saves, or “confession

alone” saves, or that “baptism by itself” has the power to save. In the same sense, one cannot (justifiably) pick the verses that mention faith/belief and demand that a person is saved by “faith only” or “belief alone.”

Faith Involves More

Second, the biblical use of the word faith involves much more than mere mental assent to a certain fact. It also involves obedience to God’s commands. Recalling Thayer’s definition of the word, faith is “a conviction, full of joyful trust, that Jesus is the Messiah—the divinely appointed author of eternal salvation in the kingdom of God, **conjoined with obedience to Christ.**”⁹ Throughout the New Testament, we see this definition of “obedient belief” used by the inspired writers. In 1 Peter 2:7, the apostle wrote: “Therefore, to you who **believe**, He is precious; but to those who are **disobedient**, ‘The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone.’” In this verse, Peter used disobedience as the opposite of belief. The Hebrews writer also equated unbelief and disobedience. According to Hebrews 3:18-19, the Israelites were not allowed into the Promised Land because they “did not obey” (3:18). But the next verse states: “So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief” (3:19). And Hebrews 4:6 also declares that they “did not enter because of disobedience.”

Repeatedly, faith is coupled with action in the New Testament. In Galatians 5:6, we read that “faith

working through love” is the process that avails for salvation. Hebrews 11, recognized by Bible students as “the faith chapter,” shows this action process by using Old Testament examples of individuals who pleased God. By faith Abel “offered” (vs. 4); by faith Noah “prepared” (vs. 7); and by faith Abraham “obeyed” (vs. 8). Verse 30 of this chapter demonstrates perfectly the relationship between belief and action. The verse states: “By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.” Joshua and the Israelites believed that God would give them the city of Jericho, but that belief was effective only **after** they “encircled” the city for seven days.

Another good example of the biblical use of “belief coupled with action” is found in Acts 16. Paul and Silas were locked in prison singing hymns when an earthquake loosed their chains. The Philippian jailer in charge of the prison thought his prisoners had escaped, and was about to kill himself, when Paul and Silas stopped him. Immediately, the jailer inquired: “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (vs. 30). Then they replied: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household” (vs. 31).

Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, **having believed** in God with all his household (vss. 32-34).

When the jailer asked what he needed to do to be saved, Paul and Silas told him to “believe (*pisteuo*) on the Lord Jesus Christ.” Yet the passage does not say that he “believed” until after he had been baptized. His belief was coupled with obedience. A similar situation is found in Acts 2. In that chapter, Peter’s listeners asked him, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (vs. 37). “Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins’” (vs. 38). A few verses later, we read that about three thousand souls were obedient to Peter’s plea and were baptized. Then, in verse 44 the Bible describes the obedient group of followers by saying, “Now all who believed were together.”

But some object to this biblical usage and maintain that such a use contradicts passages like Romans 3:28 and Ephesians 2:8-9, which teach that a person is not saved by works. First, Romans 3:28 does not separate faith from all works; rather, it states: “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds **of the law.**” The “law” discussed here is the Law of Moses, as is shown by Paul’s references to circumcision in verse 30. This passage does not say that faith saves apart from all works, but apart from works of the Law of Moses. Further, in Romans, Paul defines his use of the term faith in 1:5 and 16:26 (ESV) as an obedient faith. Ephesians 2:8-9 states that a person is saved “by grace through faith...not of works,” yet verse 10 says

Christians are created in Christ Jesus “for good works,” and the rest of the chapter discusses how the Jews and the Gentiles were both justified because the “law of commandments” (i.e., the Law of Moses) had been abolished (2:15). No person has ever been righteous enough to earn his or her salvation. Nor had any person been able to comply fully with the Law of Moses in order to earn salvation. But that does not mean that faith “apart from all action” saves a person. In fact, just the opposite is the case.

James Requires More

Third, the second chapter of James deals a crushing blow to the doctrine of “faith only.” Verses 14-26 systematically eliminate the possibility of a person being saved by “faith only.” James wrote to the Christians, asking, “What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?” These rhetorical questions demand a “No” answer. Then, in verse 17 he declared: “Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.” He went on to say that Abraham “was justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar. Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect” (vss. 21-22)? Of course, Abraham did not earn his salvation, nor was he saved because of a sinless adherence to God’s commands. On the contrary, he was saved by “offering” and “working” exactly as God instructed him. Abraham first showed his active faith when He

obeyed God's call to leave his homeland (Hebrews 11:8). He continued to show his active, living faith when he offered Isaac. Throughout his life, he was saved because he obeyed the "works of God"—works that God approved in order to obtain salvation.

James further commented: "You see then that a man is justified by works, and **not by faith only**" (vs. 24). Though many people in the denominational world contend that we are saved "by faith only," James explicitly states that a person is **not** saved by faith only. James concluded his chapter on faith with this statement: "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." Faith without the "works of God" is a dead faith that cannot save. Abraham was justified after he "offered," the walls of Jericho fell by faith after they were "encircled," the Philippian jailer's belief was not complete until he was baptized, and Noah's faith caused him to "prepare." It is the case that if the Israelites had not walked around Jericho, the walls would not have fallen, regardless of their belief. It is the case that if Noah had not "prepared" the Ark, he would not have been saved from the Flood, regardless of what he believed about God's warning. And it is the case that if a person does not confess Christ, repent of his or her sins, and get baptized for the remission of those sins, then that person will not be saved, regardless of what he or she believes about Christ.

Salvation Requires More

A fourth reason to move beyond a mere mental acceptance of Christ is because the Bible contains references to individuals who believed (*pisteuo*) that Jesus was the Son of God, yet who still were lost. In Mark 1:21-28, the Bible records an instance in which Jesus was confronted by a man with an unclean spirit. Upon contacting Jesus, the spirit “cried out, saying, ‘Let us alone! What have we to do with You, **Jesus of Nazareth?** Did You come to destroy us? **I know who You are—the Holy One of God**’” (vss. 23-24). Certainly, it would not be argued that the demon was saved simply because he believed that Jesus was the “Holy One of God.” Why not, one might ask? For the simple reason that, although the unclean spirit acknowledged the deity of Jesus, he was not willing to penitently obey Christ. James, in his chapter on faith, said as much when he stated: “You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead” (2:19-20)?

The inspired apostle John documents another example of a group of people who “believed in” Christ, but who were lost in spite of their belief. In John 12:42-43, the text reads: “Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.” Is it the case that

these rulers of the Jews were saved because they believed in Jesus, even though they were too scared to confess him? To ask is to answer. They were lost, even though they “believed (*pisteuo*) in Him.”

BE WILLING TO DO *WHATEVER* GOD COMMANDS

MILLIONS of people approach God and His Word with the mindset that they will “obey” God and “follow” Jesus, but they will do so as long as God does not demand too much from them. If “following” God is socially acceptable; if “trusting” Him is convenient; if “loving” Him is easy, then “we’re all in.” Most people don’t say these things, but sadly, many think and act this way. They allegedly “love” God, but they do so because (at the moment) it is the easy, comfortable thing to do.

In truth, before we actually make a commitment to God to do whatever He demands, we need to stop and remind ourselves what Job recognized about God in Job 42:2: “I know that You [God] can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.” Job learned that God is the supreme, sovereign Ruler of the Universe Who is worthy to be trusted and served faithfully regardless of what may occur to us in this life. The sentiment that Ruth expressed to her mother-in-law, Naomi, is the same attitude we need to have toward God, “**All** that you say to me I will do” (Ruth 3:5).

A man once asked Jesus, “Good Teacher, **what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?**” Jesus said, “You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not bear false witness,’ ‘Do not defraud,’ ‘Honor your father and your mother.’” The man, who was quite familiar with the Old Testament under which he lived, replied to Jesus, saying, “‘Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth.’ Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, ‘One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.’ But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions” (Mark 10:17-22).

It appears that this rich, young ruler had everything in his life completely in line with God’s will—except one thing—his attitude toward money. Jesus, Who knows the thoughts of man, knew the one thing with which this man had a spiritual problem—an unhealthy relationship with money. Sadly, rather than do **whatever** the Lord required, this man went away sorrowful. He was willing to “do” whatever was easy, but he was unwilling to give his life **completely** over to Christ and do **whatever** God wanted.

WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO DO?

GENERALLY speaking, God expects the same thing from man today that He has always expected

from Him. He wants us to trust Him completely. The wise man concluded that the whole purpose of one's life is to "fear God and keep His commands." Why? Because "God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing whether good or evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

Specifically, God first wants people to **hear** His message (Romans 10:14,17). Truth always has been able to stand on its own, and God's message is pure truth. He does not want you to hear a watered-down version of His message, but the whole truth—so that you can have a fair opportunity to decide what to believe.

After you have heard the truth from God's inspired Word, He wants you to **believe** it (John 8:24; Acts 15:7). He has given us more than enough evidence to show that He is real, that His Word is true, and that His Son lived on Earth, died, rose again, and one day will come back to claim His faithful followers. Belief in God, His Word, and His Son Jesus is not a blind "leap of faith" based on shaky evidence and irrational "religious" thinking. On the contrary, it is a reasonable conclusion based on trustworthy evidence. This belief, which also is known as faith, never comes as a result of "leaping" into accepting things without evidence. Instead, it comes through looking closely at the facts, and then using them to make wise decisions.

After hearing the Word and believing it, God wants you to **repent** of your sins (Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30). Repentance is one step in God's plan of salvation

that many people refuse to take. Why is this the case? Apparently, they do not want to leave behind their lives of sin in order to follow God. Some of you reading this book may be forced to decide, before the day is over, if you will repent of those sins that have separated you from God, cease them, and then start doing right.

Non-Christians must also confess a sincere belief in Christ on their way to becoming a child of God. In the first century, many people were put to death for uttering the simple phrase, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." In the 21st century, it carries no less weight. By confessing Jesus as the Son of God and as Lord and Savior, you admit to your fellow men that you have stopped living for yourself and started living for the Lord. The importance of confessing the Lord with your mouth cannot be overstated. The apostle Paul observed: "With the mouth confession is made to salvation" (Romans 10:10). But please understand that confessing Christ as Lord is not "a one-time thing." Yes, you initially make the good confession on your way to becoming a Christian, but every day for the rest of your life, by your actions as well as your words, you should shout that Jesus is Lord. And if the day ever should come that someone who is pressing a cold gun barrel against your temple demands that you deny your belief in Christ, the final words from your mouth should be "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

After confessing your belief in Jesus, you have one simple, yet profound step to take in order to be a child of God. You must be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21). To be baptized means to be totally immersed in water. It is sad that so many people today have neglected to teach that baptism is necessary for a person's salvation. In the book of Acts, when we read about people being saved, we learn that baptism was an essential part of their conversion. In Acts 22:16, for example, Saul was commanded to be baptized in order to "wash away" his sins by the blood of Christ.

Baptism is critically important because through it we contact the blood of Christ that forgives us of our sins. Paul put it this way: "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4). Just as Christ died, was buried, and rose from the dead, when we are baptized we "die" to sin, are buried in water, and rise to live a new life as a Christian. Baptism is one of the most beautiful symbolic acts of all time. If a person leaves this simple step out of his life, then he has missed an essential element of salvation that God has communicated through His Word. Furthermore, when a person is immersed in water for the forgiveness of his or her sins, then God adds that person to the

Lord's church, and his or her name is written clearly in God's Book of Life (Acts 2:47; Revelation 20:15).

As a new Christian, the Lord equips us with all that we need to remain faithful to Him. He will never allow us to be tempted beyond what we can handle, and He will always provide for us a way to escape from the devil (1 Corinthians 10:13). Although living a faithful Christian life can be tough, we will be able to accomplish all things through Christ Who gives us strength (Philippians 4:13). We can live forgiven and guilt-free, and know, without a doubt, that we are saved (1 John 5:13). "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Endnotes

7 REASONS TO BELIEVE IN GOD

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3 REASONS TO BELIEVE THE BIBLE IS FROM GOD

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4. Alexander Pope (1709), "An Essay on Criticism," http://languagelog.ldc.upenn.edu/myl/ldc/ling001/pope_crit.htm.
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9. Flavius Josephus (1987), *The Life and Works of Flavius Josephus: Against Apion*, trans. William Whitson (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson), 1:21.
10. Fleming, p. 52.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 66.
12. Diodorus Siculus (1963), *Library of History*, trans. C. Bradford Welles (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 17:40-46.
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17. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

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20. S.I. McMillen and David Stern (2000), *None of These Diseases* (Grand Rapids, MI: Revell), third edition, p. 10.
21. Sherwin B. Nuland (2003), *The Doctor's Plague* (New York: Atlas Books), p. 31.
22. Ibid., pp. 41-43.
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24. McMillen and Stern, p. 24.
25. "Cedar Oil" (no date), Spavelous, http://www.spavelous.com/Articles/Health_Nutrition/Aromatherapy_Chart.html.
26. McMillen and Stern, p. 25.
27. Roderick McGrew (1985), *Encyclopedia of Medical History* (London: Macmillan), pp. 77-78.
28. David I. Macht (1953), "An Experimental Pharmacological Appreciation of Leviticus XI and Deuteronomy XIV," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 27[5]:450, September-October.
29. William Ramsay (1915), *The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton), p. 38.
30. Lee S. Wheeler (1931), *Famous Infidels Who Found Christ* (Peekskill, NY: Review and Herald Publishing), pp. 102-106.
31. Ramsay, p. 89.
32. Wayne Jackson (1991), "The Holy Bible—Inspired of God," *Christian Courier*, 27:2, May.
33. See Randall Price (1997), *The Stones Cry Out* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House), pp. 307-308.
34. Nelson Glueck (1959), *Rivers in the Desert: A History of the Negev* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Cudahy), p. 31.

5 REASONS TO BELIEVE IN JESUS

1. See chapter one for a discussion on why mankind can (and should) come to the logical conclusion that God exists. See also the “Existence of God” category at www.apologeticspress.org.
2. For more information on the inspiration of the Bible, see chapter two. See also the “Inspiration of the Bible” category at www.apologeticspress.org.
3. For more information about the nature of Christ, see our book *Behold! The Lamb of God* or visit the “Deity of Christ” section of the AP Web site, www.apologeticspress.org.

4 REASONS TO DO MORE THAN JUST BELIEVE IN JESUS

1. J.H. Thayer (1977 reprint), *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker), p. 512.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 511.
3. R. Albert Mohler, Jr. (2001), "Being Baptist Means Conviction," *Why I Am a Baptist*, ed. Tom Nettles and Russell Moore (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman), p. 63, emp. added.
4. See Jack P. Lewis (1991), *Questions You've Asked About Bible Translations* (Searcy, AR: Resource Publications), pp. 353ff.
5. Interestingly, even though Martin Luther often taught that salvation is based on faith alone, and is not received based upon a person's meritorious works, he did not take "faith alone" to mean that mere mental assent to Christ's deity was sufficient to obtain salvation. Luther's idea of faith alone does not conform to the modern-day idea that baptism is a work and cannot be required for salvation. According to Luther's own words, he believed wholeheartedly in the necessity of baptism as a requisite for salvation. In his *Large Catechism*, he wrote: "[I] affirm that Baptism is no human trifle, but that it was established by God Himself. Moreover, **He earnestly and solemnly commanded that we must be baptized or we shall not be saved.** No one is to think that it is an optional matter like putting on a red coat. It is of greatest importance that we hold Baptism in high esteem as something splendid and glorious. The reason why we are striving and battling so strenuously for this view of Baptism is that the world nowadays is full of sects that loudly proclaim that Baptism is merely an external form and that external forms are useless.... Although Baptism is indeed performed by human hands, yet it is truly God's own action" (1530, pp. 98-99, emp. added). From Luther's comments about baptism, it is obvious that he viewed water baptism as essential for salvation. Many of the protestant denominations that attribute their ideas about "faith

only” to Martin Luther seem to be unaware that Luther’s concept of faith alone was not in opposition to works of God (like repentance and baptism), but in opposition to meritorious works by which a person believes that he or she “earns” salvation. Those today who teach that “faith alone” excludes baptism, and cite Martin Luther’s name in their defense, need to consider what Luther meant by “faith alone.” He stated: “But our know-it-alls, the new spirit people, claim that faith alone saves and that human works and outward forms contribute nothing to this. We answer: It is of course true that nothing in us does it except faith, as we shall hear later. But these blind leaders of the blind refuse to see that faith must have something in which it believes, that is, something it clings to, something on which to plant its feet and into which to sink its roots. **Thus faith clings to the water and believes Baptism to be something in which there is pure salvation and life,** not through the water, as I have emphasized often enough, but because God’s name is joined to it.... It follows from this that whoever rejects Baptism rejects God’s word, faith, and the Christ who directs us to Baptism and binds us to it” (1530, pp. 101-102, emp. added).

6. To repent means to stop doing what is wrong and start doing what is right. It includes godly sorrow and a change in attitude that results in a change of action. If a young man is having premarital sexual relations with his girlfriend, then in order to repent he must be genuinely sorry for his sin and stop engaging in premarital sex. If a person has a filthy mouth, in order to repent he or she must be genuinely sorry and stop using such language.
7. D.R. Dungan (1888), *Hermeneutics* (Delight, AR: Gospel Light, reprint), p. 305.
8. E.W. Bullinger (1898), *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1968 reprint), p. 828.
9. Thayer, p. 511, emp. added.

