

Evidences for My Faith

Reasons for My Hope

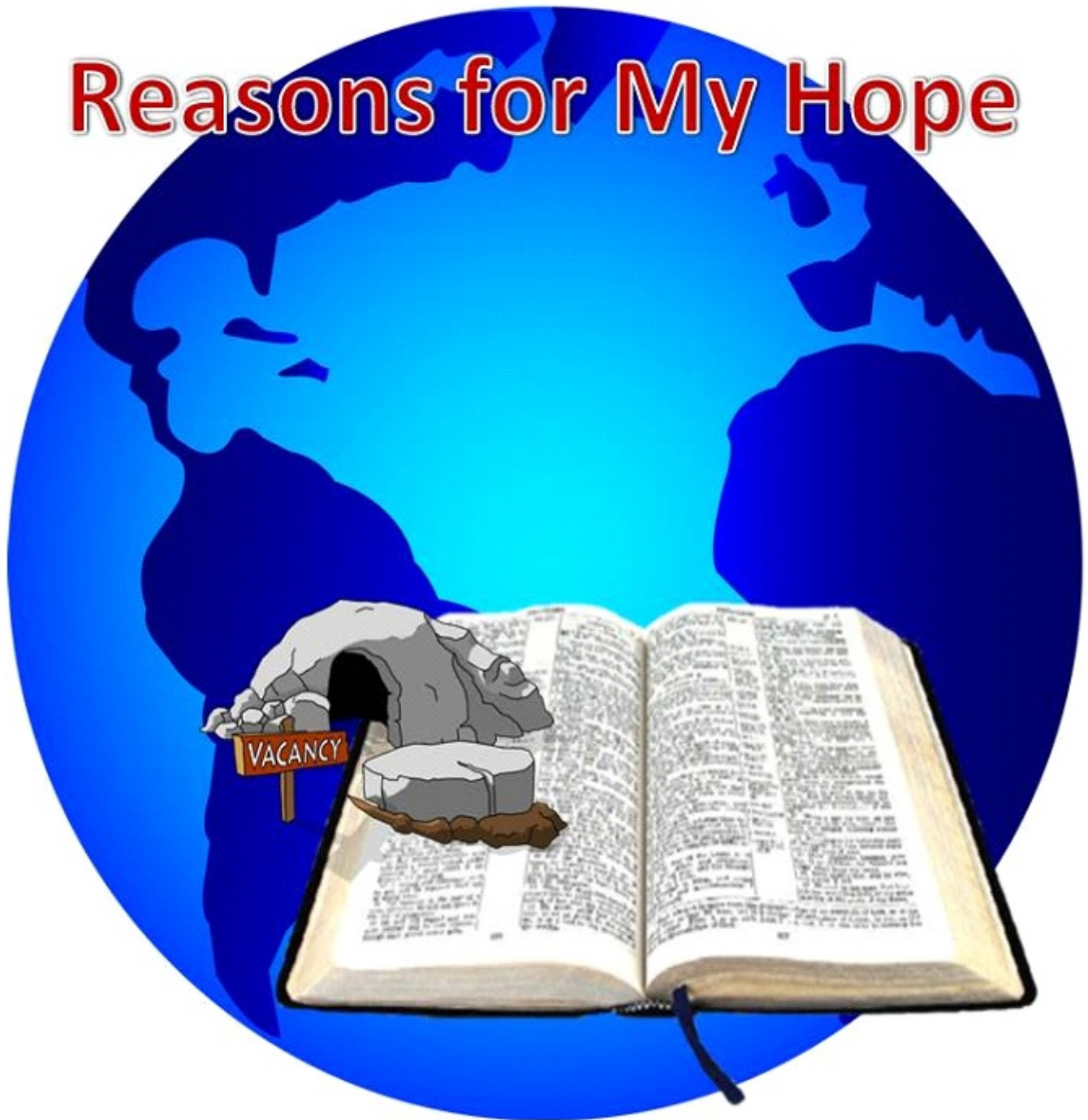


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"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"

– Hebrews 11:1, NKJV

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear"

– 1 Peter 3:15, NKJV

A Provable Faith and an Apologetic Hope

In Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*, the Queen tells Alice: "Now I'll give you something to believe. I'm a hundred and one, five months and a day."

"I can't believe that," said Alice.

"Can't you?" the Queen said in a pitying tone. "Try again; draw a long breath, and shut your eyes."

Alice laughed. "There's no use trying," she said. "One can't believe impossible things."

"I dare say you haven't had much practice," said the Queen. "When I was your age, I always did it for half an hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."

Many people today believe that this is an accurate representation of belief in God. Humanist philosopher Bertrand Russell said, "We may define 'faith' as a firm belief in something for which there is no evidence." Others say, "faith is being able to believe anything you are told." Even Christians have been known to contend that faith makes reason unnecessary.

Faith Based on Unseen Evidence

Is this what the Bible means by the word "*faith*"? We need to go to the Bible for an accurate definition of the word "faith", instead of listening to its enemies for their definition. The Word of God informs us in Hebrews 11:1 what faith is: "*now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*" From this we learn that faith is not merely wishing for something, but is assurance that what is desired can also be expected.

A concept held firmly by the scientific community and many others is that faith and science are incompatible. A college professor once explained it this way to his students, "If you have science and faith in your mind, you had better keep them in watertight compartments, for if by any chance they should intermingle, faith would disappear in the precipitation that would take place." Yet, scientist must use faith. They except the fact that the atom exists, though they have never seen one. They accept by faith based on evidence. Today, many have been blessed because of their faith in that which cannot be seen with the naked eye or heard with their ears or smelt with their nose or felt. Therefore, faith and science are not incompatible.

However, some things are beyond scientific investigation. Love and hope are accepted as real. God is beyond scientific investigation. God cannot be put in a test tube or under a microscope. His existence cannot be proven by sight, sound, touch, smell or taste. Science can never confirm or refute the creation by the Creator.

Faith is not believing in spite of the evidence. Faith is based on evidence. "*Evidence*" is from the Greek word *elenchos* and "it is used of cross-examining someone with a view to establish evidence" (Lightfoot 204). The visible came to be by the invisible God. "*For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him*" (Col. 1:16).

Though the evidence is not physically visible to us, this does not discredit faith. I believe that Moscow exist, though I have never been there. Based on evidence of those who have been there, I rest my faith that such a city exists. Yet all begin to accept faith and use it daily from birth till death. We are told as a young student in elementary school that George Washington was the first president of the United States. By faith we except this fact, even though we have never personally seen him or heard his voice. Banks extend credit on the basis of faith. We place orders online, with the confidence they will be honored. No one can live a life completely devoid of the use of faith.

This faith is like a blind man who can believe in the existence of red and blue, even though he has

never seen any colors. According to 2 Cor. 5:7 *"we walk by faith not by sight."* To those who are blind it is nearly impossible to get where they wish to go without special assistance. However, faith gives us the ability to see God as real, and to walk by His Word. Faith is not a blind leap in the dark as some view it. Instead, it is a leap into the "light" after careful consideration of the evidence. The evidence that produces this light is two fold: 1) the Bible, the Word of God (Psalm 19:7f) and 2) nature (Ps. 19:1-6).

More importantly, Heb. 11:6 teaches that no one can lead a life pleasing to God without spiritual faith. *"And 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 seek Him."* Life demands that we believe in many things we don't understand. But one thing we must understand is that without spiritual faith life here and eternal life in the hereafter is made impossible.

Hope Defended With a Reasoned Apology

What? Christians are to make an apology for their faith? Peter commanded Christians of the first century: *"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear"* (1 Pet. 3:15, New American Standard). The fact is the word *"defense"* in the original Greek is *apologia* which means "a reasoned defense." It is a "verbal defense, a speech in defense" (Vine 53). Ferrell Jenkins wrote, "an apology is a defense against a single attack...apologetics is a complete system of defenses."

Christians are not commanded to acknowledge or express regret for having faith or hope in God. Instead, they must be ready at all times to answer anyone who has questions about our hope. The when of this command to defend our hope is *"always."* Those to whom Christians are commanded to present their defense of their hope in God and Christ is *"every man."* Christians cannot have the luxury of choosing when, where, and to whom they are to make their apology. Thus we must be prepared ahead of and at all times in all places to all men who ask.

Paul was prepared to answer when questioned about his faith and hope in Christ. One such time was while he was a prisoner and being questioned by the Roman Governor Festus and King Agrippa.

Now as he [Paul] thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!" But he said, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason. For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe." Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian." And Paul said, "I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains." (Acts 26:24-29).

A Christian must back up his hard-to-accept claims with reasons that make good sense to the honest inquirer and doubter in order to persuade them to become a Christian.

Being able and ready for any question at any time by anyone is a formidable responsibility. It involves more than just answering a few common and expected questions from our denominational neighbors like: Why are you a Christian? What must I do to be saved? What church should I join? Can a Christian sin so as to lose their salvation? Today many are expressing doubt in the existence of God, the reliability of the Bible as His Word, and in Jesus as God's Son. So they will ask questions like: Are science and the Bible at odds? Are miracles possible? Is God an invention by mere men? Has science shown there is no such thing as a soul? Who made God? Is the Bible really reliable? If God is good and loving why does He allow so much evil and suffering in the world? Didn't God use evolution to create the world?

Christians provide answers to questions like those listed above in the form of evidence. Our English word "evidence" comes from the Latin verb *videre*, "to see." When we give a defense or answer to these questions, the inquirer needs to be able to clearly see the proof. This evidence can be internal (from the Bible) or external (from without the Bible). External evidence comes from such things as historical

documents, archaeology finds, observations of creation, scientific laws, etc.

Just how important is it to have on hand all this information to answer the questions Christians may face as they share and/or defend their faith? First, everyone must strengthen their own beliefs. Faith can be weak or little. Doubts can arise even among faithful disciples, like Thomas.

"Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (John 20:19-23).

Even John the Baptist expressed his personal doubts as to who Jesus was and sought evidence from Jesus. These questions come from messengers sent from John while he was in prison (Matt. 11:3-6). As Christians study to answer common questions from others, they become prepared to answer their own doubts and build up their personal faith and hope.

Furthermore, our children must be brought up *"in the training and admonition of the Lord"* (Eph. 6:4). They need to grow up having their own faith, not just one handed down or inherited from their parents. God has no grandchildren. Children must believe the truth, but they need to be able to demonstrate why they believe it based on evidence. After all, when you send our children out into the world and school their teachers, peers, the media, textbooks and many others will challenge their faith. Nearly 70% of first year students in college will lose their faith as they transition from home and church to live on campus. All the more reason parents should *"train up a child in the way he should go"* so that *"when he is old he will not depart from it"* (Proverbs 22:6).

Another reason Christians need to be ready with an apology is all the lost souls in need of salvation. *"He that is wise wins souls"* (Prov. 11:30). First, he is wise because he is helping to save what is most valuable in all the world, an eternal soul. Second, he gains wisdom by preparing himself. Furthermore they have to be ready to face those who attack God, His Word, and His Son. There are many atheists who reject any idea of the supernatural and embrace only naturalism. It is the belief that ascribes all events to natural causes, as opposed to supernatural. They will argue that God is not the creator of the universe, but a big bang started it all and through biological evolution man came to be. The Bible is viewed as nothing more than a collection of Jewish myths. And Jesus may have been one of many great teachers, but lived and died a man just like the billions of mortals that came before him and since he has died. By being prepared with a ready defense against these false teachers, Christians will be able to help save the lost, train up their children, and strengthen the faith of both fellow believers and themselves.

One of the first lessons a defender of the faith must learn is to know where to begin. When the Holy Spirit had sent Philip to preach Jesus to the Ethiopian, Philip did not start right in on the Ethiopian's need to be baptized. He first asked where the Ethiopian was at in regard to his knowledge of the scriptures and if he understood them. *"So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' And he said, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?'"* (Acts 8:30,31). It was only then that *"Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him"* (Acts 8:35). A good apology begins with a proper assessment of the inquirer's level of knowledge. You cannot convince someone of the necessity of baptism into Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, if they do not believe that Christ died, was buried, and arose from the dead. Furthermore, they are not likely to accept the miracle of the resurrection of Jesus, if they do not believe He was God's Son sent from Heaven to save the world. Then if they do not believe the Bible is God's Word, they will not have the evidence from the scriptures to believe Jesus was God. Finally, it is a futile effort to try to convince someone the Bible is God's Word, if they do not even believe in God. To save time and increase the chances in converting the lost, a Christian needs to first properly assess where he needs to begin his apology.

God has blessed man with a mind that can rationally or logically look at the evidence. Once he

weighs the evidence he can make a reasonable judgment on what is the most reasonable thing to believe. He must then make a choice as to whether to be honest and accept the truth or blindly turn away from it and reject the proof. Far too many skeptics after seeing the evidence respond as if to say, "do not confuse me with the facts, my mind is already made up." Perry Cotham wrote, "you can lead an atheist to the evidence but you cannot make him think."

An example of the willful rejection of evidence happened at Glen Rose, Texas several years ago. Creation scientists had gathered with new crews at the Puluxy River bed to lift a layer of sedimentary rock in order to expose dinosaur and human foot prints. Evolutionary scientists were on hand to witness the evidence. After the tracks were exposed, proving humans and dinosaurs coexisted at some time in the past, reporters approached the evolutionists. They asked them if they saw human tracks in the rock alongside the dinosaur's. They all claimed they did not see the evidence. That fact is, they all refused to look.

Questions:

1. What are some of the many false concepts about the Biblical concept of "faith"?
2. "Now faith is the _____ and things _____ for, the _____ of things not _____" (Hebrews 11:1).
3. True False Scientist often accept things based upon faith.
4. List some things scientist accept on the basis of faith in that which is not seen.
5. Do you have faith in the fact that electricity is running throughout the electrical system in the building? Why?
6. List several things that cannot be measured by scientific measuring tools.
7. Is historical evidence the same as scientific evidence? Explain.
8. What is faith absolute essential for being a Christian?

9. What is apologetics?
10. When, where, and to whom are Christians to make an apology for their hope in God and Christ?
11. To whom did Paul make a defense of His faith and hope? What were the two different outcomes?
12. What are some questions which people may ask us today concerning our hope?
13. What are the two sources of evidence? Give an example of each.
14. Give two examples of those disciples of Jesus who need evidence to support their faith. What evidence was given them?
15. Why is apologetics essential to saving souls?
16. Where did Philip begin to teach the Ethiopian? (please do not answer "in the chariot")

Application and Discussion:

17. Why is it so important for parents to provide evidence for their children's faith? What can they do?
18. You are approached by a co-worker who asks you about your faith and hope in God. You discover he is an atheist. What steps in proper order might you take to convince him of his need of obeying the Gospel by being baptized?

Homework: Find someone to give an answer concerning your hope this week.

God Is

God is, that is, He exist. But how do believers know He exist? It is true that God cannot be put in a test tube or under a microscope. His existence cannot be proven by sight, sound, touch, smell or taste. There are many other things that we believe in that cannot be proven by these means, such as, love. Love is real. It is not a material that can be seen, heard, smelled, tasted or touched. But we know it exist and that it is part of everyday reality. Love is just as certain as the wind and the sea. Love is as real to us as chocolate cake is to our taste buds, as real as the fragrance of a bouquet of flowers; as real as the sound of the ocean waves pounding the beach; as real as the sight of a summer's evening sunset; and as real as the warmth from a fire on a cold winter's night. If one is going to reject the existence of God, because they cannot perceive Him with their senses, then to be consistent and honest, they must also reject love, peace, and joy.

Scripture does not argue the existence of God. It merely states His existence as a matter of fact from the very first verse of the Bible, *"In the beginning GOD..."* (Gen. 1:1). Why? If one does not believe in God, he will not believe what the Bible, the Word of God, has to say about Him. However, God knows that all men can look to nature or creation and find enough evidence to believe in His existence. *"The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands"* (Ps. 19:1). Paul explained it this way to the Romans, *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse"* (Rom. 1:18-20). Today, with the abundance of evidence at our disposal modern man is also without excuse for not believing in the existence of their Creator.

Cosmological Argument

One of the great arguments for evolution is the belief that given enough time and chance it is possible for the universe to have come into existence from lifeless, non-intelligent, and eternal matter. And given enough time and chance life as we known it could evolve from a single-celled organism into an intelligent human being. The idea that the complexity of our universe came about through chance is a statistical impossibility. Even forming a protein molecule by random process is unthinkable. Yet, evolutionist still believe that given enough time, even improbable events become probable. A common example is used to demonstrate this possibility. If you have a million monkeys all banging on typewriters in time they would reproduce all the works of William Shakespeare. However, some scientists have researched the probability of how long it would take these monkeys to produce just the first four words of a Shakespearean play. It would take 800 billion years. Remember, just because something might happen does not prove that it did happen. Furthermore, where did the monkeys, typewriters, and reams of paper come from?

A college professor once informed his class that belief in God is neither scientific or needful in our enlightened age. "Why, we don't have to pray for rain, we just bombard a cloud with chemicals and it rains." A student asked, "who made the cloud?" Every effect has to have an adequate cause. The Law of Cause and Effect demands that everything is an effect of some cause. This is often referred to as the Cosmological Argument for the existence of God. Look at any typical house on the street. Where did it come from? Has it always been there? Did someone build it? *"For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God"* (Heb. 3:4). And God is eternal, thus without a cause.

Some have believed that the universe is eternal. It is the uncaused cause of all things. However, as John Njoroge said, "the accepted view in science today is that the universe (time and energy and matter and all that) all came into existence at a finite time in the past. Now if that is true, they have not always existed. They do point to a reality beyond just the physical and reality has to have certain characteristics. 1) [It] has to be timeless because a creator of time; 2) immaterial because it created space; 3) extremely powerful if not all-powerful because of the nature of the vastness of the universe; 4) and it also has to be extremely intelligent given the complexity of the universe. So what kind of a cause would this have to be?" The cause must be timeless or eternal, intelligent, all-powerful, and immaterial. The Uncaused which caused all must be either lifeless and thoughtless material or an intelligent, eternal mind. William Lane Craig explained the Kalam cosmological argument, 1) Whatever begins to exist has a cause. 2) The Universe began to exist. 3) Therefore, the Universe has a cause. The word "universe" means "one sentence." There is one sentence which sums up the origin or cause of the Universe. *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"* (Gen. 1:1). According to the Bible, it is a timeless and intelligent God who chose to create the world and all that is in it. This includes all the laws of nature.

Belief in the laws of nature mandate that one has faith in the Lawmaker. The law of Cause and Effect demands that for every effect that we see, there must be an adequate cause. We see the laws of nature, therefore there must be an adequate cause. We have at this point two choices: 1) the laws of nature are the result of chance formed out of time and non-living, non-intelligent matter or 2) the ever-living, all wise God created out of nothing. Which choice is more logical or reasonable to believe? When the evidence has been weighed, it will be discovered that it is more reasonable and intelligent to believe in God then, it is not to believe in God. These laws in nature, as complex as they are, demand belief in an intelligent Lawgiver.

The Moral Argument

In his book *Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis argued that "conscience reveals to us a moral law whose source cannot be found in the natural world, thus pointing to a supernatural Lawgiver." Mankind has always had a sense of right and wrong. This is why all civilizations create laws which govern moral behavior and choices. It is true that all men draw ethical lines separating what is right and wrong. However, they may draw them in different places. Murder is wrong. But some will say that abortion is not murder, while other say it is. According the Law of Cause and Effect the ultimate source of man's sense of morality must be in itself moral. Only God could explain the moral conscience in man. "Whenever the atheist complains about the existence of evil, he inadvertently admits the existence of God."

If God created man's sense of right and wrong, He would have also given mankind a standard to guide men in drawing a line between right and wrong. According the New Testament, truth is objective (i.e., it originates outside of man, such as, the Word of God). World religions and atheism believe that truth is ultimately attained subjectively (i.e., from within one's own self). According to the Bible, sin is a violation of God's Law (I John 3:4). God's Word therefore is an absolute ethical standard. In it one can learn where the lines of right or wrong are drawn on the pathway of life. When faced with the perplexing issues of our times one can turn to the Bible and find the answers. Concerning divorce Jesus said, *"And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery"* (Mt. 19:9). What about a solution to the AIDS epidemic? *"Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge"* (Heb. 13:4). Is homosexuality a morally valid alternate lifestyle? *"As Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire"* (Jude 7). The Biblical answer for the raising rate of teenage pregnancy is *"flee fornication"*. This ancient Book's remedy for our prolific crime rate is: *"Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil"* (Ec. 8:11). What about juvenile delinquency? *"Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him"* (Pr. 22:15). The Word of God even declares a solution for alcoholism (I Pet. 4:3). For every moral dilemma the Bible contains a relevant solution.

The Esthetical Argument

The Bible claims...

- Genesis 1:31 ESV: *And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.*
- Ecclesiastes 3:11 ESV: *He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.*
- Psalm 104:1-35 ESV: *Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, you are very great! You are clothed with splendor and majesty, covering yourself with light as with a garment, stretching out the heavens like a tent. He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters; he makes the clouds his chariot; he rides on the wings of the wind; he makes his messengers winds, his ministers a flaming fire. He set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be moved. ...*

Man has naturally within him a desire for and recognition of all things beautiful. True, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Not all find a particular scene or painting beautiful while others do. However, where did this universal longing for beauty come? God the Creator of beauty, is the source. He gave man both the desire and ability to create beautiful cities with its architecture, paintings, photos, statues as well as all other art forms. Men and women long to make themselves and others to appear beautiful. The Esthetical argument for the existence of God claims that only a Creative and beautiful God could have made man with a love for beauty.

The Ontological Argument

Where did the idea of God come from? Sigmund Freud said it was formed in man's mind from the idea of his earthly father. The concept of God is merely the product of man's imagination. Yet, when mere mortals invent gods they create them in their own image or in that of a creature. Paul wrote, *"because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things"* (Romans 1:21-23).

Did the concept of an all-knowing, all-powerful, ever-present, eternal God come from? Did man create a creator or did the Creator reveal Himself to man. Paul also wrote, *"what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 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"* (Romans 1:19-20). The Psalmist wrote,

*The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament shows His handiwork.
2 Day unto day utters speech,
And night unto night reveals knowledge.
3 There is no speech nor language
Where their voice is not heard.
4 Their line has gone out through all the earth,
And their words to the end of the world.*
– Psalm 19:1-4a

The gods created in the minds of men are materialistic, lustful, unloving, controllable and defeatable. The gods of man's mind are nothing like the God of the Bible. His very belief and knowledge of the true God in all His glory is evidence that God exists and has revealed Himself in nature and the Bible. Can you think or imagine someone or something greater and more powerful or more perfect than God? The ontological argument states "God must exist in order to cause us to have in our minds the concept of a

perfect God” (J. D. Thomas).

Why Are There So Many Unbelievers?

With all this information being declared by God’s creation everywhere, in every way to everyone it makes us wonder why some do not believe in God. Surely, *“the fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God’”* (Psalm 14:1; Psalm 53:1). We call these “fools” atheists or agnostics. An atheist is one who believes that God does not exist. While an agnostic is someone who does not know whether God exists. Paul says that man has been given so much information by creation about the Creator *“they are without excuse”* (Rom. 1:20).

Once a college philosophy professor asked a student, “Using everything we have learned this semester, prove that this chair does not exist.” The student responded, “What chair?” Men see and observe what they want to. An atheist cannot find God in the same way that a tax evader cannot find the IRS: they don’t want to find them. The “theory” of evolution is being claimed as fact in some of our public schools. Therefore, young men and young women are being brain washed into repudiating the unmistakable fact: *“in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”* (Gen.1:1). Soon people are blind to all the proof of God in all the universe. They are like a family that moved into a home next to the airport. Every fifteen minutes a jumbo jet would shake their little wood frame home to its very foundation as it roared a few dozen yards over their roof. Believe it or not, they soon became blind to the effects and deaf to the sound and went on living there day after day as if the airport with its air traffic did not even exist. Today, man has become equally blind and deaf to the evidence of God’s existence from all of creation.

The Heavens will not always proclaim the Glory of God, one day they will cease. *“Lift up your eyes to the heavens, And look on the earth beneath. For the heavens will vanish away like smoke, The earth will grow old like a garment, And those who dwell in it will die in like manner; But My salvation will be forever, And My righteousness will not be abolished”* (Is. 51:6). Peter wrote, *“looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?”* (2 Pet. 3:12). After this, mankind will either experience the existence and glory of God firsthand in Heaven or be eternally separated from God and His glory.

Questions:

1. List some things other than God which cannot be proven by the scientific method which requires empirical evidence.
2. Why doesn't the Bible argue the existence of God?
3. Why are atheist without any excuse for not believing in God?
4. Why must evolutionist rely on vast amounts of time and chance for their theory to be possible?

5. What is wrong with the argument concerning a million monkey's banging on typewriters to produce all the great works of literature in time?
6. Define the "Cosmological Argument" in your own words.
7. What four characteristics does the Uncaused cause of all the universe have to possess?
8. What do the laws of nature require according to the Law of Cause and Effect?
9. Explain the Moral Argument for the existence of God.
10. Why is it necessary that God gave man the Bible?
11. List some other passages from the Bible describing the great beauty of God's Creation.
12. Describe the Esthetical Argument.
13. Could man of imagined or invented the God of the Bible? Explain.
14. Give some examples of the moral character and attributes of gods invented by man.

15. Where did the idea of God come from?

16. Why are there so many unbelievers despite all the evidence for God?

Application and Discussion:

1. Can someone be a Christian and still believe in evolution? If the Bible is God's Word and God never lies, how could anyone reconcile evolution with what the Bible says about God creating the world in six days?

2. What are some other arguments for the existence of God?

Homework: Find an atheist or agnostic and try out some of these arguments for God's existence.

God Is the Intelligent Designer of Creation

As stated previously evolution teaches that time and chance will randomly produce complex creatures out of non-living matter. The problem with this is that the complexity of creation is so considerable that random blind chance could never produce the Universe in the mere fifteen billion years it is said to be in existence. The Teleological Argument for the existence of God is: things which show intelligent design must have an Intelligent designer. It is the opposite of the evolutionary view that all things came about by blind, mindless chance. Sir Fred Hoyle, the well-known English astronomer and professor at Cambridge University admitted; "The chance that higher life forms might have emerged in this way is comparable with the chance that a tornado sweeping through a junkyard might assemble a Boeing 747 from the materials therein" ("Hoyle on Evolution," in *Nature*, vol. 294, [11/1981], p. 105).

Intelligent Design in the Universe

The universe is filled with so much evidence of intelligent design, it must have had an Intelligent Design for its creation. The odds of the universe just happening is highly improbable. In order to comprehend and appreciate this argument, one must first understand logical probability. To help illustrate take a deck of cards. What is the probability of drawing at random an ace of spades from a shuffled deck of cards. It would be 1 out of 52. To pick the ace of clubs would be 1 out of 51. Picking the ace of diamonds right after that would be 1 out of 50. And, as you have guessed, there would be a 1 out of 49 chance in picking the ace of hearts. What are the odds of picking all four aces in a row? To calculate this would require one to multiply $(1/52)$ by $(1/51)$ by $(1/50)$ by $(1/49)$ giving the probability as 1 out of 6,497,000.

Calculating the probability of the solar system's ability to support human life will demonstrate that there is not enough time, chance or space for it to have just happened without an intelligent designer or creator. In the *Chicago Tribune* and article quoted a scientist who concluded that "human life...must be exceedingly rare and may be unique to the earth." While investigating the probability of earth being suited for life, we will look at only seven criteria: kind of galaxy, place in the galaxy, kind of star, size of the planet, spin of the planet, mass of planet, and distance from the sun. First, the earth had to be in the right kind of galaxy. This is a one in five chance. Having the right place in the galaxy in a tolerable zone for life to withstand gravitational and electromagnetic forces results in the probability of 1 in 500. The sun has to be the right kind of star. The heat and size of our sun is essential for life's survival. The chance is 1 out of 50. The current distance from the sun is very important. There is a very small margin for life to exist. The earth is some 93 million miles from the sun. The probability is 1/50. The planet's spin at about one thousand miles per hour at the equator is essential. Too slow and all life would either freeze or burn up. The chances are 1 out of 4. For gravitational purposes the earth has to have the correct planet mass. This has the odds for life at 1/9. The earth tilts on its axis at 23.5 degrees. This gives the earth seasons. The wrong tilt would result in the earth being either too cold and too hot for life to exist. Multiplying the variables results in the probability of 1 out of 2,024,000,000. It may be argued that considering the size of the universe and the possibility of many earth like planets, evolution still could be probable given enough time and chance. However, we have only considered seven criteria for calculating the probability of human life evolving on earth. When one adds the probability of the right atmosphere, the right distance from the moon, the sequencing of DNA, the correct constructions of proteins, the development of a cell, etc. The probability of life results in a number so large it would fill the known universe.

Intelligent Design of the Water Molecule

Under normal circumstances the cooler a substance becomes, the denser it is, and vice versa. For

example, air rises as it heats up and water rises as it turns to steam. However, whenever water freezes, the ice floats. Why is that? Water does become denser as it cools. Around four degrees Celsius water's mass begins to become lighter. At zero degrees Celsius, which is freezing, the water turns to ice and begins to float in the denser, warmer water. The molecular structure of the water molecule H₂O has a 105 degree angle. Therefore, it must expand to solidify. This simple angle allows life to exist on earth. If ice did not float, it would sink to the bottom of the rivers, lakes, and oceans freezing them solid in time. This would cause almost all aquatic life to die. The planet would eventually freeze over.

Intelligent Design Among Animals

Animals demonstrate intelligent design throughout all species. A rattlesnake can detect heat change of 1/1000th of a degree Celsius. The best time modern science can do this feat takes about a minute for the same reading. Snakes use this to capture warm-bodied prey in the dark.

The instinct in animals can only be explained by the presence of an Intelligent Designer. For example, the blackpoll warbler only weighs about twenty grams and is five inches long. In the fall it flies from Alaska to the New England coast. There it waits for a cold front to aid it in flying southeast in order to claim to an altitude of 21,000 feet near Antigua. There it finds westward winds to South America. The trip is not a straight shot, but it is quicker. Just three days of flight. "If a blackpoll warbler were burning gasoline instead of its reserves of body fat, it could boast of getting 72,000 miles to the gallon." The arctic tern migrates 22,000 miles every year. After spending months at sea penguins can migrate without making a mistake right back to their rookeries. Monarch butterflies travel south to rest in the wintering grounds after a two thousand mile flight.

G. R. Taylor wrote concerning the hereditary instinct of birds being able to build nest without ever learning from another bird. "There is not the faintest indication that it can hand on a behavioral programme of a specific kind, such as the sequence of actions involved in nest building" (The Great Evolution Mystery, p. 221). Weaverbirds in Africa weave a thatched roof some fifteen feet in diameter. Under this roof they build as many as a hundred nests creating a sort of bird apartment complex. The Horned Coot builds its nest on small, flat islands. Where it does not have these to build upon it will make an island in shallow waters. In southern Asia lives the Tailorbird who makes its own thread out of spider web, bark fibers and cotton and sew large leaves together to make a nest.

Scientists, engineers, and inventors from a variety of fields have studied the intelligent design found in animals and come up with designs for products to assist us in our everyday life. The study of bird wings assisted in creating the first machines of flight. Later NASA noticed the air turbulence upon the surface of the wing and body of the aircraft. This is called "skin friction drag. They found that shark skin is designed to reduce this drag because of the "V" grooves called riblets on its skin. By adding the shark skin riblets to test models of aircraft, a 10% reduction in skin friction drag has been accomplished. This finding produces hundreds of millions in savings for commercial airlines" (NASA Activities, Feb. '84, p. 7.). Additional inventions have been gleaned from a study of other creatures. Modern paper was a result of investigating the nests of wasps. The helicopter can fly thanks to the adaptation of the intelligent design of dragonfly wings. Football helmets have been made safer after manufacturers started to incorporate the design of woodpecker skulls into helmets as an added safety feature. Truly, "*they are exceedingly wise*" (Proverbs 30:24).

Intelligent Design in Humans

A single human cell is so complex it illustrates an abundance of evidence for an Intelligent Designer. It has a nucleus with a nucleolus where ribosomes are assembled, chromosomes contain the cell's DNA, endoplasmic reticulum to store proteins made by ribosomes, mitochondria that produce energy for the cell, Golgi body that packages and distributes proteins, centrioles to assist in cell reproduction, etc. Each of those "...cells function like a walled city. Power plants generate the cell's energy. Factories produce proteins, vital units of chemical commerce. Complex transportation systems guide specific chemicals from point to point within the cell and beyond. Sentries at the barricades control the export and import markets, and monitor the outside world for signs of danger. Disciplined biological armies stand ready to grapple with

invaders. A centralized genetic government maintains order" (Newsweek, "The Secrets of the human Cell," by Peter Gwynne, Sharon Begley and Mary Hager, August 20, 1979, p. 48). All of this in a space only 1/10000th of an inch in diameter. "Although the tiniest bacterial cells are incredibly small, weighing less than 10-12 grams, each is in effect a veritable micro-miniaturized factory containing thousands of exquisitely designed pieces of intricate molecular machinery, made up altogether of one hundred thousand million atoms, far more complicated than any machinery built by man and absolutely without parallel in the non-living world" (Michael Denton, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, Adler & Adler, 1985, 250). No one can fathom the idea that a single human being with 100,000,000,000,000 cells could come together by mere chance without an intelligent designer.

Complexity of DNA is fast becoming a key piece of evidence in the argument for an Intelligent Designer. Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) is a molecule that encodes the genetic instructions used in the development and functioning of all known living organisms and many viruses. Bill Gates said, "DNA is like a computer program but far, far more advanced than any software ever created." It is like a three-dimensional copy machine. "Genes are like the story, and DNA is the language that the story is written in" (Sam Kean). If you unwrap all your DNA, you could reach the moon six thousand times. In a recording of the 2004 symposium 'Has Science Discovered God', organized by The Institute for Metascientific Research, Professor Antony Flew [longtime prominent atheistic philosopher] says: 'What I think the DNA material has done is show that intelligence must have been involved in getting these extraordinarily diverse elements together . . . The enormous complexity by which the results were achieved look to me like the work of intelligence.' Dr. Jeff Tomkins a Genetics professor at Clemson University writes, "That's the biggest problem for evolution: how life got started. Because you need DNA to make proteins, you need DNA to make RNA, and you need RNA to make proteins. So, it's worse than 'what came first, the chicken or the egg'."

Have you ever wondered why your stomach does not digest itself? After all, the stomach secretes a mixture of digestive juices that are so strong that they can dissolve zinc. One of the main components of the digestive juices is hydrochloric acid. Hydrochloric acid is an extremely corrosive liquid. It will eat through skin or muscle or even metal plates of zinc, magnesium or aluminum. Fortunately, the stomach has three separate systems to protect itself. First, the lining of the stomach, gastric mucosa. This layer of cells is very dense and reproduces itself very rapidly. The gastric mucosa can actually be totally replaced in only three days. Second, the cell walls are made up of lipids. Lipids are fatty substances which ionic acids like hydrochloric acid have a hard time penetrating. Third, the outer layer of cells are covered with a layer of carbohydrates which reduce the corrosive action of the acid on the stomach wall. Be glad that at each meal what you eat does not cause you to digest your own stomach.

The human heart is an amazing pump. It operates twenty-four hours a day for over one hundred years without missing a beat. It pumps a total of 100,000 tons of blood in the average person's lifetime.

Don't let all this intelligent design of your body go to your head. Unless we are talking about your brain. This three pounds of mystery only makes up two percent of one's body weight, yet uses 25 percent of one's blood supply. An 83,000-processor supercomputer can only match 1% of a human brain.

Thomas B. Warren wrote, "the existence of one human being constitutes evidence that God exist." The Psalmist said, "*I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well*" (Psalms 139:14).

Conclusion

The theory of evolution cannot account for all the intelligent design found in creation. Many may not be willing to accept God as the Creator, however, they cannot accept the alternative anymore. Some still will tenaciously cling to evolution despite the evidence. Could you imagine an archeologist at an Indian burial site digging up a sharp flint arrow head and claiming that it just happened to exist by time and chance. Its design was not the product of an intelligent mind. Yet the human brain, cell, and DNA are far more complex in design and an arrowhead. However, we are told these are all the product of time and chance.

Questions:

1. Why is it difficult to believe that the Universe and life in it evolved over the last fifteen billion years?
2. Explain the Teleological Argument for the existence of God.
3. What are the odds of drawing all four aces in a row from a well shuffled deck of cards? Would you be willing to bet your life on such odds?

Matching: Probability of Earth Fit for Life

- | | |
|---|---|
| 4. ____ kind of galaxy | a. Heat and size essential |
| 5. ____ place in the galaxy | b. 1000 mph at equator |
| 6. ____ kind of star | c. for gravitational purposes |
| 7. ____ size of the planet | d. one in five chance |
| 8. ____ spin of the planet | e. tolerable zone to withstand gravitational and electromagnetic forces |
| 9. ____ distance from the sun | f. 23.5 degrees |
| 10. ____ mass of planet | g. 93 million miles |
| 11. Why does ice float? What if it did not float? | |

Matching: Intelligent Design Among Animals

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 12. ____ Rattlesnake | a. less air friction and drag on airplanes |
| 13. ____ Blackpoll Warbler | b. safer football helmets |
| 14. ____ Weaverbirds | c. sows leaves to make nests |
| 15. ____ Tailorbird | d. helicopters |
| 16. ____ bird wings | e. could boast of getting 73,000 miles per gallon |

The Unity of the Bible

Can you write a book just like the Bible has been compiled? To do so you would have to choose a diverse number of authors, from different times, professions, and places. Yet you would have to maintain unity as one book. Imagine selecting forty different men to write just one chapter from your book. Cull them from various occupations and educational backgrounds. Do not allow them to collaborate with each other. Scatter them over a wide area. Then compile these chapters into single bound volume. You would have great diversity, but would there be unity? Would it have a central theme or main figure? Would all the chapters harmonize without any contradictions? To write a book the way the Bible was written would take nothing short of a miracle.

Unity in Diversity

■ **Diverse Time of Writing**

It took about 2,000 years to write 66 books by about 40 different writers. The book of Job was about the earliest written (1500 B.C. ca.). Moses wrote the first five books between 1450 and 1400 B.C. Most of the Psalms were penned by David around 1000 B.C. In the sixth century B.C. Daniel wrote his prophecy. The prophecy of Ezekiel was written about the same time. Paul wrote his epistles to the Thessalonians and to Ephesus 50 A.D. and 62 A.D. respectively. Revelation was written by John around 90-96 A.D. When all these books along with the other 66 are compiled, they represent a unified book called the Bible.

■ **Diverse Places of Writing**

Moses wrote in the Sinai wilderness. Daniel wrote in Babylon. The prophecy of Jeremiah was written in Jerusalem. Some of the epistles of Paul were written from a Roman prison. Other letters by Paul were written from places like Ephesus or Corinth. John penned his prophecy while banished to the isle of Patmos. Again, all these books unite as one in the Bible despite the fact they were written in same may different locations.

■ **Diverse Occupations of the Writers**

Trained in the wisdom of Egypt (Ac. 7:22) Moses could have been a great leader among the Egyptians, instead he chose to suffer affliction as the leader of the Israelite slaves having worked as a shepherd in the 40 year interim. Joshua was a great military leader in the conquest of Canaan. Before reigning as king for 40 years David was a mere shepherd boy and psalmist. The prophet Amos was both a shepherd and a fig picker from Tekoa, before he wrote his prophecy. Both in the Babylonian Empire and then in the Medo-Persian Empire Daniel became a high ranking statesman. Ezekiel was a priest. Ezra was both scribe and priest. His contemporary, Nehemiah served the King of the Medo-Persian Empire as a cupbearer before being appointed governor of the province of Judah. Before they became apostles and wrote their gospel accounts Matthew was a tax collector for the Romans and John was a fisherman. Prior to traveling with Paul on his missionary journeys and penning both a gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, Luke was a Greek physician. Despite their varying professions, these men work as if they were one in contributing to the Bible.

■ **Diverse Languages**

Most of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew. However, portions of it were recorded in Aramaic. The New Testament was written in Koine Greek.

■ **Diverse Types of Writing**

The books of the Bible break down into various categories or genre of literature, such as: Books of Law, Poetry, History, epistles, narrative, biography, prophecy. Furthermore, parts of Daniel, Ezekiel,

Zechariah and Revelation are apocalyptic.

■ **The Bible is Not an Anthology**

An anthology is a collection of selected literary pieces, such as, a collection of British Literature or American Poetry into a book or volume of books. Yet they would not be considered a single book with a central theme or figure. Although a book may contain all the writings of Edgar Allan Poe, it is still just a collection of his stories. The book would not have a plot or climax connected to each chapter. Because of the diversity even linguist professionals of the same time and place differ widely. Man's writings lack unity in diversity, but only the Bible epitomizes true unity in diversity. It is a harmonized Book of books. Ferrel Jenkins wrote, *"Its unity has been likened to a variety of individual musical instruments being brought together into one great orchestra. The instruments blend together into one great harmony under the direction of a guiding hand."*

Unity in Purpose

The Theme of the Bible (Christ the Savior of the World) is an uninterrupted story line that fastens the 66 books of the Bible together as one. God's great plan of saving man from his sins through Christ Jesus can be seen from Genesis to Revelation. The first messianic prophecy is found after the fall of man in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:15). The promises to Abraham are fulfilled in Jesus his physical descendant (Gen. 12:1-5). Selection of Israel as His people through whom Christ should come is a major development of this theme as Genesis closes and Exodus begins. The Historic books of the Old Testament illustrate how the nation was being prepared to carry out God's purpose of bringing Christ into this world. The longings and aspirations of the coming Messiah is revealed in the poetical books. Both the major and minor prophets foretell Christ's coming. The four gospels manifest the life of Christ. The establishment of Christ's kingdom is fulfilled in Acts. Christians living is detailed in the epistles. Finally, man and God reunited against Satan and his forces is depicted in Revelation. *"The Paradise Lost of Genesis becomes the Paradise regained of Revelation. Where the gate to the tree of life is closed in Genesis, it is opened forevermore in Revelation"* (Hendriksen).

Not only are the books of the Bible united in via a single theme, but the theme itself is very unique. Only the Bible answers man's spiritual needs and questions, such as, "Where did I come from?"; "Why am I here?"; "Where am I going?"; and "How do I get there?" Human philosophies and cults give no hope in the hereafter.

No writer of the Bible ever contradicts another writer concerning the theme. As one writer put it: *"While there is no collusion among the writers neither is there any evidence of collision."* All this should not be a surprise when you consider God foreordained that man would be saved through Christ before the world as made (Eph. 3:10,11).

Organic Unity

According to A. T. Pierson *"Organic unity is the unity of organized being. All parts of the Bible are necessary to its completeness." "Any part of the human body can only be properly explained in reference to the whole body. And any part of the Bible can only be properly explained in reference to the whole Bible"* (F.F. Bruce, p. 89).

The second law of organic unity is that all parts are necessary to the complement of each other. This is seeing the *"essentiality of the books like Job, Esther, Ruth, Song of Solomon, and Philemon to make the Bible a complete book"* (Ferrell Jenkins). One would be at a loss in comprehending Hebrews without Leviticus; the Old Testament prophets without their fulfillment found in the gospels; or the Revelation of John without Old Testament books like Daniel, Ezekiel, and Zechariah. Even the four gospels would be incomplete without each other.

The fundamental basis of organic unity is that one life principle must pervade the whole. The principle is: God's Son came to save man from his sin. God is the author of the whole having inspired each writer. *"There is a beautiful connection between the first book of the Bible and the last. Scripture resembles a flower. We find the seed in Genesis, the growing plant in the books which follow, the fully developed and beautiful flower in the Revelation of John"* (Hendriksen, p. 236).

Unity of Style

□ **Brevity of Entire Books**

Genesis only contains fifty chapters, yet they cover the first 2,500 years of human history. Each month an issue of Readers' Digest uses more words.

In the Library of Congress there are more books on the life of Christ than on any other individual. In the Bible, only four brief books: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, tell of Christ's life. These books contain 28, 16, 24, and 21 chapters respectively.

□ **Brevity of Bible Incidents**

The whole creation of the world are found in Genesis chapters one and two. In contrast a sports announcer will use more words to introduce a high school football game, then God took to explain the origins of all creation.

"Gen. 3:1-24 tells the story of man's fall. In this small space we have the explanation of the origin of sin, suffering, sickness, death, toil, and the necessity of the coming Savior," (Baxter, p. 178).

Many other significant events are dealt with in a similar succinct fashion. The Flood of the entire world is explained in a mere three chapters. The Death of the Jesus Christ the Son of God is covered in eight chapters. Even the birth of Christ is only found in Matthew chapter two and Luke chapter two. The death of John the Baptist is described in nine English words, just seven in the original Greek.

□ **Omission of the Scriptures**

Certainly men are naturally curious about the other events of Christ's life. However, nothing is said of His life from age 12 to age 30. To satisfy man's interest many spurious writers have penned pseudo-gospels of the early life of Christ. The *Protoevangelism* contains 25 chapters of the supposed events from the annunciation to Mary to the slaughter of the innocent at Bethlehem by Herod the Great. Another such book, *the Gospel of the Infancy* covers the first twelve years of Christ's life in some fifty chapters. In contrast, Christ's life totaled more than 12,000 days, yet His active ministry only 1,270 days. Of those days, the gospels only account for 24 days. John has 879 verses, 259 of these pertain to one day in Christ's life - His last day on earth. Even important details of His life and ministry are not made known. For example, the only words that Christ wrote to our knowledge (Jn. 8:1-8) are never explained. No physical description is given.

The Apostle John gives an explanation: *"And truly 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). *"And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen"* (John 21:25).

Impartiality of the Scriptures

The Bible doesn't cover up or overlook the mistakes of its most important figures. It tells of Abraham's deception through Sarah, Moses' sin at the Rock, David's adultery (2 Sam. 11:1-21), Peter's denial of Christ (Mt. 26:69-75) and Judas' betrayal (Mt. 26:14-16; 47-50). Only Christ is shown to be sinless.

Such impartiality is not true of secular writings. In his first book on JEWISH WARS, Flavius Josephus, famous Jewish historian in the first century A.D. makes Herod the Great out to be a good, heroic and courageous man. This is the same Herod who slaughter the children of Bethlehem.

Calmness of Scriptures

The Biblical description of Christ's death is almost unemotional in its description. Seldom does the Bible moralize. Even when the betrayer of Christ, Judas, went out and hung himself. Often scriptures state things in a matter-of-fact fashion. Additionally, superlatives like: "amazing", "unbelievable", "unprecedented", "fantastic", or "stupendous" are not used.

Conclusion

Take a 66 blocks of marble and distribute them among 40 different sculptors from 20 different

centuries to create the greatest work of art ever known to man. They will be from different countries, different backgrounds, different levels of education, and even speak different languages, etc. Let when the last one finishes his work on the last piece all the various pieces can be fit together with perfect precision to make a great statue of a famous man of history. Yet none of the artist would have known what the real man looked like prior to the statue's completion. The odds against such ever being a reality are mind boggling. Nothing short of a miracle could account for it. In like manner, the Bible must be the product of an eternal, all-knowing, all-powerful Mind.

Questions:

Matching: Diverse Time of Writing

- | | | | |
|-----------|------------|----|------------------|
| 1. ___ | Job | a. | 1000 BC |
| 2. ___ | Moses | b. | 62 AD |
| 3. ___ | David | c. | 90-96 AD |
| 4. ___ | Daniel | d. | 1950 BC |
| 5. ___ | Ephesus | e. | 1450-1400 BC |
| 6. ___ | Revelation | f. | sixth century BC |

Matching: Diverse Places of Writing

- | | | | |
|-----------|----------|----|---------------------|
| 7. ___ | Moses | a. | Jerusalem |
| 8. ___ | Daniel | b. | Wilderness of Sinai |
| 9. ___ | Jeremiah | c. | Island of Patmos |
| 10. ___ | Paul | d. | Babylon |
| 11. ___ | John | e. | Roman prison |

12. In what three languages was the Bible written?

13. Why types or genre of literature are found in the Bible?

14. True False The Bible is an anthology.

15. What is the theme of the Bible? When was this theme developed in the mind of the Author?
16. What is Organic Unity?
17. Give an example of the brevity of the Bible.
18. Give an example of the impartiality of the Bible.
19. Give an example of the calmness of the Bible.

Application and Discussion:

20. Is it statistically probable that mere men could have written the Bible? Explain.
21. How can this lesson be used to show someone that the Bible is truly the Word of God?

Homework: Find someone this week to share and discuss the Bible's unique unity.

Prophetic Fulfillment of the Bible

Prophecy, when fulfilled, provides strong evidence that the Bible is not a man made product, but divinely inspired. Prophecy is internal evidence which comes to life when we see its fulfillment on the external pages of historical testimony.

Definition of Prophecy

Prophecy is "a declaration of future events, such as no human wisdom or forecast is sufficient to make - depending on a knowledge of the innumerable contingencies of human affairs which belongs exclusively to the omniscience of God: so that from its very nature prophecy must be divine revelation" (M'Llvaine, Evidence of Christianity, p. 238). Justin Martyr defined prophecy as "to declare a thing shall come to be, long before it is in being and then to bring about the very thing according to the same declaration - this, or nothing is the work of God".

One of the best working definitions of prophecy came by Homer Hailey in the form of a syllogism.

- 1) Man cannot know the future; only God can foretell history or events.
- 2) The Bible foretold the destiny of nations and the coming of Christ.
- 3) Therefore, the Bible is the Word of God, not of man.

Point number three is the natural conclusion and represents the proposition of this lesson. Number two will be proved in this lesson. The first premise is accepted by all because it is easily proven, even to an atheist.

Before moving on it is most appropriate to deal with misdefinitions of Biblical prophecy. Prophecy is not mere guesswork, a forecast, a calculation, a conjecture, a vague generalization, or an educated analysis of a forthcoming situation. Weathermen can't even forecast. In Boston, forecasters predicted the worst snowstorm in the 1974 season. Schools closed, snow plows readied, but not a single snowflake fell! "About 60% accuracy is the best they can do and that's only for predicting whether temperature and precipitation will be above or below normal." Henry M. Morris studied 72 prophecies from the 10 prominent psychics he found "it is remarkable that not one was fulfilled in 1978 as predicted." In contrast, when the Bible makes a prophecy everything comes to pass.

The Criteria of Biblical Prophecy

The Bible encourages its readers to test all prophecies. *"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world"* (1 John 4:1). In order for a prophecy to be genuine it must meet certain tests of validity. 1) The event must be beyond the power of men to foresee. 2) Proper timing is essential. The prophecy must be written before the event. 3) It must contain predictions applicable to the event. 4) The language of the prediction must be unambiguous and unmistakable. Many man-made predictions contain generalizations without any specific details. "In Greece, too, oracles were pronounced by the Pythian prophetess, who by vapors and the like was aroused to a practice of mantic art. In Dodona it was the voice of the divinity of Nature, which they sought to read in the rustling of the trees and the murmuring of the water. How uncertain these sources were was well known to heathen antiquity. The ancients complain of the enigmatical character of the Sibylline utterances and the doubtful nature of what was said" (ISBE, IV:2466). Nostradamus and Jean Dixon are famous for making many vague predictions, most of which were not fulfilled. 5) It must have a clear and demonstrable fulfillment. (H.W. Everest, The Divine Demonstration, p. 26). The acid test of

a true prophet is that it must be true. *"But the prophet who resumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die." And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?' when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him"* (Deuteronomy 18:20-22). If a prophet is wrong just one time, he is a false prophet. According to this passage he wouldn't get a second chance to give another bogus prediction.

The Value of Fulfilled Prophecy

The predictions of the Bible become more meaningful as time goes on. Especially true in cases where God said a city would never be rebuilt or nations never to reign over others again. As archaeology brings more evidence to light, the prophecies stand the tests of time.

Prophecy is a more valuable eye-witness testimony. Peter wrote, *"and we have the word of prophecy made more sure"* (I Peter 1:19-21, ASV). A miracle would have been impressive to an eye-witness. However, no one is alive today that has seen a Biblical miracle preformed. All today, can read the Biblical predictions and observe the historical facts to witness their fulfillment.

Unique to Christianity is the use of prophecies as proof of its own legitimacy. None of those in other religions are willing to go out on a limb like the Bible. By giving predictions about the future they would jeopardize their reputations and be exposed as impostors. The oracles by pagans are not considered prophecy because: *"There is not a single one of them that meets the tests required to prove supernatural agency which every scripture prophecy evidences"* (Randolph S. Foster, p. 111). Only the Bible challenges any person or pagan religion to produce an equivalent prophecy. *"'Present your case,' Says the Lord. 'Bring forth your strong reasons,' says the King of Jacob. 'Let them bring forth and show us what will happen; let them show the former things, what they were, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare to us things to come. Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods; Yes, do good or do evil, that we may be dismayed and see it together. Indeed you are nothing, and your work is nothing; He who chooses you is an abomination"* (Isaiah 41:21-23). *"Tell and bring forth your case; yes, let them take counsel together. Who has declared this from ancient time? Who has told it from that time? Have not I, the Lord? And there is no other God besides Me, A just God and a Savior; there is none besides Me"* (Isaiah 45:21).

One Genuine Prophecy: Cyrus

"One real case of fulfilled prophecy would establish a supernatural act" (Ramm, p. 86). "The enemy of Christianity must silence all our guns; we need to fire only one of them," (p. 88). Yet there is a great multitude of fulfilled prophecies. Thousands can be culled from the pages of the New Testament. Prophecies abound concerning the ancient nations and cities of distant civilizations, such as, Egypt, Tyre, Nineveh, and Babylon. Not to mention the nearly 300 messianic prophecies.

The one case of fulfilled prophecy we will fire is selected due to its daring forecast and great fulfillment concerns: Cyrus. Isaiah prophesied concerning one who will permit the rebuilding of the Temple and Jerusalem. It even names the ruler's name. Between 730 and 710 B.C. Isaiah prophesied: *"Who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd. And he shall perform all My pleasure, saying to Jerusalem, 'You shall be built,' And to the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid.'" Thus says the Lord to His anointed, To Cyrus, whose right hand I have held - To subdue the nations before him and loose the armor of kings, to open before him the double doors, So that the gates will not be shut:"* (Is. 44:28; 45:1). Both archaeology (Cyrus Cylinder) and the Bible clearly demonstrate its fulfillment. *"Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, 'Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the Lord God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel (He is God), which is in Jerusalem, And whoever is left in any place where he dwells, let the men of his place help him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, besides the freewill*

offerings for the house of God which is in Jerusalem" (Ezra 1:1-4; cf. 2 Chronicles 36:22,23).

If you found the diary of a man living in Spain in the 1840's that clearly predicted that Bill Clinton would be president of the United States and further predicted that one of his first acts as president would be to promote homosexuals in the military, every newspaper and TV station in the world would covet the rights to the story.

Nations in Prophecy

Dr. Harry A. Ironside said, "Prophecy is history prewritten. The prophetic scriptures are as trustworthy as any other scripture. Prophecies occur throughout the Bible sixteen books of the Old Testament and one book of the New Testament are wholly prophetic in character. Nearly one-fourth of the Bible was predictive when it was written. It is most reasonable to conclude since every Bible prediction concerning the past has been fulfilled in the minutest detail, that we may expect all the remaining unfulfilled prophecies to be just as literally fulfilled."

Compare the Bible predictions of Egypt, Tyre, Nineveh, and Babylon to any history book or encyclopedia and you will find that the Bible indeed is history pre-written.

Egypt in Prophecy

The powerful Egyptian legacy lasted from about 3200 B.C. to 332 B.C. consisting of thirty dynasties divided into seven periods. Considered to be one of the earliest civilizations and the first world empire.

- **The Land of Egypt Was To Become a Desolation and a Waste**

Ezekiel prophesied, *"And the land of Egypt shall become desolate and waste; then they will know that I am the LORD, because he said, 'The River is mine, and I have made it.' I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate; and among the cities that are laid waste, her cities shall be desolate forty years; and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them throughout the countries"* (29:9,12). Today, a great deal of ruins exist in Egypt. The Egyptians of today are mostly nomads and foreigners who wonder through the land of a long forgotten civilization, greater than some of those of modern day.

- **Egypt To Be A Base Nation**

Ezekiel also prophesied, *"I will bring back the captives of Egypt and cause them to return to the land of Pathros, to the land of their origin, and there they shall be a lowly kingdom. It shall be the lowliest of kingdoms; it shall never again exalt itself above the nations, for I will diminish them so that they will not rule over the nations anymore"* (29:14,15). Never was this great empire to rule over the nations again despite its long history of world dominance. Patrick Fairborn wrote that Egypt was "to be brought down from its supremacy, to lose its ancient prestige, to be humbled, and made to serve, and rendered base among the nations..." Historical events throughout the years support this prophecy. In 700 B.C. Sennacherib of Assyria, defeated Egyptian forces at Eltekeh in south Palestine. Another Assyrian king, Esarhaddon, penetrated Egypt, and captured Memphis in 671 B.C. Then came the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar who defeated Pharaoh Neco at Carchemish in 605 B.C. Later, Egypt was conquered by the Persians under Cambyses in 525 B.C. The Greeks arrived in 332 B.C. when Alexander of Macedon entered Memphis. He also founded the new city on the Mediterranean coast called Alexandria. Following Alexander's death, one of his generals, Ptolemy, ruled Egypt. The Ptolemaic dynasty lasted from 305 to 30 B.C. One of the most famous of these rulers was Cleopatra, upon her death Egypt became a vassal state for the Romans. Muslim invaders took Alexandria in the seventh century A.D. Later came the Sarmatians and then the Mamelukes. In more recent history it has been ruled by the French, British, Germans and Italians, but never again has Egypt regained its prestigious position of ancient times.

- **No Prince Will Rule In The Land Of Egypt**

Among her sons Egypt would not find a ruler like unto the great Pharaohs of old. *"Thus says the Lord GOD: 'I will also destroy the idols, and cause the images to cease from Noph; there shall no longer be princes from the land of Egypt; I will put fear in the land of Egypt'"* (30:13). From 350 B.C. "to the present no native prince has ruled the land. Again and again has Egypt changed masters, but among them all, no son of hers is numbered" (Urguhart, 40). Most of the inhabitants of Egypt today are Arabs (Semitic

descendants of Shem and Abraham through Ishmael).

- **The Land Was to Become Less Productive**

Perhaps Ezekiel's most telling prophecy was God's warning *"I will make the rivers dry, and sell the land into the hand of the wicked; I will make the land waste, and all that is in it, by the hand of aliens. I, the LORD, have spoken"* (30:12). The Nile does not overflow its banks with rich sediment. A series of dams and a change in climate has long since depleted the nation's arable land to the point that only a narrow strip exists for cultivation. Modern Egyptians plant high paying crops for export so they can purchase the grain to feed its people.

Tyre in Prophecy

On the Phoenician coast about 100 miles due north of Jerusalem and with the Lebanon mountains to the north a maritime city state called Tyre became the subject of the prophet Ezekiel. At the time it was over a 1,000 years old and one of the richest cities of the ancient world.

After a thirteen year siege Nebuchadnezzar took the mainland city of Tyre. A truce was struck, but when the Babylonians tore down the gates they found that the inhabitants had fled to an island offshore. Finding out he had been deceived, Nebuchadnezzar ordered the city plundered and the remainder of the inhabitants killed. This fulfilled Ezekiel's prophecy that Nebuchadnezzar would destroy Tyre. *"He will slay with the sword your daughter villages in the fields; he will heap up a siege mound against you, build a wall against you, and raise a defense against you"* (26:8f).

The Babylonians alone did not fulfill all the prophecies against Tyre. In 332 B.C. Alexander the Great came to Tyre fulfilling his part. When he arrived, they were confronted with an Alcatraz-like island fortress. Located a half mile from shore this island city was well protected. Furthermore, a swift current ran between the shore and the city with the Persians and Phoenician fleets controlling the sea. To top it off, the Greeks were faced with a 150 foot wall built on the edge of the shore. Alexander had his men build a causeway 200 feet wide to the island. His engineers used the ruins of the mainland city, casting them into the city to construct this causeway. Thus, fulfilling the prophecy that the ruins of the city would be dumped into the water. *"They will plunder your riches and pillage your merchandise; they will break down your walls and destroy your pleasant houses; they will lay your stones, your timber, and your soil in the midst of the water"* (26:12). In her book *Tyre Through the Ages*, Nina Jidejian reported that by "Looking down into the water one can see a mass of granite columns and stone blocks strewn over the sea bottom."

Phillip Myers, a non-theologian historian wrote, "Alexander the Great reduced it to ruins. She recovered in a measure from this blow, but never again regained the place she had previously held in the world. The larger part of the site of the once great city is now bare as the top of a rock." Again Ezekiel foretold that *"And they shall destroy the walls of Tyre and break down her towers; I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock"* (26:4) Myers further stated that "...a place where the fisherman that still frequent the spot spread their nets to dry." This too was prophesied, *"It shall be a place for spreading nets in the midst of the sea, for I have spoken," says the Lord GOD; "it shall become plunder for the nations"* (26:5). As described by Nina Jidejian: "The 'Sidonian' port of Tyre is still in use today. ...The port has become a haven today for fishing boats and a place for spreading nets" (*Tyre Through The Ages*, p. 139).

Once the causeway neared completion, Alexander acquired boats from allies and sieged the city seven months before destroying it.

After the Babylonians and Greeks attacked Tyre, came Antiochus (314 B.C.), then the Moslems, then the Crusaders, then finally in 1321 A.D. the Moslems again. This too was foretold, *"Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Behold, I am against you, O Tyre, and will cause many nations to come up against you, as the sea causes its waves to come up'"* (26:3).

Although the old island and the causeway have become a part of the coastline, only a fishing village remains on the site. As far as the mainland city is concerned it has never been rebuilt. Ezekiel said, *"I will make you like the top of a rock; you shall be a place for spreading nets, and you shall never be rebuilt, for I the LORD have spoken," says the Lord GOD*" (26:14) *"I will make you a terror, and you shall be no more; though you are sought for, you will never be found again," says the Lord GOD*" (26:21).

In his book, *Science Speaks: An Evaluation of Certain Christian Evidence*, Peter W. Stoner, related the following: "If Ezekiel had looked at Tyre in his day and had made these seven predictions in human wisdom, these estimates mean that there would have been only one chance in 75,000,000 of their all coming true. They all came true in the minutest detail" (p. 80).

Nineveh in Prophecy

The ancient capital of the Assyrian Empire, Nineveh, was located on the Tigris River. It was one of the oldest cities in the world, believed to have been founded in 4500 B.C. King Sennacherib built Nineveh on a grander scale. He said, "I have turned the city into a residence which gleams like the sun." Even the Lord called it *"that great city"* (Jonah 1:2). The city was enclosed by two great walls the inner wall was about ten stories tall and thick enough for about six to seven cars abreast. Its towers were about twenty stories tall and it boasted fifteen gates. To top off its defenses there was a one hundred fifty feet wide moat which encircles the seven miles of wall.

How could a great city like this fall in a short time? Well, according to the Greek historian Diodorus Siculus, who lived in the first century B.C., the King had prepared a feast and "much wine and drinking for his soldiers." The king felt the empire secure and the city invincible. After all there was a prophecy of the day which stated, "No enemy will ever take Nineveh by storm unless the river shall first become the city's enemy." No less than three times does Nahum predict Nineveh's fall via a flood. *"But with an overflowing flood he will make an utter end of its place, and darkness will pursue His enemies. The gates of the rivers are opened, and the palace is dissolved."* (Nahum 1:8; 2:6). Not only is this prophecy amazing, but consider the prediction that the city would fall while they were drunk. *"For while tangled like thorns, and while drunken like drunkards, they shall be devoured like stubble fully dried"* (Nahum 1:10).

Nineveh's walls were of mud brick. Abnormally high floods caused breaches in the walls allowing conquerors to invade. Walter Maier states: "According to its chronology Nineveh fell in the month of Ab. The season of the heavy rainfall in Nineveh occurs normally in March, while the rivers attain their greatest height in the months of April and May, the period roughly parallel to Ab" (The Book of Nahum, A Comm., pp. 118,119).

Again, Nahum predicted: "Yet she was carried away, she went into captivity; her young children also were dashed to pieces at the head of every street; they cast lots for her honorable men, and all her great men were bound in chains. ... Surely, your people in your midst are women! The gates of your land are wide open for your enemies; fire shall devour the bars of your gates." (Nahum 3:10,14). The Babylonian Chronicle says the victors "carried off much spoil from the city...into a ruin-mound and heap of debris..."

When Sir Anthony Shirley, journeyed in the east at the close of the sixteenth century and observed, "Nineveh, that which God himself calleth the great Citie, hath not one stone standing which may give meaning to the being of a town." Ferrell Jenkins said of his travels to Nineveh that he saw "the shepherds with their sheep grazing on the ruins of this ancient world capital." The prophet Zephaniah wrote, *"And He will stretch out His hand against the north, destroy Assyria, and make Nineveh a desolation, as dry as the wilderness. The herds shall lie down in her midst, every beast of the nation. Both the pelican and the bittern shall lodge on the capitals of her pillars; their voice shall sing in the windows; desolation shall be at the threshold; for He will lay bare the cedar work"* (Zeph. 2:13,14).

Babylon in Prophecy

Nebuchadnezzar asked concerning his city *"Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?"* (Daniel 4:30). The city covered an area of nearly twenty square miles on both sides of the Euphrates. This great river ran underneath the walls. Encompassed by seventeen miles of walls wide enough for a four horse chariot to be turned around. This outer wall was 311 feet high with 250 watchtowers, one hundred feet higher than the outer walls. The wall was in turn surrounded by a thirty foot wide moat. Indeed, any army prior to World War I would have found these defenses quite formidable. The city itself contained a ziggurat with a temple to Marduk on top, a great procession street, and a network of canals. Also, Babylon could boast one of the Seven Wonders of the World: its Hanging Gardens.

According to the prophet Isaiah who prophesied around 740 to 700 B.C., the Medes were to defeat Babylon and would become like Sodom and Gomorrah (13:17-19). *"Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, who will not regard silver; and as for gold, they will not delight in it. Also their bows will dash the young men to pieces, and they will have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye will not spare children. And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah"* (13:17-19). The Cyrus Cylinder tells of how Cyrus the Mede capture the city of Babylon without even breaking down a wall in 539 B.C. Greek Historian Herodotus (484-425 B.C.) said that Cyrus had his men diverted the water of the Euphrates which flowed under the city walls. Once the river was diverted around the city, they went under the city wall and surprised the Babylonians who were having a drunken party (i., p. 191).

After its fall to the Medes the city slowly began to deteriorate. The last mention of Babylon is a tablet dating 10 B.C. "Trajan visited Babylon in A.D. 116 during his campaign against the Parthians and found, according to Dio Cassius, 'mounds and legends of mounds'" (Gerald A. Larue, Babylon and the Bible, p. 80). Isaiah prophesied that it would never be inhabited again, not even the tents of the Arab will be pitched there, and shepherds would not make their flocks lie down upon its ruins. *"It will never be inhabited, nor will it be settled from generation to generation; nor will the Arabian pitch tents there, nor will the shepherds make their sheepfolds there"* (13:20). Floyd Hamilton observed: "Travelers report that the city is absolutely uninhabited, even [by] Bedouins. There are various superstitions current among the Arabs that prevent them from pitching their tents there, while the character of the soil prevents the growth of vegetation suitable for the pasturage of flocks" (The Basis of Christian Faith, p. 310).

In contrast to those who would not inhabit Babylon, Isaiah informs us that wild beasts of the desert will be found on this ancient site. *"But wild beasts of the desert will lie there, and their houses will be full of owls; Ostriches will dwell there, and wild goats will caper there... I will also make it a possession for the porcupine, and marshes of muddy water; I will sweep it with the broom of destruction," says the LORD of hosts*" (13:21,23). Nora B. Kubie wrote: "The owl's hoot and the lion's roar were still heard in the ruins of Babylon" (Road to Nineveh, p. 272).

Between 627 and 585 B.C., Jeremiah prophesied that the materials of Babylon would not be used to build other places. *"They shall not take from you a stone for a corner nor a stone for a foundation, but you shall be desolate forever," says the LORD*" (51:26). Alexander the Great attempted to rebuild Babylon and make it a great capital for his vast empire. "None of it, however, was to be. Alexander died at Babylon in the grip of some sudden and mysterious disease in June of 323 B.C. after 12 years of rule and a mere 32 years of life."

In 1899 through 1917, the German expedition "had to clear away over a million cubic feet of rubble before they exposed the temple of Marduk" which was the tallest structure of ancient Babylon (Robert Koldewy, The Excavations At Babylon, pp. 299,300). Strangely, Jeremiah prophesied this would happen to the ruins of Babylon. *"Babylon shall become a heap, a dwelling place for jackals, an astonishment and a hissing, without an inhabitant. ...Her cities are a desolation, a dry land and a wilderness, a land where no one dwells, through which no son of man passes"* (51:37,43). "Though nearly all ancient cities are on prominent tourist routes, Babylon is not, and has very few visitors" (Peter W. Stoner, Science Speaks: An Evaluation of Certain Christian Evidences, p. 94). Edward Chiera adds concerning both Nineveh and Babylon: "Even scientifically-mined travelers who knew from the Bible of the existence of these two cities, and attempted to find them, several times passed over their very ruins without knowing it."

In surveying just seven of the above prophecy about Babylon Peter Stoner found that "The probable fulfillment of each item in the Babylonian prophecy was estimated as follows: (1) 1 in 10 [it will be destroyed]; (2) 1 in 100 [never be reinhabited]; (3) 1 in 200 [Arabs will not pitch their tents there]; (4) 1 in 4 [no sheepfolds there]; (5) 1 in 5 [wild beasts occupy the ruins]; (6) 1 in 100 [stones will not be removed from other buildings]; (7) 1 in 10 [men will not pass by the ruins]. This makes a probability for the whole prophecy of 1 in 5 x 10 to the ninth power" (Stoner, 95).

Conclusion

It was prophesied that Arabs would pitch their tents and shepherds would allow their flocks to visit

Matching: Nations in Prophecy

- | | | | |
|------------|--|----|----------------|
| 7. ___ | Egypt to become a desolation | a. | Ezek.26:5 |
| 8. ___ | Egypt to be a base nation | b. | Ezek. 26:8f |
| 9. ___ | No prince to rule Egypt | c. | Is. 13:21,23 |
| 10. ___ | Egypt's land less productive | d. | Ezek. 26:14 |
| 11. ___ | Babylonians to destroy Tyre | e. | Ezek. 26:12 |
| 12. ___ | Tyre's ruins cast into sea | f. | Ezek. 26:3 |
| 13. ___ | Tyre a place to spread fishing nets | g. | Is. 12:21-23 |
| 14. ___ | Many nations to come against Tyre | h. | Nahum 1:8; 2:6 |
| 15. ___ | Tyre never rebuilt | i. | Ezek. 30:12 |
| 16. ___ | Nineveh to fall via a flood | j. | Is. 13:17-19 |
| 17. ___ | Nineveh as dry as the wilderness | k. | Ezek. 30:13 |
| 18. ___ | Babylon to be like Sodom and Gomorrah | l. | Jer. 51:37,43 |
| 19. ___ | Babylon never to inhabited by men | m. | Is. 13:20 |
| 20. ___ | Babylon to be a home to owls and porcupine | n. | Ezek. 29:14,15 |
| 21. ___ | Babylon a place for jackals | o. | Ezek. 29:9,12 |

Application and Discussion:

22. Is it statistically probable that all these prophecies concerning the nations to have merely happened by coincidence? Explain.
23. Why is it important that all these prophecies against the nations to have been fulfilled?

Homework: Find someone this week and discuss the Bible's uniqueness in regard to fulfilled prophecy.

Textual Reliability and Durability of the Bible

The Reliability of the Biblical Text

How can anyone trust the Bible to be reliable? The Bible has been copied over and over again? It has been translated over and over again. Is it reliable enough to represent what the original writers intended to convey? After all, none of the original books written by the hands of the authors exist today.

Accuracy of the Scribes

Before the invention of the printing press most books had to be written by hand. A scribe was someone who copied the sacred texts by hand. However, scribes are human and prone to make mistakes? "Jews preserved it as no other manuscript has ever been preserved. With their massora they kept tabs on every letter, syllable, word and paragraph. They had special classes of men within their culture whose sole duty was to preserve and transmit these documents with practically perfect fidelity - scribes, lawyers, massorets. Who ever counted the letters and syllables and words of Plato or Aristotle? Cicero or Seneca?" (73/230,231).

Massive Manuscript Evidence

Overwhelming manuscript evidence exists demonstrating the New Testament has not been corrupted from its original form. All four Gospel accounts of Jesus' life were written within the time of the apostles who walked and talked with Jesus. All four of these Gospels are found in the Chester Beatty Papyri written in about 250 AD. They speak to the perfect accuracy and preservation of the Gospel for the past two thousand years. Over 5,300 manuscripts from the second to the fifteenth centuries all affirm the preservation of the New Testament. The John Ryland Fragment dated between 117-138 AD shows that the verses from John 18 have not been corrupted. Even if the New Testament had been corrupted by subsequent generations the 86,000 quotations of the New Testament by early Christian writers would have exposed this corruption and could be used to restore an accurate copy.

Few Variants

One Muslim writer argues, "It is admitted by the most learned men in the Hebrew language, that the present English version of the Old Testament contains at least 100,000 errors (this would amount to approximately three errors in every verse)" (8.9 Ron Rhodes).

The above statement does not represent the facts. There are about 200,000 errors or variants found among the thousands of different ancient copies of the Bible. Most of these are variant spellings or grammatical errors or a change in word order. To put these in a proper perspective of the 5,300 manuscripts of the New Testament one word with one letter change in 2000 manuscripts would equal 2000 variants. This alone would account for one percent of the 200,000 errors. Over ninety-nine percent of these errors or variants are insignificant and do not affect the meaning of the text. For example, if five variants are found among five manuscripts you would still be able to understand the meaning of the original writer.

- 1) Jesus Christ is the Son of God
- 2) Christ Jesus is the Son of God
- 3) Jesus Christ is God's Son
- 4) Jesus is the Son of God
- 5) Jesus Christ is hte Son of God

Because of its age and the number of manuscripts available for comparison the Bible is the most accurately transcribed book in the world.



Dependability of Manuscripts

Since we do not have the original biblical manuscripts (that is, the very pages upon which the authors wrote scripture), the question is, "how good are the copies?" The Bible has a stronger manuscript support than Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Caesar and Tacitus have for their writings. Furthermore, the Bible record is confirmed through the eyewitness credentials of the authors. Moses participated in the Exodus. Luke, who wrote both the Gospel of Luke and the Acts, was a first-rate historian. *"Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus"* (Luke 1:1-3; see Acts 1:1-3). Peter said, *"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 Pet. 1:16).

Secular historians like Josephus (100); Tacitus (120); Suetonius (110); and Pliny the Younger (110) all corroborate the teachings of the Bible in their writings. The early Christian writers often quoted from the Old and New Testaments. Someone has said that if all the manuscripts of the New Testament were lost that it could be replicated with great accuracy from the writings of Christians like Irenaeus, Tertullian, Julius Africanus, Clement of Rome, etc. All of them wrote before AD 250.

In 1947 a Beodoin shepherd boy threw a stone into a cave near Qumran on the Dead Sea. He heard the breaking of pottery. Upon investigation tall clay jars were found which contained scrolls dating back to 150 to 50 BC. Many of these manuscripts were of complete books of the Old Testament. These prove that the scribes were very trustworthy in faithfully transcribing the scriptures. There is a thousand year gap between the next oldest manuscript of Isaiah and yet both manuscripts are virtually the same. "The Old Testament books from Qumran are those which we find in our Bible. Minor textual variants occur as they do in any document which depends on hand copies for multiplication, but the Biblical texts may be regarded as essentially reliable" (Charles Pfeiffer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible*, p. 114).



Compared to Scriptures of World Religions and Denominational Creeds

This fact appears even more compelling when the Bible is compared to other religions writings. Consider the Koran, Vedas, Granth, Zend-Avesta, Analets, Toa Tasang, Torah, Koriki & Nihongi. All of these contradict, are difficult to understand, and are illogical. Yet the Bible is not a book of blatant contradictions.

The denominational creeds of men that are said to be based upon the Bible, such as, Baptist Manuals, Lutheran Catechism, Methodist Discipline, Book of Mormon, Presbyterian Confession of Faith, writings of Ellen G. White, etc. do contradict the Bible. However, these are the writings of mere men and not the inspired word of God. If these creeds say more than the Bible they add to the word of God. If they say less they subtract. If they say the same thing than why do you need them, let's just read the Bible.

The Bible even claims to have originated from the very breathe of God, *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work"* (2 Tim. 3:16,17).

An Indestructible Book

The Bible is the oldest book in the world ever to endure as it has. The Bible has been translated and re-translated and paraphrased more than any other book in existence. The Bible is the most widely circulated book in the world. More books are written about or based on the Bible. H.L. Hastings, in *Will the Old Book Stand?* wrote: "The Bible is a book which has been refuted, demolished, overthrown, and exploded more times than any other book you ever heard of..."

The Bible lays claim to it's durability or indestructibility. Jesus made this claim in Matthew 24:35, *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away."* God did not reveal His message to mankind only to have it lost to extinction. Peter contrasts the Word of God's longevity to that of the grass and flowers. *"All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, But the word of the Lord endures forever."* Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you" (1 Peter 1:24,25). Even the Old Testament scriptures are included

since Peter is quoting from Isaiah 40:8. The Word of God will even outlast the world itself and be used to judge man before the throne of God. *"He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him-- the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day"* (Jn. 12:48). *"And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books"* (Rev. 20:12).

The Bible is the most universally and viciously attacked literature in the world. It is virtually a miracle it even around at all. Some time during the reign of King Manassah the Book of Law was lost in the Temple and about a half a century later was found and given to King Josiah. About twenty-five hundred years ago, Jehoiakim, king of Judah, cut the roll of Jeremiah's prophecy with a penknife and then consigned it to the flames; but he did not destroy the inspired message of the "weeping prophet." Jehoiakim died in disgrace and as the prophet said, was given the "burial of an ass" (22:18,19). The Roman emperor "Diocletian destroyed meetings houses, forbid meeting for worship, and made a hobby of burning Bibles and killing their owners." Eusebus: "Royal edicts were published everywhere, commanding that the church be leveled to the ground the Scriptures destroyed by fire" (Church History, Book VII, ch. 1). "Multitudes...hastened to deny the faith and to surrender their copies of the Scriptures; many more bore the most horrible tortures and refused with their latest breath to surrender the Scriptures or in any way to compromise themselves." (Newman, Church History, p. 169).

The Roman Catholic Church attempted for many centuries to physically destroy Bibles. Pope "Innocent II" in 1199 had all French bibles burned at Metz and forbade the people to have one. The council of Terragona, in Spain, under Pope Gregory 9th in 1234 ordered the people to bring in their Bibles that they might be burned. William Tyndale was strangled and burned at the stake on October 6, 1536 at the command of Charles V The Jesuits in Bohemia boasted of burning 60,000 Bibles in a single year (1637). King Ferdinand & Queen Isabella (1474-1516) forbade the people to have the Bibles. 10,000 Bibles were burned at Graez in Steirmark on August 8, 1600 by order of Frerdiand II, the Empower.

As more and more of the common people became literate, the Roman Catholic Church's attempts to destroy the Bible appeared more and more futile, the Roman Catholic church began to forbid the reading of the scriptures. The Council of Trent forbade the reading of the Scriptures "in the vulgar tongue" except under the supervision of the priesthood. Pope Clement II, in 1713, condemned Bible reading as did Pope Pius 6th. Pope Gregory 16th on May 5, 1844 said those favoring bible societies were guilty of the greatest crime before God and the church.

Throughout the years men have made various attempts to refute the Bible's claim to divine inspiration. Thomas Payne made a bold statement that "in fifty years there will not be any Bibles save those in museums." He had written a book called *The Rights of Man* to expose the Bible and destroy its influence. Thomas Paine was a deist, a free-thinker who accepted "God" on a basis of reason and nature, but rejected revelation and all positive religion. He died crying, "O Lord God, help me, Jesus Christ, Help me!"

During the late 19th century Robert Ingersoll was known as the "Great Agnostic". This American lawyer and orator gained this title due to his outspoken anti-religious views. Although his father was a Congregationalist preacher, young Ingersoll developed a distaste for religion. Having gained great notoriety as a lecturer, he often received \$3,500 for an evening lecture. His speeches were often filled with irreverent statements against religion, God, and the Bible. Some of his anti-religious lectures were entitled "Some Mistakes of Moses", "Why I am an Agnostic", and "Superstition". In one speech Ingersoll held up a copy of the Bible and said, "In fifteen year's I'll have this book in the morgue." Fifteen years rolled by, Ingersoll had gone to the morgue and the Bible lives on.

The famed French writer and philosopher Voltaire wrote, "We will write an exposure of the Bible and soon it will only be found in the archives." He went on to say that in one hundred years the Bible would be an outmoded and forgotten book. In one hundred years Voltaire's home was owned and used by the Geneva Bible Society. Voltaire's most brilliant novel was "Candide". In this satirical and philosophical novel he studies the problem of evil and suffering and blames religion for the woes of the world. Several years ago 92 volumes of Voltaire's works - a part of the Earl of Derby's Library were sold for just \$2. Voltaire died

crying, "I am lost! I am lost! Oh, that I had never been born."

A group of Christians in France known as the Huguenots pictured the Bible and the Christian faith as an anvil surrounded by three vigorous blacksmiths, beneath which they put this inscription: "the more they pound and the more they shout, The more they wear their hammers out! The Bible's survivability in a hostile world is clearly demonstrated by the following poem entitled *The Anvil*.

Last eve I passed beside a black-smith's door
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
When looking in, I saw upon the floor
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.
"How many anvils have you had," said I.
"To wear and batter all these hammers so?"
"Just one", said he; then said with twinkling eye.
"The anvil wears the hammers out, you know".
And so I thought the anvil of God's word
For ages skeptics blows have beat upon.
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard.
The anvil is unharmed - the hammers gone?

Today these enemies of God's Word are gone, but the Bible is still living. A man's attack against it is just as temporary as the life of man. The Bible is just as powerful and enduring as its Author. This ever-enduring book is here to stay and to lead you in the way that God would want you to go. What may be even more important is the fact that it is just as relevant as it is enduring. Its message will never be made obsolete by the passage of time.

Questions:

1. Who were the scribes and what practices made their texts so reliable?
2. List some evidence which helps to verify the accuracy and legitimacy of the Gospel texts?
3. Are their errors and variants found among the various Biblical manuscripts? Would such prove that the Bible is filled with errors?
4. True False The Bible has a stronger manuscript support than Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Caesar and Tacitus have for their writings.
5. Give examples of Bible penmen who were eye-witnesses to the events they recorded.

6. True False Secular historians do not corroborate the information of the Bible in their writings.
7. Why are the Dead Sea Scrolls so important in confirming the reliability of the Bible?
8. Why is the Bible more reliable than the sacred text of world religions and the creeds of denominations?
9. What are some great and amazing facts about the Bible?
10. List the passages showing that the Bible claims to be durable and indestructible?
11. Which King cut up and burned scripture? Where is that scripture today? What happened to the king?
12. What did the Roman Catholic church do to remove the Bible from the hands and eyes of the common people?
13. List some skeptics who attacked the Bible. Where are they today?

Application and Discussion:

14. Compare or contrast the reliability of the Biblical text with that of other ancient texts.
15. How is the Bible like an anvil?

Homework: Find a skeptic of the Bible and show them how reliable and durable the Bible is.

Historical Exactness of the Bible

Throughout the years critics have attacked the Bible because it was filled with historical blunders. They viewed it as fictional and highly imaginative. At one time the records of secular history didn't mention some forty-seven kings found in the Bible.

If the book is inspired of God, we can expect it to be historically correct. If the Bible is not accurate historically, then can it be trusted to be accurate concerning spiritual matters? This lesson will demonstrate that the historical record of history and the Bible record are very compatible.

The Bible is not a history book. Nonetheless, whenever God's Word incidentally touches on any aspect of history, it is always accurate. "Discovery after discovery has established the accuracy of innumerable details, and has brought increased recognition to the value of the Bible as a source of history." (William F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religions of Israel*, pp. 127,128). Merrill Unger wrote, "Old Testament archaeology has rediscovered whole nations, resurrected important peoples, and in a most astonishing manner filled in historical gaps, adding immeasurably to the knowledge of Biblical backgrounds" (Unger's Bible Dictionary, p. 15). "Archeology is a real help in understanding the Bible. It yields fascinating information which illustrates what might otherwise be obscured, and in some instances confirms what some might otherwise regard as doubtful." (Paul E. Little, *Know Why You Believe*, p. 88).

Archaeology has in many cases refuted the views of modern critics. Thousands of sites showing some connection with the Old Testament period have been located in Bible lands. Dr. Robert Dick Wilson, former professor of Semitic philology at Princeton Theological Seminary, said, "After forty-five years of scholarly research in Biblical textual studies and in language study. I have come now to the conviction that no man knows enough to assail the truthfulness of the Old Testament. Where there is sufficient documentary evidence to make an investigation, the statements of the Bible, in the original text, have stood the test." Furthermore, the noted Dr. J.O. Kinnaman said, "of the hundreds of thousands of artifacts found by other archaeologists, not one has ever been discovered that contradicts or denies one word, phrase, clause, or sentence of the bible, but always confirms and verifies the facts of the Biblical record." If one discards the Bible as being unreliable, then he must discard almost all literature of antiquity.

Period of the Patriarchs

▶ **Babylonian and Assyrian accounts of creation**

These accounts are grossly polytheistic. Here are some translated phrases: "Seven tablets of creation", "chaos of water" called "the deep", "made the upper and lower firmaments", "established the heavens and the earth", on the sixth day "formed man out of the dust of the ground." The "seventh day" was appointed a "holy day", and "to cease from all business commanded".

▶ **Babylonian traditions of the fall of man**

Many references are found with regard to the "tree of life" in Babylonian traditions. The Story of Adapa contains many striking parallels to Adam: "Adapa, the seed of mankind" - "the wise man of Eridu" - "blameless" then he "offended the gods" - "through knowledge" - then he "became mortal" - "food of life he ate not" - the gods said, "he shall not rest" - "they clothed him with a morning garment". The Temptation Seal is an even closer parallel to the Biblical account: "in the center is the tree; on the right, a Man on the left a Woman, plucking fruit;" and behind her is a serpent standing erect.

▶ **Primeval Longevity**

Methuselah lived 969 years; Jared, 962 years; Noah, 950 years and Adam 930 years. Berosus, a Babylonian historian of 300 B.C. used tablets he found in the Babylon. The names of ten pre-flood kings each reigning from 10,000 to 60,000 years. It concludes with: "in the time of Xisuthros, the Great Deluge

occurred." The Weld Prism and Nippur Tablets name the ten Kings in a different language and a different type of chronology and calendar. At this point it states, "Then the Flood overthrew the land."

▶ **Evidence of the Flood**

The flood tablets were written between the flood and Abraham, found in Ur. They repeat expressions such as: "The flood"; "the age before the flood", and "inscriptions of the time before the flood."

▶ **Gilgamesh Epic**

Gilgamesh was 5th King of the Erech Dynasty. He went to see Utnapishtim, the Babylonian Noah. Utnapishtim relates to him the story of the flood. "The assembly of the gods decided to send a Deluge. They said, On the sinner let his sin rest. O man of Shuruppak, build a ship, save your life. Construct it with six stories, each with seven parts. Smear it with bitumen inside and outside. Launch it upon the ocean. Take into the ship seed of life of every kind. I built it. With all that I had I loaded it, and with silver, gold, and all living things that I had. I embarked upon the ship with my family and kindred. I closed the door. The appointed time arrived. I observed the appearance of the day. It was terrible. All light was turned to darkness. The rains poured down. The storm raged; like a battle charge on mankind. The boat trembled. The gods wept. I looked out upon the sea. All mankind was turned to clay, like logs floating about. The tempest ceased. The flood was over. The ship grounded on Mt Zaair. On the seventh day I sent out a dove; it returned. I sent out a swallow; it returned. I sent out a raven, it alighted, it waded about; it croaked; it did not return. I disembarked. I appointed a sacrifice. The gods smelled the sweet savor. They said, Let it be done no more" (Halley's Bible Handbook, pp. 76,77). This visit was quite possible considering that Noah lived 350 years after the flood and died only two years before the birth of his tenth generation, Abraham.

Period of the Patriarchs

▶ **Excavation of pre-flood cities**

The cities of Ur, Kish and Nineveh all existed before and after the flood, but the comparison doesn't stop there. An expedition to the ancient site of Ur in 1929 led by Dr. C.L. Woolley found "underneath several strata of human occupation, a great bed of solid water-laid clay eight feet thick without admixture of human relic, with yet the ruins of another city buried beneath it." The pre-flood civilization was found to be so different that Woolley said it represented "a sudden and terrific break in the continuity of history."

At the cite of Kish, Dr. Stephen Landon found a water-laid bed of clay five feet thick. The relics found in the pre-flood strata were of a different culture containing four-wheeled chariots, wheels of wood, and copper nails. Nineveh, also had a water laid bed of clay eight feet thick.

▶ **The Hittite Nations**

Forty-six times the Hittites are mentioned in the Bible (Joshua 3:10). No mention is made of them in secular history. Before the 20th century, many said this was a fictitious empire. A.A. Sayce suggested that he found Hittite writings in Syria. Hugo Winckler excavated Boghazkoy, the Hittite capital, in 1906. Over 10,000 texts were found. Now you can graduate with a doctorate degree in Hittitology at the University of Pennsylvania.

▶ **Cities visited by Abraham**

Shechem, Bethel, Haran, and Gerar have all been excavated and proven to be in existence at Abraham's time. Even his home town of Ur has been discovered and excavated. An abundance of evidence surfaced to disprove the notion that Abraham's era was one of ignorance. Found were receipts for business transactions; temple hymns; others were mathematical tables with formulae for calculating square and cube roots as well as simpler sums. All these were strangely contemporary. According to Millar Burrows "...his name appears in Babylonia as a personal name in the very period to which he belongs" (What Mean These Stones?, p.259).

▶ **Seven years' famine**

Sir Flinders Petrie in 1912 confirmed great granaries and Joseph's Palace. An Egyptian named Baba claims to have done for his city what the Bible said Joseph did for all Egypt (Gen. 41:47-57). Baba: "I collected corn, as a friend of the harvest god. And when a famine arose, lasting many years, I distributed corn to the city, each year of the famine."

Early Israelite Period

▶ Bricks of Pithon

Expeditions of Pithon in 1908 found the bricks of the lower courses were filled with good chopped straw; the middle with stubble that had been plucked up by the root; that the upper courses were of pure clay.

▶ Development of groups of Canaan

The Amorites came in 2,200 B.C. and were well established by the time of the wilderness wanderings (Num. 13:29). Philistines moved in about that time. Pottery from Rhodes and Cyprus found on a bed of ash. Invasion pushed the tribe of Dan north.

The Amarna Tablet to Pharaoh asked concerning a safe route for King Pella. "Ask Benjamin, Ask Tadua, Ask Joshua." Thus confirming the identity of a Hebrew in a position of authority - Joshua the leader of the Israelites.

▶ The Fall of Jericho

Jericho was excavated by Dr. John Garstang between 1930 and 1936. He found that the great wall was 12' thick and the outer wall 12' thick both being thirty feet high, fell "down flat". "As to the main fact, then, there remains no doubt: the walls fell outwards so completely that the attackers would be able to clamber up land over their ruins into the city. (The Foundations of Bible History; Joshua, Judges, p. 146). Walls normally fall inward. *"So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city"* (6:20).

Joshua chapter six and verse twenty-four says, "They burnt the city with fire". Garstang found charcoal and ash and pockets of white ash. God commanded them to "keep yourselves from the devoted thing" (6:18). Again, Garstang found storerooms full of food turned to charcoal by fire.

▶ Conquest of Canaan

Joshua *"burnt Hazor with fire"* (11:11). Once more the archeologist's finds confirmed this with ashes with burnt pottery of 1400 B.C.

About 1380 B.C. an Amarna Tablet from an Egyptian envoy in northern Palestine written to Pharaoh for help: "Let my Lord the King recall what Hazor and its king have already had to endure."

The Period of the United Kingdom

▶ David captured the Jebusite city

Kathleen Kenyon between 1961-1967 found the Jebusite walls. Captain Charles Warren found the water shaft through which Joab climbed to gain entrance to the city (2 Samuel 5:6-8).

▶ Solomon's Kingdom

It has been found that Solomon used the same architectural design for the gate ways of Hazor, Gezer and Megiddo (I Kings 9:15). Larger stables for up to 500 horses were found at Megiddo (I Kings 9:15,18). The defeat of the Philistines opened the way for trade on the Philistine coast which helped in getting in the material for building the Temple. An excavation of Ezion-Geber found a blast furnace supporting the claim of Solomon's casting of metals. "The finest and largest smelting and refining plant ever discovered in the ancient Near East has been unearthed at the northwest corner of the site. It was provided with a complicated system of flues and air channels almost modern in aspect and function" (Nelson Glueck, "Ezion-Geber," Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research, Oct., 1939, p. 10).

The Period of the Divided Kingdom

▶ Ahab, King of Israel

Shalmaneser (860-825 B.C.) mentions Ahab: "I destroyed -- 2,000 chariots and 10,000 men of Ahab King of Israel."

Ahab's house of Ivory has been discovered (I Kings 22:39). A Harvard University expedition found the ruins of this house. Its walls had been faced with ivory. This same expedition (1931-35) also found in the palace courtyard an open cistern or pool measuring thirty-two and a half feet by seventeen feet;

perhaps the one use to wash down Ahab's blood stained chariot (I Kings 22:38).

Jezebel "painted her eyes" (2 Kings 9:30). In the ruins of Ahab's ivory house was found saucers, small stone boxes. They contained traces of: kohl for black; turquoise for green; ochre for red, and a central depression for mixing.

▶ **Moabite Stone**

Following the death of Ahab, Moab rebelled against Israelite domination (Kings 3:1-4). The Moabite stone made in Moab in 850 B.C. was discovered by Klein in 1868. It is now at the Louvre in Paris. "I, Mesha, King of Moab, made this monument to Chemosh, to commemorate deliverance from Israel. My father reigned over Moab 30 years, and I reigned after my father. Omri, King of Israel, oppressed Moab many days, and his son after him. But I warred against the king of Israel, and drove him out and took his cities..." (Halley, 202).

▶ **Hazael, King of Syria**

Hazael overthrew the dynasty of Ben-hadad (2 Kings 8:7-15). An inscription of Shalmaneser King of Assyria says: "I fought with Ben-Hadad. I accomplished his defeat. Hazael, son of a nobody, seized his throne."

▶ **Jehu, King of Israel**

Layard found the "Black Obelisk" of Shalmaneser III; a block of black stone seven feet tall. At the top it shows Jehu bowing and paying tribute. This is the only depiction of a historical personage of Israel. It says, "the tribute of Jehu son of Omri, silver, gold, bowls of gold, chalices of gold, cups of gold, vases of gold, lead, scepter for the king, and spear-shafts, I have received." Jehu is the only king of Israel to be physically pictured on an archaeological discovery.

▶ **Sargon, King of Assyria**

In Isaiah 20:1 it reads, "In the year that Tartan came to Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against Ashdod and took it." Secular records contained no mention of this monarch of Assyria. However in 1843 Emile Botta discovered the palace of Sargon at Khorsabad. The information uncovered indicated Sargon to be one of Assyria's greatest kings. A inscription further confirms the Biblical record: "Azuri, king of Ashdod, planned in his heart not to pay tribute. In my anger I marched against Ashdod with my usual bodyguard. I conquered Ashdod, and Gath. I took their treasures and their people. I settled in them people from the lands of the east. I took tribute from Philistia, Judah, Edom and Moab" (Halley, 288).

▶ **Sennacherib's Invasion of Judah**

A monument called the Prism of Sennacherib found in Nineveh has contains a record of his conquest of Judah (701 B.C.) "As for Hezekiah the Judahite, he did not submit to my yoke. I laid siege to forty-six of the his strong cities, walled forts, and to countless villages in their vicinity, and conquered them..I drove out over 200,000 people...Hezekiah himself I made prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence, like a bird in a cage." Although there is no evidence in this record explaining his failure to capture Jerusalem or the destruction of his army.

Isaiah mocked Sennacherib in saying, "I will put my hook in your nose and my bit in your mouth..." (37:29), which is compatible with existing practices of those times.

▶ **Babylonian Destruction of Judea**

A Babylonian Chronicle read by Dr. Wiseman in 1955 describes in brief detail of Nebuchadnezzar's military campaign against Judea. It gives the exact date of the capture of Jerusalem as March 16, 597 B.C.

▶ **Return from Captivity under Cyrus**

Ezra begins his book with the proclamation of the Medo-Persian Cyrus. *"Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is among you of all His people? May his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel (He is God), which is in Jerusalem. And whoever is left in any place where he dwells, let the men of his place help him with silver and gold, with*

goods and livestock, besides the freewill offerings for the house of God which is in Jerusalem." (1:1-4). A parallel account is record on the clay cylinder of Cyrus (538 B.C.).

Conclusion

With every turn of the archaeologist's spade we continue to see evidence for the trustworthiness of Scripture. As quoted in the New York Times, Dr. Nelson Glueck said, "No archaeological discovery has ever been made that contradicts or controverts historical statements in Scripture." (Book Review, Oct. 18, 1956). Henry M. Morris observes: "...there exists today not one unquestionable find of archaeology that proves the bible to be in error at any point." (The Bible and Modern Science, p. 95). For example, in Acts 18:12 Luke speaks of Gallio as proconsul of Achaia and Paul was brought to his judgment seat. Evidence shows that Gallio was indeed at proconsul at this time. Although the Bible has been criticized for having many fictitious rulers not supported in other historical records, archeologist dug up the truth. They have proven the Hittites did exist and even had a vast empire; there was Babylonian ruler named Belshazzar and King Jehu is even seen depicted on the obelisk of Shalmaneser paying tribute.

Every day archeologists and historians are uncovering more and more evidence that the Bible is historically accurate. Every time a spade of an archaeologist digs into the earth it turns up evidence supporting the Bible. Could all of this been fabricated by Biblical writers? The evidence from archaeology says NO! If the Bible is so accurate historically how much more is it in guiding man spiritually.

Questions:

1. Should we expect the Bible to be historicly accurate? Why?
2. What role has archaeology played in demonstrating the historical exactness of the Bible?

Matching: Period of the Patriarchs

- | | | | |
|---------|------------------------------|----|---|
| 3. ____ | Babylonian Creation accounts | a. | Utnapishtim, the Babylonian Noah |
| 4. ____ | The story of Adapa | b. | Shows man, tree, snake, woman picking fruit |
| 5. ____ | Temptation Seal | c. | Shows seventh day a day of rest |
| 6. ____ | Nippur Tablets | d. | Lists Kings and time of Flood |
| 7. ____ | Gilgamesh Epic | e. | Comparable to Biblical Adam |
-
8. What evidence is their for the existence of the Hittites?
 9. True False Only a few of the cities said to be visited by Abraham were in existence during his lifetime.

10. What evidence is there for Joshua?

11. What does the archeology confirm about the Biblical destruction of Jericho?

Matching: Period of the divided Kingdom

- | | | | |
|----------|----------------------------|----|---|
| 12. ____ | Ahab's Ivory House | a. | Prism of Sennacherib |
| 13. ____ | Omri, King of Israel | b. | Inscription of Shalmaneser of Assyria |
| 14. ____ | Hazael coup on Ben-Hadad | c. | Cyrus Cylinder |
| 15. ____ | Jehu, King of Israel | d. | A Babylonian Chronicle |
| 16. ____ | Sargon, King of Assyria | e. | Harvard University expedition in 1931-35 |
| 17. ____ | Hezekiah, King of Judah | f. | Emile Botta found Sargon's palace in 1843 |
| 18. ____ | Capture of Jerusalem | g. | Moabite Stone |
| 19. ____ | Jews return from captivity | h. | Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser the III |

Application and Discussion:

20. How should a Bible student react to the mention of an individual or place or event for which there is no historical evidence?

21. What are some recent archeological finds which have been shown to support the historical accuracy of the Bible?

Homework: Find someone who may have doubts about the Bible and share with them information showing the historical exactness of the Word of God.

Scientific Precision of the Bible

The Bible and science are compatible with each other. The Bible makes no claim to be a textbook on science. However, when the Bible makes a statement touching any field of science it is scientifically accurate. Science and the Bible are like two locomotives running on parallel tracks they never collide. None of the writers of the Bible include the spurious scientific beliefs of their day. Though Daniel was "*skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge and understanding science*" (Daniel 1:4), he did not record any of that Babylonian science in the Bible. Actually, the Bible condemns false science "*O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called*" (1 Tim. 6:20).

Yet, how do we deal with contradictions between science and the Bible? Conflicts come between theories which are not proven laws of nature. The theory of evolution and the Big Bang theory are in direct conflict with the Bible explanation of origins. The word "science" is from the Latin word "scientia" meaning "knowledge" or "to know". A thing is scientific when it is known. Science really involves experimentation, observation and classification of facts. These theories are merely philosophies of how the world came to be not scientific fact. Neither they or creation can be demonstrated or observed scientifically. Both are accepted by faith.

Another reason for conflict are those religious doctrines that are not part of the Bible, but are mere theories invented by men. For example, it has been argued that the Bible teaches the universe is geocentric (earth-centered) instead of heliocentric (sun-centered). However, as demonstrated below, the Bible teaches just the opposite. Some understood the phrase "*the four corners of the earth*" (Isaiah 11:12) to be Biblical proof that the world was flat during the days when the explorers were first trying to sail around the world. Yet even today the phrase is still used to refer to the four points of the compass (north, south, east and west).

The language of the Bible was popular not scientific. It used the common vernacular of every day man and not the technical jargon of a specific science. Furthermore, the Bible language is phenomenal meaning "pertaining to appearances". For example, the Bible and modern man as well uses "sunrise" and "sunset" though neither of these terms are technically accurate. Remember, it is perfectly scientific to speak of things as they appear and not always as they are in fact.

The Bible's scientific accuracy demands an explanation. Not only are there no contradictions between true Biblical doctrines and genuine scientific teaching, the Bible is pre-scientific. It runs ahead of the scientists. The fact is, the same God who created this universe is the same God who wrote the Bible. God superintended the writing of the Bible to keep it from making scientific mistakes. Although other books written ages ago contained out-dated facts about science, the Bible is never obsolete. It is a book which is new and modern, even though it is old and ancient. Nature's Laws (which science is just now discovering) has the same author as the Bible, therefore, the two "books" cannot be contradictory.

Basic Principles of Science

The famous British philosopher, Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) stated that there are only five basic scientific principles: time, space, matter, force, and motion. This is what all else in science is based on. In the very first verse in the Bible we find: "*In the beginning [time] God [force] created [motion] the heavens [space] and the earth [matter]*" (Genesis 1:1).

Astronomy and the Bible

- **Rotundity of the Earth**

In 1543 A.D., Copernicus advanced the theory for the first time that the earth was round and rotated on its axis. Years later Galileo was accused by the Catholic Church as a heretic for promoting these views. Up until the time of Columbus everyone accepted that the earth was flat. Sailors feared sailing off the edge of the earth. In the third century B.C., Isaiah wrote: *"it is He who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in"* (40:22). This was 2,200 years before Magellan sailed around the world. The Hebrew word for "circle" is "khug" meaning "roundness" or "spherical".

Christ's second coming is to occur *"in the day"* and *"in the night"* (Luke 17:31,34). Some will be working others will be sleeping. The only explanation is that the earth was round and Christ who was also at creation knew this.

- **Suspension of the Earth in Space**

Job said over 4,000 years ago that God *"... hangs the earth on nothing"* (26:7b). Ancient man did not know this. Egyptians said it was supported by large pillars. Greeks said it was supported by Atlas' shoulders. They didn't tell us on what Atlas was standing. Our astronauts have taken beautiful photographs showing that it literally rest "upon nothing". Job did not reproduce the science of his day.

- **Heliocentric Solar System**

For many years critics derided Psalm 19:5,6 assuming the Bible taught the false science of geo-centricity, that is, the sun revolves around the earth. However, according to this passage the sun is not stationary. *"Which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices like a strong man to run its race. Its rising is from one end of heaven, and its circuit to the other end; and there is nothing hidden from its heat."* It is estimated to be moving through the space at approximately 600,000 miles per hour, in an orbit so large it would take approximate 200 million years to complete just one orbit. The sun is the source of energy for the earth "nothing hidden from its heat."

- **Empty Space In The North**

When astronomers point their great telescopes toward the North and behold a great empty space no stars or planets. They are unable to account for this. Yet, Job said, *"He stretches out the north over empty space..."* (26:7a). Scientist's did not discover this until the nineteenth century. How did Job know it thousands of years before without the aid of a telescope through which to make this astronomical discovery.

- **Innumerable Amount of Stars in Universe**

The Greek astronomer Hipparchus in 150 B.C. stated there were 1,026 stars. Three hundred years later Ptolemy counted 1,056 stars. In 1575 Brahe figured there were but 777 stars. The approximation of 1,005 was given in 1600 by Kepler. In the early 1800's it was believed that there were 400 million. Today Dr. Carl Sagan says the count is at 25 sextillion that's 25 with 21 zeroes added to it. And they are still counting.

The Bible has always agreed with modern science. God promised Abraham that He would make Him a great nation innumerable as the stars. *"And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered"* (Genesis 13:16). Again in Genesis 15:5 God promised, *"Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."*

Jeremiah said, *"As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, nor the sand of the sea measured, so will I multiply the descendants of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me"* (33:22). David said God could count them *"He counts the number of the stars; he calls them all by name. Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; his understanding is infinite"* (Ps. 147:4,5).

- **Different Types of Stars**

Paul states that *"There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory"* (1 Cor. 15:41). Science shows that there are blue stars, yellow stars, white dwarfs, etc.

Oceanography and the Bible

- **Paths of the Sea**

The book, *Matthew Fontaine Maury, Pathfinder of the Seas*, by C. L. Lewis and published in 1927 by the U.S. Naval Institute tells the remarkable story of the birth of a science straight out of the pages of the Bible. Murray was a naval officer in the early 1800s. His duties included the oversight of the charts and records of the Navy. Maury studied ships' records and logs. When Maury (1806-1873) was sick in bed. His son was reading to him from Psalm eight. When he read verse eight: *"the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas."* Maury stopped him and had him read it again. He "took God at His word". If God said there were paths of the sea then they must be there. At this time there were no sailing lanes nor charts of the sea. A few years after he regained his health Maury began to chart ocean winds and ocean currents these proved invaluable to the science of marine navigation. He came up with an idea to research. He made up forms for ships to fill out as they voyaged across the oceans. Thousands of these were collected over the next twenty years. Corked bottles were also dropped into the sea which carried the date and location where they were dropped. Ship captains were told to pick up any bottles they came across dropped from other ships. They were to record the day and location these were found. He discovered there is indeed paths in the sea. Today these ocean currents are caused by strong steady winds blowing from east to west and make for ocean going sea lanes which enable ships to travel faster while using less fuel. Murray became known as the father of modern oceanography. He was the first to recognize that the seas were circulating systems with interaction between wind and water. His book on *The Physical Geography of the Sea* (1855) is still considered a basic text for studies of the sort. In his home town of Fredericksburg, Virginia stands a statue to his honor. He is depicted holding his charts in one hand and the Bible in the other.

- **Ocean Trenches and Springs**

Man, in previous centuries, thought of the seashore as nothing but a shallow, sandy extension from one continent to another. In contrast to the beliefs of his day Job wrote, *"Have you entered the springs of the sea? Or have you walked in the search of the depths?"* (38:16). The Hebrew word "recesses" could also be translated "trenches". In 1873 a team of British scientists searching in the Pacific Ocean found a "recess" five and a half miles straight down. The deepest discovered trench in the Pacific Ocean is the Mariana Trench which is 36,198 feet or almost seven miles deep! While in the Atlantic Ocean the deepest discovered trench is the Puerto Rico Trench which is 28,734 feet deep. How did Job know this?

Meteorology and the Bible

- **The Hydrologic Cycle**

The Mississippi River, when running at normal rate dumps approximately 6,052,500 gallons of water per second into the Gulf of Mexico. Where does all that water go? The wisest man, Solomon explains *"all the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; to the place from which the rivers come, there they return again"* (Ecclesiastes 1:7). Later he gives greater detail: *"if the clouds are full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth; and if a tree falls to the south or the north, in the place where the tree falls, there it shall lie"* (Ecclesiastes 11:3). Even the prophet Amos enlightens us as to the hydrologic cycle *"He who builds His layers in the sky, and has founded His strata in the earth; who calls for the waters of the sea, and pours them out on the face of the earth-- the LORD is His name"* (Amos 9:6). As far back as Job the process of rain is explained, *"for He draws up drops of water, which distill as rain from the mist, which the clouds drop down and pour abundantly on man"* (Job 36:27,28).

Not until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries through the experiments of Pierre Perrault and Edme Mariotte did modern man comprehend this law of nature.

- **Treasures of the Snow and Hail**

According to Dr. Frank T. Shutt of the Canadian Department of Agriculture there is great agricultural value of snow and hail. As fertilizer he found that an average winter's snow is worth about \$15 an acre. In 1880, 15 year old Wilson Beatty photographed 6,000 flakes of snow. He discovered that no two were alike. Yet they were always arranged in six segments forming from three nuclei, with larger crystals growing

in size at the expense of smaller ones.

Job wrote of this thousands of years ago, *"have you entered the treasury of snow, or have you seen the treasury of hail"* (38:22).

Physics and the Bible

- **First Law Of Thermodynamics**

In the not too distance past a majority of renown scientist believed in spontaneous generation. Modern science has discounted this former "science". Today, the first law of thermodynamics has replaced it. "The total amount of energy in the universe remains constant. More energy cannot be created; existing energy cannot be destroyed. It can only be converted from one form to another...energy conversions of all kinds are notable for this reason: Whenever one takes place, a little energy escapes to the surroundings as heat...Heat can be transferred from the hot object to a cooler one, but it cannot on its own be transferred to the opposite direction" (Biology: The Unity and Diversity of Life, p. 92). This means creation of energy began at a fixed point in time and since then no energy has been created.

Moses wrote of this in his creation account. *"Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished"* (Genesis 2:1). Moses chose the Hebrew past definite tense for the verb "finished", indicating an action completed in the past, never again to occur. Creation was "finished" once and for all. Neither matter nor energy can be either created or destroyed.

- **Second Law Of Thermodynamics**

The earth is wearing out. Isaiah wrote of this *"Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look on the earth beneath. For the heavens will vanish away like smoke, the earth will grow old like a garment, and those who dwell in it will die in like manner; but My salvation will be forever, and My righteousness will not be abolished"* (Isaiah 51:6). Before him the psalmist spoke of the future of matter: *"They will perish, but You will endure; yes, they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will change them, and they will be changed"* (Psalm 102:26).

Years after the Bible stated this fact, modern science discovered the Second Law of Thermodynamics, also known as the Law of Increasing Entropy. Simply sated, it means that in time everything is running down, wearing out. This well-known fact of science clearly militates against the theory of evolution. For evolution to occur change must be outward and upward; but with entropy change is inward and downward. Evolution called for randomness to complexity and from disorder to order. Entropy is being demonstrated as just the opposite by the merely observing the disorder and breakdown of things in everyday life. Whereas entropy is a well-documented and demonstratable law of science, evolution is a hypothesis at best which cannot be demonstrated. No; evolution is not a scientific fact like the Law of Entropy.

- **Dimensions of the Ark**

Noah was instructed to build an ark of gopher wood. God told him "And this is how you shall make it: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits" (Genesis 6:15). 300 cubits in length about 450 feet; 50 cubits in width which is about 75 feet and the depth of 30 cubits being approximately 45 feet. Modern ship builders still use this same ratio because it makes for the best sea going vessel. The formula is: Height is 1/10 of the length and the width is 1/6th of the length or 30:5:3 ratio.

Medical Science and the Bible

- **Life In The Blood**

In 1615 William Harvey discovered the circulation in the blood and that life principle resided therein. A modern scientist writes, "This is the most comprehensive and up-to-date physiological generalization that has ever been made. The life and well being of every organ, gland, and tissue depends upon the condition of the blood stream". The red blood cells can carry oxygen (due to hemoglobin in the cells) and life is made possible. In fact, there are approximately 270,000,00 molecules of hemoglobin per cell! In George Washington's day they bled him to death using the system of "bloodletting" because they thought death was in his blood.

However, 3,000 years before Washington's death, the Bible said *"For the life of the flesh is in the blood,"* (Lev. 17:11).

- **Man Of Soil And Earth**

Moses said, *"man is formed of the dust of the ground,"* (Genesis 2:7). Again the Bible said, *"In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return"* (Genesis 3:19).

Science says, "The identical sixteen elements found in the human body are also found in ordinary soil of the earth." A science lecturer said, "if it were possible for the human body to instantly lose all of its electrical values, that the body would instantly fly into dust." When the body dies it decays and deteriorates into dust. *"Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it"* (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

- **Circumcised On Eighth Day**

God commanded the circumcision of the child on the eighth day, *"He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant"* (Genesis 17:12). Why the eighth day? This is when the blood clots. Unless the babe has a Vitamin K shot at birth it could bleed to death if circumcision was preformed on a day prior to the eighth.

Dr. Bert Thompson informs us that "In 1935 Professor H. Dam proposed the name 'Vitamin K' for the factor in foods which helped prevent hemorrhaging in baby chicks. We now know Vitamin K is responsible for the production of prothrombin by the liver. If Vitamin K is deficient, there will be a prothrombin deficiency and hemorrhaging may occur. Oddly enough, it is only in the 5th through the 7th days of the newborn male's life that Vitamin K begins to be produced (the vitamin is usually produced by bacteria in the intestinal tract). And, it is only on the eighth day that the percent prothrombin climbs above 100%. The only day in the entire life of the newborn that the blood clotting element prothrombin is above 100% is day eight". Only superhuman knowledge can account for the Biblical instruction to circumcise on the eighth day.

- **Dietary Restrictions On Unclean Animals**

Leviticus 11 contains rigid sanitation injunctions, including instructions not to eat pork. Porcine animals are scavengers, eating almost anything. In so doing, they are more prone to acquire bacterial and parasitic conditions than other animals. One of the parasites which porcine animals may have in their muscle tissues is the parasite *Trichinella spiralis* the cause of the disease we know as trichinosis a painful, sometimes fatal disease acquired by humans through the ingestion of undercooked or raw pork.

If an animal died by natural means it was not to be eaten. Mosaic Law states *"And every person who eats what died naturally or what was torn by beasts, whether he is a native of your own country or a stranger, he shall both wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. Then he shall be clean"* (Leviticus 17:15). Today it is against the law to take an animal that has died naturally into a slaughter house, to be prepared for human consumption. Certain animals carry diseases harmful to man (Lev. 2). Disease control under the Law of Moses was via quarantine (Lev. 13). Yet, how did they know?

Not too long ago in this century the "germ theory" was still an issue among doctors, some taking one side and some the other side of the question. Articles appeared in medical magazines affirming and denying the existence of such a thing as a living germ organism. In the last century we didn't know anything about germs as the source of infection and often a patient died because of infection, though the operation was successful. Now surgeons wear sterilized rubber gloves, a mask over the nostrils and mouth and sterilized surgical gowns. The breath carries germs into the atmosphere, and the atmosphere carries germs into the open wound, and the result would be infection.

How did the Jews know about germs?

Biology and the Bible

- **All Nations Of One Blood**

As Paul stood before the Athenians upon Areopagus he said *"And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and*

the boundaries of their dwellings" (Acts 17:26). Scientist can tell between animal blood and human blood, but not between the races of men. Transfusions can be given from one race of men to another without trouble. If all men descended from one man, they would all have the same blood.

All ape and monkey blood falls in the category of animal blood, not human. Nor is there a category of half-human or half-animal blood. Therefore, the scriptures harmonize with medical science, but evolution which declares man descended from monkeys or apes does not. Evolution does not provide any answers.

- **Law of Biogenesis**

According to creation, God designed procreation to be governed by the seed law. Every plant, animal and even man must reproduce *"after their kind"* (Genesis 1:21). You cannot plant corn seeds and end up with banana trees. A pair of elephants cannot reproduce a zebra. Modern Biology affirms the laws of hereditary and genetics.

On the other hand, the theory of evolution is in conflict with this law. "Organic evolution, as usually defined, means that gradual development of all forms of life by natural processes from complex chemicals in the earth's primeval ocean....But there is an overwhelming scientific objection right at the beginning, namely, the impossibility of accounting for the development of living organisms from nonliving chemicals in the first place. the notion of 'spontaneous generation' was widely held until demolished by Pasteur and others a hundred years ago. It is known beyond doubt that there is no such process occurring in the present world..." (Henry M. Morris, *The Bible And Modern Science*, pp. 33,34).

- **Male And Female Seed**

According to ancient biology, only the male carried the "seed of life". Women were just glorified incubators. One writer even suggested that the male seed could be deposited in warm mud and the result would be the same.

Moses wrote, *"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel"* (Genesis 3:15). Although Moses was schooled in all the knowledge of the Egyptians (Ac. 7:22), he did not incorporate into his writings the science of the Egyptians.

Conclusion

The points mentioned above are just the beginning for the Bible also demonstrates scientific foreknowledge about static electricity (Jer. 10:13); air having weight (Job 28:25); stars are said to give off signals indicating radio astronomy (Job 38:7) light is a particle for it has mass, a photon (Job 38:19); light can be split up into component colors (Job 38:24); lightning and thunder are related (Job 38:25); Arcturus and other stars move through space (Job 38:32); plants use sunlight to manufacture food (Heb. 11:3); etc.

It is amazing the Bible is so accurate in all these sciences. Even in our own time most of the books which discuss science are out-dated by the time they go to the press. The writers of the Bible such as Moses and Job could not have known these things of themselves. Their cultures were not advanced enough scientifically. The only logical explanation is that God revealed these Laws of Nature to them as He revealed His Spiritual Laws.

Though no one discusses whether or not the writings of Aristotle, Plato, Homer, and other early writers are scientifically accurate because the answer is so blatantly obvious, men are still discussing whether or not the Bible is scientifically accurate which is a tribute to the Book of books in itself.

Questions:

1. True False When the Bible makes a statement touching any field of science it is scientifically accurate.
2. True False The Biblical phrase "the four corners of the earth" (Isaiah 11:12) teach that the world is flat.

3. What does the Bible's pre-scientific knowledge indicate?

4. Fill in the banks with the basic scientific principles: *"In the beginning _____ God _____ created _____ the heavens _____ and the earth _____"* (Genesis 1:1).

Matching: Astronomy and the Bible

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 5. _____ Rotundity of the Earth | a. Gen. 13:16; 15:5; Ps. 147:4,5 |
| 6. _____ Suspension of Earth in Space | b. 1 Cor. 15:41 |
| 7. _____ Heliocentric Solar System | c. Job 26:7a |
| 8. _____ Empty Space in the North | d. Is. 40:22; Luke 17:31,34 |
| 9. _____ Innumerable Amount of Stars | e. Ps. 19:5,6 |
| 10. _____ Different Types of Stars | f. Job 26:7b |
11. Why and how did Matthew Fontaine Maury become the father of modern oceanography?

 12. Calculate the difference in years between the discovery deep ocean trench in 1873 and Job 38:16.

 13. List the Biblical writers who mention the hydrological cycle.

 14. What scientific law does Genesis 2:1 support?

 15. List the passages which support the Second law of Thermodynamics or the Law of Entropy.

16. How are the dimensions of the Ark used today?

Matching: Anatomy/Biology and the Bible

- | | | | |
|----------|----------------------------|----|--|
| 17. ____ | Life is in the Blood | a. | Vitamin K production starts on 8th day |
| 18. ____ | Man made from soil | b. | Human blood is from one original man |
| 19. ____ | Circumcised on 8th day | c. | Pigs have the parasite <i>Trichinella spiralis</i> |
| 20. ____ | Do not eat unclean animals | d. | Ancient science had males only having seed of life |
| 21. ____ | All nations of one blood | e. | William Harvey in 1615 |
| 22. ____ | Reproduction after kind | f. | Law of Biogenesis |
| 23. ____ | Male and Female seed | g. | The body and soil share the sixteen elements |

Application and Discussion:

24. How should a believer the Creation account respond to the Big Bang Theory and the theory of evolution?

25. How should a believer in the inspired Word of God respond when there is an apparent contradiction between modern science and the teachings of the Bible.

Homework: Share the Bible's unique scientific precision with a skeptic this week.

Virgin Birth of Christ

A December of every year there is evidence that many regard Christmas as the birth of Christ. For some this is the only time of year (other than Easter) that recognition is given to the Son of God. However, no where in Scripture are we commanded to worship the Christ - Child. Furthermore, we really don't know the date of His birth. If God wanted us to know, He would have made sure that it would have been revealed to us with all the other vital information we need to know do properly observe such a Holy Day. We do know something very significant about His birth. He was miraculously born of a virgin. He is the only babe the world has ever known who did not have a father after the flesh. That unique birth stands today as a credible testimony that Jesus is all that He claimed to be: namely the Son of God.

Prophecies of the Virgin Birth

After Adam and Eve's sin in the Garden, God gave the first in a long line of Messianic prophecies. *"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel"* (Gen. 3:15). The seed of woman is Christ. The Savior of mankind was to be born of a woman. Christ was to receive a minor injury (the cross) and Satan a fatal blow (loss of power through sin and death). In the hour that he was born he fulfilled 5,000 years of prophecy. What is even more significant is that we read of the seed of man - Abraham, Isaac, Jacob - but never do we read of the seed of woman, except in this instance. Why did this prophecy not mention the seed of man? Because Jesus was not of the seed of men, but of only a woman, a virgin named Mary.

Modern critics of Isaiah 7:14 have attacked a passage of prophecy which for generations has been recognized as a Messianic prophecy. *"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel"*. However, Matthew makes it clear that this prophecy was fulfilled in the virgin birth of Christ. While Joseph was considering what to do about Mary who he had learned was pregnant, an angel appeared to him and said, *"Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us"* (Matt. 1:20b-23) Immanuel means "God with us", thus speaking of the incarnation of Christ.

Another prophecy which relates to the birth of Christ is Isaiah 9:6,7. *"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this"*. A man child would be born of a physical birth. He would be a fleshly descendant of David. He would bear the government upon his shoulders as King on the throne of David henceforth forever. He would be the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father. Such a description does not fit Hezekiah nor any other physical king and certainly no child of Isaiah's.

Evidence From the Gospels and Paul

Joseph was betrothed to Mary, when he learned she was pregnant (Matt. 1:18). Joseph had not had any sexual contact with Mary. However, a betrothal was a legal engagement to be married that could be broken only by a bill of divorcement. Joseph wanted to put Mary away for he knew the child was

not his (1:19). In the Old Testament, unfaithfulness upon the part of a betrothed woman was punished by death (Dt. 22;23,24). To put her away privately (give her a bill of divorce) which the law of Moses allowed him to do (Dt. 24:1). Joseph determined to deal with her out of mercy - not stern justice which would have called for capital punishment. Furthermore, without two or three witnesses and the adulterous man the death penalty could not be applied to this situation. The scene where Joseph decides to privately divorce Mary is added to give even greater stress to the miraculous conception. The angel said that the baby was of the Holy Ghost (1:20). According to the angel, the Son of God was to be named "Jesus" meaning Savior, it is a form of Joshua (1:21). Many mothers named their sons such hoping that their son would be a savior. However, only Jesus Christ was born of a virgin as prophesied. Again, note that the Angel quotes Isaiah 7:14 as being fulfilled (1:22). An important detail is given related to the prophecy. After Joseph took Mary as his wife, *"he knew her not till she had brought forth a son"* (1:25). Thus, Mary was a virgin at conception and she was a virgin at birth also.

While Matthew's account of the virgin birth of Jesus focuses on Joseph's point of view, Luke wrote concerning Mary's viewpoint (1:26-35). His repetition of *"virgin"* in verse 27 would have appeared redundant in the first century since all betrothed Jewish women were considered virgins. However, he repeats this word to emphasize the miraculous conception of Jesus.

The angel informed Mary that this child was to be *"Son of the Highest,"* (1:32). She pointed out that she had not had marital relations with any man (1:34). If you think Joseph was dumbfounded, just think how much faith Mary had to have all throughout her pregnancy. The only explanation for her pregnancy was a miraculous event of God through the Holy Spirit (1:35). Mary accepts in faith, saying, *"Be it unto me, according to Thy word"* (1:38).

Although Mark's Gospel does not include an account of Christ's birth, it by no means weakens the evidence for the virgin birth. The scope of Mark's Gospel does not require the discussion of these things. He begins with: *"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God,"* (Mk. 1:1). Although the usual designation in those days was to call Jesus the son of Joseph, Mark only refers to Him as the *"Son of God"* and the *"son of Mary"* (6:3).

In John's Gospel there is no express mention of the virgin birth. Yet, John does tell us of the incarnation of the Christ. He tells us of the *"only begotten of the Father"* who *"became flesh"*. God sent His Son to this World, the means of sending Him was His birth of a virgin.

"All the Gospels which deal with the childhood of Jesus tell of the virgin birth, and those which do not mention it say nothing to contradict it rather use language that cannot be understood without assuming it" (Goodpasture, p. 80,81).

Paul alludes to the virgin birth of Christ. *"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,"* (Gal. 4:4). The term *"made"* carries the idea of divine creation is involved (Jn. 1:1,3,14; Phil. 2:-7; Rom. 1:3). He was created by the divine of a woman. The term was fitting for Paul to use because Christ was made by God in the womb of Mary, not by a man.

Purpose of the Virgin Birth

◆ False Reasons

Some denominations teach that Christ was born of a virgin, so that He could be born sinless. They believe that all men are born with the sin of Adam, thus inheriting sin from the forefather. The Savior of the world from sin could not have sin, so by being born of a virgin He did not inherit the sinful nature of Adam. Consider the following quotes:

"Because He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, His substance was pure and immaculate, and without original sin. To save sinners, it was imperative for Him to be sinless, hence, the necessity of a virgin birth."

"As Mary was truly His mother, an additional miracle must have been necessary to prevent the transmission of the taint through her, and this subsidiary miracle took place within her womb".

"Since our race is contaminated with sin, a miraculous entrance into the world would be required, hence the virgin birth. Moreover, if Jesus had been sired by Joseph, He would not have been able

to claim the legal rights to the throne of David. According to the prophecy of Jer. 2:28-30, there could be no king in Israel who was a descendant of King Jeconiah, and Mt. 1:12 relates that Joseph was from the line of Jeconiah. If Jesus had been fathered by Joseph, He could not rightly inherit the throne of David, since he was a relative of the cursed line."

It is true that the Savior had to be a sinless sacrifice for all mankind. However, the New Testament links Jesus' sinlessness to His obedience, not to an unpolluted human nature. Second, there is no necessary connection between the Virgin Birth and the doctrine of Christ's sinless human nature. Most of all, no descendent of Adam has ever inherited the guilt of Adam. *"The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself"* (Ezek. 18:20).

Another false reason involves the view that sex in and of itself is sinful or somehow tainted. This doctrine also holds to the perpetual virginity of Mary. Yet, Joseph and Mary obviously had children together (Mt. 13:55,56). The Hebrew writer claimed, *"Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled;..."* (Heb. 13:4).

This time of year many claim that the Christ-Child born of a virgin is to be worshiped through the man made holiday - Christmas. However, we do not know when He was born. We have never been commanded to worship Him as a babe in swaddling clothes. He is not the reason for the season. Instead, we are commanded to remember His death on the cross in the memorial supper on the first day of the week.

◆ **To Fulfill Prophecy**

The purpose of the prophecies of the virgin birth was to point out to mankind that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. Mary and Joseph were able to identify with certainty that Jesus is the Christ. It was a sign of the time of the fulfillment of God's promises of grace to all men.

◆ **Supernatural Birth for a Supernatural Being**

How does God become man? How can a man claim to be God? Only the virgin birth of Christ could adequately provide an answer to these questions. That unique birth stands today as a credible testimony that Jesus is all that He claimed to be. Yet, Jesus did not come into existence by that miraculous conception and virgin birth. Jesus is eternal, He has always existed (Jn. 1:1-3,14). By the virgin birth Jesus did not become God's Son. He was God's Son always, it is an eternal relationship.

A common objection to the virgin birth is that it is a biological impossibility. C.S. Lewis responded to this criticism:

"Thus you will hear people say, 'The early Christians believed that Christ was the son of a virgin, but we know that this is a scientific impossibility.' Such people seem to have an idea that belief in miracles arose at a period when men were so ignorant of the course of nature that they did not perceive a miracle to be contrary to it. A moment's thought shows this to be foolish, with the story of the virgin birth as a particularly striking example. When Joseph discovered that his fiancée was going to have a baby, he not unnaturally decided to repudiate her. Why? Because he knew..the ordinary course of nature women do not have babies unless they have lain with men...that a virgin birth is contrary to the course of nature. And Joseph obviously knew that" (Miracles, p. 48).

The Virgin Birth of Christ is not a biological impossibility, but a miracle. There is no way of explaining this event through natural laws. As a matter of fact, biology further demonstrates the uniqueness of this miracle.

In the creation of life within the womb the seed of a man and the seed of a woman are both necessary. All cells of a human have 46 chromosomes which contain the genetic material for development.

In the woman's seed or egg there are 23 chromosomes and in the male's spermatozoon there are 23. Thus, half of an unborn babe's genes come from the mother and half from the father. At conception these two sets of chromosomes pair up. The male chromosomes from the father with the corresponding chromosomes from the mother. The 23rd pair of chromosomes determine the sex of the child. They look

like a "X" and a "Y". If an X pairs with an X the child will be female, thus XX. If the X pairs with a Y the child will be male, XY. Since the mother's gamete only carries with it an X and the male carries a Y then the male gamete determines the gender of the child. Since Mary knew not a man how did she conceive a male child? Answer: the Holy Spirit provided the Y chromosome miraculously.

◆ **To Distinguish the Coming Christ from All Others Conceived Miraculously**

Isaac, Jacob, Samson and Samuel were all born of previously barren women because of God's intervention. In no case was the hero's mother a virgin. The encounter of the mothers of Jesus and John in Luke 1:39-56 illustrate this point. The future ministry of the Messiah is set in bold contrast with the one who would prepare the way. In every case Jesus is exalted to the higher place. John was born naturally to human parents, while in 1:27 Luke twice repeats the designation of Mary as a "virgin." The angelic messenger calls John "filled with the Holy Spirit" and "in the spirit and power of Elijah," while Jesus is "Son of the Most High," inhabiting "the throne of his father David...forever" (vv. 15-17; cf. vv. 32,33). At John's birth Zechariah praises God (68-79) but at Jesus' birth the "heavenly host" sings glory to God (2:13,14). John was not to be confused with the Messiah.

◆ **To Demonstrate the Manner of the Incarnation**

"The doctrine of the incarnation is the doctrine that Christ was both wholly human and wholly divine. The doctrine of the virgin birth is the doctrine of the how that Jesus was both human and divine. A belief in the doctrine of the incarnation would have little depth if separated from the doctrine of the virgin birth, or the how of the incarnation. The doctrine of the virgin birth specifies where and the when of the incarnation."

The virgin birth of Christ shows us the how deity became human. How Jesus became the God-Man.

Christ was not born of a virgin so we could worship a babe in a manger once a year or so millions would worship the virgin Mary. Christ was born of a virgin to fulfill prophecy and point out to all men that He was the incarnate Son of God. We thus, worship a risen Savior each Lord's Day, not a swaddling babe each Christmas.

Arguments Against the Virgin Birth

The virgin birth of Christ is not accepted by all those who call themselves Christians. Quite a few modern theologians have made some rather bold statements in rejecting the miraculous birth of the Son of God.

- Henry Emerson Fosdick: "Of course I do not believe in the virgin birth or in that old fashioned doctrine of the atonement and I do not know any intelligent Christian minister who does?"
- "Whoever makes the further demand, that an evangelical Christianity shall believe in the words 'conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary,' wittingly constitutes himself a sharer in a sin against the Holy Spirit of the true Gospel as transmitted to us by the Apostles and their school in the Apostolic age" (Salau, *The Birth of Jesus Christ*, p. 32).
- "...but later reflection has convinced me that in the point of fact it operates as a hindrance to spiritual religion and a real living faith in Jesus. The simple and natural conclusion is that Jesus was the child of Joseph and Mary, and had an uneventful childhood" (R.J. Campbell, *The new Theology*, p. 104).

Why reject the virgin birth? What better way is there for Satan and his false teachers to begin to undermine the deity of Christ. Belief in the virgin birth is essential to our faith. You cannot get past the first page in the New Testament without being faced with the doctrine of the virgin birth.

In the earliest centuries of Christianity, "Christians" themselves held different opinions about the origin of Jesus. The Gnostics contended that Christ descended directly from heaven and so was never truly human. The Arians denied his deity, that at his baptism Jesus was "adopted" as Son of God. For the most part early Christian writers accepted the virgin birth and considered those who rejected it to be heretics. Ancient critics were hushed by the Nicene Creed, which declares "I believe in...Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord, conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary."

Modern arguments state that the story of the virgin birth was adapted from conception myths of other cultures. Supernatural beginnings are claimed for Zarathustra, Buddha and Loa Tzu, all founders

of religions. In the Mediterranean world it was said that the god Apollo begat men was varied as Plato, Pythagoras and Augustus. Zeus-Ammon was said to be the father of Alexander the Great. In most of these stories virginity has no emphasis. Only in the birth of Buddha is there mention of a virgin, however, this story is post-Christian.

◆ **Does “Almah” mean “Virgin”?**

One of the most common modern arguments attacks the use of Isaiah 7:14 as a genuine prophecy of the virgin birth is that “almah” does not mean “virgin”. Isaiah said that the virgin (ha almah) would conceive and bring forth a son whose name shall be Immanuel or "God with us" (Is. 7:14). The claim is made that “almah” simply means a “young woman”. If a genuine virgin was intended then the word “bethulah” would have been used. The Revised Standard Version (RSV) and the New English Bible have translate “almah” as “young woman”.

What does the Hebrew word “almah” mean? It is used here and in six other places (Gen. 24:43; Ex. 2:8; Ps. 68:36; Pr. 30:19; Can. 1:3; 6:8). The KJV and ASV translators only used "young woman" once. This is in Genesis 24:43 and they had already designated Rebekah as a maiden, a virgin or one not known by a man in Genesis 24:16 which is a translation of the Hebrew word "bethulah". Rebekah the virgin (bethulah) is referred to as an "almah".

According to Young’s Analytical Concordance “almah” is defined "Concealment, unmarried female." One whose body had been concealed from all men. According to "The Virgin Birth" an article by Guy N. Woods, "the term (almah) is never applied to a married woman, never designates a non-virgin, never alludes to an impure woman." (GOSPEL ADVOCATE, Vol. CXV, No. 8, Feb. 22:1973).

In 285 B.C. some of the world’s best scholars gathers in Alexandria, Egypt and translated the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek. This translation is called the Septuagint after the 70 scholars who translated this great work. They chose the Greek word "parthenos" for "almah". This Greek word always means "virgin." Cruden’s defines it as "a young unmarried woman who had preserved the purity of her body." Certainly these scholars were not purposely trying to defend the historical fact of the Virgin Birth, for it was centuries before it was to occur.

So, the 70 scholars of the Septuagint, 47 scholars of the KJV, 101 scholars of the ASV of 1901 knew the meaning of the Hebrew word "almah". They translated it virgin. Why then, did the 32 translators of the RSV use “young woman” in Isaiah 7:14. They did so because these translators were liberal theologians or modernist. A modernist does not believe that men inspired by the Holy spirit wrote Scripture; he does not believe that Jesus is the Son of God; and he does not believe the miracles recorded in Scripture. Several of the RSV translators readily admitted they did not believe the virgin birth.

- Edgar J. Goodspeed: "The Virgin Birth is simply an oft repeat Ancient Greek way of describing moral sonship with God."
- Millar Burrows: "I have never believed that the virgin birth of Jesus was an essential article of the Christian faith."
- According to W.W. Otey in his book, Christ or Modernism "All [RSV translators, DRV] say they do not believe that Jesus was born of a virgin, but that he had a natural father" (45).

Perhaps, the argument can easily be settled if we rely on the Holy Spirit’s interpretation of Isaiah 7:14. The divinely inspired apostle, Matthew, wrote in his Gospel that the prophecy was fulfilled in Mary. Mary was a young woman, but a son born of a young woman is not a prophecy, but a well know fact. Young woman often give birth to sons. The prophecy can only refer to a unique, miraculous event, such as a virgin birth. To deny the idea of the virgin birth in this Old Testament passage is to take issue with the Holy Spirit. This birth was to be a sign. A sign that Jesus was the “Immanuel”. What "sign" or unique significance would there be in a young married women bearing a child? This occurs every few seconds.

◆ **“He Was Born of Fornication”**

This was a statement made by some of the Pharisees (Jn. 8:30-59). Note, that these same accusers had sought to kill Jesus (v. 40). They tried to stone Him (v. 59).

The ancient infidel, Celsus, said to Roman soldier named "Pantheras" was actually Jesus' father.

(I guess that is where His blond hair and blue eyes came from). Mary was the one person who could know whether this was true or not. Yet she stood and witnessed Jesus' death on the cross. She saw Him die for saying He was the Son of God. Is this the action of the mother toward her beloved son? All she had to do is make known who His father was and save His life.

Conclusion

What is the big deal if some do not believe in the virgin birth of Jesus? First, to deny the doctrine of the virgin birth is to deny the trustworthiness of the Bible. If the prophecy is false, by what right do we accept as true any other prophecy about Christ? If Matthew's account in his Gospel is false, by what reason should we accept as true any other story about Christ? Second, to deny the virgin birth is to deny that we have a Savior. It is His incarnation by the virgin birth that demonstrates who God sent to be a Savior of mankind. If Jesus is just another man, He is not a savior. Instead, He is just another moral philosopher or religious teacher. Finally, to deny this miracle casts doubt upon all Jesus' miracles. Belief in Jesus requires belief in the supernatural events involved in His life (Jn. 14:11). John explained this well at the end of his Gospel. *"And truly 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"* (20:30,31). If anyone does not believe in the virgin birth, how can they possibly believe Jesus is the "Immanuel" meaning "God with us."

Questions:

1. What was the first Messianic prophecy? Explain how it was fulfilled.
2. What does Isaiah 7:14 prophecy about the coming Messiah? Where was it quoted and by whom as being fulfilled?
3. How does Isaiah 9:6-7 demonstrate that the child born was to be deity?
4. Why did Joseph not have Mary stoned for adultery but merely divorced her?
5. At one point did Mary's virginity end?
6. What phrases from the angel's announcement indicate that the baby Jesus was to be the Messiah, the Son of God?
7. Why does Galatians 4:4 allude to the virgin birth?

8. What false reasons are held by many concerning the purpose of Christ's virgin birth?
9. What are the four reasons Jesus was to be born of the virgin?
10. Why is the seed of both a man and woman essential to the formation of a fetus especially male?
11. Who else in the Bible had miraculous conceptions or births? How are they different from Jesus?
12. Is there any evidence that any of the pagan gods were born of a virgin? Explain.
13. Does "almah" mean "virgin"? Explain.
14. Which translation has "young woman" instead of "virgin" in Isaiah 7:14? Why?
15. Who were the first to claim that Jesus was born of fornication?

Application and Discussion:

16. Some claim the spontaneous cloning of a woman's seed in theory could result in a virgin becoming pregnant. Why does this argument not apply to Jesus?
17. How does the rejection of the virgin birth affect one's belief in the inspired Word of God and the deity of Jesus?

Homework: Share the prophecy and fulfillment of the virgin birth of Christ as a means to teach the Gospel.

The Deity of Christ

Did people of Jesus time misunderstand the nature of Jesus and His claims? Did they think that He was Deity and thus have perpetuated this false notion through out the ages until this generation? NO! The fact is Jesus made it very clear that He was not just some great teacher or prophet but the Son of God. The One who was equal to God.

◆ **Jesus Claimed to Be God**

On many occasions Jesus claimed to be Jehovah (Jn. 8:58; 12:41; 20:28). He also claimed to be *"equal with God"* (Jn. 10:30,33). The Jews understood the Jesus was claiming to be God. *"Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God"* (Jn. 5:18). They picked up stones to kill Him for blasphemy. Jesus claimed to be equal with God in other ways. He also put His words on a par with God's. Jesus warned, *"He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day"* (Jn. 12:48). He equated Himself with God by claiming that to either know, see or hate Him was know, see or hate the Father. Jesus said, *"You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also"* (John 8:19). *"And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me"* (John 12:45). *"He who hates Me hates My Father also"* (John 15:23).

Jesus claimed time and time again to be God. Not just a son of God, but the Son of God. A business man once put it this way: "For anyone to read the New Testament and not conclude that Jesus claimed to be divine, he would have to be as blind as a man standing out doors on a clear day and saying he can't see the sun."

◆ **God Claimed Jesus to Be His Son**

God the Father, Himself testified that Jesus was His Son. Before the conception of Jesus in the virgin Mary the angel sent by God *"said unto her, 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God'"* (Lk. 1:35). When Jesus came up out of the water having been baptized by John *"a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'"* (Matt. 3:17). At the mount of Transfiguration, Peter, James and John heard the voice from heaven speak in reference to Jesus, *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"* (Matt. 17:5).

◆ **Jesus Possessed the Attributes of Deity**

If He is really deity, then He must possess distinctive characteristics which only God possesses. To be deity one must be all-knowing, all-powerful, present everywhere, and eternal. Jesus claimed and demonstrated that He was all-knowing or omniscience. Jesus knew the thoughts of others. *"But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, 'Why do you think evil in your hearts?'"* (Matthew 9:4). He also knew when all that He accomplished was complete. *"After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I thirst!'"* (John 19:28).

Another divine attribute is His physically and spiritual omnipotence or all-powerfulness. Concerning His life, Jesus said, *"Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."* (John 10:17,18).

Jesus had all things within His observation. *"Nathanael said to Him, 'How do You know me?' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you'"* (John 1:48). Like God Jesus is omnipresent.

Jesus claimed to possess eternal life. To the Jews, Jesus said, *"Most assuredly, I say to you,*

before Abraham was, 'I AM'" (John 8:58). In His prayer, on the night in which He was betrayed Jesus said, "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was" (John 17:5).

◆ **Jesus Received Worship as God**

According to the Bible only God or deity is to receive worship (Ex. 20:1-4; Dt. 4:5-9). Jesus, Himself, said that only God is to be worshiped. "Then Jesus said to him, 'Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve'" (Matthew 4:10). In the New Testament, Paul and Barnabas refused to receive worship because they were mere men (Acts 14:15). Even angels refused to be worshiped (Rev. 22:8,9). Even so both men and angels are said to worship Jesus. From the time the wisemen came to worship Him (Matt. 2:11) till the throne scene of Revelation 5.

Jesus accepted worship on numerous occasions, showing His claim to be God. A healed blind man believed Him to be the Son of God and worshiped Him (Jn. 9:35-38). A healed leper worshiped him (Matt. 8:2). After He stilled the storm, "Those in the boat worshiped Him saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God'" (Mt. 14:33). A group of Canaanite women worshiped Jesus (Mt. 15:25) as did the mother of James and John (Mt. 20:20). Jesus even received worship from demons who recognized Him as the Son of God, such as, the Gerasene demoniac (Mk. 5:6). Jesus accepted worship from Thomas as he confessed Jesus to be "My Lord and My God" (Jn. 20:28). After His resurrection He was worshiped. "And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, 'Rejoice!' So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him" (Matt. 28:9) and later at His ascension into Heaven "when they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted" (Matt. 28:17). This acceptance of worship by Jesus is proof positive that He considered Himself equal to God. Otherwise, He would have been playing the hypocrite because of His argument made to Satan that only God is to be worshiped.

◆ **Jesus was Sinless**

His ability to live up to His teaching separates Him from all other great teachers. He alone was completely faultless with regard to doing the Father's Will. "And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him" (Jn. 8:29). Jesus even challenged men to convict Him of sin. "Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?" (John 8:46). Pilate's verdict after extensive examination of Christ was: "I find no fault in Him". The centurion who watched Him and heard Him on the cross said, "Truly, this was the Son of God" (Matthew 27:54). His perfect life promotes His perfect doctrine. He teaches against revenge even though He was greatly persecuted. He taught forgiveness even in His dying prayer: "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

◆ **Christ Fulfilled Prophecy Concerning His Deity**

According to the Bible the Messiah was to be a savior. The angel told Joseph concerning Mary "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). "Jesus" means "savior." Isaiah predicted "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Is. 7:14). Jesus was to be called "Immanuel, which is translated, "God with us" (Matt. 1:23). The Hebrew writer quoted Psalm 45:6 as being fulfilled in Jesus the Son of God "But to the Son He says: 'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom'" (Heb. 1:8).

Hundreds of prophecies about Christ were written hundreds of years before He was born. The fulfillment of these demonstrates Jesus was the Son of God. There is no way one man could by mere coincidence fulfill all of these in a mere thirty-three years of life. By taking just seven prophecies we can clearly see how improbable it would be for any one man to fulfill all the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament by mere coincidence. For example, it was prophesied that the Messiah would: 1) be betrayed, 2) by a friend, 3) for thirty pieces 4) of silver, and that these would be 5) cast on the floor 6) of the Temple, and 7) used to buy a potter's field. The probability of a man fulfilling all of these: 1 in 10 to the 17th power. That is: a one with 32 "0's" behind it. To better understand the odds, take 10 to the 17th power of silver dollars and cover the face of Texas two feet deep. Mark one of them, and then stir the

whole mass. Blindfold a man and send him out to select that one silver dollar. Thus, Christ had one chance in 10 to the 17th power in fulfilling just seven out of 300 messianic prophecies.

Added to all this is the prophecies that Jesus made Himself. He predicted that Judas would betray Him (John 6:64,70,71). He predicted the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem (Matthew 24:1,2). He prophesied persecution for his followers in the days ahead (Matthew 10:16-18). All these and many others prophesied by Jesus have been fulfilled.

◆ **Jesus Performed Miracles to Confirm His Claim to Be Deity**

The Bible is filled with miracles used to prove the claims of God's prophets (Ex. 4; 1 Ki. 18; Jn. 3:2; Heb. 2;3,4). Jesus like no other religious leader in history not only proves Himself to be a prophet of God but the very son of God by His miracles. The Old Testament prophesied of His miracles (Is. 29:18-21; 35:5,6; 61:1,2; cf. Mt. 9:35). Nicodemus saw the great miracles of Jesus as His divine credentials when he said to Jesus, *"Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him"* (Jn. 3:2). When John the Baptist was in prison he sent his disciples to inquire of Jesus if He were the One, *"Jesus answered and said to them, 'Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind receive their sight 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'"* (Matt. 11:4,5). Although John only recorded a few of Jesus miracles in his gospel, he concluded it by saying, *"And truly 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"* (Jn. 20:30,31).

Could He have tricked everyone? His miracles were done out in the open and not in some corner (Acts 26:26). If He failed in just one attempt, then He would have been condemned as a fraud throughout the whole of Palestine. Yet, none of His enemies who witnessed His miracles would call Him a fraud.

The miracles of Jesus can be broken down into five categories:

- Nature Miracles - Calming of the Sea
- Miracles of Bodily Healing - Healing the Blind Man, Jn.9
- Healing those Possessed with Demons - Legion
- Miracles of Multiplication - Feeding the 5000, Jn. 6.
- Resurrection - Jarius' daughter (Lk. 8:40-56); the widow of Nain's son (Lk. 7:11-17); and His friend, Lazarus (Jn. 11).

The very miracles of Jesus are of greater proof of His deity than even the witness of John. *"But I have a greater witness than John's; for the 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).

◆ **Jesus Had Power to Forgive Sins**

Jesus performed miracles to show that He was indeed the Son of God. He also provide miracles as evidence that He had the power to forgive sins. *"But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"--then He said to the paralytic, 'Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house"* (Matt. 9:6). His critics were astonished by His bold claims to have the right and ability to forgive sins against God. *"And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, 'Who is this who even forgives sins?' Then He said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you. Go in peace'"* (Luke 7:49,50). Even while being crucified Jesus told the thief on the cross beside Him, *"Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise"* (Lk. 7:49,50). The prerogative of forgiving sins belongs only to God (Is. 43:2; Jer. 31:34; Ps. 130:4). Therefore, when Jesus forgave sins He was claiming to be God.

◆ **Reliable Eyewitnesses Claimed He was God's Son**

Many reliable eyewitnesses have left their observations and confessions of the deity of Christ throughout the New Testament. "John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, *"This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.'"* (John 1:15) and later John the Immerser would declare, *"And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God"* (John 1:34).

For three and a half years the twelve disciples were with Jesus. They believed and affirmed that He was the Son of God. Peter confessed: *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."* Jesus answered and said to him, *'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven'"* (Matthew 16:16,17). Later he claimed, *"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 Pet. 1:16). Nathanael, who did not think anything good could come out of Nazareth, claimed Jesus was the Son of God. *"Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"* (John 1:49). John spoke of the extent of their close relationship with Jesus, *"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life"* (1 Jn. 1:1). Thomas how handled the very wounds of Jesus confessed Jesus' deity *"My Lord and My God"* (Jn. 20:28). Thomas, who doubted Jesus' resurrection claimed Him to be God after seeing and touching the evidence. *"Then He said to Thomas, 'Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.'* And Thomas answered and said to Him, *'My Lord and my God!'"* Jesus said to him, *'Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed'"* (John 20:26-29).

Other disciples of Jesus would attest to their belief that Jesus was who He said He was: The Son of God. Martha said, *"Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world"* (John 11:27). Stephen while being stoned to death for teaching Jesus as the Son of God called out *"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit"* (Acts 7:59).

The New Testament writers were contemporaries of the events of Jesus' life. Matthew was a disciple. As a tax collector he would have been trained to pay close attention to details. John was an eyewitness as was Peter who could have shared these observations and knowledge with Mark (1 Pet. 5:13). Luke was a first rate contemporary historian of the events he recorded (Luke 1:1-3). Paul was a witness of the resurrected Christ (1 Cor. 15:8).

◆ **Enemies of Jesus Recognized His Deity**

Even Jesus' enemies attested to their belief that He was an innocent man. Pilate and wife proclaimed him innocent. The Centurion and soldiers at the Cross went even further when they declared, *"Surely this man was the Son of God."*

Jesus, Himself, bore clear witness as to His identity as Deity. *"I and My Father are one"* (John 10:30). The Jews accused Jesus of blasphemy because he said, *"I am the Son of God?"* (John 10:36). Even the enemies of Jesus understood Him to affirm His equality with the Father.

Paul, who was once the greatest enemy of Christianity, not only believed and proclaimed Jesus as the Son of God, but cited many who also were eye-witnesses of Christ's Resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:5-8).

Conclusion

C.S. Lewis wrote: "A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse." If we say that Jesus' claims were false, then we are left with only three possible alternatives: He was a liar or a lunatic or a legend invented by the writers of the gospels.

Jesus was not a lunatic! Medically speaking, schizophrenia is more autistic than realistic. Such a condition causes one to desire to escape from reality. Christ faced reality in a way that no other man has or ever did before or since Him. He freed people from mental anguish. He still teaches people today how to live a successful life.

Jesus was not a liar! To be a liar would make Him: a Deceiver of His followers; a Hypocrite, because he told others to be honest; a Demon, because He led others to a cruel death for His lies; and a Fool, because He died needlessly on the cross.

Jesus was not a legend! Immoral men could not have invented a perfect man. The invention of the character of Jesus Christ by four non-literary men, calls for a greater miracle than any performed by

Christ. What motive is there for the writers of the gospels to make such a dramatic creation? They were not of the book making or literary class. Matthew was a tax gatherer for the Romans. Luke was a physician. John as a fisherman. John Mark was an evangelist. Mere men could not have created the perfect character of Jesus, therefore this Jesus of the four gospels really lived in the first century A.D.

He was not just the greatest man that ever lived or the greatest of teachers. He is either the Christ or a pretender. He is the divine being or a Blasphemer. He is the sinless Savior or a hypocrite. He is the Son of God or a Fraud and a Liar. There is no middle ground.

Which is more logic to believe after weighing the evidence? True, no one can prove one way or the other by using the "scientific method". Yet, neither could one prove 2,000 years from now that you ever lived by the scientific method. Yet, they could use the legal-historical method of proof. Which is based upon showing that something is fact beyond a reasonable doubt or a verdict is reached on the basis of the weight of the evidence. Do you believe?

Questions:

1. How do you know that the Jews of Jesus day understood that He claimed to be God?

2. On what three occasions did God claim Jesus to be His Son?

3. Under each verse list the attribute of deity being claimed by Jesus.
 - a) "But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, 'Why do you think evil in your hearts?'" (Matthew 9:4).

 - b) "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father." (John 10:17,18).

 - c) "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was" (John 17:5).

4. List those who worshiped Jesus.

- 5 List those to claimed that Jesus was sinless or without fault in the New Testament.

6. What prophecies did Jesus make concerning his death?

7. What was the purpose of Jesus miracles?

8. What did Jesus' claim to forgive sin indicate?

9. List the reliable eye-witnesses who claimed Jesus to be the Son of God. Why are they reliable witnesses?

10. List the enemies of Jesus whose testimony directly or indirectly point to the deity of Jesus?

Matching: Proof of Christ's Deity

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| 11. ____ Christ fulfilled prophecy | a. "Those in the boat worshiped Him saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God' (Mt. 14:33). |
| 12. ____ Jesus is Creator | b. "And truly 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," (Jn. 20:30,31). |
| 13. ____ Jesus' power to forgive sins | c. "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Is. 7:14). |
| 14. ____ Jesus performed miracles | d. "but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God" (Jn. 5:18). |
| 15. ____ Jesus claimed to be God | e. "He also made the worlds" (Heb. 1:2). |
| 16. ____ Eyewitnesses claims | f. "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more" (Jn. 8:11). |
| 17. ____ God claimed Him to be His Son | g. "My Lord and my God!" (Jn. 20:28). |

18. _____ Jesus received worship as God h. “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” (Matt. 17:5).

Application and Discussion:

19. Is it statistically probable that Jesus fulfilled all the Messianic prophecies by chance? Explain.

20. How would you go about proving that Jesus was not a lunatic, liar, legend but the Lord?

Homework: Find a skeptic who thinks that Jesus was just a good man or gifted teach and share the evidence of His deity.

Evidence from the Crucifixion

It is not uncommon to find religions and non-religions people who deny that Jesus Christ was every crucified by the Romans at the demands of the Jewish leadership of the first century. Among this group are atheists and agnostics who loved to read such fictional conspiracy theories like Dan Browns The DaVinci Code. Prevalent among Muslims is the belief that Jesus was not crucified but someone like Judas was mistakenly sent to the cross in His place. For proof they claim the Gospel of Barnabas tells the truth story. Many Qur'anic verses speak of the death of Christ (2:87; 3:55; 4:157,158; 19:33). Other Muslim traditions claim He never died but ascended directly into heaven. After all, only a dead body can be resurrected. Yet, the death of Christ by crucifixion is one of the best attested death's in ancient history.

† **The Old Testament Predicted Jesus Crucifixion**

The Old Testament predicted that Christ would die (Is. 53:5-10; Ps. 22:16; Dan. 9:26; Zech. 12:10). Many prophecies were fulfilled by Christ on the day of His death. If He did not fulfill them than He is not a great prophet but an imposter.

† **Christ Predicted His Own Death on the Cross**

Peter rebuked Jesus for foretelling His murder at the hands of the chief priests and scribes. Like Peter, many Muslims do not understand the necessity of the cross (Matt. 16:21-23; Lk. 9:32; Mk. 8:31). Jesus compared His death to lifting up of the brass serpent by Moses. *"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life"* (Jn. 3:14-16). While dying on the cross Jesus cried, *"Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit"* (Lk. 23:46).

† **Testimony of Eyewitnesses**

The Bible says repeatedly that Christ died on the cross (Rom. 5:8; 1 Cor. 15:3; 1 Th. 4:14). Many witnesses and recorded accounts can be found in the New Testament verifying that Christ was crucified (Matt. 27: 35f; Mark 15:1-43; Lk. 22:66-23:43; John 19:30-42).

- *"then they crucified Him"* (Matt. 27:35)
- *"they crucified Him"* (Mk. 15:25)
- *"where they crucified Him"* (Jn. 19:18)

John was standing at the foot of the cross with several women including Jesus' own mother. If the Romans had put the wrong man on the cross they should have known. There were in attendance *"a great multitude"* (Lk. 23:27) and the Jewish leaders (Mt. 27:41). All of these eyewitnesses believed it was Jesus on the five hundred years removed from the events of the great fateful day?

† **Pre-Crucifixion Suffering**

The severe suffering of Jesus which led to His death began in the Garden of Gethsemane. *"And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. And His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground"* (Luke 22:44). Luke the Physician, is the only one who mentions this. This condition is known in the medical field as hematidrosis or bloody sweat is well documented, but a rare occurrence. Under great emotional stress, tiny capillaries in the sweat glands can break thus mixing blood with sweat. It produces weakness and possible shock.

After Jesus was arrested he went through a night of one physically and emotionally abusive trial after another. During His trial before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin Peter denied him three times. *"Now*

the men who held Jesus mocked Him and beat Him. And having blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him, saying, 'Prophecy! Who is the one who struck You?' And many other things they blasphemously spoke against Him" (Luke 22:63-65). A soldier strikes him for remaining silent. Blind-folded and taunted by guards as they walked by smiting and spiting upon him.

In early morning battered and bruised, dehydrated, with no sleep he is taken across Jerusalem to the Praetorium. Pilate finds no fault in Him but has him scourged. A whip known as a flagrum was used. It had eight thick leather straps with two lead balls fastened to the ends of each, or three thick leather straps with several sharp pieces of bone fastened on to them. The prisoner's back is laid bare and hands tied to a post above his head. The heavy whip is brought down across his shoulders, back, and legs. Cuts the skin. Then deeper into the flesh and to the bone, and arterial bleeding. What isn't cut is badly bruised. When at the point of death the beating is stopped.

Next Roman soldiers as a joke threw a robe over his back, put a crown of thorns on his head and septre in hand; mocking him as King of the Jews. Then, they struck him and drove the thorns deeper into His head. Tired of their sadistic sport, they tore the robe off his bloody clotting wounds as one carelessly removes a bandage.

Before heading off to be crucified the heavy patibulum is tied across his shoulders and He is made to walk the way to the cross, uphill. Since Jesus could not carry it having lost much blood and having pain caused to his back, the Romans make Simon of Cyrene carry it. As a group of Jerusalem women join the procession to openly weep in behalf of the Lord, He turns to lovingly rebuke them, instructing them to weep not for Him, but for themselves and their children. As He rebuked the wailing women of Jerusalem for not seeing their own coming destruction, so is His rebuke warning all who continue to ignore the message of the cross.

† **Nature of the Crucifixion**

The very nature of the crucifixion first developed by the Persians and later perfected by the Romans proves His death.

Christ is offered wine mingled with myrrh (Matthew 27:34). This was a custom of the Jews. It was a mild analgesic mixture. Christ was willing to suffer and do His Father's Will. He would not go to the cross for us in a drugged, semi-conscious condition.

The Lord's hands were nailed to the cross the soldiers not through the palm of the hands of most artist depict. If they had done so, the weight of his body would have torn the nails through his fingers. Instead the soldiers drove the iron-wrought nails through His wrist and into the patibulum. Keep in mind the ancient world considered the wrist to be part of the hand. Then his executioners would have turned his left foot back against the right foot and nails were driven through the arches of each. The patibulum is lifted to it's slot on the stipe, with the titulus reading "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. His left foot is turned back against the right foot and nails are drove through the arches of each.

In his book, *The Passion of Christ from a Medical Viewpoint*, Dr. Davis gives explicit and horrifying details of the crucifixion of Christ.

As He slowly sags down with more weight on the nails in the wrists, excruciating, fiery pain shoots along the fingers and up the arms to explode in the brain--the nails in the wrists are putting pressure on the median nerves. As he pushes Himself upward to avoid this stretching there is a searing agony of the nails tearing through the nerves between the bones of the feet. As the arms fatigue, great waves of cramps sweep over the muscles, knotting them in deep, relentless, throbbing pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push Himself upward. Hanging by His arms, His muscles become paralyzed. Air can be drawn in to the lungs, but cannot be exhaled. Jesus fights to raise Himself in order to get even one short breath. Finally, carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream and the cramps partially subside. Spasmodic-ally, He is able to push Himself upward to exhale and bring in the life giving oxygen.

Dr. Davis continues to explain the process,

Hours of this limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rending cramps, searing pain as tissue is torn from His

lacerated back as He moves up and down against the rough timber; then another agony begins...A deep crushing pain, deep in the chest as the pericardium slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart...It is now almost over--the loss of tissue fluids has reached a critical level--the compressed heart is struggling to pump heavy, thick sluggish blood into the tissues--the tortured lungs are making a frantic effort to gasp in small gulps of air. The markedly dehydrated tissues send their flood of stimuli to the brain.

His final sayings are: *"It is finished"* (His mission on earth is accomplished and death is near) and *"Father, into thy hands I commit My Spirit"*.

The common method of ending crucifixion by breaking of the legs, with blows from a club. "This prevented the victim from pushing himself upward, the tension could not be relieved from the muscles of the chest and rapid suffocation occurred. When they came to Christ was already dead. Prophecy was thus fulfilled that our Passover Lamb would not have a broken bone (Ps. 34:20).

Cicero, the Roman author, witnessed many crucifixions. His records gives us further details of the horrifying agony of this method of execution. He recorded that victims often became raving madmen long before they were mercifully released by death. It was sometimes necessary to cut out their tongues in order to put a stop to their terrible screams and curses.

† **Pilate Made Sure Jesus Was Dead**

When Joseph of Aramathea asked for the body of Jesus for burial Pilate double-checked to make sure Jesus was dead. *"Pilate marveled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. And when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph"* (Mk. 15:44,45).

† **The Roman Soldiers Made Sure Jesus Was Dead**

The Roman soldiers, accustomed to crucifixion and death, pronounced Jesus dead. They did not even break Jesus' legs (Jn. 19:33). They pierced His side and *"blood and water"* came forth (Jn. 19:34,35). These were trained executioners they would not have failed to make sure the condemned was dead before He was removed from the cross. They were under the penalty of death if they did not perform their duties as executioners. Dr. Davis wrote, "Apparently to make double sure of death, a Roman soldier drove his lance through the fifth interspace between the ribs, upward through the pericardium and into the heart....Thus there was an escape of watery fluid from the sac surrounding the heart and blood from the interior of the heart. We, therefore, have rather conclusive post-mortem evidence that our Lord died, not the usual crucifixion death by suffocation, but of heart failure due to shock and constriction of the heart."

The Journal of the American Medical Society (March 21, 1986) concluded:

Clearly, the weight of the historical and medical evidence indicates that Jesus was dead before the wound to his side was inflicted and supports the traditional view that the spear, thrust between his right rib, probably perforated not only the right lung but also the pericardium and heart and thereby ensured his death. Accordingly, interpretations based on the assumption that Jesus did not die on the cross appear to be at odds with modern medical knowledge.

† **Christian and Non-Christian Historians Claim He was Dead**

Not only do we have the testimony of the New Testament that Jesus was crucified, many Christian writers of the second century believed Jesus died on the cross. In the second century Justin Martyr referred to the "Acts of Pontius Pilate" under whom "nails were fixed in Jesus' hands and feet on the cross; and after he was crucified, his executioners cast lots for his garments" A disciple of John, Polycarp, wrote "our Lord Jesus Christ, who for our sins suffered even unto death." Ignatius was a friend of Polycarp and he claimed that Jesus "really suffered and died, and rose again." Although it could be argued that the above statements were biased many other non-Christian historians and writers of the first and second centuries recorded statements affirming that Jesus died on the cross.

- Josephus (Jewish historian for the Romans): "He was (the) Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that love him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day."

- Tacitus's Annals: "Christ, who was executed under Pontius Pilate in the reign of Tiberius"
- Cornelius Tacitus: "A wise man who was called Jesus...Pilate condemned Him to be condemned and to die."
- Thallus (AD 52), "When discussing the darkness which fell upon the land during the crucifixion of Christ," spoke of it as an eclipse.
- Lucian, speaks of Christ as "The man who was crucified in Palestine because he introduced a new cult into the world." He called him the "crucified sophist"
- The "letter of Mara Bar Serapion" (AD 73) "What advantage did the Jews gain from executing their wise King?"
- The Roman writer, Phlegon, in his Chronicles wrote, "Jesus while alive, was of no assistance to himself but that he arose after death, and exhibited the marks of his punishment, and showed how his hands had been pierced by nail".
- "The eclipse in the time of Tiberius Caesar, in who reign Jesus appear to have ben crucified, and the great earthquakes which then took place."
- "But, (in truth) none of these sufferings were in vain; for the Lord was really crucified by the ungodly"
- The Jewish Talmud, pub. 1943 p. 42: "Jesus was crucified one day before the Passover. We warned Him for 40 days that He would be killed because He was a magician and planned to deceive Israel with His delusions. Whoever wished to do so was asked to defend him, and when none did, He was crucified on the eve of the Passover.

The point of the cross is to point to who Jesus really was. The centurion in charge of the crucifixion, who stayed and saw and heard Jesus on the cross, confessed: "*Truly, this was the Son of God*" (Matthew 27:54).

Questions:

1. What groups deny the crucifixion of Jesus?
2. Why is it so important to prove that Jesus really did die on the cross?
3. List Old Testament passages showing that Jesus was to die?
4. Give passages in the New Testament where Jesus predicted His death.
5. What is hermatidrosis?
6. What is a flagrum? How was it used?
7. Why did Simon of Cyrene have to carry Jesus' cross?

8. What did Jesus refuse drink on the cross? Why?
9. What are the three pieces which make up a Roman cross?
10. Why to you think the several sayings of Jesus on the cross were so short?
11. How did the Centurion respond to what he saw at Christ's crucifixion?
12. Our word "excruciating" comes from the Latin words which mean...
13. Who made sure Jesus was dead before handing the body over to Joseph of Aramathea for burial?
14. What did the soldier's spear through Jesus side prove?
15. List the names of the ancient non-biblical and Biblical writers who claimed that Jesus did die on the cross.

Application and Discussion:

16. Why does the crucifixion prove the deity of Christ?
17. What other reasons was their for Jesus to die on the cross?

Homework: Share the suffering with a lost soul to show what all God and Jesus did to save them.

Resurrection of Christ

In preparation for an up-coming Gospel Meeting a couple thousand flyers had been mailed out to the community. On the last night of the meeting a Korean man in his early thirties showed up and handed me the flyer as he was greeted. He said, "I received this invitation in the mail and decided to come." After welcoming him I led him to the auditorium. His name was Paul Lee. If he had any questions I told him to ask me about them after services as we would be happy to discuss them.

The lesson that night was on the Resurrection of Christ. On Paul Lee's way out the door he turned to me and said, "very interesting message. It appears the resurrection by Jesus from the dead is a very important part of Christianity." I replied, "yes it is. In fact, without it there could not be the religion of Christianity. Would you like to get together some time and learn more?" Paul Lee expressed both surprise and excitement over the invitation. He was a follower of the Confucius religion and knew little of Christianity. Three months of study resulted in him being baptized into Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

Today, there happens to be many who call themselves Christians who do not believe in or still have serious doubts concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Since the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus has been supported by historical evidence many of those who reject it have come up with a myriad of theories to suggest what really happened to the body of Jesus. Some say He swooned on the cross and revived after three days. He unwrapped himself, moved the stone, fought off the guards, walked the dozens of miles, and appeared health to His disciples. Instead of displacing the miracles of the resurrection, this theory replaces it with another. Others claim His body was stolen or the disciples simply were confused on the location of His tomb. A theory has been held for years that dogs ate the body. This seems just as plausible as the view that those who thought they saw the resurrected Jesus were just having the same hallucination. In his book *Risen* author G.D. Arnold proposes the theory that Jesus' body evaporated into gases in three days. Now that sounds like a miracle to me.

The teaching of the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead is not without evidence:

➤ **The Empty Tomb**

"Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid" (John 19:41). When Peter and John came to the tomb this is what they saw, *"Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. For as yet they did not know the Scripture"* (John 20:3-9). The fact that it was a new tomb makes the empty tomb all that more of a potent proof of the resurrection.

The very character of the tomb in which Jesus' body was placed indicates that Jesus' body was not stolen, mistaken, misplaced, or that He was merely in a coma, etc. Since it was a new tomb there could be no error by seeing other bodies and other wrappings and bones (Luke 23:53; John 19:41). There was no other entrance to be gained into this tomb due to the fact that it was cut in solid rock (Matthew 27:60; Mark 15:46). Jesus would have been powerless to emerge, if still alive. The tomb was also sealed with a large stone (Mk. 16:3,4). Breaking of the seal would mean automatic crucifixion upside down. The three women who first came to the tomb could not have moved it. Jesus if still live could not have moved it from the inside. Furthermore, a careful survey of the tomb was made (Luke 24:12; John 20:7). They testified

that they saw the linen clothes which wrapped the body in one place and the napkin for Jesus head folded and laid in another (Luke 24:12; John 20:7).

However, those who reject the resurrection have formed many flawed theories to explain away the empty tomb. These attempts have been going on for nearly two thousand years. The first argument was made by the elders of the Jews that the enemies of Christ attempted to bribe the guards to say the body had been stolen (Matt. 28:11-15). In order to perpetuate this lie *"they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, 'Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.' And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure.'* So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day" (Matt 28:12b-15). Could the body of Jesus have been stolen? The disciples could not steal it and successfully dispose of it (Matthew 27:62-66). Many would also lose their life for preaching the resurrection. Why would they die for a lie? Why did not one of them crack under the pressure of persecution and expose the deed? The Jews would not have stolen it (Matthew 28:11-15). What motive would they have to steal it. Besides, they had every reason to keep Him in the tomb. The Jews required a guard of sixteen soldiers posted by Roman authorities. Furthermore, if they did steal it, why didn't they produce the body on the day of Pentecost when the disciples were preaching that Jesus arose, thus silencing their claims forever.

Over the millennia other attacks on the veracity of the resurrection have been argued. The Swoon theory claims that Jesus did not die on the cross but merely swooned. He awoke on Sunday morning and left the tomb empty. Yet, how could Jesus removed His grave clothes, move the large sealed stone, and fight off the soldiers guarding it? How could He walk the length of Palestine and appear healthy to His disciples after He had suffered a scourging and a crucifixion? Next, there is the Wrong Tomb theory. Are we to believe that everyone went to the wrong tomb including Joseph of Aramethia who owned the tomb. Others claim that the body of Jesus was never buried but left like all crucifixion victims for the wild dogs to eat. If so, why did the Romans seal an empty tomb? Why did the Jewish elders fabricate a lie and pay out a large bride. Finally, the Hallucination Theory which has been contrived to argue that it was all a mirage. They only thought they observed an empty tomb and witnessed a resurrected Jesus. Yet there is no such thing as a mass hallucination.

✦ **Prophecies of the Resurrection**

Psalms 16:8-11 is twice referenced in the New Testament as having been fulfilled by the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 2:25-31; 17:2,3). Many other prophecies pointed to the resurrection (Is. 26:19; Dan. 12:2).

✦ **Jesus Claimed He Would Resurrect**

Jesus told his disciples He would *"be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again"* (Mk. 8:31). He prophesied *"I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands"* (Mark. 14:58). *"No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father"* (Jn. 10:18). If Jesus did not raise from the dead after three days He could not be a great prophet but He would be a false prophet.

One of the most important events in all history and the climax of the earthly mission of Christ was his crucifixion. If the story ended there Jesus would have been just another martyr of history. However, He arose. Because He arose as promised and predicted, many have become believers the this Jesus was truly the Son of God.

✦ **Disciples Witnessed the Resurrected Jesus**

The number of appearances, the variety of occasions, and the diversify of witnesses all are evidence that Jesus did indeed arise from the dead. Many disciples of Jesus were eyewitnesses to the resurrection of Jesus. Several of them were not predisposed to believe the events to which they gave testimony. The apostles themselves did not believe the testimony of others that Christ had risen from the dead (Lk. 24:11) They were *"slow of heart to believe"* (Lk. 24:25). Jesus was even touched on two different occasions. At the empty tomb He told Mary Magdalene *"Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God' "* (John 20:17). Doubting Thomas would not believe unless he could see and

touch Jesus (Jn. 20:25). Later, in the closed upper room where the disciples were meeting Jesus told Thomas, *"reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing"* (John 20:27).

These eyewitnesses did not see a ghost or have hallucinations. They touched a physical body with their physical hands. They observed while Jesus ate food on a couple of occasions. They saw the empty tomb with the burial cloths folded. They heard with their ears as well as seeing with their eyes the Son of Man who had been with them for three and a half years.

The evidence of the resurrection may well be the one of the most verified events by eyewitness counts in all of ancient history. Luke wrote, *"to whom He also 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"* (Ac. 1:3). Paul claimed that Jesus *"was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep"* (1 Cor. 15:6). These men and women had nothing to gain if the resurrection were a lie fabricated by the followers of Jesus. Many of these eyewitness would be persecuted and/or die for proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus. The large number of witnesses support the historical claim of the resurrection.

➤ **Unbelievers Observed the Resurrected Jesus**

Jesus not only appeared to believers, He also appeared to unbelievers. He appeared to His half-brother James (Jn. 7:5; 1 Cor. 15:7). The greatest persecutor of the early church was Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9). Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus. Paul gave an account of this before the religious leaders and political rulers of his day. He would later write a letter to the Christians and Rome which declared why the resurrection was so important *"and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead"* (Rom. 1:4).

Is it really important to living the Christian life and practicing its teachings to believe in the resurrection of Christ? Paul wrote, *"but if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable"* (1 Cor. 15:13-19). These appearance by Jesus after his death made believers out of many people even those who were enemies of the cross.

➤ **Transformation of the Lives of Witnesses**

After witnessing the resurrected Son of God, Paul's life was transformed from a persecutor of Christ to a humble minister of the Gospel and apostle of Christ. Paul explained this transformation, *"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief"* (1 Tim. 1:12-15). This same type of transformation has taken place in the lives of unbelievers for the past two millennia. The early disciples so unshakably believed that Jesus in fact bodily arose from the grave that despite intense persecution even to the point of suffering cruel deaths they testified to the truth of the resurrection. While it is conceivable that some people might die for what they believed in to be the truth, it is inconceivable that so many would die for what they knew to be false. Greenleaf wrote, *"if it were morally possible for them to have been deceived in this matter, every human motive operated to lead them to discover and avow their error....If then their testimony was not true, there was no possible motive for this fabrication"* (Simon Greenleaf, *The Testimony of the Evangelists* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984], 29,30). Dr. Simon Greenleaf, the greatest authority on legal evidence of the nineteenth century, after being goaded by his students into examining the evidence for the resurrection, suggested that any cross-examination of the eyewitness testimonies recorded in Scripture would result the exposure of the resurrection as a fraud. Dr. Greenleaf not only became a Christian, but in 1846 wrote *"An Examination of the Testimony of the Four Evangelists by the*

Rules of Evidence Administered in the Court of Justice.” Even today, the evidence for Christ’s resurrection is so staggering that no one can investigate it with an open mind without becoming assured of its truthfulness. The resurrection of Christ is an undeniable fact of history.

Conclusion

A Moslem once was taunting a Christian stating that "you Christians don't even have a tomb to which you can point where your Jesus lies buried. We have a great tomb for Mohammed in our holy city of Mecca." The Christian answered, "that is precisely the point. Your prophet is dead and lies buried; our Christ is risen and is with us always."

Someone has asserted, "The resurrection is the very capstone in the arch of Christianity; if it is removed, all else crumbles." Jesus is not peers with Buddha, Mohammed, etc. They died and are still dead, but Christ is risen. If He were still in a grave He could not be the Son of God but just another false Messiah.

The enemies of the cross reject the bodily resurrection of Christ. If Christ did not rise from the grave the faith and hope of all New Testament Christians is vain. Paul wrote, *"now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up--if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable"* (1 Cor 15:12-19). Either Christians accept the fact that Jesus arose from the dead based on the evidence and defend their hope or else surrender their faith in Christ. However, Paul who witnessed the resurrected Son of God went on to say, *"but now Christ is risen from the dead"* (1 Cor 15:20). You see, if Jesus is still in His tomb, the Good News of Christ is missing a very essential element: His victory over sin and death. Half-a Gospel is no Good News at all.

Questions:

1. List the various theories some of come up with to explain away the resurrection of Jesus.
2. True False The fact that it was a new tomb makes the empty tomb all that more of a potent proof of the resurrection.
3. What is the oldest argument on record used to explain away the resurrection of Jesus? Why is this argument illogical?
4. How would you substantiate that it was very doubtful that Jesus merely swooned on the cross and later revived in the tomb?
5. List the passages prophesying the resurrection including those made by Jesus.

6. Were the disciples predisposed to believe in the resurrection? Explain.
7. What did Thomas require before he believed? What was his response?
8. Could the resurrection have been a case of mass hallucinations? Explain.
9. List the eyewitnesses of the resurrected Christ according to the New Testament.
10. Why is James, Jesus half-brother and Paul such credible witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus?
11. How did the witnessing of the resurrection of Jesus transform lives?
12. What are the consequences if Jesus did not resurrect from the dead?

Application and Discussion:

13. How would you answer the argument that Jesus' body was eaten by dogs?
14. How has the resurrection of Jesus transformed your life?

Homework: Share the evidence and story of the resurrection to share the Gospel with a lost soul.