

# CONNECTING TO GOD THROUGH THE TRUTH

## INTRODUCTION

For the believer in Jesus Christ, connecting to God should be a way of life. J.D. Greear, in his book Stop Asking Jesus into Your Heart, says, “Salvation is a posture of repentance and faith that you begin in a moment and maintain for the rest of your life.”<sup>1</sup> I really appreciate this wording because it recognizes that salvation comes to a person at a time of decision and then continues throughout life. The implication is ongoing growth and being connected to or abiding in God and His Word.

This is another devotional guide about connecting. Over the past four plus years we have been doing a lot of connecting to God. I hope this guide and the upcoming messages will help you daily to become more connected to Him and remain connected to Him for the rest of your life.

Jesus said to His Father in the prayer found in **John 17:17**, “*Sanctify them by Your Truth. Your Word is Truth.*” We are going to be focusing on connecting to God through the truth. The truth is His truth. Truth is a person and His name is Jesus.

It is always good to begin a project like this with the end in mind. Here it is and enjoy!

- TRUTH IS A PERSON AND THAT PERSON IS JESUS CHRIST
- TRUTH IS THAT WHICH CORRESPONDS TO REALITY
- BELIEVERS MUST BE PREPARED TO GIVE REASONS FOR THEIR FAITH
- REASON TO BELIEVE: THERE IS SOMETHING RATHER THAN NOTHING
- REASON TO BELIEVE: THERE IS DESIGN IN CREATION
- REASON TO BELIEVE: THERE IS RIGHT AND WRONG
- REASON TO BELIEVE: GOD CONFIRMED HIS MESSAGE WITH MIRACLES
- REASON TO BELIEVE: THE NEW TESTAMENT IS 99.5% TEXTUALLY PURE
- REASON TO BELIEVE: THE NEW TESTAMENT PRESENTS JESUS AS GOD
- REASON TO BELIEVE: THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS TOLD THE TRUTH
- REASON TO BELIEVE: JESUS REALLY DID RISE FROM THE DEAD
- REASON TO BELIEVE: JESUS CLAIMED TO BE GOD
- REASON TO BELIEVE: JESUS TAUGHT THAT THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD

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<sup>1</sup> Greear, J.D., Stop Asking Jesus Into Your Heart: How to Know for Sure You Are Saved (Kindle Locations 190-191). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

## WEEK 1 WHAT IS THIS ALL ABOUT?-----Dennis Watson

"What is truth?" This was the question posed by Pilate when Jesus appeared before him during the "trials." And then Pilate went on to say, "*I find no fault in Him.*" At least he was right in that. This question has been asked over and over since Pilate first asked it and it is still being asked today. That question is what we will be dealing with for the next thirteen weeks.

All of this is based on Scripture and one verse in particular:

*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)*

The word "defense" in the Greek is the word "apologia." It is the word we get the word 'apologetics' from. The website "Got Questions" provides this explanation:

"What is Christian apologetics?"

Answer: The English word "apology" comes from a Greek word which basically means "to give a defense." Christian apologetics, then, is the science of giving a defense of the Christian faith. There are many skeptics who doubt the existence of God and/or attack belief in the God of the Bible. There are many critics who attack the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible. There are many false teachers who promote false doctrines and deny the key truths of the Christian faith. The mission of Christian apologetics is to combat these movements and instead promote the Christian God and Christian truth.<sup>2</sup>

We are going to be looking at how to give an answer, defense, or "apologetics" more clearly. The goal is that believers in Jesus will be able to give reasons why they believe. It is very important that believers know what they believe and be prepared to tell others both what they believe and why they believe it.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/Christian-apologetics.html>

## DAY 1 A PERSONAL JOURNEY OF VERIFICATION

### First Read 2 Timothy 1:12

I grew up in a Christian home and was regularly taken to church and all the associated activities. From my earliest remembrances I believed in God and never doubted. I was saved around the age of ten. I have always believed and never doubted but to say that I have always believed 100% would not be correct. There are things I do not understand, yet because I have enough information, I do believe. I drive over bridges almost every day in my car, yet I do not fully understand how those bridges were built. For this reason I do not have a 100% belief that the bridge will work. The belief that I do have is sufficient for me to drive across the bridges. I have adequate information regarding God, the Bible, Jesus, and other major Biblical teachings, that are sufficient for strong belief. Although not always 100% I am consistently growing in my faith. True and Biblical faith is built upon information; the more reliable the information, the stronger my belief. Clark Pinnock says, “The heart cannot rejoice in what the mind rejects as false.” This is faith that is informed. We do not make a leap of faith. We do however “leap into the direction set by the light.”<sup>3</sup>

Just before I turned 40 I struggled a little with the knowledge that many people have had doubts about their Christian faith, but I never really did. So I tried to have doubts that would cause me to examine if I was really saved. I remained confident. I decided to take a look at what I believed from a different direction. I sought to go from what I see, observe, and know from the observable world I live in, and see if the Bible adequately gives an answer to what I see and know from experience and senses. I now know that this is called ‘particularism.’ Particularists start by knowing specific, clear items of knowledge—like I had a turkey sandwich for lunch, there is a computer in front of me, and  $7 + 5 = 12$ . There are many things I know without having to prove them to be true. So I went from there, what I know to be true, to the Bible to determine if my faith is reasonable. I wanted to discover for myself if perceived, experiential reality corresponded to the revelation I had come to believe from the Bible. Truth is that which corresponds to reality. I had always come from the Bible to reality. Now I was going from experiential (empirical) reality to revealed reality. I wanted to test revelation and see if it corresponded to what I know by experience.

The things that I am going to share have grown and continue to grow from that exercise. That is what this devotional book is all about. It is about this—TRUTH.

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<sup>3</sup>True Truth: Defending Absolute Truth in a Relativistic World, Art Lindsley, Kindle location 78

## DAY 2 EVERYONE HAS A WORLDVIEW

### First Read John 14:6

It is true—everyone has a worldview. A worldview is “simply the sum total of our beliefs about the world, the big picture that directs our daily decisions and actions.”<sup>4</sup> All people have a worldview either chosen or by default. Unfortunately, too many people just drift, taking on views of the world from friends, family, classmates, and coworkers.

A person's worldview is the way they see and understand the world, especially regarding issues such as politics, philosophy, and religion.<sup>5</sup>

Jesus told us His full identity, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life*” and in doing so He became our worldview. We need to study, use reason, logic, science, philosophy, and of course the Bible, to bolster a Christian worldview. Then we need to tell others about our beliefs and why we believe.

For all worldviews to be reliable they must provide thorough and adequate answers to five questions.

Indeed, the five most consequential questions in life are these:

1. Origin: Where did we come from?
2. Identity: Who are we?
3. Meaning: Why are we here?
4. Morality: How should we live?
5. Destiny: Where are we going?<sup>6</sup>

Look at these questions again. We are going to seek to provide answers for these and four more.

- Does Truth Exist?
- Does God Exist?
- Are Miracles Possible?
- Is the New Testament Reliable?

Be praying that God will enable you to give answers for the reason for what you believe.

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<sup>4</sup> How Now Shall We Live, Charles Colson, p. 14

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/world-view>

<sup>6</sup> I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist, Norman Geisler and Frank Turek, p 20

## DAY 3 WHAT IS TRUTH?

### First Read John 18:33-38

This is quite a question! In fact, in these post-modern times it seems that most people are even skeptical about anything being true. “Truth is relative,” is the mantra. “It is true for you but not for me.” Many would say, “There is no such thing as truth.” Well, is that true? There is a lot of information available for research on self-defeating statements.

But what about Pilate? Did he know something about Jesus? Did God reveal something to him? Pilate evidently never came to a knowledge of the truth. Eusebius (263-339 AD), the historian and Bishop of Caesarea, records the fact that Pilate ultimately committed suicide sometime during the reign of the emperor, Caligula—a sad ending and a reminder for everyone that ignoring the truth always leads to undesired consequences.<sup>7</sup> When Pilate asked that question, he did not wait for Jesus to respond. He declared, “*I find not fault in Him.*” Pilate exonerated Jesus; telling the truth.

Truth is that which corresponds to reality. Art Lindsley put it this way:

“I am starting with a basic understanding of truth as that which corresponds to reality, as perceived by God. Only God sees reality in all its complexity. What we understand is partial and limited. Yet partial truth can be real truth as long as we do not take it for the whole truth. Because we are made in the image of God, we have the capacity to understand what we need to know about creation and about God.”<sup>8</sup>

God is sovereign. He does not change. What He says is the same—sovereign and does not change. So it is safe to say that truth is a person. Jesus said, “*I am the way, the truth, and life.*” God is truth in its fullness—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. To know Jesus, to grow in Him, is to know truth and grow in truth.

When you read the Bible—the Word of God, you are reading truth. That which is contrary to the Word of God is not true. This is the reason for the struggle that believers face today. When we live by and conform our lives to God (truth), we will most often be in conflict with the relative teaching of the world.

It was Founding Father Alexander Hamilton who originated, “If you don’t stand for something, you will fall for anything.” That is one of the major reasons for this study!

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<sup>7</sup><https://www.gotquestions.org/what-is-truth.html>

<sup>8</sup> Art Lindsley, True Truth: Defending Absolute Truth in a Relativistic World (Kindle Locations 114-116). Kindle Edition.

## DAY 4 WHY DOES TRUTH MATTER?

### First Read John 8:30-36

Jesus told the religious leaders of His day, *"You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."* Obviously truth is very important. Knowing or not knowing the truth means freedom or bondage. It was once believed that the earth was flat. That belief put people in bondage. They feared traveling on the oceans because they believed that you could sail right off the end of the earth. That was bondage. To know that the earth is a sphere and is governed by gravity means leaving the earth without strong propulsion is not possible. Even in an aircraft we are held to the earth's realm by its gravity.

Truth is a person with clear truth directions for how to live. Knowing and following this person will enable us to live lives that are free from fear and confusion.

One of the farthest places in the continental United States from Fayetteville is Prudhoe Bay, Alaska. It is separated from the United States by Canada, but if you wanted to do so, it would still be possible to drive there. It would take about seven days of driving twelve hours a day to cover the 4,709 miles. Freedom comes from the use of a GPS or a map. That way you know where you are, where you are going, and how to get there. Following the GPS or the map would free you up to travel confident that you would arrive at your planned destination.

Earlier this week you saw the five worldview questions:

1. Origin: Where did we come from?
2. Identity: Who are we?
3. Meaning: Why are we here?
4. Morality: How should we live?
5. Destiny: Where are we going?

God is truth. His Word is truth in a form to read and follow. Jesus was truth in bodily form dwelling among us. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to live in us and to lead us into truth. With the Word of God, the Son of God, and the Spirit of God, we can truly know and follow the truth.

Being on the right road and confident that it is right is truly liberating.

## DAY 5 MANY ARE SUPPRESSING THE TRUTH

### First Read Romans 1:18-25

The difficulty believers in Jesus Christ have is not conflicting truths, but the denial that there is truth at all. Can truth really be known? In fact, Paul, writing in Romans 1, says that what can be known about God can be known because God has revealed Himself in His creation.

Most of Romans 1 is about those who suppress the truth and the result. The word "suppress" means to hold down. Those who oppose God do so by holding down the truth. Many truths about God can be known by His effects which we can observe. Those who refuse to acknowledge the truth are without excuse. If you continue to read in Romans 1, you will discover the number one reason why people rejected God and His truth. They rejected God and instead pursued the *"lusts of their own hearts."* I have often believed that people choose atheism to pursue their own way. If there is no God, then there is no one to whom you would be accountable.

Think of the conflict that exists. The Bible opens with ten words, *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."* Now either that is true or it is not. If it is true, then it would follow that the rest of the Bible would also be true. But what about the many who have made a choice to believe that the entire universe came into existence by chance? Most all scientists today now are convinced that the universe had a beginning. It is not eternal, and it did not come into existence by a slow process of emerging evolution. In fact, it is clear that most species of animal and plant life came on the scene suddenly. However, for decades now evolution has been taught in public schools as a scientific fact. Even today when it is scientifically accepted that evolution has major flaws, most people are still hesitant to accept a Creator. We will look at this more in the weeks to come.

The main thing to keep in mind today is that the Biblical account of creation is largely rejected today as a fact. Why? Because some people continue to suppress the truth and promote ungodly lifestyles that come from suppressing it. It is not just acceptance, it is promotion.

Is it a wonder that in our nation there is a moral crisis that is not just in some neighborhoods among gangs? The moral crisis permeates our local, city, state, and national leadership! May God's people return to Him with great zeal, giving an informed reason for why they believe what they believe.





## WEEK 2 WHAT IS APOLOGETICS?-----Chris Watson

As believers we have been commissioned by Jesus to go into the whole world and declare the message of The Gospel. This includes making disciples, baptizing, and teaching. A huge and often neglected part of this is teaching people how to give an answer for the hope they have. This is called apologetics. Many people are scared of this word, but it comes from 1 Peter 3:15 and it means “to give a defense.” This week we will look at what apologetics is and what it is about. Each day, apologetics becomes more and more relevant because people today largely have not grown up in Christian homes, nor have they been exposed to the teachings of the Bible.

### DAY 1 DEFINING APOLOGETICS

#### First Read 1 Peter 3:14-17

The apologetic verse is **1 Peter 3:15**:

*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)*

I recently saw a post on social media that said something like, “how to shut down an atheist in 15 seconds.” This is not apologetics. We are not trying to “shut anyone down,” “win,” or simply “prove our point.” Apologetics is lovingly and yet truthfully being able to tell what you believe and why you believe it. It should be our desire that in doing so, God shows others their need for Him.

In **1 Peter 3:15** Peter tells us to “*sanctify the Lord God in our hearts.*” The Greek word for sanctify means to “make holy” or “set apart.” Only God can make us holy. As we walk with Him and focus on His heart, this becomes part of the sanctifying process. Peter goes on to say “*be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason.*” In other words, people, if they have not already, will ask you “why do you believe that” or “how do you know that’s true”? Some will come right out and say it, and others will ask it in around about ways.

Often we think of a “defense” as an argument, but that is not the intent here. Our goal should not be to “win the argument” but rather present the truth, all while telling how the truth has changed our life. Ephesians 4:15 reminds us that we should do so in love. Remember from 1 Corinthians 13, we can do anything and everything under the sun, but if we have not love we are nothing. So in giving a “defense” we are simply presenting the truth.

We of course have to know the truth, walk in it, and study it. In giving a defense, we are expressing the “logic” of why we believe what we believe. In fact, the word “reason” means “logic.” So under the direction of the Holy Spirit we are expressing what we believe, why we believe it, and why we know it to be true. In doing so, we have the hope that what we are conveying is true. This is not a “hope” like we hope it will rain or hope it will snow, but a confident hope that God has already done what He said He would do through Jesus, and therefore we have the One True Hope.

We see Paul “give an answer” in Acts 26. He is in chains in front of some very powerful and influential people. He stands and very lovingly, and yet truthfully, tells about the hope that he has in Jesus, and this too is what God has called us to do. Paul shared his story, or God’s story, and I believe he anticipated the questions others would have and answered them up front even before they were asked. We may be challenged and we are to present our answers with kindness and respect.

We will be looking at this more in the coming weeks. Ask God to show you how to lovingly and gracefully give an answer for the hope you have while praying God will draw others to Himself.

## **DAY 2 THE WHY OF APOLOGETICS**

### **First Read 1 John 2:24-29**

It is God’s will that people be saved and have fellowship with Him and other believers. 1 John is about having fellowship with God and others. However, John also addresses a very prominent problem that was in existence early in the lives of believers. The problem was the people who sought to lead others away from the truth of God. John says that one of the reasons for his writing was to warn them of “*those who try to deceive you.*”

The KJV uses the term ‘seduce’ rather than deceive. Seduce means “to lead astray, to lead from the truth.” I think that seduce is a good word here because it applies in exactly the same way in both the physical and spiritual realms. In other words, you lead a person to commit spiritual adultery when you lead him away from the truth.<sup>9</sup> These are some strong words from J Vernon McGee, but they are true. If I lead others away from THE TRUTH, either in word and/or deed, this is exactly what I am doing, leading them to commit spiritual adultery.

This leading away from the truth was present in John’s day and is still with us today. Being deceived can be very clear cut and obvious, but it most often happens over time, little by little. It often starts with a “half-truth.” Remember Genesis 3 right before the fall? The serpent tells a half-truth

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<sup>9</sup>Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

(which is a lie). He tells Adam and Eve they shall be as gods (lie) knowing good from evil (true). They were deceived both by the fruit that looked good and by the serpent with a half-truth. The serpent didn't come right out and say, "disobey God" but rather he planted doubt, half-truths, and wonder in their minds.

We see this happen with false teachers today which is why we have to know God and His Word. We need to be able to distinguish between truth and lies and know what God says. In public schools, colleges both private and public, publications like "National Geographic," major news sources, and the movie and TV industry, there seems to be an agenda, and it's not always God's. Have you noticed how it is more prevalent today? Have you also noticed that no "religion" is questioned, put on the hot seat, or run through the mill like Christianity? Why is that? Because no other "religion" is true or works; they are wrong and give half-truths at best (a lie). Leaders in government know that Christianity is real, but why? Perhaps it is because most everyone knows someone who is a true Christian, and they have seen the life change. Also, God tells us in Romans 2 that the truth is written on everyone's heart. Therefore, many don't want to follow God or believe because they know it's true, and if it is true, then they are accountable to someone other than themselves.

Pay very close attention to the things we are learning. Listen to the attacks on truth, and think and begin to practice how you can give an answer for what you believe. While a majority of our world may not want to listen to the answer, we have it and there are always some who are looking and wanting. Remember God is not willing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

## **DAY 3 CONTEND FOR THE FAITH**

### **First Read Jude 3-4**

Jude was writing to believers to encourage them in the faith. He was writing to encourage them and urge them to "*contend earnestly for the faith.*" The problem that led to the warning was apostasy. There were people among the believers who had turned away from the truth and were seeking to turn others away. Apostasy means to turn or fall away. Some fall away because they never met Christ to begin with. Others fall away when times get hard and they have to pick a "side." Others fall away because they were living on mom and dad's faith and not their own. Some even claim to be believers, and may even be in the church, but follow moralism or legalism and not God Himself. Whatever their reasons, they desire to take others with them.

As I read and studied Jude 3 and 4, I realized this can be two “groups” of people. One group has “crept in unnoticed” and seeks to share their own truth; the other is the group who have fallen away. I have often found the greatest enemy of God’s church can be those who are a part of it or who used to be a part of it and now brush off God. It is often sneaky and unnoticed as verse 4 says, and therefore it can lull us to sleep if we are not careful. This is what Scripture describes as wolves in sheep’s clothing.

Often such people in today’s verses have come up with their own truth. Whether they have taken the truth of God and added to it, taken away a little bit, or totally “overthrown” it and made fun of it, they still seek to find “their own truth.” In fact, not too long ago Oprah at the Golden Globes spoke on “your truth.” To quote her, “speaking your truth is the most powerful tool we all have.” Just what is “your truth?” Because if my truth is speaking up for unborn babies because I believe abortion is wrong, and someone else believes it is right, and they speak up for it, both can be right. What if “your truth” is to rob banks and it is right for you, but the government says you are wrong? If you are seeking “your truth,” are you not right as well? We know you can’t have two contradictory truths. Our world is so lost about truth they can’t even define it. We know from God’s Word that Truth is a person, Jesus Christ. Explaining truth as a whole helps us have a good foundation.

There are many other truths about truth. Here are some of them:

- Truth is discovered, not invented. It exists independent of anyone’s knowledge of it. (Gravity existed prior to Newton.)
- Truth is transcultural; if something is true, it is true for all people, in all places, at all times (2+2=4 for everyone, everywhere, at every time).
- Truth is unchanging even though our beliefs about truth change. (When we began to believe the earth was round instead of flat, the truth about the earth didn’t change, only our belief about the earth changed.)
- Beliefs cannot change a fact, no matter how sincerely they are held. (Someone can sincerely believe the world is flat, but that only makes that person sincerely mistaken.)
- Truth is not affected by the attitude of the one professing it. (An arrogant person does not make the truth he professes false. A humble person does not make the error he professes true.)

- All truths are absolute truths. Even truths that appear to be relative are really absolute. (For example, “I, Frank Turek, feel warm on November 20, 2003” may appear to be a relative truth, but it is actually absolutely true for everyone, everywhere that Frank Turek had the sensation of warmth on that day.)

In short, contrary beliefs are possible, but contrary truths are not possible. We can believe everything is true, but we cannot make everything true.<sup>10</sup>

Truth doesn’t change, period. Our beliefs, circumstances, family, and jobs may change, but truth doesn’t. This is why we must know the truth and as verse 3 of our Scripture says today, “*contend earnestly for the faith.*”

## **DAY 4 WHEN WAS CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS FIRST PRACTICED?**

### **First Read Luke 24:25-32**

This Biblical account was the occasion of Jesus meeting two of His followers on the road to Emmaus. The two were talking about what had taken place in Jerusalem with the crucifixion of Jesus. When Jesus joined in the conversation with the two, one of whom was Cleopas, they did not recognize Him. Jesus was proving things about the Old Testament with prophecy. We have numerous prophecies from books like Isaiah and Daniel, written hundreds of years before Christ’s coming, and it proves that Jesus is who God’s word says He is.

In time, the two men’s eyes were opened and they knew it was Jesus. The evidence from prophecy plus the miracle of the Spirit allowed them to believe. Prophecy was a tool, if you will, that the Lord used to show others He was who He said He was and is. Books written literally hundreds of years before Christ’s birth and death helped those around Him recognize He was not just an ordinary man.

Another tool Jesus used was miracles. Jesus didn’t do miracles for miracles sake but for several different reasons. One was to show people He really was who He said He was. Another was to meet their physical need so He could then speak and show their need of spiritual things. This reminds us that people often need someone to just listen and talk to them first. It’s good to form a friendship with those that we meet so that when we invite them to church or share the Gospel with them they already have a relationship with us. Of course, we need to share with others we don’t know as well like servers who we might only see once.

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<sup>10</sup>Geisler, Norman L. [I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist](#) (Foreword by David Limbaugh) (pp. 37-38). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

We read about many miracles that God did, both in the Old and New Testament. If you are a Christian, I would be willing to say you have seen God do miracles and great works in your own life, not to mention your salvation. Thank God for His mighty work.

## DAY 5 SHAPED BY THE TRUTH NOT SHAPING TRUTH

### First Read Romans 12:1-2

For many, and perhaps most people, truth is what they want it to be. So either there is a truth or reality to which we align our lives or we make reality or truth align with our lives.

C.S. Lewis put it this way in *The Abolition of Man*:

“There is something which unites magic and applied science while separating both from the ‘wisdom’ of earlier ages. For the wise men of old the cardinal problem had been how to conform the soul to reality, and the solution had been knowledge, self-discipline, and virtue. For magic and applied science alike the problem is how to subdue reality to the wishes of men: the solution is a technique”.<sup>11</sup>

In short, we must choose whether we believe that reality is what we make it to be or whether there is an ultimate reality to which we must respond. The two roads set before us are: (1) conform the soul to reality or (2) subdue reality to our wishes. On the first road we find God's grace at work, conforming our desires to the truth. On the second road we find magic, applied science, the human potential movement, Eastern religion, Neopaganism and postmodernism at work, all attempting to conform truth to the individual's desires. On the first road truth is solid and knowable; truth is that which corresponds to reality. We need to know our place in that reality and conform ourselves to the God who created it. On the second road our desires are sovereign, and we can rationalize our behavior or redefine reality in order to do what we want.<sup>12</sup>

Paul exhorts believers to “*not be conformed to this world.*” He is warning us about the desire within us to make our own truth and to shape the world by our desires. But that is not God's plan for His children. He wills that we “*be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*” We are not to be shaping truth, reality, and our world by our desires, but our desires are to be shaped by God's truth and reality.

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<sup>11</sup> Lewis, C. S. *The Abolition of Man* (Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis) (p. 78). HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.

<sup>12</sup> Art Lindsay. *True Truth: Defending Absolute Truth in a Relativistic World* (Kindle Locations 1246-1254). Kindle Edition.

God shapes His creation through truth—His Word and His reality. Man's attempt to shape his world with his own version of truth will fail miserably. Just look around, turn on the radio, or watch a little TV. It doesn't take long to see everyone has their own so called "truth" and yet people can't figure out why they are wrong or why it doesn't seem to be working. We can only make sense of this world by God's truth, the only truth. Yield to it and follow Him.

## WEEK 3 WHY IS THERE SOMETHING RATHER THAN NOTHING?

-----Dennis Watson

Reason, logic, and evidence cry out that the universe exists. There have been some strange philosophies through the years that question the existence of things; even one's own existence. Reason, logic, and simple evidence tell us that not only do we exist, but a vast universe also exists. Of course the Bible teaches us that all of creation was created by God, and that the *"heavens declare the glory of God."* This week we will be looking at the cosmological argument for existence. Remember this is not an argument in the sense of two people arguing. An argument is a statement or evidence as in a court case. Cosmos is the word for universe. The cosmological argument for the existence of God is the argument from the fact of the existence of the universe. So dig in and learn how to give an answer of the reason for the hope that is in you.

### DAY 1 WHAT IF THERE WERE NO GOD?

#### First Read Ecclesiastes 2:11 and 12:11-14

Our purpose in this study is to help you understand the evidence for Christian beliefs. However, there are some who are atheists who make statements that can make people wonder why they are not believers themselves. In the case of what if there were no God, consider this:

Many philosophers, like Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, have argued that if God does not exist, then life is absurd. Admittedly, Sartre and Camus didn't take this to be a proof of the opposite, namely, that God exists. Rather they concluded that life really is absurd. Nevertheless, their analysis of human existence shows us clearly the grim implications of atheism.<sup>13</sup>

In my observation, and that of millions of others, life does have meaning. If there is no God, then life is absurd, but since there is a God, life has meaning, value, and purpose.

King Solomon set out to discover what life was about, and time and time again he concluded that life was characterized by vanity. In fact at the end of each of his experiments, he wrote something like this found in Ecclesiastes 12:8:

*"Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher, "All is vanity." Ecclesiastes 12:8 (NKJV)*

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<sup>13</sup>Craig, William Lane. On Guard: Defending Your Faith with Reason and Precision (Kindle Locations 416-419). David C. Cook. Kindle Edition.



But when it was all said and done Solomon concluded:

*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. 14 For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 (NKJV)*

In his book On Guard: Defending Your Faith with Reason and Precision, William Lane Craig explains these three notions:

- Meaning has to do with significance, why something matters.
- Value has to do with good and evil, right and wrong.
- Purpose has to do with a goal, a reason for something.<sup>14</sup>

What about you? Are you convinced that life has meaning, value, and purpose? It is clear that without God life is absurd. With God life is meaningful. In fact, all indications are people die. Not only people but the universe as we know it will die ultimately. If there is no God, then there is no hope beyond death. But God has revealed Himself and also hope beyond death. He has provided a plan for man to live eternally with Him and a plan for a new heaven and new earth.

William Lane Craig's appraisal:

I hope you begin to understand the gravity of the alternatives before us. For if God exists, then there is hope for man. But if God does not exist, then all we are left with is despair. As one writer has aptly put it, "If God is dead, then man is dead too."<sup>15</sup>

King Solomon concluded that God was the meaning and purpose of life! Therefore, life has value.

## **DAY 2 WHAT IS THE COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT FOR GOD?**

### **First Read Genesis 1:1-5**

The first ten words of our English Bible express the truth of God that sets the stage for the rest of the Bible, "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*" In the Hebrew there are only seven words. How cool is that! The Biblical teaching about God that determines all that follows is right there in the beginning. The theistic God revealed in the Bible called into being time, space, and matter. That means that God, the theistic God of the Bible, is timeless, non-spatial, and immaterial. For God to create time, space, and matter, He had to be beyond time, space, and matter.

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<sup>14</sup>Craig, William Lane. On Guard: Defending Your Faith with Reason and Precision (Kindle Locations 434-437). David C. Cook. Kindle Edition.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid, location 564-566.

The word ‘cosmos’ means world or universe. The cosmological argument for God is the argument providing evidence of God from the existence of the universe. A huge part of presenting arguments for Christianity is logic. Logic is putting your thoughts in order. Our word logic comes from the Greek word “logos.” In **John 1:1** we read, “*In the beginning was the Word (logos), and the Word (logo) was with God, and the Word (logos) was God.*” “God is a rational being and the principles of good reason flow from His very nature.”<sup>16</sup> The logic of the cosmological argument goes like this:

1. Everything that had a beginning had a cause.
2. The universe had a beginning.
3. Therefore the universe had a cause.<sup>17</sup>

It looks like Paul made an appeal to this logic when he wrote about those who, “Suppress the truth.”

*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 1:20 (NKJV)***

Paul was saying that the logic of the creation was enough evidence so that people who do not believe in God as Creator are “without excuse.”

Since there is something - the universe - there must be a cause. This along with two other arguments make it likely that the God of the Bible, who said He did this, did it!

### **DAY 3 THE HEAVENS DECLARE GOD’S GLORY**

#### **First Read Psalm 19:1-6**

The Psalmist says that the universe declares God’s glory. The Message paraphrase says, “*God’s glory is on tour in the skies.*” Paul says that people are without excuse for not believing in God because He can be known by what He has made. This is called general revelation. God has revealed Himself in what is known as general and special revelation. General revelation is what can be known about God through His effects. This largely is the universe. God has shown Himself to exist through what He has made. Special revelation is His Word, Jesus, and miracles. This is special because He is communicating specific attributes of His nature.

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<sup>16</sup>Geisler, Norman and Brooks, Ronald. Come Let Us Reason: An Introduction to Logical Thinking, (p. 7).

<sup>17</sup>Geisler, Norman L., I Don’t Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist (Foreword by David Limaugh) (p.75).

The Psalmist says that creation “*declares His glory.*” His glory is His shining, His brightness, and splendor. God has made certain things known about Himself through His creation.

God has shown us in His creation—

He is beyond time—timeless

He is beyond matter—immaterial

He is beyond space—spaceless

He is personal—He chose to create

He is intelligent—everything in creation has design

He is powerful—in order to create from nothing, He had to be powerful

The bottom line is this: Since there was an absolute beginning to space, time, and matter, it’s reasonable to conclude that the cause of the universe must be spaceless, timeless, and immaterial. This cause must also be personal in order to choose to create, intelligent to create such a fine-tuned universe, and powerful to create out of nothing. A spaceless, timeless, immaterial, personal, intelligent, powerful Being is exactly what theists call “God.”<sup>18</sup>

Just look around and you do not have to look far. God has revealed Himself by His handiwork!

## **DAY 4 GOD IS ETERNAL, THE UNIVERSE IS NOT**

### **First Read Deuteronomy 33:27**

Most scientists now are in agreement—the universe had a beginning and it will have an end. The universe is not eternal. All scientific evidence points to a big bang. I have no problem with that. God said it and bang, it happened. Since the universe had a beginning, it had a beginner.

The obvious question then is “Who made God?” The universe came to exist and everything in the universe came to exist. God, on the other hand, did not come to exist. The Bible teaches that God is eternal. He has no beginning and no end. He has always been and always will be. He told Moses that he was to tell the Israelites that “*I AM*” had sent him to them to lead them out of Egyptian bondage. God told Moses that His name was the

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<sup>18</sup> <http://crossexamined.org/the-universe-had-a-beginning/>

Hebrew verb “to be.” That is because He is the One True God who has always been and always will be.

When Moses blessed the tribes of Israel in Deuteronomy 33, in one verse of his conclusion he called God eternal. God is, He is not caused.

There is a foundational law of science—the law of causality.

Norman Geisler and Frank Turek help us with this:

Science is a search for causes, and that search is based on our consistent observation that everything that has a beginning has a cause. In fact, the question “Who made God?” points out how seriously we take the Law of Causality. It’s taken for granted that virtually everything needs a cause. So why then doesn’t God need a cause? Because the atheist’s contention misunderstands the Law of Causality. The Law of Causality does not say that everything needs a cause. It says that everything that comes to be needs a cause. God did not come to be. No one made God. He is unmade. As an eternal being, God did not have a beginning, so he didn’t need a cause.<sup>19</sup>

God is the uncaused cause; the unmoved mover. Give praise to our Eternal God!

## **DAY 5 SCIENCE POINTS TO TRUTH**

### **First Read John 1:1-5 and Psalm 53:1**

The universe is expanding. If it is expanding, then it is reasonable to understand that there was a point that expansion began and will continue to expand. It would be like gluing buttons to a balloon. When you blow up the balloon, the buttons move out from each other. How does that demonstrate a beginning? The simple way to look at this is to think of it in reverse. If we could speed this up in reverse, then the universe would move inward until it was one speck and then nothing, absolutely nothing, not even space. If you deflate the balloon with the buttons, the buttons will come close together as it was before it was inflated.

The second law of thermodynamics also shows that the universe had a beginning and is winding down. The second law of thermodynamics states that a closed system will tend toward increasing disorder. The outcome is expressed this way by William Lane Craig:

Already in the nineteenth century scientists realized that the second law implied a grim prediction for the future of the universe. Given enough

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<sup>19</sup>Geisler, Norman L., *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist* (Foreword by David Limbaugh) (Loc 1640)

time, all the energy in the universe will spread itself out evenly throughout the universe, just as the gas spreads itself out evenly throughout the bottle. The universe will become a featureless soup in which no life is possible. Once the universe reaches such a state, no significant further change is possible. It is a state of equilibrium, in which the temperature and pressure are the same everywhere. Scientists called this the “heat death” of the universe.<sup>20</sup>

In a way it seems that scientists who claim to be atheists or agnostics have been painted into a corner by the science they espouse. A scientist who is also an agnostic expressed a great deal of frustration regarding scientific discoveries that have not led science where they hoped. In his book *God and the Astronomers* he writes:

“Astronomers now find they have painted themselves into a corner because they have proven, by their own methods, that the world began abruptly in an act of creation to which you can trace the seeds of every star, every planet, every living thing in this cosmos and on the earth. And they have found that all this happened as a product of forces they cannot hope to discover. That there are what I or anyone would call supernatural forces at work is now, I think, a scientifically proven fact.”<sup>21</sup>

Science it seems more and more points to the truth of the Bible. Truth is that which corresponds to reality. Jastrow also writes:

“At this moment it seems as though science will never be able to raise the curtain on the mystery of creation. For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.”<sup>22</sup>

The truth will set you free! Many scientists have been enslaved by the lie that there is no God. They remain captive to the law and blocked from the truth and the God of the truth.

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<sup>20</sup> Craig, William Lane. *On Guard: Defending Your Faith with Reason and Precision* (Kindle Locations 1509-1514). David C. Cook. Kindle Edition.

<sup>21</sup> [https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/87585.Robert\\_Jastrow](https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/87585.Robert_Jastrow)

<sup>22</sup> [https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/87585.Robert\\_Jastrow](https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/87585.Robert_Jastrow)



## WEEK 4 IS THERE EVIDENCE OF DESIGN IN THE UNIVERSE?-----

Chris Watson

“The universe came into existence at a point in the past in an event called the big bang. This name came from what scientist believe was the sudden appearance of all of the universe.” In fact, if you have received any public education you would know this term and definition well or at least have heard something like it during your education. Our government wants to push the “big bang” agenda. They know that if they can doubt God’s existence at the beginning, the creation, then that takes care of it.

This week we are going to look at another argument, Geisler, Norman L, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist (Foreword by David Limbaugh) (p. 95). Crossway. Kindle Edition. Or, answer for believers to give for why they believe what they do and where their hope comes from. This argument is called the “Teleological Argument.” Teleological comes from a Greek word “telos” which means design. So the teleological argument is the argument from design.

The Teleological Argument goes like this:

1. Every design had a designer.
2. The universe has a highly complex design.
3. Therefore, the universe had a Designer.<sup>23</sup>

### DAY 1 IS THE UNIVERSE DESIGNED?

#### First Read Psalm 8:1-4

William Paley, in the 18th century, expressed the claim that every watch has a watchmaker. Think of it this way. Let’s say you were on a hike in the wilderness to escape the mad rush of the city. You were enjoying nature and suddenly there on the ground is a Rolex watch. If you had been thinking naturalistically you could transfer that method of thinking and look at the watch and wonder what kind of natural phenomenon brought that watch into existence. Of course that would be a foolish way of thinking because immediately you would know that someone lost that watch and it had been made by a watchmaker. But why not look at nature and think about the miraculous event that brought it into existence?

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<sup>23</sup>Geisler, Norman L., I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist (Foreword by David Limbaugh) (p. 95). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

Every day we see cars, jets, buildings, and more. Someone designed and built these things. What about art? When you look at a painting do you realize that work of art was created twice. It was first in the mind of the artist and then it was put on canvas. That is the way it is with all things that people produce. Mercedes-Benz stadium is an incredible work of architecture and design. It first existed in the mind of the designer and then builders made it a reality.

The same is true of our universe. God designed it and we see this design in Genesis 1 and 2. Some argue that it's hard to believe that God created the universe. I would argue it's hard to believe that the universe just came to be. The "big bang" is described as "The violent explosion of an extremely small, hot, and dense body of matter between 12 and 18 billion years ago. It is viewed as the earliest event in a widely held model of the origin of the universe."<sup>24</sup> This is much harder for me to believe, personally, than the earth having a designer from an all-powerful God. What about you? Some have said, "Well then who made God?" If God was made or a created being that is not much of a God. God has always been. This is hard for us to grasp because everything we have ever known, if you will, has a beginning or an end. God was, is and will always be. One has to decide either to put their faith in the world just appearing with a "big bang" in randomness and now everything "works" or to believe that a creator God put things into motion and designed all things.

God, according to Scripture, designed our world. It first existed in the mind of God and then He spoke it into existence. He had a plan, intent, and design. It was all done with intent. When a song writer writes a song he intends for it to be sung and performed. God's universe is for His intent and purposes, for His glory and renown. It is all about Him.

## **DAY 2 FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE**

### **First Read Psalm 139:13-17**

Life is an incredible design and intent of God. In 1953 James Watson and Francis Crick discovered DNA. This is the abbreviation for deoxyribonucleic acid. DNA is the chemical that encodes instructions for building and replicating all living things. DNA identifies the cells in your body as your cells. Your DNA is what makes you uniquely you. That is how DNA can be used to convict people of crimes. No one else has your DNA.

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<sup>24</sup> <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/Big+Bang>



Charles Colson speaks of DNA and says,

“Simply put, DNA is like a language in the heart of the cell, a molecular message, a set of instructions telling the cell how to construct proteins—much like the software needed to run a computer. Moreover, the amount of information DNA includes is staggering: A single cell of the human body contains as much information as the Encyclopedia Britannica—all thirty volumes—three or four times over.”<sup>25</sup>

It’s also said that, “Genes are composed of DNA, and it is predicted that there are over 3 billion base pairs in the human genome. Humans have approximately 10 trillion cells, so if you were to line all of the DNA found in every cell of a human body it would stretch from the earth to the sun 100 times!”<sup>26</sup>

Talk about incredible design and detail! Such detailed information makes each of us the person God intended us to be. God is intelligent and powerful. He is also personal and when you consider all of these it really enables us to better understand that we are made in the image and likeness of God. We were not a happen stance, created by evolution, or an afterthought. We are God’s very own creation and we see in Genesis that after God made mankind, He said that day was, *“very good.”*

Take some time today to thank God for His creation, particularly for His creation of mankind. Thank Him for creating you and for knowing you like no one else knows you. Thank Him for meeting your needs, particularly that of knowing God through Jesus Christ.

## **DAY 3 THE UNIVERSE WAS MADE FOR LIFE**

### **First Read Genesis 2:8-15**

This is such a great passage of Scripture. God got everything ready and then put man in the garden. That is what He did! After He finished the work of creating He declared it *“very good”* and then He placed man in the garden prepared for him. What a picture of grace—creation-grace! God made the universe perfect for life, including human life.

So was man really a cosmic accident? Was he really just a coincidence? I have heard many people remark, even children, after a trip to Disney that most of the songs children learn from Disney give the idea that the world just happened with no meaning or purpose.

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<sup>25</sup> Colson, Charles. How Now Shall We Live? (p. 75). Tyndale House Publishers. Kindle Edition.

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.genome.gov/dnaday/q.cfm?aid=10&year=2012>

Here is what Charles Colson writes about a friend's experience:

"What a message for kids to hear, Dave groaned. It tells them they're nothing more than a cosmic accident. Small wonder that, over time, language about a loving God who created them and loves them sounds more and more like a fairy tale."<sup>27</sup>

Science has discovered a very significant truth that corresponds with the Bible. It appears that the universe was designed to support life! This reality is known as the "Anthropic Principle." Anthropic comes from a Greek word that means "human" or "man." The Anthropic principle states that the physical structure of the universe is exactly what is needed to support life. That is not an accident or a coincidence. How do we know this?

For example, without gravity life wouldn't work, at least like we know it. We often take for granted the things that just seem to work. In fact, I would argue it's very hard for atheists and agnostics to explain or make sense of things like gravity. Did gravity evolve? Was it not there and then over thousands of years it evolved? Or has it always been there? Take the human body for another example. The Lord designed the body with two arms and two legs to move about and get things done. To think or believe that something like the human body happened over time or as the result of other things just "happening" over time is absurd. This world along with you and I are not by chance, and the fact that you and I are here is by design, God's design.

## **DAY 4 GOD MADE THE UNIVERSE PERFECT FOR LIVING**

### **First Read Romans 11:33-36**

If we would just pay attention to the Word of God and the beauty, splendor, and design of our world, we would live ever rejoicing in what He has done.

Our little planet of all the many planets and celestial bodies in our universe appears to be the only one that supports life. So far no other planet has been discovered that has that ability. Man is the crown of God's creation.

The extent of the universe's fine-tuning makes the Anthropic Principle perhaps the most powerful argument for the existence of God. It is not that there are just a few broadly defined constants that may have resulted by chance. No, there are more than 100 very narrowly defined constants that strongly point to an intelligent Designer.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Colson, Charles., How Now Shall We Live? (p. 61). Tyndale House Publishers. Kindle Edition.

<sup>28</sup>Geisler, Norman L., I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist (Foreword by David Limbaugh) (p. 105). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

Here are just a few of the constants which demonstrate the constants of the Anthropic Principle.

1. Oxygen comprises 21 percent of the atmosphere. If it were 25 percent, fires would erupt, if 15 percent, human beings would suffocate.
2. If the gravitational force were altered by 1 part in 1040 (that's 10 followed by forty zeroes), the sun would not exist, and the moon would crash into the earth or sheer off into space. Even a slight increase in the force of gravity would result in all the stars being much more massive than our sun, with the effect that the sun would burn too rapidly and erratically to sustain life.
3. If the centrifugal force of planetary movements did not precisely balance the gravitational forces, nothing could be held in orbit around the sun.
4. If the universe was expanding at a rate one millionth more slowly than it is, the temperature on earth would be 10,000 degrees.
5. The average distance between stars in our galaxy of 100 billion stars is 30 trillion miles. If that distance was altered slightly, orbits would become erratic, and there would be extreme temperature variations on earth. (Traveling at space shuttle speed, seventeen thousand miles an hour or five miles a second, it would take 201,450 years to travel 30 trillion miles.)
6. Any of the laws of physics can be described as a function of the velocity of light (now defined to be 299,792.458 miles a second). Even a slight variation in the speed of light would alter the other constants and preclude the possibility of life on earth.<sup>29</sup>

What a mighty God we serve and how He has graced us with just what we need!

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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.jashow.org/articles/science/anthropic-principle/the-anthropic-principle/>

## DAY 5 MORE DIVINE DESIGN

### First Read 1 Chronicles 29:11-12

Yesterday we looked at just how awesome our God and His creation is. Today we will continue this thought and see some other evidence of this.

1. If Jupiter was not in its current orbit, we would be bombarded with space material. Jupiter's gravitational field acts as a cosmic vacuum cleaner, attracting asteroids and comets that would otherwise strike earth.
2. If the thickness of the earth's crust was greater, too much oxygen would be transferred to the crust to support life. If it were thinner, volcanic and tectonic activity would make life untenable.
3. If the rotation of the earth took longer than 24 hours, temperature differences would be too great between night and day. If the rotation period was shorter, atmospheric wind velocities would be too great.
4. Surface temperature differences would be too great if the axial tilt of the earth were altered slightly.
5. If the atmospheric discharge (lightning) rate were greater, there would be too much fire destruction; if it were less, there would be too little nitrogen fixing in the soil.
6. If there were more seismic activity, much life would be lost. If there was less, nutrients on the ocean floors and in river runoff would not be cycled back to the continents through tectonic uplift. Even earth quakes are necessary to sustain life as we know it.<sup>30</sup>

I believe it would be appropriate to at least read the words of "The Doxology" in praise to God our Creator:

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

While our society wants to discount all they can to show that there was not a creator for our universe it is just overwhelming to see that there had to be a creator. Thank God for His awesomeness and His great design.

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<sup>30</sup><https://www.jashow.org/articles/science/anthropic-principle/the-anthropic-principle/>



## WEEK 5 IS THERE REALLY RIGHT AND WRONG?---Dennis Watson

We have looked at two arguments for God—the cosmological argument and the teleological argument. The cosmological argument tells us that since the universe exists there must be a God who made it. The teleological argument tells us that since the universe has design it had a designer and that designer is the God of the Bible. The first two arguments are scientific; this one is moral in nature. It tells us that since people have a moral law written on their hearts there must be a source of that moral law.

The moral argument goes like this:

1. If God does not exist, objective moral values and duties do not exist.
2. Objective moral values and duties do exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.<sup>31</sup>

This week we will look at how the awareness of right and wrong points to a reason for belief in God.

## DAY 1 IS THERE A MORAL LAW WRITTEN ON MAN’S HEART?

### First Read Romans 2:14-15

Here are two verses that clearly correspond to what we see in the world. Everywhere people have an awareness of right and wrong. There is written on the hearts of people everywhere a moral code. Norman Geisler and Frank Turek also refer to it as “moral obligation”:

"Everyone knows there are absolute moral obligations. An absolute moral obligation is something that is binding on all people, at all times, in all places. And an absolute Moral Law implies an absolute Moral Law Giver."<sup>32</sup>

The fact is people have an awareness of basic right and wrong. To know something is right implies there is something wrong. And of course the reverse is true. This is undeniable. J. Budziszewski says that the basic knowledge of right and wrong is “what we can’t not know.” He has written a book by that title. It is about the loss of common truths about what we know about right and wrong.

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<sup>31</sup> Craig, William Lane., On Guard: Defending Your Faith with Reason and Precision (Kindle Locations 2076-2078). David C. Cook. Kindle Edition.

<sup>32</sup> Geisler, Norman L., I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist (Foreword by David Limbaugh) (p. 171). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

Sheila often tells me that my behavior is rude. I am pretty much an introvert and will occasionally be zoned out and miss an opportunity to speak to someone. I know that it is wrong to be rude; it is just sometimes I am not aware that I am being rude. The problem is that of not being aware. People know that being respectful is the right behavior. If they act in a disrespectful way, they are either unaware of their disrespectful behavior or have chosen to behave wrongly. In this case it may be a choice and not an awareness issue. Either way it is wrong.

In the introduction to this week I gave one syllogism (a logical argument with two premises and a conclusion) regarding the moral argument for God. Another is in order:

1. Every law has a law giver.
2. There is a Moral Law.
3. Therefore, there is a Moral Law Giver.<sup>33</sup>

This is another argument, or answer, to give when you are telling people why you believe in God. All people everywhere have a moral code that is inside of them. Therefore, I believe God put it there! There is a moral code written on the heart by the moral, creating, just and loving God revealed in the Bible.

## **DAY 2 GOD'S LAW WRITTEN IN HIS WORD**

### **First Read Exodus 20:1-18**

As we saw yesterday, there is a moral code written on the heart of people. However, God has also given us a moral code in writing. In fact, it was first written by the finger of God in stone and given to Moses. This code is known as The Ten Commandments. There is a difference between the moral law written on man's heart and the law given in the Bible. The fact that man has a moral code or law written on his heart clearly points to a moral law giver. When there is a prescription, there is a prescriber. The God of the Bible is that prescriber. He also gave the written law which is known as the Mosaic Law because it was given through Moses. It was given first to the nation of Israel so that they would know how to live and live in relation to God as their God. The Law, particularly The Ten Commandments, was then for all people everywhere. The Levitical law was primarily given to Israel to guide worship and the sacrificial system.

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<sup>33</sup> Geisler, Norman L., I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist (Foreword by David Limbaugh) (p. 171). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

The moral law and the written Mosaic Law reveal a standard from God. These laws are not arbitrary. He does not tell us “do this and don’t do this ” just for rules’ sake. The standard of rightness is the very nature of God. God is the God of infinite love and infinite justice.

In The Ten Commandments God gives ten moral standards. The first four standards deal with man’s relationship to God, and the remaining six standards deal with man’s relationship with other men. There is the law on our hearts, and then God fine-tunes it with the written law in His Word.

The written law accomplishes several things.

First it lets man know how to relate to God and other people. Much of this is already written on the heart, but God makes it clear and brings out what is already written on the heart.

Secondly, the written law makes us aware of our failures, or more importantly, of our tendency toward sin.

Thirdly, and the most important, it makes us aware of the greater need of man. We must deal with the heart of the matter—our heart.

God is the eternal God who created all things. As creatures in His image, man is accountable and responsible to Him. The truth is, God has written a moral code on our hearts and He has given us the written code in His Word. All of mankind is accountable and responsible to Him.

### **DAY 3 JESUS AND THE LAW**

#### **First Read Matthew 5:21-48**

The law that is written in the Bible is not just a cold legal document. Since the moral law is written on our hearts and God gave the written law in the Bible, there must be more that He is out to accomplish. In the passage today Jesus definitely moves the written law into the heart of man. He shows that the law is much more than a written document. There is a real danger with the written law that religious people fall into. That danger is legalism. Legalism is keeping the written law but ignoring the real matter—the heart. Jesus, in speaking to the religious leaders of His day, said that people speak out of the overflow of the heart (see Matthew 12:34). The real issue was the heart.

Jesus took a few elements of the written law and brought it to bear on the heart. He prefaced His statements with, *“You have heard it said”* in reference to the law, and then He said, *“But I say to you.”* He is not undoing the law, but showing the heart that needs to be behind the law. Jesus did



not come to make us good or moral; He came to make us God's very own children:

*But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

**John 1:12-13 (NKJV)**

This is becoming very overwhelming! Never did I think that an apologetics study could be a spiritual and moving experience. I am a believer in God:

- Because He has made me aware of Truth and that He is the very essence of truth.
- Because He has made me aware that the universe shouts, "Creator."
- Because He has made me aware that the universe shouts, "Designer."
- Because He has made me aware that even in my best intentions I violate the moral code He has written on my heart and the written code He has given in the Bible, and this shouts, "I am guilty."

And now I know that the God of the universe, revealed in the Bible, has made me aware of Himself and that He did not send Jesus to make me moral or a good person because it is impossible. He came to make me able to call Him "FATHER."

God is greater than I ever dreamed to this day and I know there is more to come!

## **DAY 4 PAUL'S DISCOVERY ABOUT THE LAW**

### **First Read Romans 7:7-12**

People disobey, suppress, and try to adapt the moral code so they may ease their conscience. The written law of God (The Ten Commandments) points out man's greatest problem—man is sinful!

All people know murder is wrong. Therefore, the majority of people will not murder. We think we are good. But what about coveting? Paul said that he was not even aware he was coveting until he read the law. The written law of God points out our failure to measure up to it. I have never murdered anyone, but Jesus took it farther by saying that to be angry with your brother without cause shall be in danger of judgement. I am therefore a guilty murderer!

The point of the written law is to make us aware that we are not good or moral. We will never, by our own merits, arrive and be acceptable to God. Bottom line—we cannot fix anyone and especially ourselves. That was a hard lesson I had to learn early in ministry. I believe that is what is known as the God complex. Many people in ministry have suffered from this malady believing they can't fix or save people. All we can do is point them to the One who can—Jesus. It was filmmaker Cecil B. DeMille, producer of the 1956 movie “The Ten Commandments” who said, “We cannot break the Ten Commandments. We can only break ourselves against them.” Paul was broken by them and then cried out:

*O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*  
<sup>25</sup> *I thank God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.*  
**Romans 7:24-25 (NKJV)**

The goal of the law, the one written on our hearts informed by the one written in God's Law found in the Bible, is to bring us to the God of the universe revealed in the Bible. The law on our hearts and in the Bible make it obvious we need a Savior.

## **DAY 5 THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE OF THE LAW**

### **First Read Galatians 3:19-25**

Have you ever really wondered why God gave us the written law? One of my favorite Bible commentators, J. Vernon McGee, in commenting on this passage writes:

"It was given to reveal not remove sin. It was not given to keep man from sin because sin had already come. It was to show man himself as being a natural, ugly, crude sinner before God. Any man who is honest will look at himself in the light of the Law and see himself guilty. It was not given to prove that all men were sinners, nor was it given (as many liberals are saying today) as a standard by which man becomes holy. Oh, my friend, you would never become holy this way, because, first of all, you can't keep the Law in your own strength."<sup>34</sup>

We are not sinners because we sin. We sin because that is what we are—sinners and sinners sin.

The law can kill but it cannot give life. Violating the law of gravity can kill you. It does not matter if you jump off of a thirty-story building, are thrown

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<sup>34</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

off the building, or if you accidentally fall off. The why is not important; it is the law of gravity. However, the law of gravity cannot give life. The law can kill or point out your sin nature, but it cannot do anything about it.

The purpose of the law is to point out or reveal sin. In pointing out sin it also points you to the One who can do something about your sin—Jesus Christ. The law makes us aware that we need a Savior and that Savior is Jesus. The law cannot justify but Jesus can. The law teaches us about our sin nature, and Jesus does something about it. The law was not given to make you good but to make you aware that you are not good.



## **WEEK 6 ARE MIRACLES POSSIBLE?-----Chris Watson**

Review—This is all about truth—that which corresponds to reality. There is no denying there is such a thing as truth. God revealed truth in the Bible. Since there is truth, it had to have come from One greater than man—outside of man and the known universe.

The universe teaches us that something comes from something and that something is a someone who is beyond the time, space and matter of the universe. The God of the Bible corresponds to this reality. Design comes from a designer. There is no design without a designer and that designer is the God revealed in creation, design, and the Bible.

Morality is an indisputable aspect of the human race. People know that there are things that are right and things that are wrong. This is because there is a moral code written on our hearts because there is a moral law giver. That moral law giver also gave us the written moral law in the Bible. The written law was given to bring out the moral law written on our hearts and to reveal that man is in violation of both.

As a result, the God of the Bible, took steps to meet the moral standards to make man a child of His own, rather than to make us moral which would violate His own nature of love and justice. It is not hard to understand that this God who is creator, designer, moral, just and loving, would perform miracles to confirm His message.

### **DAY 1 GOD AND THE OPEN BOX**

#### **First Read Nehemiah 9:15-21**

In Frank Turek's book I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, he gives an illustration that I would like to share. The illustration came from Professor Ronald Nash. On a trip to Russia, Nash shared with Russian educators an illustration of two cardboard boxes. The different boxes represented two views of the universe. One box was closed and sealed. This closed box represents the atheist's view of the universe. It is best represented by the words of Carl Sagon, "The cosmos is all there is or ever has been or ever will be." With the closed box there is nothing outside of the universe. With this view there are no miracles because there is no supernatural realm.

The other box is open. This box represents the worldview that says there is something outside of the universe we call God. With the open box someone from outside the box can reach inside and manipulate its contents. Nash said, "Just like I can reach into this box to manipulate its contents, God can reach into our universe and perform what we call miracles."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Geisler, Norman L., I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist (Foreword by David Limbaugh) (p. 202). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

Since there is a God who created the universe out of nothing;

And since that universe has design requiring a designer;

And since the designed universe was designed to support life;

Since man the crown of all of God's creative life is a moral creature like the God who made him;

And since God has acted to have a relationship with man;

Then miracles are not only possible they are probable. "Or, to put it another way, a miracle is an act of God to confirm the word of God through a messenger of God."<sup>36</sup>

I separated the above statements intentionally. Go back and read them one by one and think about them. God not only created the world but He is in charge of it. The belief of deism says that there is a supreme being who created the universe but does not intervene in the universe. It has also been referred to as the "clock maker God." God made the world, wound the clock, and someday it will end; between His making the world and it ending, He has no bearing on what happens today or tomorrow. Theism, on the other hand, not only believes in the existence of a God and creator but that God intervenes and seeks to sustain personal relations to His creatures, humans that is.

The God of the Bible is involved in His creation, not just in creating it, but since creating it, and forever more. We see this clearly spelled out in Scripture with what God did, and I pray you see it in your life with how God has worked in it and in those around you. Go back and read our Scripture for today again. What jumped out to you? What jumped out to me was how patient and loving God was with the people of Israel. Unfortunately, too many times I am impatient with myself and with others. Thank God today for the miracles He has done in your life and for His patience and love.

## **DAY 2 WHAT IS A MIRACLE?**

### **First Read Exodus 4:1-9**

A true miracle is an event in the external world brought about by the immediate agency or the simple volition of God, operating without the use of means capable of being discerned by the senses, and designed to authenticate the divine commission of a religious teacher and the truth of his message (John 2:18; Matthew 12:38). It is an occurrence at once above

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<sup>36</sup>Geisler, Norman L., I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist (Foreword by David Limbaugh) (p. 202). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

nature and above man. It shows the intervention of a power that is not limited by the laws either of matter or of mind, a power interrupting the fixed laws which govern their movements, a supernatural power.<sup>37</sup>

A true miracle of God is unique, easily recognizable and something only God can do.

Geisler says, “For an act of God to be an unmistakable sign from God, the act would have to meet certain criteria—criteria that would distinguish God’s acts from any other unusual event. Like a king’s seal, God’s sign must be unique, easily recognizable, and something only God can do. In other words, it has characteristics that cannot be explained by natural laws, natural forces, or anything else in the physical universe. What would these criteria look like? As we saw from the Cosmological, Teleological, and Moral Arguments, God alone has infinite power (power beyond that in the natural world), supreme design and purpose, and complete moral purity. Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that his acts would display or contain elements of these attributes. So the criteria for true miracles include: A. An instantaneous beginning of a powerful act, as evidenced by the Cosmological Argument (the beginning of the universe); B. Intelligent design and purpose, as evidenced by the Teleological Argument (the precise design of the universe for the purpose of supporting life, and the specified and complex design of life itself); C. The promotion of good or right behavior, as evidenced by the Moral Argument (the Moral Law pressing on us).<sup>38</sup>

Therefore, when we read about miracles, like our reading in Exodus today or that of the parting of the Red Sea, it is something laws of science cannot explain. It is truly only something the One True God can do. God used miracles, not just for miracles sake but, to draw people to Himself so others would know He was the One True God.

Can you think of any miracles God has done in your life? If we are honest, any working of God in our life is a miracle. If you are saved, that in itself is a miracle. Therefore you have most likely seen God do other miracles in your life. Thank Him for working in your life and particularly for saving you.

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<sup>37</sup> <https://christiananswers.net/dictionary/miracle.html>

<sup>38</sup> Geisler, Norman L., I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist (Foreword by David Limbaugh) (pp. 210-211). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

## DAY 3 DIVINE PROVIDENCE AND MIRACLES

### First Read Acts 17:22-34

Divine providence is the governance of God by which He, with wisdom and love, cares for and directs all things in the universe. The doctrine of divine providence asserts that God is in complete control of all things. He is sovereign over the universe as a whole (Psalm 103:19), the physical world (Matthew 5:45), the affairs of nations (Psalm 66:7), human destiny (Galatians 1:15), human successes and failures (Luke 1:52), and the protection of His people (Psalm 4:8). This doctrine stands in direct opposition to the idea that the universe is governed by chance or fate.<sup>39</sup>

With this understanding often comes the question of “evil.” If God is in control, then why do evil, sickness, death or murder exist? If we look back to Genesis 3 we know the answer. We chose to disobey God and go our own way bringing spiritual death (separation from God) and eventually physical death. Though many times we say “I would have done it differently.” Let’s look at that:

Perhaps a practical way to look at this question would be to consider some alternative ways people might have God run the world:

1) God could change everyone’s personality so they cannot sin. This would also mean that we would not have a free will. We would not be able to choose right or wrong because we would be “programmed” to do only right. Had God chosen to do this, there would be no meaningful relationships between Him and His creation.

Instead, God made Adam and Eve innocent but with the ability to choose good or evil. Because of this, they could respond to His love and trust Him or choose to disobey. They chose to disobey. Because we live in a real world where we can choose our actions but not their consequences, their sin affected those who came after them (us). Similarly, our decisions to sin have an impact on us and those around us and those who will come after us.

2) God could compensate for people’s evil actions through supernatural intervention 100 percent of the time. God would stop a drunk driver from causing an automobile accident. God would stop a lazy construction worker from doing a substandard job on a house that would later cause grief to the homeowners. God would stop a father who is addicted to drugs or alcohol from doing any harm to his wife, children, or extended family. God would stop gunmen from robbing convenience stores. God would stop the

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<sup>39</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/divine-providence.html>



bullies from tormenting other kids. God would stop thieves from shoplifting. And, yes, God would stop terrorists from flying airplanes into buildings.

While this solution sounds attractive, it would lose its attractiveness as soon as God's intervention infringed on something we wanted to do. We want God to prevent horribly evil actions, but we are willing to let "less-evil" actions slide—not realizing that those "lesser-evil" actions are what usually lead to the "greater-evil" actions. Should God only stop actual sexual affairs, or should He also block our access to pornography or end any inappropriate, but not yet sexual, relationships? Should God stop "true" thieves, or should He also stop us from cheating on our taxes? Should God only stop murder, or should He also stop the "lesser-evil" actions done to people that lead them to commit murder? Should God only stop acts of terrorism, or should He also stop the indoctrination that transformed a person into a terrorist?

3) Another choice would be for God to judge and remove those who choose to commit evil acts. The problem with this possibility is that there would be no one left, for God would have to remove us all. We all sin and commit evil acts (Romans 3:23; Ecclesiastes 7:20; 1 John 1:8). While some people are more evil than others, where would God draw the line? Ultimately, all evil causes harm to others.

Instead of these options, God has chosen to create a "real" world in which real choices have real consequences. In this real world of ours, our actions affect others. Because of Adam's choice to sin, the world now lives under the curse, and we are all born with a sin nature (Romans 5:12). There will one day come a time when God will judge the sin in this world and make all things new, but He is purposely "delaying" in order to allow more time for people to repent so that He will not need to condemn them (2 Peter 3:9). Until then, He IS concerned about evil. When He created the Old Testament laws, the goal was to discourage and punish evil. He judges nations and rulers who disregard justice and pursue evil. Likewise, in the New Testament, God states that it is the government's responsibility to provide justice in order to protect the innocent from evil (Romans 13). He also promises severe consequences for those who commit evil acts, especially against the "innocent" (Mark 9:36-42).<sup>40</sup>

Now with all this stated we are reminded of Scripture in **Isaiah 55:8-9**, "*My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,*" says the Lord. In other words, there are some things God does that we don't understand. If we could understand them, that would make us like God. If we could fully understand God and His ways, would that be a God worth serving and following?

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<sup>40</sup><https://www.gotquestions.org/God-allow-evil.html>

God often intervenes in situations in our lives. I suggest He intervenes more than we know; we are just too busy to notice. There are times He intervenes through what we call miracles, either in salvation, the healing of a disease, a difficult situation, or giving wisdom on how to proceed. We often question “Why did God intervene in their situation and not mine?” In truth, He did; it just may not have been how or what we were looking for. We have come to know that we can trust God and His heart. Do you trust Him, even when it doesn’t make sense? It reminds me of Mercy Me’s song, “Even if.” Even if God doesn’t do what we ask or think He should do, we will still serve and trust Him because He is worthy. Ask Him to help you trust Him today.

## DAY 4 NO NEED TO DOWNPLAY MIRACLES

### First Read Exodus 7:1-7

There are many miracles listed in Scripture. You can check out a list of specific miracles here: <https://christiananswers.net/dictionary/miracle.html>. It lists 125 miracles in the Bible, and depending on where you look, you can even find more than that. Again, in my mind any work of God is a miracle in itself.

The greatest miracle of all is the creation of the universe out of nothing. Think about it, God took nothing and made it something. We may say that’s mind boggling and hard to believe, but for me it’s more mind boggling to think nothing made something. This something is because of a big explosion and a subsequent process that continued over “millions of years?” If it is true that creation was the first and biggest miracle, then why would any miracle after that be brought into question? Either God created the universe and therefore is in control and has done many miracles since or He hasn’t.

There is no need to downplay miracles. We have some artifacts that even prove or give account to the miracles of today. Remember miracles were not for miracles sake. One reason for miracles was listed in our passage today, “*And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them*” (**Exodus 7:5**). God did miracles to ultimately draw people to Himself and to make Himself known.

There is no need to downplay any of the miracles in the Bible. Miracles overpower natural laws, and if God is who He said He is, then God oversees and is in charge of natural laws.

## DAY 5 MIRACLES AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

### First Read Luke 11:14-23

Remember Jesus is all powerful. He has power over everything including demons. Jesus was accused of operating under the power of Satan (Beelzebub). Our key verse today is verse **20** that says, *"But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you."*

*"If I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you."* Jesus says the miracles are evidences of the arrival of God's promised, redemptive rule. They are audiovisual testimony to God's power and rule. The miracles trumpet the arrival of God's ruling power in such a way that Satan's display of power on earth is challenged and is in the process of being defeated.

To say the kingdom has arrived is not to argue that consummation has come, only that its presence has begun. The process of establishing kingdom authority is a long one, as Jesus will reveal, and it will take His return to bring the full promise of the kingdom to completion. God is breaking peacefully into the creation, through Jesus, to reclaim humanity from Satan's grip.

Jesus overcomes the presence and power of evil in the world. His power is greater than that of demons. He is stronger than Satan. His power and authority reverse the effect of sin. This exercise of power through Jesus is why Paul can call the gospel "the power of God" in Romans 1:16-17.<sup>41</sup>

The miracles in the Bible show God's power over all of the created order and point to God, His power and sovereignty. John 10 tells us *"that the enemy comes to steal, kill, and destroy but God has come to give us life and that more abundantly."* Our Lord is greater than the enemy; He is the overcomer. In our passage today Jesus tells the crowd, *"he who is not with me is against me."* We must decide to be with the Lord or not, remember He is the only one worthy to be praised. Remember in God's timing there will be a new heaven and a new earth, and there will be no sin or effects of sin, I'm looking forward to that, what about you?

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<sup>41</sup><https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/ivp-nt/Why-Miracles>

## WEEK 7 WHAT WAS KNOWN ABOUT JESUS AND WHEN WAS IT KNOWN?-----Dennis Watson

The debate about the foundational person of Christianity usually revolves around the reliability of the historical record of Jesus. As believers in Jesus we need to know and better understand the reliability of the historical record of Jesus. Of course the most significant historical record is the New Testament.

### DAY 1 A VERY EARLY CREED ABOUT JESUS

#### First Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

There are people who became believers after either living a life of atheism or being hostile to Christianity. The Apostle Paul, who wrote a great deal of the New Testament was, before his conversion, hostile to and a persecutor of Christians. C.S. Lewis was an atheist who became a believer and a Christian apologist. The same can be said of Lee Strobel who became a believer after a two-year spiritual journey in which he sought to know the truth. After his wife Leslie became a Christian in 1979 he interviewed scholars and authorities on the Bible and Christianity in his search. In the introduction to his book The Case for Christ, he writes:

“I’ll take you along as I interview thirteen leading scholars and authorities who have impeccable academic credentials.”<sup>42</sup>

The outcome was his own conversion to Christ and becoming an author and apologist.

In his interview with Craig Blomberg, an authority on the New Testament gospels, Strobel writes:

“We find that Paul incorporated some creeds, confessions of faith, or hymns from the earliest Christian church. These go way back to the dawn of the church soon after the Resurrection. “The most famous creeds include Philippians 2:6–11, which talks about Jesus being ‘in very nature God,’ and Colossians 1:15–20, which describes him as being ‘the image of the invisible God,’ who created all things and through whom all things are reconciled with God ‘by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.’<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Strobel, Lee., The Case for Christ: A Journalist's Personal Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus (Case for ... Series) (p. 14). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p. 34.

In 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 we see one of those creeds. If Jesus was crucified in 30 AD, then Paul was probably converted in about 32 AD. Paul was most likely given this creed by at least 35 AD. Certainly it was circulated and used in the early church well before Paul received it. This means that very early after Jesus death and resurrection, His true identity was being acknowledged among believers in creedal statements. It was not after hundreds of years of development of legend but very early.

Very early in the historical record we read:

- Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures
- He was buried and rose on the third day according to the scriptures

The reality of this was verified by the Scriptures (e.g., Ps. 16:10; Isa. 53:8-10) and by historical evidence verified by time in the grave and out of it, in the presence of the living.<sup>44</sup> These two events which are the very cornerstone of Christian faith were prophesied and fulfilled and were in creedal form just after the events had occurred.

The historical record of Jesus that comes to us from the New Testament; legend did not have time to develop and taint the historical record. Very early in the historical record the identity of Jesus was very clearly known and was being circulated. This comes from very early historical records!

## **DAY 2 HOW EARLY WERE THE NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS WRITTEN?**

### **First Read Acts 1:1-3**

Luke wrote the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts which is the continuation of the gospel after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. Acts records the beginning of the church. It concludes with Paul under house arrest in Rome where it ends abruptly. According to Eusebius, an early church historian, Paul was beheaded under the Roman Emperor Nero during a time of persecution. This would have taken place in the mid 60's AD. So Acts was completed before the early 60's and Luke's gospel even earlier. Most conservative scholars believe that the New Testament books were all written by 70 AD. Norman Geisler and Frank Turek write:

But it's not just conservative scholars who believe these early dates. Even some radical critics, such as atheist John A. T. Robinson, admit the New Testament documents were written early. Known for his role in launching the "Death of God" movement, Robinson wrote a revolutionary book titled Redating the New Testament, in which he posited that most New Testam-

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<sup>44</sup>The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

ment books, including all four Gospels, were written sometime between A.D. 40 and 65. The great and once-liberal archaeologist William F. Albright, after seeing how well the New Testament fit with the archaeological and historical data, wrote, "We can already say emphatically that there is no longer any solid basis for dating any book of the New Testament after about A.D. 80." Elsewhere Albright said, "In my opinion, every book of the New Testament was written by a baptized Jew between the 40s and the 80s of the first century (very probably sometime between about A.D. 50 and 75)." <sup>45</sup>

The New Testaments books were written very early and close to the events written about.

### **DAY 3 MISSING HISTORY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

#### **First Read Matthew 24:1-2**

The disciples were very impressed with the temple architecture. Jesus, however, let them in on prophecy that would be fulfilled within the next four decades. Jesus spoke of the destruction of the temple they were admiring. Although He prophesied the event it did not take place until 70 AD.

This was most punctually fulfilled; for after the temple was burnt, Titus, the Roman general, ordered the very foundations of it to be dug up; after which the ground on which it stood was ploughed up by Turnus Rufus. <sup>46</sup>

The event is not mentioned anywhere in the New Testament, and the temple was in place in Jerusalem throughout the New Testament.

Chuck Missler says there are other historical events missing in the New Testament:

"There are events in the New Testament that are conspicuous by their absence. There's no mention of Nero's persecutions which started about A.D. 64. Also not in the text is the execution of the leader of the Jerusalem church, James in A.D. 62. There was a Jewish revolt against the Romans in A.D. 66 which is not cited. Nor is the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 talked about. Why aren't these things mentioned? Because they hadn't happened yet. That's a strong authentication of the early dating of these books." <sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Geisler, Norman L., I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist (Foreword by David Limbaugh) (p. 243). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

<sup>46</sup> Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament

<sup>47</sup> Learn the Bible in 24 Hours, Chuck Missler, (p. 164.)

Think of significant events of the past twenty years. What if you were reading a particular author who was writing about historical events in the recent past? As you read you begin to wonder why nothing was written about the attacks of 9-11. Then you decided to check out when the book was written and discover that it was written in 1999. You could have easily found out that information by looking for the copyright year. Of course the New Testament writers did not have that. But we can determine approximate dates by what is included and what is excluded.

## **DAY 4 WHAT ARE NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS?**

### **First Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17**

The New Testament did not come to us out of the first century in the form of twenty-seven separate books bound in leather with gold trim. Instead what we have is eyewitness accounts that were gathered and written down. They were then circulated by believers and leaders in the first century. There are no originals due to the extensive use of the early writings and the quality of the writing material. What we do have is thousands of handwritten copies known as manuscripts.

At last count, there are nearly 5,700 handwritten Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. In addition, there are more than 9,000 manuscripts in other languages (e.g., Syriac, Coptic, Latin, Arabic). Some of these nearly 15,000 manuscripts are complete Bibles, others are books or pages, and a few are just fragments.

Consider some very trusted and unquestioned ancient writings and the number of manuscripts available:

Homer—643  
Demosthenes—200  
Herodotus—8  
Plato—7  
Tacitus—20  
Caesar—10  
Pliny—7  
Total 895<sup>48</sup>

Now if you think those are large numbers the number of New Testament manuscripts is 5696! Over six times as many as the others combined! How is it that these are considered reliable but the New Testament questioned?

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<sup>48</sup> Geisler, Norman L., I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist (Foreword by David Limbaugh) (p. 227). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

As you can see, there are thousands more New Testament Greek manuscripts than any other ancient writing. The internal consistency of the New Testament documents is about 99.5% textually pure. That is an amazing accuracy. In addition, there are over 19,000 copies in the Syriac, Latin, Coptic, and Aramaic languages. The total supporting New Testament manuscript base is over 24,000.<sup>49</sup>

That is extremely convincing. Like Frank Turek and Norman Geisler, I don't have enough faith to be an atheist!

## **DAY 5 OTHER EARLY CHURCH WRITERS AND THE MANUSCRIPTS**

### **First Read Luke 1:1-4**

I have to say that the Bible is a miraculous book! It came to us by way of God's inspiration and His oversight.

Beginning in February of A.D. 303, the Roman emperor Diocletian ordered three edicts of persecution upon Christians because he believed that the existence of Christianity was breaking the covenant between Rome and her gods. The edicts called for the destruction of churches, manuscripts, and books and the killing of Christians. Hundreds if not thousands of manuscripts were destroyed across the Roman Empire during this persecution, which lasted until A.D. 311. But even if Diocletian had succeeded in wiping every Biblical manuscript off the face of the earth, he could not have destroyed our ability to reconstruct the New Testament. Why? Because the early church fathers—men of the second and third centuries such as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, and others—quoted the New Testament so much (36,289 times, to be exact) that all but eleven verses of the New Testament can be reconstructed just from their quotations. In other words, you could go down to your local public library, check out the works of the early church fathers, and read nearly the entire New Testament just from their quotations of it! So we not only have thousands of manuscripts but thousands of quotations from those manuscripts. This makes reconstruction of the original text virtually certain.<sup>50</sup>

This is how use of the manuscripts have provided for us the extremely reliable New Testament. The process of pulling it all together is what is known as textual criticism. This involves taking the thousands of manuscripts in existence and then checking and crosschecking to come up with the most reliable text.

When you read your New Testament you are reading a very reliable text that reveals God's message to us.

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<sup>49</sup> <https://carm.org/manuscript-evidence>

<sup>50</sup> Geisler, Norman L., I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist (Foreword by David Limbaugh) (pp. 227-228). Crossway. Kindle Edition.





## **WEEK 8 OTHER SUPPORTIVE EVIDENCE-----Chris Watson**

This week we will be looking at a few other sources of supportive evidence for the New Testament. The miracle of preservation and passing along of the vast number of manuscripts is incredible. There is also the method that was used to compile the New Testament Canon. We will look at extra-Biblical sources that include early history beyond the New Testament and even those not necessarily friendly to Christianity.

### **DAY 1 PASSING ALONG THE TRUTH**

#### **First Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-34**

Notice that Paul was passing on what he had received. Understanding the textual reliability of the New Testament is something that even believers can fail to do. Thankfully most believers trust the reliability, but it is good to present to others why we have such confidence beyond our trust in God. Last week we looked at the incredible number of ancient New Testament manuscripts. All totaled there are about 15,000 fragments, portions, complete books, and in some cases, complete Bibles. That is far greater than any other ancient writings. How does this lead to what has been the position of many Biblical scholars? "This means that the Greek text from which we derive our New Testament translations is 99.5 percent pure."<sup>51</sup>

Most all of us, at some time, have played the game "telephone." This is where there is a group of people sitting in a circle, and one person has whispered to the person next to them a statement, and each person is to pass it along to the next until the message has been all the way around. By the time the message reaches the last person it does not sound at all like the message that was started. That is called linear transmission. One person tells another, and so on, and it can be highly unreliable. (As most people know who have played the "telephone" game) However, the New Testament made it to us with incredible reliability through transmission that was geometric. This would be like one original giving birth to 50 which in turn led to 500. All of which were written and not oral.

Coming from the same website cited above here is a great illustration:

Pretend your Aunt Sally learns in a dream the recipe for an elixir that preserves youth. When she wakes up, she scribbles the directions on a scrap of paper, then runs to the kitchen to make her first glass of the potion. In a few days Aunt Sally is transformed into a picture of radiant youth because of her daily dose of "Sally's Secret Sauce."

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<sup>51</sup><http://www.equip.org/article/facts-for-skeptics-of-the-new-testament/>

Aunt Sally is so excited that she sends detailed, handwritten instructions on how to make the sauce to her three bridge (card playing for us younger folks) partners. They, in turn, make copies for 10 of their own friends. All goes well until Aunt Sally's dog eats the scrap of paper on which she first wrote the recipe. In a panic she contacts her three friends who have suffered similar mishaps, so the alarm goes out to the others in an attempt to recover the original wording.

Sally rounds up all the surviving handwritten copies, 26 in all. When she spreads them out on the kitchen table, she immediately notices some differences. Twenty-three of the copies are exactly the same. Of the remaining three, however, one has misspelled words, another has an inverted phrase ("mix then chop" instead of "chop then mix"), and one includes an ingredient that is not listed on any of the others.

Do you think Aunt Sally can accurately reconstruct her original recipe from this evidence? Of course, she can. The misspellings are obvious errors and are easily corrected. The single inverted phrase stands out and can easily be repaired. Sally would then strike the extra ingredient, reasoning that it is more plausible that one person would accidentally add an item than that 25 people would accidentally omit the same one. Even if the variations were more numerous or more diverse, the original could still be reconstructed with a high level of confidence if Sally had enough copies.

This, in simplified form, is how scholars do "textual criticism," an academic method used to test all documents of antiquity, not just religious texts. It's not a haphazard effort based on hopes and guesses; it's a careful linguistic process allowing an alert critic to identify and correct the possible corruption of any work.<sup>52</sup>

We are blessed to have the New Testament. It is a miracle of God that it has been so reliably brought to us over the years. It is also interesting that many other works of history are not documented as clearly as the Bible, and we don't question them, not one bit. But when it comes to the Bible, it is questioned. This reminds us again that some do not want the Bible to be true, but praise God we know it is. Spend some time today thanking God for His Word.

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<sup>52</sup> <http://www.equip.org/article/facts-for-skeptics-of-the-new-testament/>

## DAY 2 HOW WERE THE 27 NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS DETERMINED?

### First Read 2 Peter 3:14-16

Peter made references to the letters of Paul. They, along with other of the New Testament Scriptures were being read in the first century churches regularly and accepted as holy Scripture. Very early in the first century the church was acknowledging that Scripture came from God. It was inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The word “canon” means a general law, rule, or principle by which something is judged. In the case of the New Testament Canon it was determined by God and then the early followers of Jesus. So here is the standard that was realized.

- 1) Was the author an apostle or have a close connection with an apostle?
- 2) Is the book being accepted by the body of Christ at large?
- 3) Did the book contain consistency of doctrine and orthodox teaching?
- 4) Did the book bear evidence of high moral and spiritual values that would reflect a work of the Holy Spirit?

It appears that probably by the end of the first century the accepted canon was already in place. However, it was not until special councils that the “official” canon was determined and accepted.

There were councils that were convened to establish the books that would be included in the New Testament but it must be understood God did the determining and man simply came to affirm what God determined. Here is a chart that really drives it home.

The Incorrect View	The Correct View
The Church is the Determiner of Canon	The Church is the Discoverer of Canon
The Church is the Mother of Canon	The Church is the Child of Canon
The Church is the Magistrate of Canon	The Church is the Minister of Canon
The Church is the Regulator of Canon	The Church is the Recognizer of Canon
The Church is the Judge of Canon	The Church is the Witness of Canon
The Church is the Master of Canon	The Church is the Servant of Canon <sup>53</sup>

Our Bible is a miraculous book and God has been the One who has provided it, preserved and protected it and delivered it to us. Give thanks to Him for His revelation of Himself to us!

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<sup>53</sup> [http://www.truthnet.org/Bible-Origins/7\\_The\\_New\\_Testament\\_Canon/index.htm](http://www.truthnet.org/Bible-Origins/7_The_New_Testament_Canon/index.htm)

## Day 3 NOT DONE IN A CORNER

### First Read Acts 26:24-32

Paul made an appearance before King Agrippa to make his defense. For Paul it was most importantly, an opportunity to proclaim Jesus. King Agrippa was known to be an expert in the customs and ways of the Jews. Paul told the account of his conversion and then in response to Governor Festus' statement that Paul was mad, Paul said that the King knew these things about Jesus *"since this thing was not done in a corner"* (**Acts 26:26**). Quite the contrary! Many non-Christian writers mentioned things about Jesus that confirm what is written in the New Testament. It is obvious that Paul knew that most people including King Herod knew about the events surrounding Jesus.

The New Testament and, in fact, the whole Bible including the Old Testament is an amazing book and source of history and presentation of the truth about God and man. Flavius Josephus lived around 37-100 AD. He has been referred to as the greatest Jewish historian of all times and wrote about Jesus. Keep in mind he was not a believer. He was merely writing history. Josephus wrote about Jesus:

Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.<sup>54</sup>

He also wrote about James the brother of Jesus:

Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the Sanhedrin of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others, [or, some of his companions]; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned.<sup>55</sup>

The events written about in the New Testament were not done in a corner. They were written about as history not only in the New Testament but also in other ancient writings. Thank God for the truth and faithfulness of His Word.

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<sup>54</sup><http://sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/ant-18.htm>

<sup>55</sup> <http://sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/ant-20.htm>

## Day 4 NON-CHRISTIAN WRITINGS

### First Read John 21:20-25

This talk between Peter and Jesus culminates with Peter asking about John, *“the disciple whom Jesus loved.”* Jesus, in so many words, tells Peter, “Don’t worry about him, you follow Me.” Then John wraps it up sharing about his own testimony and writings and then writes,

*“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 (NKJV)**

Indeed there were many other things written about Jesus. There are at least 10 non-Christian writers, including Josephus who mentions Jesus within 150 years of His life. By contrast, over the same 150 years there are 9 non-Christian writers who mention Tiberius Caesar, The Roman emperor at the same time of Jesus. If you include the Christian sources, authors mentioning Jesus outnumbers those mentioning Ceasar 43 to 10.<sup>56</sup>

Some of the non-Christian sources—such as Celsus, Tacitus, and the Jewish Talmud—could be considered anti-Christian sources. While these works do not have any eyewitness testimony that contradicts events described in the New Testament documents, they are works written by writers whose tone is decidedly anti-Christian. What can we learn from them and the more neutral non-Christian sources? We learn that they admit certain facts about early Christianity that help us piece together a storyline that is surprisingly congruent with the New Testament. Piecing together these ten, non-Christian references, we see that:

1. Jesus lived during time of Tiberius Caesar.
2. He lived a virtuous life.
3. He was a wonder-worker.
4. He had a brother named James.
5. He was acclaimed to be the Messiah.
6. He was crucified under Pontius Pilate.
7. He was crucified on the eve of the Jewish Passover.

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<sup>56</sup> Geisler, Norman L., *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist* (Foreword by David Lim baugh) (pp. 222-223). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

8. Darkness and an earthquake occurred when he died.
9. His disciples believed he rose from the dead.
10. His disciples were willing to die for their belief.
11. Christianity spread rapidly as far as Rome.
12. His disciples denied the Roman gods and worshiped Jesus as God.

In light of these non-Christian references, the theory that Jesus never existed is clearly unreasonable. How could non-Christian writers collectively reveal a storyline congruent with the New Testament if Jesus never existed?<sup>57</sup>

So from history's record we find that Jesus was also known outside of Biblical writings. These obviously came from eyewitness accounts and those passed down. Thank Jesus, He is who He says He was and worship Him.

## **DAY 5 HISTORY, ARCHEOLOGY AND THE BOOK OF ACTS**

### **First Read Acts 16:6-15**

When you read these few verses there are five specific details that would only be known by someone who either was familiar with the area or knew someone who was. How many details can you remember from places you lived? A little known fact about the section of Fayette County where Harp's Crossing Baptist Church Fayetteville is located is that it was once known as Little Flock. Just down Harp Road from the Fayetteville campus is an old abandoned rundown building that was once the Little Flock Schoolhouse. When the founding group of Harp's Crossing Church was trying to determine its name, they came close to calling it Little Flock Baptist Church. A little research bore out that the old building, which is still standing with no sign except "Keep Out," was the Little Flock Schoolhouse. Very few people today are aware of that. You either had to know it by experience or by those who knew and were familiar with the area.

In the days of Luke, who wrote the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts, there are things about the area where the events recorded in Acts happened that only a person living in the area or who knew people who lived in the area would know. In the passages you read today there are five specifics recorded that indicate Luke had to have been an eyewitness or knew one who gave him this information:

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<sup>57</sup>Geisler, Norman L., I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist (Foreword by David Limbaugh) (pp. 222-223). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

The proper form of the name Troas (16:8)

The place of a conspicuous sailors' landmark, Samothrace (16:11)

The proper description of Philippi as a Roman colony (16:12)

The right location for the river (Gangites) near Philippi (16:13)

The proper association of Thyatira as a center of dyeing (16:14)

This is just a portion of a list of 84 specific details classical scholar and historian Colin Hemer developed in a verse by verse careful study of the last 16 chapters of Acts. You can see the full list in I Don't Have Enough Faith To Be an Atheist.<sup>58</sup>

Historical and archeological study give support to the reliability of the New Testament. The writers of the New Testament either experienced things as eyewitnesses or knew eyewitnesses. While we were not eyewitnesses of the physical Jesus, we have many records of what He did and what took place while He was on earth. We also have many accounts of how He has worked in our lives .

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<sup>58</sup>Geisler, Norman L., I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist (Foreword by David Lim baugh) (pp. 256-259). Crossway. Kindle Edition





## WEEK 9 HOW DO WE KNOW THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS TOLD THE TRUTH?-----

Dennis Watson

This week we look at what Norman Geisler calls the “The Top Ten Reasons We Know the New Testament Writers Told the Truth.” This is a full chapter in their book I Don’t Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist. When you consider all of these together it is very convincing. So far we have looked at manuscript, historical, and archeological reasons to present as to why we believe what we believe. Now we will take a look at why we can believe the writers of the New Testament were telling the truth.

### DAY 1 EMBARRASSING DETAILS ABOUT THEMSELVES WERE INCLUDED AND EMBARRASSING DETAILS ABOUT JESUS

#### First Read Matthew 26:47-56

Few writers, or speakers for that matter, will point out embarrassing details about themselves. In the New Testament, however, it is done on many occasions.

In the passage you read today the disciples are adamant earlier in Matthew 26:33-35 that they will not “disown” Jesus. Then of course Peter denies knowing Jesus three times and “*Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled*” (**Matthew 26:56**). The women stand by Jesus and the morning of the resurrection it is the women who discover the empty tomb.

We see the record of Peter, James, and John, three of the inner circle, falling asleep at a time when Jesus needed them most. Jesus had taken them to Gethsemane to pray before He was arrested, tried, and crucified. At His greatest hour of need the three companions were sleeping, and Jesus had to wake them each time.

There are many other records including the time Jesus rebuked Peter and called him “Satan.” The bottom line is that you do not include embarrassing details in a made-up story.

Not only were there details about the writers and disciples that were embarrassing, but also some embarrassing details about Jesus. He was after all the God-Man. He was God in the flesh. The writers were merely telling the truth. Jesus:

- is considered “out of his mind” by his mother and brothers (his own family), who come to seize him in order to take him home (Mark 3:21, 31)
- is not believed by his own brothers (John 7:5)

- is thought to be a deceiver (John 7:12)
- is deserted by many of his followers (John 6:66)
- turns off “Jews who had believed in him” (John 8:30-31) to the point that they want to stone him (v. 59)
- is called a “drunkard” (Matt. 11:19)
- is called “demon-possessed” (Mark 3:22; John 7:20, 8:48)
- is called a “madman” (John 10:20)
- has his feet wiped with the hair of a prostitute (an event that had the potential to be perceived as a sexual advance—Luke 7:36-39)
- is crucified by the Jews and Romans, despite the fact that “anyone who is hung on a tree is under God’s curse” (Deut. 21:23; cf. Gal. 3:13)<sup>59</sup>

Much more could be said but the main thing here is that the writers of the New Testament did not try to dress things up. They merely told the truth and presented the facts. These, along with all the other things so far, definitely give reason for the hope we have.

## **DAY 2 THE NT WRITERS LEFT IN DEMANDING SAYINGS OF JESUS AND DISTINGUISHED JESUS’ WORDS FROM THEIR OWN**

### **First Read Matthew 5:39-48**

The first two reasons we believe the New Testament writers were being truthful were the embarrassing details they gave about themselves and about Jesus. They were more concerned with being truthful than making anyone look good. Today we look at two more reasons to believe they were telling the truth.

**The NT writers left in demanding sayings of Jesus.** They did not attempt to make the sayings of Jesus palatable. Jesus had very demanding standards that the writers presented without trying to explain them away. Many of these high standards are spelled out in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7.

All of these commands are difficult or impossible for human beings to keep and seem to go against the natural best interests of the men who wrote them down. They certainly are contrary to the desires of many today who want a religion of spirituality that has no moral demands. Consider the extremity and undesirable implications of these commands:

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<sup>59</sup> Geisler, Norman L., I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist (Foreword by David Limbaugh) (pp. 277-278). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

- If thinking about a sin is sinful, then everyone—including the New Testament writers—is guilty.
- To set such stringent standards for divorce and remarriage does not appear to be in the earthly best interests of the men who recorded this saying.
- To not resist the insults of an evil person is to resist our basic human instincts; it also sets up an inconvenient standard of behavior for the apostles, who were undergoing persecution when this saying was written down.
- To pray for our enemies goes well beyond any ethic ever uttered and commands kindness where enmity is natural.
- To not accumulate financial wealth contradicts our deepest desires for temporal security.
- To be perfect is an unattainable request for fallible human beings.
- To not judge unless our own lives are in order counters our natural tendency to point out faults in others.

These commands clearly are not the commands that people would impose on themselves. Who can live up to such standards? Only a perfect person. Perhaps that's exactly the point.<sup>60</sup>

The NT writers distinguished Jesus' words from their own. If the New Testament writers were writing the story on their own they could very easily have put words into the mouth of Jesus. However, Paul in particular made it clear when he was speaking and not the Lord. You can read this in 1 Corinthians 7:10-12. This careful distinction is another reason to believe they were telling the truth.

### **DAY 3 TWO MORE REASONS TO BELIEVE THE WRITERS WERE TELLING THE TRUTH**

#### **First Read Matthew 28:11-15**

The New Testament writers include events related to the resurrection that they would not have invented. What in the world does that mean? If the story of the gospel, Jesus, the crucifixion, and resurrection were made up by men, it surely would have been different.

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<sup>60</sup> Geisler, Norman L., I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist (Foreword by David Limbaugh) (p. 280). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

First of all, consider who buried Jesus. It was recorded in all four of the gospel accounts that it was Joseph of Arimathea. This man requested the body from Pilate, took His body, wrapped it and placed it in the tomb. Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin. This was the Jewish ruling council that had sentenced Jesus to die. Here is the problem. It was not the followers of Jesus that took care of His body after His death but one of the council members the early believers despised. It seems that if this had been made up, it would have been His disciples who buried Him. The Jews never denied the account.

Second, all four of the gospel accounts say that the first witnesses of the empty tomb were women. One of these was Mary Magdalen who was once considered to be demon-possessed. In the first century in that culture women were not considered reliable witnesses. The testimony of women carried no weight in a court of law. This would not be the way to establish an account if it were a made-up story.

Third, in the passage for today you read that early on, there had been a circulated account about the empty tomb. The story came about because the chief priests and elders bribed the soldiers to say that His disciples came and stole the body. The people in the first century would have known if this was true and that would have discredited the gospel accounts. The tomb must have really been empty and the statement of the soldiers inadequate. The NT writers include more than thirty historically confirmed people in their writings. Consider just a few of the names that have been confirmed from history: Pilate, Caiaphas, Festus, Felix, and the dynasty of the Herods. Like above, it would have been quickly discredited and exposed as bogus. The New Testament writers recorded accurately what they saw.

## **DAY 4 MORE REASONS TO BELIEVE THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS WERE TELLING THE TRUTH**

### **First Read John 20:12 and Matthew 28:5**

The New Testament writers include divergent details. The two verses above seem to be contradictory. Matthew speaks of only one angel and John says there were two. However, the two accounts are not contradictory but account for the different testimony of eyewitnesses. Matthew did not say there was only one angel but that just one rolled back stone and spoke. John says that Mary saw two angels. What is the difference? The difference is the testimony of two witnesses telling what they saw.

There are two words that sound alike but are similar yet different; collaborate and corroborate. Collaborate means to work together to accomplish a goal or task. Two people may collaborate to write a book or article. They

would share their information and then put it together having collaborated on the project. Corroborate means to verify or support. The writers of the New Testament did not collaborate but their writings do corroborate one another. There are four gospel accounts. It is obvious that they did not collaborate. If they had, their accounts would have been alike. The fact that there are divergent details lets us know that they were reporting different eyewitness accounts of the same events. If two eyewitnesses in a court proceeding gave verbatim testimony, it would be quickly thought that they had gotten together and made sure their stories matched. That would make them less believable. But if their accounts were different, they would likely give support to one another.

“The bottom line is this: agreement on the major points and divergence on the minor details is the nature of eyewitness testimony, and this is the very nature of the New Testament documents.”<sup>61</sup>

**The NT writers challenge their readers to check out verifiable facts, even facts about miracles.** Take a moment to read 2 Corinthians 12:11-13.

Paul was bold to write down and declare that miraculous signs had been performed in Corinth which affirmed their authority. The people of Corinth could have easily testified that this was not true. However there is no record of this happening.

Now why would Paul write this to the Corinthians unless he really had done miracles for them? He would have destroyed his credibility completely by asking them to remember miracles that he never did for them! The only plausible conclusion is that 1) Paul really was an apostle of God, 2) he therefore really had the ability to confirm his apostleship by performing miracles, and 3) he had displayed this ability openly to the Corinthians.<sup>62</sup>

## **DAY 5 TWO MORE REASONS TO BELIEVE THE NT WRITERS TOLD THE TRUTH**

### **First Read Acts 2:22-24**

How much fanfare and embellishment was part of the miracles in the New Testament, particularly the miracles of Jesus? Take for instance the miracle of Jesus restoring the ear of Malchus (See Luke 22:50). When the authorities came to arrest Jesus one of the disciples (Peter) cut off the ear of the servant of the High Priest. Jesus very simply, *“touched his ear and healed him.”* The miracles of Jesus and the others performed by the apostles were simple statements of fact that affirmed God at work.

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<sup>61</sup>Geisler, Norman L., I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist (Foreword by David Lim baugh) (p. 286). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

<sup>62</sup>Geisler, Norman L., I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist (Foreword by David Lim baugh) (pp. 286-287). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

In the 1950's TV series "Dragnet" Detective Joe Friday was requesting "just the facts." When you read the four gospels, you are reading the Biblical historical account of the earthly ministry of Jesus. The writers of the New Testament and in particular the gospels were concerned with reporting the facts.

**The New Testament writers abandoned long-held sacred beliefs and practices, adopted new ones, and did not deny their testimony under persecution and threat of death.**

Through the years I have watched people move from one denomination to another. That has often been a hard and dramatic move. The feeling is that of forsaking family tradition or leaving a long-time way of life. Many could not make the transition even coming from another Christian denomination. Can you imagine leaving behind 1500 years of Jewish religion and traditions? They did not just follow Jesus and say He worked miracles and rose from the dead; they gave up many aspects of their ancient practices.

In Lee Strobel's book The Case For Christ, J.P. Moreland says in an interview how incredible it was for these followers of Jesus, thousands of Jerusalem Jews including Jewish Priests to convert to Christianity:

[The Jewish people] believed that these institutions were entrusted to them by God. They believed that to abandon these institutions would be to risk their souls being damned to hell after death.

Now a rabbi named Jesus appears from a lower-class region. He teaches for three years, gathers a following of lower- and middle-class people, gets in trouble with the authorities, and gets crucified along with thirty thousand other Jewish men who are executed during this time period.

But five weeks after he's crucified, over ten thousand Jews are following him and claiming that he is the initiator of a new religion. And get this: they're willing to give up or alter all five of the social institutions that they have been taught since childhood have such importance both sociologically and theologically.

. . . . Something very big was going on.<sup>63</sup>

Can you imagine that these loyal Jewish people almost immediately left their traditions and faith to come to follow Jesus! They must have been convinced that He was who He said He was.

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<sup>63</sup>Strobel, Lee., The Case for Christ: A Journalist's Personal Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus (Case for ... Series) (p. 250). Zondervan. Kindle Edition

Giving up millennia of traditions is one thing but going to their martyrdom for their belief is quite another thing. Consider the words of Chuck Colson who was an aide of President Nixon. Colson went to prison over the Watergate scandal. Colson wrote an article "An UnHoly Hoax? The Authenticity of Christ." Here is an excerpt comparing the apostles experience to his own:

Watergate involved a conspiracy to cover up, perpetuated by the closest aides to the President of the United States, the most powerful men in America, who were intensely loyal to their President. But one of them, John Dean, turned state's evidence, that is, testified against Nixon, as he put it, "to save his own skin"—and he did so only two weeks after informing the president about what was really going on—two weeks! The real cover-up, the lie, could only be held together for two weeks, and then everybody else jumped ship in order to save themselves. Now, the fact is that all that those around the President were facing was embarrassment, maybe prison. Nobody's life was at stake.

But what about the disciples? Twelve powerless men, peasants really, were facing not just embarrassment or political disgrace, but beatings, stonings, execution. Every single one of the disciples insisted, to their dying breaths, that they had physically seen Jesus bodily raised from the dead.

Don't you think that one of those apostles would have cracked before being beheaded or stoned? That one of them would have made a deal with the authorities? None did.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup><https://www.epm.org/resources/2002/Mar/29/unholy-hoax-authenticity-christ/>





## WEEK 10 DID JESUS REALLY RISE FROM THE DEAD?-----

Chris Watson

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the very crux of the gospel message. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is central to Christianity. Not only is that true, but it is also the most significant miracle in the Bible after the creation miracle. The resurrection confirms that Jesus was who He said He was and who the Bible said He was. The miracle is the event that most strategically caused the new movement to explode so quickly in the region and beyond and ultimately to the whole world.

### DAY 1 A QUESTION OF HISTORY

#### First Read Mark 16

As we have already seen in previous devotions, there is so much history and evidence to Jesus and the resurrection, including and excluding the Bible that it is hard to argue. In fact, there is more evidence for Jesus and the resurrection, far more, than that for other things we read as history and never question.

Josh McDowell has said, “After more than 700 hours of studying this subject, I have come to the conclusion that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is either one of the most wicked, vicious, heartless hoaxes ever foisted on the minds of human beings — or it is the most remarkable fact of history. Here are some of the facts relevant to the resurrection: Jesus of Nazareth, a Jewish prophet who claimed to be the Christ prophesied in the Jewish Scriptures, was arrested, was judged a political criminal, and was crucified. Three days after His death and burial, some women who went to His tomb found the body gone. In subsequent weeks, His disciples claimed that God had raised Him from the dead and that He appeared to them various times before ascending into heaven. From that foundation, Christianity spread throughout the Roman Empire and has continued to exert great influence down through the centuries.”<sup>65</sup>

People today still try to undermine the Bible and truth, but some look, even when it goes against what they want to find, with an open mind. “The historian Luke wrote of ‘authentic evidence’ concerning the resurrection. Sir William Ramsey, who spent 15 years attempting to undermine Luke’s credentials as a historian to refute the reliability of the New Testament, finally concluded, ‘Luke is a historian of the first rank...this author should be placed along with the very greatest of historians.’”<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> <https://www.josh.org/wp-content/uploads/Evidence-For-The-Resurrection.pdf>

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.josh.org/wp-content/uploads/Evidence-For-The-Resurrection.pdf>

Often when studying the Bible and the death, burial, and resurrection, for many it's not a matter of truth or lie; it's a matter of if it is true, then something has to change. People don't want to change so out of convenience for themselves, they will just believe lies. In fact, in many of Frank Turek's Q and A's with well know atheists and agnostics he has asked the question, "If Christianity could be proven 100% true with no doubt, would you believe?" and they almost always answer, no.

"Professor Thomas Arnold, for 14 years a headmaster of Rugby, author of the famous History of Rome, and appointed to the chair of modern history at Oxford, was well acquainted with the value of evidence in determining historical facts. This great scholar said: 'I have been used for many years to study the histories of other times, and to examine and weigh the evidence of those who have written about them, and I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, to the understanding of a fair inquirer, than the great sign which God hath given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead.' Brooke Foss Westcott, an English scholar, said: 'Taking all the evidence together, it is not too much to say that there is no historic incident better or more variously supported than the resurrection of Christ. Nothing but the antecedent assumption that it must be false could have suggested the idea of deficiency in the proof of it.'<sup>67</sup>

God is true, faithful, holy and right, thank Him for this and also thank Him for the faithfulness and the truth of His Word that we have with us today.

## **DAY 2 THREE PROOFS OF THE RESURRECTION**

### **First Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-28**

It is important to note that the believers at Corinth did believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ; so Paul started his argument with that fundamental truth. He presented three proofs to assure his readers that Jesus Christ indeed had been raised from the dead.

Proof #1—their salvation (vv. 1-2). Paul had come to Corinth and preached the message of the Gospel, and their faith had transformed their lives. But an integral part of the Gospel message was the fact of Christ's resurrection. After all, a dead Savior cannot save anybody. Paul's readers had received the Word, trusted Christ, been saved, and were now standing on that Word as the assurance of their salvation. The fact that they were standing firm was proof that their faith was genuine and not empty.

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<sup>67</sup> <https://www.josh.org/wp-content/uploads/Evidence-For-The-Resurrection.pdf>

Proof #2—the Old Testament Scriptures (vv. 3-4). First of all means "of first importance." The Gospel is the most important message that the church ever proclaims. While it is good to be involved in social action and the betterment of mankind, there is no reason why these ministries should preempt the Gospel. "Christ died... He was buried... He rose again... He was seen" are the basic historical facts on which the Gospel stands (**1 Cor. 15:3-5**). "*Christ died for our sins*" (author's italics) is the theological explanation of the historical facts. Many people were crucified by the Romans, but only one "victim" ever died for the sins of the world.

When Paul wrote "*according to the Scriptures*" (**1 Cor. 15:3**) he was referring to the Old Testament Scriptures. Much of the sacrificial system in the Old Testament pointed to the sacrifice of Christ as our substitute and Savior. The annual Day of Atonement (Lev. 16) and prophecies like Isaiah 53 would also come to mind.

But where does the Old Testament declare His resurrection on the third day? Jesus pointed to the experience of Jonah (Matt. 12:38-41). Paul also compared Christ's resurrection to the "first fruits," and the first fruits were presented to God on the day following the Sabbath after Passover (Lev. 23:9-14; 1 Cor. 15:23). Since the Sabbath must always be the seventh day, the day after Sabbath must be the first day of the week, or Sunday, the day of our Lord's resurrection. This covers three day on the Jewish calendar. Apart from the Feast of First fruits, there were other prophecies of Messiah's resurrection in the Old Testament: Psalm 16:8-11 (see Acts 2:25-28); Psalm 22:22ff (see Heb. 2:12); Isaiah 53:10-12; and Psalm 2:7 (see Acts 13:32-33).

Proof #3—Christ was seen by witnesses (vv. 5-11). On the cross, Jesus was exposed to the eyes of unbelievers; but after the Resurrection, He was seen by believers who could be witnesses of His resurrection (Acts 1:22; 2:32; 3:15; 5:32). Peter saw Him and so did the disciples collectively. James was a half-brother of the Lord who became a believer after the Lord appeared to him (John 7:5; Acts 1:14). The 500 plus brethren all saw Him at the same time (1 Cor. 15:6), so it could not have been a hallucination or a deception. This event may have been just before His ascension (Matt. 28:16ff). But one of the greatest witnesses of the Resurrection was Paul himself, for as an unbeliever he was soundly convinced that Jesus was dead. The radical change in his life—a change which brought him persecution and suffering—is certainly evidence that the Lord had indeed been raised from the dead. Paul made it clear that his salvation was purely an act of God's grace; but that grace worked in and through him as he served the Lord. "Born out of due time" probably refers to the future salvation of Israel when they, like Paul, see the Messiah in glory (Zech. 12:10-13:6; 1 Tim. 1:16).

At this point, Paul's readers would say, "Yes, we agree that Jesus was raised from the dead." Then Paul would reply, "If you believe that, then you must believe in the resurrection of all the dead!" Christ came as a man, truly human, and experienced all that we experienced, except that He never sinned. If there is no resurrection, then Christ was not raised. If He was not raised, there is no Gospel to preach. If there is no Gospel, then you have believed in vain and you are still in your sins! If there is no resurrection, then believers who have died have no hope. We shall never see them again!

The conclusion is obvious: Why be a Christian if we have only suffering in this life and no future glory to anticipate? (In 1 Cor. 15:29-34, Paul expanded this idea.) The Resurrection is not just important; it is "of first importance," because all that we believe hinges on it.<sup>68</sup>

Jesus not only died and was risen again, but He lives today. He lives inside of me and I pray the same is true for you. If not call on His name to save you right now. If He does, thank God for your salvation and pray for others to experience the resurrection and the life.

### **DAY 3 JAMES THE TRANSFORMED BROTHER OF JESUS**

#### **First Read Mark 3:2-21, 31-35; 6:2-4**

James was the brother of Jesus. He later became the leader of the Jerusalem church. The Jewish historian Josephus wrote about James in the first century:

Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he (Ananus, the high priest) assembled the Sanhedrin of judges and brought before them the brother of Jesus who was called Christ; whose name was James, and some others; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned.

This confirms James was the brother of Jesus and that he was martyred for his part in the work of Jesus Christ. This was from a source outside the New Testament.<sup>69</sup>

But why was James martyred? Early on we see that James along with other family members were concerned about his big brother Jesus. They believed that He was "out of His mind" (Mark 3:21). It was obvious that James was not characterized by hero-worship of his big brother. What was it that changed him? Here is what Frank Turek and Norman Geisler say:

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<sup>68</sup> Bible Exposition Commentary (BE Series) - New Testament - The Bible Exposition Commentary - New Testament, Volume 1.

<sup>69</sup> Morison, Frank., Who Moved the Stone? (p. 91). Kindle Edition.

James, the skeptical brother of Jesus, suddenly becomes convinced that his brother is the Son of God, and then becomes the leader of the church in Jerusalem. He later suffers martyrdom at the hands of the high priest. (We all know that family members can be the most difficult people to convince to our religious viewpoint. James began as the unconvinced brother of Jesus [John 7:5]. If there was no Resurrection, then why did James—who was called “the Just” by second-century historians Clement and Hegesippus—suddenly come to believe that his brother really was the Messiah? Unless he saw the resurrected Christ, why would James be come the leader of the church in Jerusalem and suffer a martyr’s death?)<sup>70</sup>

Obviously there had to have been something extremely convincing to transform this unbelieving brother into a believer and leader in the first century church. Obviously, like Paul, he had a true God encounter. Maybe you are praying for someone(s) to have a God encounter. In fact, you know if they don’t, there is no hope. It happened in the Old and New Testament times and it happens today; keep praying and keep sharing.

## **DAY 4 SAUL: TRANSFORMED BY THE RISEN JESUS**

### **First Read Acts 22:1-21**

Within approximately four years Saul appears on the scene in Jerusalem as a Pharisee who was designated to persecute the earliest believers. What do you think Saul, who became Paul, thought about the controversy surrounding the empty tomb and the missing body of Jesus? Do you suppose that he knew about the bribery of the guards to say that the body had been stolen (Matthew 28:13)? Or was he maybe being carried along by religious zeal and carrying out persecution of believers. He was there giving his approval when Stephen was stoned to death for his faith.

Just a very short time later Saul was transformed while on a business trip to Damascus to arrest and persecute believers. He encountered the risen Christ on the road to Damascus. He was radically transformed. Frank Morison describes the change that took place in Saul’s life this way:

The fact we have chiefly to deal in this chapter is that this young man, coming with some freshness to the problem, began by being the outstanding figure on one side of the controversy and ended in being the outstanding figure on the other. He attempted to suppress the movement by force, but was himself suppressed and assimilated by it.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Geisler, Norman L., I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist (Foreword by David Limbaugh) (p. 319). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

<sup>71</sup> Morison, Frank., Who Moved the Stone? (p. 97). Kindle Edition

Can there be any greater testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ than one who was once zealously trying to stamp it out but became its greatest evangelist? Geisler and Turek put it this way, "If there was no resurrection then why did the greatest enemy of Christianity suddenly become its greatest leader?"<sup>72</sup> Is there a way to account for such a radical change except for a miraculous experience with the risen Lord? Perhaps the old hymn "He Lives" best expresses it for Paul, "You ask me how I know He lives, He lives within my heart." You?

## **DAY 5 OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS**

### **First Read Isaiah 53**

In the Old Testament, Psalm 22 is about David and his suffering, but it is also predictive of the suffering of Jesus at the time of His crucifixion. If you read Psalm 22 you have to hear the experience of Jesus when He was going through the ordeal of His crucifixion. This was penned by King David about a thousand years before Christ.

Even more prophetic are the servant passages found in Isaiah 52 and 53. When you read these two chapters, it is impossible not to think of what is written about Jesus in the Gospels. Even in Isaiah we read about Jesus, His birth, His suffering, and His resurrection. In Acts 8 Philip encounters the Ethiopian Eunuch. He is riding in his chariot when Philip approaches as the Holy Spirit instructs and finds him reading from the prophet Isaiah these verses:

*"He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth. <sup>33</sup> In His humiliation His justice was taken away, And who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth." Acts 8:32-33 (NKJV)*

The Ethiopian Eunuch asked, "Of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or some other man?" Philip tells him that the prophet is speaking of Jesus and shares with him the Gospel and the Ethiopian Eunuch receives Jesus. So from the first century AD the passage in Isaiah was understood to be about Jesus.

**In Psalm 16:10** we find a very clear passage about the resurrection. "For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption."

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<sup>72</sup>Geisler, Norman L., I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist (Foreword by David Limbaugh) (p. 319). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

Verses 8-11 of Psalm 16 are cited by Peter on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:25-28). Peter says that the Psalmist was referring to Christ. Paul uses Psalm 16:10 in Acts 13:35 applying it to the resurrection of Jesus.

We have seen so many reasons to believe in God, the God of the Bible who created all things. We have seen so many reasons to believe that the New Testament is true and that miracles are for real. We have seen a few of the many reasons to believe that Jesus was really raised from the dead. It is true what Frank Turek and Norman Geisler say about there being more reasons to believe in the message of the Bible than not. In other words, it takes more faith to be an atheist than to be a Christian. Where do you land? Who do you believe? We can go with the worlds "truth" or we can go with THE TRUTH, Jesus Christ!





## **WEEK 11 IS JESUS GOD? -----Dennis Watson**

Was Jesus just a man? Was He just a teacher? What does the Bible say? What does Jesus say? This is a huge topic, and you need to be ready to tell people what you believe about who Jesus is and why you believe it. We have waded through many reasons for Christian beliefs and now we come to one more. Some people really do believe that He was just a good man and teacher, but is that a real and legitimate option?

### **DAY 1 WHAT DOES THE OLD TESTAMENT SAY?**

#### **First Read Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:18-23**

J. Barton Payne, in his Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy, identifies 71 Old Testament prophecies fulfilled by Christ. Some of these are illumined by Christ's life. Chuck Missler along with many others says that in the Old Testament Christ is concealed and in the New Testament He is revealed.

In Isaiah 7:14 Isaiah gives a sign to Ahaz. Although his false piety would not allow him to test God, God gives him a sign anyway. The prophecy was given as a sign to King Ahaz that the Israel-Aram alliance would be broken when a child was born to a young lady who had been a virgin but then married. When he was still young, the alliance would be broken. But like many Old Testament prophecies this one had two fulfillments. Within just about three years that alliance was broken in 732 BC. The other fulfillment was in Matthew 1:18-23. The name the child was to be given was Immanuel and the interpretation or translation was, "God with us." This One born in Matthew 1 was born of a virgin. Mary and Joseph were engaged. Mary was found to be with child "of the Holy Spirit." Joseph "did not know her until she had brought forth her firstborn son" (did not know her in an intimate way). This very name of Jesus was a prophesied and fulfilled name given that says Jesus was and is God with us—Immanuel!

Time and space do not permit going into other Old Testament prophecies about Jesus but here is a chart from a sampling in Isaiah:

#### **Messianic Prophecies in the Book of Isaiah**

1. He will be called before His birth to be God's servant (49:1).
2. He will be born of a virgin (7:14).
3. He will be a Descendant of Jesse and thus in the Davidic line (11:1,10).
4. He will be empowered by the Holy Spirit (11:2; 42:1).
5. He will be gentle toward the weak (42:3).
6. He will be obedient to the Lord in His mission (50:4-9).
7. He will voluntarily submit to suffering (50:6; 53:7-8).
8. He will be rejected by Israel (49:7; 53:1, 3).

9. He will take on Himself the sins of the world (53:4-6, 10-12).
10. He will triumph over death (53:10).
11. He will be exalted (52:13; 53:12).
12. He will come to comfort Israel and to bring vengeance on the wicked (61:1-3).
13. He will manifest God's glory (49:3).
14. He will restore Israel spiritually to God (49:5) and physically to the land (49:8).
15. He will reign on David's throne (9:7).
16. He will bring joy to Israel (9:2).
17. He will make a New Covenant with Israel (42:6; 49:8-9).
18. He will be a light to the Gentiles (42:6; 49:6).
19. He will restore the nations (11:10).
20. He will be worshiped by Gentiles (49:7; 52:15).
21. He will govern the world (9:6).
22. He will judge in righteousness, justice and faithfulness (11:3-5; 42:1, 4).<sup>73</sup>

## **DAY 2 JESUS WAS WITH GOD IN THE BEGINNING AND HE WAS GOD IN THE FLESH**

### **First Read John 1:1-18**

The first sixty-four words of the Gospel of John are loaded with meaning. Add in the first nine words of verse 14 and we find that Jesus and God are one and the same. Jesus is the living Word of God. The living Word was present with God in the beginning of time, space, and matter, as was the Spirit of God. The Psalmist writes, *"Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven."* **Psalm 119:89**. God's Word is eternal. Jesus is the Word of God and He is eternal and was with God when He made everything.

The statement, *"The Word was God"* takes away any question regarding what is written here about Jesus. He is the living Word of God and He is God.

All things were made by Him and for Him. All things are about Jesus and giving glory and praise to Him. All things in heaven, earth, and under the earth will worship Him. Jesus came to reveal the Father and all of creation reveals Him.

Jesus was with God in the beginning. He was God and is God. He also became flesh and dwelt among us. He was God made flesh. He was at the same time fully God and fully man and He came to live and walk in history among the people at that particular time in history. Jesus was God living in history among man.

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<sup>73</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

Jesus then, after His resurrection and before His ascension, promised to send His Spirit to live in and empower His followers. He would not be with or among them but He would be in them. Jesus is living today in His followers by way of the resurrection through the Holy Spirit.

The Gospel of John opens with a very clear explanation that Jesus was God in history, He was God in eternity past, and He is God today and always.

## DAY 3 JESUS CLAIMED TO BE GOD

### First Read Mark 14:61-64

Some say that Jesus never claimed to be God. That is hard to accept when you read the New Testament. Jesus made indirect claims:

God in the OT	Claim	Jesus in the NT
Psalms 23:1	Shepherd	John 10:11
Isaiah 44:6	First and Last	Revelation 1:7
Joel 3:12	Judge	Matthew 25:31ff
Isaiah 62:5	Bridegroom	Matthew 25:1
Psalms 27:1	Light	John 8:12
Isaiah 43:11	Savior	John 4:42
Isaiah 42:8	God's Glory	John 17:5
1 Samuel 2:6	Giver of Life	John 5:21 <sup>74</sup>

There are several direct claims that Jesus made. In John 8:56-59 Jesus was embroiled with His many exchanges with the religious leaders. Here is a portion of the exchange:

*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." 57 Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" 58 Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." John 8:56-58 (NKJV)*

Jesus made a statement that appears to be grammatically incorrect, "Before Abraham was I AM." He was not seeking to be grammatically correct because He was using the very name of God they would know. He was saying that He was the I AM. God had revealed Himself in **Exodus 3:13-14** as "I AM WHO I AM." Jesus was saying He was God, the self-existent One.

When He was before Pilate he asked Jesus if He was the Christ:

*But He kept silent and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" 62 Jesus said,*

<sup>74</sup>Geisler, Norman L., I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist (Foreword by David Limbaugh) (p. 343). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

*I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." Mark 14:61-62 (NKJV)*

Here Jesus was saying, "I am the Anointed of God—the Messiah." Jesus clearly claimed to be God.

## DAY 4 JESUS CLAIMED TO FORGIVE SINS

### First Read Luke 19:1-10

Jesus claimed to forgive sins. The religious leaders had a major complaint with Jesus because He made this claim. They accused Jesus of blasphemy saying, "*Who can forgive sins but God alone?*" (**Mark 2:7; Luke 5:21**). In John 3 Jesus offered salvation to Nicodemus.

In Luke 19, a tax collector named Zacchaeus invited Jesus to his house one day. After Zacchaeus said that he would pay back everyone he had cheated, "*And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; 10 for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost'*" **Luke 19:9-10**. Jesus used the title He often used of Himself "*Son of Man*," saying, "*The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost*." This title was used in Daniel 7:13. Jesus used the title to show His relationship to God, the Ancient of Days." Jesus was claiming that He had authority to forgive sins, judge, and save. Jesus knew He was sent from the Father and as God in the flesh, He could forgive sins. This claim was clearly a claim to His Divinity. C.S. Lewis writes:

One part of the claim tends to slip past us unnoticed because we have heard it so often that we no longer see what it amounts to. I mean the claim to forgive sins: any sins. Now unless the speaker is God, this is really so preposterous as to be comic. We can all understand how a man forgives offences against himself. You tread on my toes and I forgive you, you steal my money and I forgive you. But what should we make of a man, himself unrobbed and untrodden on, who announced that he forgave you for treading on other men's toes and stealing other men's money? Asinine fatuity is the kindest description we should give of his conduct. Yet this is what Jesus did. He told people that their sins were forgiven, and never waited to consult all the other people whom their sins had undoubtedly injured. He unhesitatingly behaved as if He was the party chiefly concerned, the person chiefly offended in all offences. This makes sense only if He really was the God whose laws are broken and whose love is wounded in every sin. In the mouth of any speaker who is not God, these words would imply what I can only regard as a silliness and conceit unrivalled by any other character in history.<sup>75</sup>

Since Jesus claimed to forgive sins, He was making Himself out to be God, because He was.

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<sup>75</sup>Lewis, C. S., Mere Christianity (C.S. Lewis Signature Classics) (pp. 50-51). Harper Collins. Kindle Edition.

## DAY 5 SO WHO DO YOU SAY JESUS IS?

### First Read John 20:24-29

The disciples were telling Thomas, another of the disciples, that Jesus was alive and that they had seen Him. Thomas remained steadfast in his unbelief saying that he would not believe, "*Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side.*" Thomas wanted the facts and the truth before he would believe. Then when Jesus came into the room eight days later even with the doors locked, He invited Thomas to touch His hands and side. Thomas was convinced and cried out, "*My Lord and My God!*" Thomas believed because of the evidence. But Jesus blessed those of us who would believe without seeing. The evidence is available.

So what are the options to believe about Jesus? He claimed to be equal with God. He claimed to be God. Others recognized Him as God and worshipped Him. He went about forgiving sins. He said He would rise from the dead (and He did). Josh McDowell made the invitation popular that has been tossed about for many years now. The invitation is to decide for yourself what is true about Jesus. He was either a liar, a lunatic, or is Lord. Jesus came in history and what we read about Him in the Bible and what has come to us through history, philosophy, and logic, we must decide who He is for ourselves.

He was a Liar—he was intentionally deceiving people seeking to lead them astray.

He was a Lunatic—He was a mad man, out of His mind, and a very bad man.

He was Lord—He was who He said He was and is who He said He is. If that is the case, He should be your Lord and Savior.

C.S. Lewis writes:

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic— on a level with 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. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a

a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.<sup>76</sup>

He is Lord! Is He yours?

Now what would we think of a person who went around making these claims today? Certainly not that he was a good man or a sage. There are only two possibilities: he either speaks the truth or not. If he speaks the truth, he is God and the case is closed. We must believe him and worship him. If he does not speak the truth, then he is not God but a mere man. But a mere man who wants you to worship him as God is not a good man. He is a very bad man indeed, either morally or intellectually. If he knows that he is not God, then he is morally bad, a liar trying deliberately to deceive you into blasphemy. If he does not know that he is not God, if he sincerely thinks he is God, then he is intellectually bad—in fact, insane.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Lewis, C. S., Mere Christianity (C.S. Lewis Signature Classics) (p. 52). HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.

<sup>77</sup> <http://www.peterkreeft.com/topics/christ-divinity.htm>





## WEEK 12 WHAT DID JESUS TEACH ABOUT THE BIBLE?

-----Chris Watson

The Bible Jesus “used” was the Old Testament. He quoted largely from the Old Testament, often beginning with *“It is written.”* Jesus affirmed the Old Testament. But we have more than the Old Testament; we have the New Testament. Jesus promised the New Testament teaching would come through His apostles as the Holy Spirit directed.

### DAY 1 JESUS BELIEVED THE OLD TESTAMENT

#### First Read Matthew 12:29-41

It is very interesting today that many people do not believe certain aspects of the Old Testament to be literal history. For instance, the Biblical historical account of Jonah is often taught as metaphor. To believe that a man could be swallowed by a big fish and remain there for three days is not possible. Jesus used this account as literal when He said that He would be three days and nights in the earth like Jonah was three days in the belly of the great fish. Jesus believed that Jonah was a real man, who wrote a real book, and was three days and nights in the belly of a real fish.

Jesus believed that Noah was a real person and that there was a real flood that swept people away. Matthew 24:37-39.

Jesus believed that Abraham was a real man. John 8:56-58.

Jesus believed that Lot and his wife were real people who escaped the destruction of the two real places Sodom and Gomorrah. Luke 17:28-32.

Jesus believed that God really fed manna to the people as they wandered in the wilderness. John 6:31.

These are just a few examples that make us aware that Jesus believed the Old Testament to be historical and reliable. That affirms that we too should take the historical aspect of the Old Testament as literal. If Jesus did, so should we. Remember if God created the world out of nothing, then anything is possible, be it Jonah in the belly of a whale or God feeding his people through manna. God’s Word is true!

### DAY 2 JESUS QUOTED THE OLD TESTAMENT AS AUTHORITATIVE

#### First Read Matthew 4:1-11

Many of the people who heard Jesus were amazed that He taught and spoke *“as one having authority”* (Mark 1:22). When Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, Jesus turned to the

authority of the Word of God to refute His foe. The Word of God, of course, was the Old Testament.

The wilderness experience took place right after Jesus was baptized. Matthew 4:1 begins with the word “then” indicating that there was a historical chain of events. Jesus was baptized and “*Then He was led by the Spirit to be tempted by the devil.*” After His baptism and being affirmed by God His Father with the words, “*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*” Jesus went out to contend with the enemy. It was then and there that He turned to the Word of God He had, the Old Testament, and resisted the devil. Jesus used the authoritative Old Testament to dismiss His most powerful enemy.

He did this many times. On another occasion in Matthew 5 He quotes from the Law in the Old Testament beginning with, “*You have heard it said of old.*” He then quotes portions of the Ten Commandments referring to their authority and He takes the commands even further. Jesus came to fulfill the law and the prophets.

Jesus never belittled Scripture (as some modern critics do), or set it aside (as the Jewish leaders of His day had done with their Oral Traditions), or criticized it (although He criticized those who misused it), or contradicted it (although He rejected many interpretations of it), or opposed it (although He sometimes was free or interpretive with it), nor spoke in any way as “higher” critics do of the Old Testament (Tanakh).<sup>78</sup>

For Jesus the Old Testament was His Biblical source of authority. Norman Geisler and Frank Turek write:

In fact, on ninety-two occasions Jesus and his apostles supported their position by saying “*it is written*” (or the equivalent) and then quoting the Old Testament. Why? Because Jesus and his apostles considered the Old Testament Scriptures to be the written Word of God, and thus the ultimate authority for life.<sup>79</sup>

The more I have grown in my faith, the more I enjoy the Old Testament. As a teenager and young adult I really enjoyed the New Testament but as my faith has grown, the more I read the more I realize the importance, history and truth in the Old Testament. In fact, I can relate to the Old Testament well. But, unfortunately I can be like Israel often was. That is one minute worshipping God and thanking Him and the next minute questioning Him. What about you? Thank God today for His Word, both the Old and New Testament.

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<sup>78</sup><https://answeringgenesis.org/jesus-christ/on-the-infallibility-of-Scripture/>

<sup>79</sup>Geisler, Norman L., I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist (Foreword by David Lim baugh) (p. 357). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

## DAY 3 MORE OF WHAT JESUS TAUGHT ABOUT THE BIBLE

### First Read Matthew 5:17-20

Over the past several weeks we have looked about the Bible, primarily the Old Testament. If you didn't already know and appreciate the Old Testament, hopefully the past few weeks have helped. The more I learn and read the New Testament, the more I seem to appreciate the Old. That sounds weird I know, but the New speaks so much of the Old and always points to Jesus. To summarize, here is what we have said over the past few weeks:

The Old Testament is imperishable; actually all of Scripture is, but the Old speaks to the New and the New to the Old. Jesus told us that not even the smallest mark in Scripture would perish. Scripture also reminds us that though the flower fades and the grass withers, the Word of the Lord will stand forever. Jesus said, *"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets" he declared, "I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till it is fulfilled (Matthew 5:17).* In today's time we may say the dot of an I or the cross of a T will not perish.

We have also seen how God's Word and the Old Testament are infallible; God's Word is 100% trustworthy. Jesus was about to be stoned for blasphemy in John 10 and He escaped when he quoted **John 10:35** *"the Scripture cannot be broken"* (**John 10:35**). "In other words, when his life was on the line, Jesus referred to an infallible authority that cannot be broken- the Scripture.<sup>80</sup> He later spoke of **John 17:17** when He said, *"sanctify them by truth our word is truth"* (**John 17:17**).

The past few weeks we have seen the Old and New Testament speak of truth. Even though other sources (other than the Bible) speak to this, the Bible is enough. The Bible is without error. Some have said they have found errors such as wrong marks and such, but the message is the same. In fact, our English language didn't have some of the words that the Greek and Hebrew have, so our best English word was used. To read the Bible exactly how it reads you can go to [www.Scripture4all.org](http://www.Scripture4all.org) and click Hebrew (Old Testament) or Greek (New Testament) and see how it read and the words used. It's a neat and free resource. The Pharisees and Sadducees tried to trap Jesus and tell Him He was in error but His response was, *"You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God."* (**Matthew 22:29**).

God's Word is also scientifically accurate. "While adherents of other religions may accept a complete separation from science, Christians do not.

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<sup>80</sup> Turek book

Truth about the universe cannot be contradictory. Since all truth is God's truth, religious beliefs must agree with scientific facts. If they do not, then either there is an error in our scientific understanding, or our religious beliefs are wrong. As we have seen, many of the claims of Christianity are affirmed by scientific investigation. Christ knew it would be this way."<sup>81</sup>

Lastly we look at the supremacy issue. Jesus asked the Pharisees, "why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?...You nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition" (Matthew 15:3 and 6). He would then tell them in Matthew 15 that they honor Him with their lips but their hearts are far from Him and that they worship Him in vain in that their teaching are rules taught by men.

Did you have a love and appreciation for God's Word before our apologetics study? Do you have one now or a greater sense of one? I pray you do. I know just in writing and thinking through our devotions I have learned so much and my faith has been strengthened. I pray yours has as well.

## **DAY 4 JESUS PROMISED THE NEW TESTAMENT**

### **First Read John 16:5-15**

The Old Testament and New Testament make a complete unified book. Thirty-nine books in the Old Testament and twenty-seven books in the New Testament. It was written over several thousand years by more than forty authors. It is a unified whole. The New Testament was not written until after end of Christ's earthly life. In fact, it was planned for the books of the New Testament to come through His apostles. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit.

He promised that when the Holy Spirit came He would lead them into "all truth."

*"These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. <sup>26</sup> But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. John 14:25-26 (NKJV)*

*I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.*

<sup>13</sup> *However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. John 16:12-13 (NKJV)*

Paul made it clear that what He wrote was not from man:

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<sup>81</sup> Turek book

*But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.<sup>12</sup> For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.* **Galatians 1:11-12 (NKJV)**

God's Word is true and while it was penned by man, it was written by God. "The apostles didn't just claim to be getting messages from God. Anyone can do that. They gave evidence that their words were inspired by performing miraculous signs. In fact, one of the two qualifications of an apostle was the ability to perform such signs; the other qualification was being an eyewitness to the Resurrection (Acts 1:22; 1 Cor 9:1). Paul affirmed that he was an apostle when he declared to his Corinthian readers, "The things that mark an apostle—signs, wonders and miracles—were done among you with great perseverance" (2 Cor. 12:12). Paul must have been telling the truth about having done miracles in their presence, or he would have lost all credibility with his readers. In addition to Paul claiming to do miracles, Luke records thirty-five miracles in the book of Acts alone—the well-authenticated book we've already investigated that chronicles the propagation of the church from the Resurrection to about A.D. 60. Most of these miracles are performed by the apostles (a few were performed by angels or by God). Furthermore, the writer of Hebrews, speaking of the salvation announced by the Lord, declares, '*God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will*'" (Heb. 2:3-4).<sup>82</sup>

The bottom line is that the New Testament was promised by Jesus and inspired by the Holy Spirit and produced by the apostles. What an incredible flow and compilation of the Bible that we have today.

## **DAY 5 AN UNBROKEN CHAIN**

### **First Read 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17**

The early dating of the New Testament writings and especially the gospels has already been demonstrated. The early church fathers provide a connection that also enables us to see another reason to trust the reliability of the New Testament. Jesus said that His apostles would produce the books of the New Testament. The twenty-seven books that make up the New Testament were written by apostles or those confirmed by apostles. The apostles had also been confirmed by miracles.

What happened after the time of the writing of the New Testament? Through God's amazing providence the New Testament books were brought into the second century by an unbroken chain. There is what Frank Turek and Norman Geisler call, "an unbroken chain of testimony

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<sup>82</sup> Geisler, Norman L., *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist* (Foreword by David Limbaugh) (pp. 364-365). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

from the apostles to the early church fathers regarding the authorship and authenticity of the New Testament books.”<sup>83</sup>

We know from the writings of an early church father named Irenaeus that John the apostle had a disciple by the name of Polycarp. Irenaeus was a disciple of Polycarp. We see an unbroken chain here connecting one of the apostles, John, who knew all of the apostles and New Testament writers. Polycarp lived from AD 69-155 and Irenaeus lived from AD 130-202. The apostle John lived until about AD 100. The amazing thing here is that between Polycarp and Irenaeus, 23 of the 27 New Testament books are quoted in their writings and affirm their authenticity.

Think about it this way. When Polycarp read, preached and quoted from the writings it was basically the same New Testament I read and preach from. The GotQuestions website summarizes about Polycarp:

Despite the scant information we have about Polycarp, he serves as a powerful example for us. His reliance on the Gospels and the Epistles gives evidence of the inspiration of the New Testament. His dedication to the theology taught by the apostles encourages us to take their writings at face value even as we follow his lead in not concentrating on the nonessentials. And his steadfastness in the face of death inspires us to remain faithful to Christ.<sup>84</sup>

Here we have an amazing unbroken chain that remains unbroken! God has been faithful. He has also left us with the Holy Spirit and His Word. The evidence that we have for God and His Word is like that of an avalanche, almost too much to take in, but I am thankful for what God has given us and how He leads us.

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<sup>83</sup> Geisler, Norman L., I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist (Foreword by David Lim baugh) (p. 368). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

<sup>84</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/Polycarp.html>

## **WEEK 13 EVIDENCE THAT DEMANDS A VERDICT--Dennis Watson**

Josh McDowell's book, Evidence That Demand a Verdict was first published in 1972. There have been subsequent editions and a second volume. This book has had a huge influence on millions of lives. The magazine "Christianity Today" ranks it 13th on a list of the most influential evangelical book published after WWII. The title is self-explanatory. The evidence that is presented clearly demands a response—a verdict. Over the past twelve weeks in daily devotions and in preaching we have looked at a small amount of evidence regarding the Christian faith. If a person is truly open to the truth, they must decide to become a follower of Jesus Christ. If not, the problem is not lack of evidence; it is a choice to refuse to accept the evidence. This week we bring this to a conclusion. I hope you have grown in your faith. Faith comes by the Word of God. I hope you are more confident in your faith and more prepared to share with others why you have faith in Jesus Christ.

### **DAY 1 A BRIEF SUMMARY**

#### **First Read Ephesians 2:1-10**

God has done a great work in His glorious plan of salvation. He has made Himself known to us as a loving Father who paid it all to have a relationship with us.

This project has taken about six months and untold hours of research and preparation. I do not say that so you will give applause but because it has been a faith growing experience. It also took so long because I am slow! When the work began it was my hope to provide a quick tool that can be either quickly shared or elaborately presented. Today I give you the best simple summary I could come up with. Go back and review. Study some on your own. Pull together little add-ons to help you elaborate when needed.

- TRUTH IS A PERSON AND THAT PERSON IS JESUS CHRIST
- TRUTH IS THAT WHICH CORRESPONDS TO REALITY
- BELIEVERS MUST BE PREPARED TO GIVE REASONS FOR THEIR FAITH
- REASON TO BELIEVE: THERE IS SOMETHING RATHER THAN NOTHING
- , • REASON TO BELIEVE: THERE IS DESIGN IN CREATION
- REASON TO BELIEVE: THERE IS RIGHT AND WRONG

now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool." (Isaiah 1:18) He is saying, "Let's talk about this and I will tell you what I am going to do." He is presenting His plan and His reason, and it is dominated by grace. All we do and say should be dominated by grace. Presenting our reasons for what we believe is not done to prove we are right, but to say this is what I believe and the reasons for it.

## DAY 3 THERE ARE ONLY TWO KINDS OF PEOPLE IN THE WORLD

### First Read John 3:17-21

Jesus was in a conversation with Nicodemus where He tells Him He must be born again and then gives Him that famous **John 3:16**, "*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.*" But in this same context Jesus tells him that there are two kinds of people in the world. There are those who believe and are not condemned and there are those who do not believe and are condemned already. There is not a third option. In the first option, a person believes that Jesus is the Son of God who came to save and therefore, will live forever now and with God in heaven after this temporal life is over. The second option is to not believe that Jesus is the Son of God who came to save and therefore be condemned and separated from God forever in hell. C.S. Lewis had a way of saying things which only he could say:

There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, in the end, 'Thy will be done.' All that are in Hell, choose it. Without that self-choice there could be no Hell. No soul that seriously and constantly desires joy will ever miss it. Those who seek find. To those who knock it is opened.<sup>86</sup>

The evidence has been presented (and this isn't all of it) and demands a verdict or decision.

## DAY 4 BACK TO THE WORLDVIEW

### First Read Psalm 119:18

Looking back to Week 1 Day 2, we talked about worldview and the fact that everybody has one, either by conscious choice or default.

All worldviews to be reliable must provide thorough and adequate answers to five questions.

Indeed, the five most consequential questions in life are these. Now the short answer to each.

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<sup>86</sup> Lewis, C. S., THE GREAT DIVORCE (Kindle Locations 541-543). UNKNOWN. Kindle Edition.



1. **Origin: Where did we come from?** We were all created in the image and likeness of God being fearfully and wonderfully made.
2. **Identity: Who are we?** We are creations of supreme worth to God, however negatively flawed by sin and thus separated from the God who made us. This is remedied only through the reconciling work of God in making us His children.
3. **Meaning: Why are we here?** We are here to reflect God's image and likeness and to bring Him glory.
4. **Morality: How should we live?** We should live godly, holy lives indicative of the God who made us. This is humanly impossible without the reconciling work of God made possible through the sacrificial substitutionary work of Jesus
5. **Destiny: Where are we going?** Since God is holy and is a God of justice, our sins must be punished. God provided a way for our sins to be paid for and to accomplish bringing us into relationship with Him. This relationship cannot be earned; it must be received as a free gift. To receive this gift one must receive God's gift of salvation through the atoning death of Jesus Christ. This is the eternal destiny of the one who becomes a believer in Jesus Christ and the result and child of God.

## DAY 5 A PERSONAL WORD IN CLOSING

This seems odd. It is the end of this study and devotional guide. I have been moved and brought to tears many times on this journey and I am there again. As I was pulling it all together for this last week and now this last day, my mind went back to week 5 day 2. It was a moment that the Word of God in written form and the Word of God written on my heart brought me to a moment of celebration and rejoicing in what God has done to accomplish His gift of salvation for me. It just seems appropriate to close with those words from that day:

*But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. John 1:12-13 (NKJV)*

This is becoming very overwhelming! Never did I think that an apologetics study could be a spiritual and moving experience. I am a believer in God:

- Because He has made me aware of Truth and He is the very essence of truth.
- Because He has made me aware that the universe shouts, “Creator.”
- Because He has made me aware that the universe shouts, “Designer.”
- Because He has made me aware that even in my best intentions I violate the moral code He has written on my heart and the written code He has given in the Bible, and this shouts, “I am guilty.”

And now I know that the God of the universe revealed in the Bible has made me aware of Himself and that He did not send Jesus to make me moral or a good person which is impossible. He came to make me able to call Him “FATHER.”

To this day, God is greater than I could ever have dreamed, and I know there is more to come!

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