



# SURVEYING

## THE

# EVIDENCE

WAYNE JACKSON

ERIC LYONS

KYLE BUTT

**Apologetics Press, Inc.**  
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## **DEDICATION**

**To Dave Miller and Frank Chesser, mighty men of God, who through faith, humility, and perseverance have courageously advanced the blood-stained banner of Christ. We thank you for your friendship and godly influence.**



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# PREFACE

The *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary* defines reason as “the power of comprehending, inferring, or thinking, especially in orderly, rational ways.” God and His spokesmen always have spoken rational, reasonable truths. When Samuel spoke to the Israelites at the coronation of Saul, he said: “Now therefore, stand still, that I may **reason** with you before the Lord concerning all the righteous acts of the Lord which He did to you and your fathers” (1 Samuel 12:7, emp. added). God employed reason to convince Isaiah’s listeners of their sin, saying, “Come now, and let us **reason** together,...though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow” (Isaiah 1:18, emp. added). The apostle Paul contrasted reason with insanity in Acts 26:24-25: “Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, ‘Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!’ But he said, ‘I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of

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**truth** and **reason**” (emp. added). Truly, since the dawn of time, God has presented man with the facts, and then allowed him to use reason to reach correct conclusions. Thus, Romans 1:20 states: “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being **understood** by the things that are made...” (emp. added). Reason provides for the removal of all contradictory and fallacious arguments, leaving only those facts that are consistent and correct.

Despite what the critics of Christianity might say, it makes sense to be a follower of Christ. The Christian religion, at its core, is based upon solid facts and inescapable truths. In *Surveying the Evidence*, you will learn of the evidence **for** God and Creation and **against** atheism and evolution. You will study many facts that undergird the Bible’s inspiration, uniqueness, and reliability. You will discover the evidence for the historicity and deity of Christ, and learn of God’s great plan to save man. Whether you are a non-Christian in search of the Truth or a Christian preparing yourself to teach others the facts that set Christianity apart from all other religions, *Surveying the Evidence* will be a valuable study.

*Wayne Jackson   Eric Lyons   Kyle Butt*



# LESSON 1

## UNBELIEF



The modern world increasingly is one of unbelief. Faith is under assault. The time has come for responsible people to fortify their minds, and those of their children, with the kind of evidence that can weather the attacks of unbelief.

There is nothing new about infidelity. More than 3,000 years ago Pharaoh, King of Egypt, in response to Moses' challenge that the people of Israel be freed, said: "Who is Jehovah, that I should hearken unto his voice to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah..." (Exodus 5:1,2). There are numerous deluded souls who proudly boast of being spiritual descendants of that ancient pagan. To some, unbelief is a mark of intellectual sophistication; they frankly contend that faith ought to be relegated to the realm of superstition.

Others, though not approaching that extreme, feel that faith is, at least to a certain degree, **unprovable**. Such an assumption is incorrect. **God does exist**, and

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has not asked us to gamble our eternity upon a set of non-provable assertions! In these studies, we intend to show that there is ample evidence to demonstrate that God is, and that He rewards those who seek after Him (Hebrews 11:6).

The world of unbelief is complex; unbelievers come in different varieties. The **atheist** (from *a*, “not” and *theos*, “God”) adamantly asserts: “There is no God!” The **skeptic**, not quite so brazen, simply doubts the existence of a Supreme Being. The **agnostic** argues that there is not sufficient evidence to establish a reasonable case for the existence of God, hence he affirms that one simply cannot know whether there is, or is not, a God. A **deist** theoretically acknowledges the existence of a Supreme Creator, but his “God” has no interest in, or contact with, man. Hence, revelation from the Lord via the Scriptures is but a myth, and communication with Him in worship is meaningless.

Each of these philosophies is deadly wrong, and can lead only to eternal ruin. Those who subscribe to such views have, for various reasons, **forced** the evidence for God’s existence from their minds (cf. Romans 1:28), for, as we shall presently demonstrate, unbelief is not natural. Rather, it forces reason aside to capture the mind.

### THE NEED TO BELIEVE

If God is the ground of all existence, and if He is the One in whom we live, move and have our very

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being (Acts 17:28), it is only reasonable to conclude that mankind would have a basic **need** to believe in Him. Studies, both of the past and present, reveal that this is indeed the case.

Man is curiously awed by a sense of the divine; he has an incurable urge to believe in a higher Being. One writer put it like this: "That man has always possessed an ineradicable sense of the divine rests on evidence which in its cumulative effect is simply overwhelming. The records and relics of the past, the researches of anthropologists into the beliefs and customs of primitive people, all testify to the universality of this urge" (Macdonald, 1959, p. 57).

### WHY DO PEOPLE TURN TO ATHEISM?

If atheism is not normal, why do certain people become unbelievers? First of all, it is well known that the seeds of atheism can be planted early in life. One of the most dangerous contributions a parent can make toward the spiritual delinquency of his child is a failure to instill within him a **wholesome respect for authority**. If the parent neglects to set the proper example as an authority figure, or refuses to exercise discipline with love, he might well be rejected as an authority-figure by his child, and thus, by transference, the child ultimately may come to disdain all authority, including the Supreme Authority, God.

Dr. Joshua Liebman wrote: "I believe that much atheism has the ground prepared for it in the disil-

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lusionment with the parent which has arisen in the child. Disbelief in life, skepticism about humanity, the denial of God—all sink their roots in the soil of emotion long before exposure to courses in philosophy and science. Life has scarred such people early and has made them unwilling to believe either in man or in God” (1946, pp. 147-148).

Second, **inordinate pride** facilitates atheism. This disposition sees man as his own God, hence he will submit to no one else! Evolutionist George Gaylord Simpson wrote that man “is his own master. He can and must decide his own destiny” (1953, p. 155). Friedrich Nietzsche, the atheistic philosopher who made such an impact upon Hitler, once said, “If there were gods, how could I endure it to be no god?”

Third, men reject belief in God in order to be **free of moral responsibility**. In an article titled “Confessions of a Professed Atheist,” Aldous Huxley argued that belief in God, and viewing the world as having meaning, were hindrances to “sexual freedom” (1966, p. 19). The French atheist philosopher, Jean Paul Sartre wrote: “Everything is indeed permitted if God does not exist” (1961, p. 485). The psalmist pinpointed it: “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. **They are corrupt, they have done abominable works**” (Psalm 14:1, emp. added).

Fourth, sometimes people turn to atheism because their faith in someone who professes to be a devout believer in God has been shattered. “Confidence in

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an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint” (Proverbs 25:19). It is folly to blame Deity for the blunders of man. Read Psalm 118:8.

### THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING

With many people, the great obstacle to belief in God is the problem of evil and suffering. Because men cannot subject **all** suffering to meaningful analysis, the assumption sometimes is made that there cannot exist a loving God such as the Bible portrays.

The problem, as presented by the Greek philosopher Epicurus, is this: If God wishes to prevent evil, but cannot, He is not all-powerful; if He can prevent evil, but will not, He is not good; if He has both the power and will to eliminate evil, then **why** is evil in the world? The fallacy of the argument, of course, is the assumption that there is no good purpose to be served by the allowance of evil and suffering in the world.

No one would be so presumptuous as to assert that man can **completely** understand the problem of suffering. Other than what He has revealed in His Word, the mind and purposes of God are unknown to man, and “how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out” (Romans 11:33). Enough answers are provided in the Bible, however, to allow us to accept that inexplicable percentage on the basis of faith, trusting in the loving God Who always does what is right (Genesis 18:25). Observe the following.

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First, let it be noted that when one raises the question of “evil,” he is appealing to some universal system of justice which evil allegedly violates. But, if there is no God, hence no universal system of “rightness,” how could there be any evil? Does not the word “evil” suggest the violation of some standard? Actually, then, no atheist, consistent with his own philosophy, should even introduce the problem of evil.

Second, let us introduce the following argument, which we will expand:

1. Love allows freedom of choice. [Could anyone conceive of a **loving** God Who created intelligent beings but then programmed them to slavishly serve Him without personal will-power?]
2. But God is love (1 John 4:8,16).
3. Thus, God allows freedom of choice.

Now, consider these things if you will.

- A. Where there is freedom of choice, there is the possibility that **finite** beings will make wrong choices.
- B. But wrong choices can entail evil and suffering [if all choices, both good and bad, produced the **same** effect, how would one ever learn to choose the former and reject the latter? Or even want to?].
- C. Thus, where there is freedom of choice, there is the inevitable consequence that finite beings must be allowed to suffer the consequences of their choices.

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In light of this, let us consider several categories of suffering in the world.

1. We frequently suffer due to our **personal wrong choices**. If a man steals and goes to prison, whose fault is it (cf. 1 Peter 4:15)?
2. Much suffering is a consequence of **other people's** freedom of choice (do we covet freedom of choice for ourselves, and yet we would deny it to everyone else?). An innocent party may be killed in a wreck involving a drunken driver. We sometimes pay the price for others' freedom of choice.
3. Suffering is frequently the result of the freedom of choice as abused by **former generations**. We reap the benefits of the labors of former generations (e.g., scientific discoveries); can we avoid reaping the evils as well? Innocent children starve in countries in the Far East because their ancestors rejected God and decided to worship cows! Note the Lord's warning in Exodus 20:5,6: "...for I Jehovah thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing lovingkindness unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments."

In connection with this point, some additional observations need to be made. Consider, for example, the numerous diseases with which mankind is blighted.

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Ultimately, these are related to humanity's bad choices (sin). Before their sin, Adam and Eve were unaffected by disease and death. When they rebelled, however, they were deprived of the "tree of life" (Genesis 3:22,23), and their offspring have become heir to the conditions they introduced into the world (cf. Romans 5:12; 8:20ff.). [For a discussion of the archaeological evidence for a "tree of life" and a primitive world without sickness, see: Jackson, 1982, pp. 8-9.]

Also, there is admittedly much suffering in the world today as a consequence of meteorological phenomena (hurricanes, earthquakes, etc.). But what produces the violent physical conditions of this planet?—the drastically different geophysical features of the Earth (e.g., mountain ranges, deserts, varying pressure areas, etc.). What created these divergent conditions which precipitate the disasters to which we are victim? Many scholars believe that the **universal Flood** of Noah's day (Genesis 6-8) left behind the conditions which facilitate the occurrence of such phenomena (see Whitcomb and Morris, 1961, pp. 240ff.). Had it not been for man's evil, the Flood never would have come, the features of the Earth would not have been so altered, and man would not be suffering the results today!

4. It must be remembered also that we live in a world regulated by **natural law**. And since this is the case, a certain amount of suffering seems inevitable. If, for example, the law of



gravity acts consistently, a building may fall on someone, killing or injuring him. Such events could only be prevented if God continually intervened, suspending natural laws. But this would render the law-system of our planet completely undependable and make life a sphere of hopeless confusion. Such a haphazard system would argue more for atheism than for theism!

5. Suffering can be beneficial. What if we could experience no pain? Suppose our clothes caught fire; we could be burned severely before we were aware of what was happening. Doesn't pain sometimes send us to the doctor for treatment and cure?
6. Is it not true that suffering helps to develop the highest qualities of which man is capable? If there was no suffering, could such traits as patience, bravery, compassion, etc. be cultivated? Remember, where there is only sunshine, there is a desert!
7. Suffering and evil serve to remind us that this world was never designed to be man's final abode. We are to consider ourselves strangers in this world (Hebrews 11:13; 1 Peter 2:11). There is a place where the "wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary are at rest" (Job 3:17).
8. Finally, that suffering *per se* is not contrary to the goodness of God is revealed by the fact

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that **even Christ was subjected to suffering** (Hebrews 5:8; 1 Peter 2:21ff.).

It is clear, therefore, that enough of human suffering can be explained, to negate the atheistic charge that misery is incompatible with the existence of God. If man will but use the wisdom with which the Creator endowed him, he will be able to use the adversities of life to help fashion the kind of character with which Jehovah is pleased, and by which He is glorified.

### ATHEISM—A SYSTEM OF BELIEF

The atheist frequently attempts to convince himself that he has a totally “scientific” and rational outlook on life. “I deal in facts,” he claims, “and you religionists deal in faith.” Such is not an accurate assessment of the situation, for there are many things one must **believe** (and without **any kind** of reasonable evidence) in order to subscribe to atheism. Note the following:

1. To be an atheist, one must **believe** that God does not exist. The atheist cannot logically say, “I **know** that there is no God,” for then he would have to know everything. If he admits that there is anything he does not know, it just might be the fact that “God is.”
2. The atheist must either **believe** that matter is eternal (and the evidence is against this), or he must **believe** that matter was its own creator. Two fundamental laws of science contradict these beliefs—the First and Second Laws of

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Thermodynamics. The First Law indicates matter cannot create itself, and the Second Law suggests that matter is not eternal.

3. Contrary to the Law of Biogenesis (life comes only from life, and that of its kind), atheists **believe** that life was spontaneously generated.
4. Atheists **believe** that order and design in nature are the results of non-intelligent accidents.
5. Atheists **believe** that the non-conscious evolved the conscious, and the non-moral evolved the moral.

These points could be amplified many times over, but this is sufficient to explode the notion that atheism operates solely on fact, leaving “faith” to religionists. One who takes the time and effort to investigate such a charge will quickly find that it is far from the truth of the matter.

### THE DESPAIR OF UNBELIEF

When Paul once contemplated the prospect of death, he admonished his brothers to “sorrow not, even as the rest, who have no hope” (1 Thessalonians 4:13). Doubtless only sorrow and utter despair can accompany those who have no hope beyond this earthly existence. Those who adopt the various postures of unbelief frequently are prone to periods of agonizing depression. In his fascinating book, *Therefore Stand!*, Dr. Wilbur M. Smith cites a number of examples of unbelief’s dismay when considering life and death.

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Voltaire was the leading voice of 18th-century French infidelity. He probably did more to destroy faith in the Bible than any man in relatively modern times, yet, near the end of his days, he exclaimed: "I wish I had never been born!"

Perhaps one of the greatest women of science was Marie Curie. Twice awarded the Nobel Prize, she, with her husband Pierre, discovered radium. In a biography written by her daughter, Eve, there is much evidence that Madame Curie enjoyed little peace of mind. For example, in 1904 when Madame Curie was expecting her second child, Eve wrote: "It seemed that she no longer loved anything; neither science nor life, and not even the child which was about to be born. She cried out, 'Why am I bringing this creature into the world? Existence is too barren.'"

Robert Ingersoll, the infidel who toured the nation lecturing on "The Mistakes of Moses," once wrote: "I am afraid of the land of the shadows—the dim 'Beyond' is filled with frightful shapes or appears perfectly empty which is still more frightful."

British agnostic Bertrand Russell depressingly declared: "The life of Man is a long march through the night, surrounded by invisible foes, tortured by weariness and pain, towards a goal that few can hope to reach, and where none may tarry long."

How much better to live the life of faith whereby one may approach death with a disposition of courage and peace (cf. Psalm 23; Philippians 1:23).

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## **DISCUSSION AREAS**

1. What role does early home life play in the religious development of a young person?
2. Discuss possible reasons why people turn to atheism. Cite examples from personal experience.
3. Why is an atheist inconsistent when he talks about the “problem of evil”?
4. Discuss what kind of world this would be if God intervened with a miracle every time a human being was in trouble.
5. Is God just in allowing man to suffer the consequences of his sins? Explain your answer.
6. Talk about some of the things one must “believe” in order to be an “unbeliever.”
7. Do you think one can truly be happy who has no hope for anything beyond this earthly existence?

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- Sartre, Jean Paul (1961), *French Philosophers from Descartes to Sartre*, Leonard M. Marsak, ed. (Cleveland, OH: The World Publishing Co.).
- Simpson, George Gaylord (1953), *Life of the Past* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press).
- Smith, Wilbur (1945), *Therefore Stand!* (Boston, MA: W.A. Wilde).
- Whitcomb, John and Henry Morris (1961), *The Genesis Flood* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker).

## RECOMMENDED READING

The following works are recommended as supplementary reading for those who want additional material on the topics of unbelief, suffering, pain, and other related areas:

- Bales, James D. (1962), *Communism: Its Faith and Fallacies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker).
- Bales, James D. (1976), *How Can Ye Believe?* (Shreveport, LA: Lambert).
- Gatewood, Otis (1970), *There Is A God In Heaven* (Abilene, TX: Contact).
- Geisler, Norman L. (1978), *The Roots of Evil* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan).
- Jackson, Wayne (1974), *Fortify Your Faith In An Age Of Doubt* (Stockton, CA: Courier Publications).
- Lewis, C.S. (1962), *The Problem of Pain* (New York: Macmillan).
- Myers, Edward P. (1978), *The Problem of Evil and Suffering* (West Monroe, LA: Howard).
- Smith, Wilbur (1945), *Therefore Stand!* (Boston, MA: W.A. Wilde). [NOTE: Also published by Baker, Grand Rapids, Michigan.]





# LESSON 2

## THE CASE FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD—PART I



According to the principle in logic designated the Law of the Excluded Middle, a thing either “is,” or it “is not.” There is no middle ground. Applied to the matter of God—He either does, or does not exist. A person is driven to one or the other of these conclusions. If God **does** exist, all who would be pleasing unto Him must “believe that He is” (Hebrews 11:6).

But is it reasonable to believe that there is a God? Is faith an emotional, purely subjective, blind “leap into the dark”? Or can it be reasonable and intellectual? Surely, the latter is the case. In this lesson (and the one to follow) we intend to demonstrate that faith involves a firm conviction regarding God’s existence—a conviction based upon certain **facts** that warrant the reasonable conclusion that **God is!**

One might wonder why it is necessary to so vigorously argue for the existence of God, since, as Edward Thomson so beautifully put it, “...the doctrine of the one

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living and true God, Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor of the universe, as it solves so many problems, resolves so many doubts, banishes so many fears, inspires so many hopes, gives such sublimity to all things, and such spring to all noble powers, we might presume would, as soon as it was announced, be received by every healthy human mind” (1872, p. 1).

Some, however, contrary to their higher interests, have refused to have God in their knowledge, and thus have become vain in their reasoning and foolish in their philosophy (Romans 1:21,22,28). The truth is, all such unbelief springs from an urge to be free of any responsibility to a Higher Power. It is grounded in **rebellion!**

### THE NATURE OF THE PROOF

The existence of God can be proved to any fair-minded person. By “proved” it is not meant, of course, that God’s existence can be scientifically demonstrated to human senses in the same way that one might, for example, prove the existence of the Pacific Ocean. However, empirical evidence (that which is based solely upon experiment and observation) is not the only basis for establishing a provable case. Legal authorities recognize the validity of a *prima facie* case. A *prima facie* case exists when adequate evidence is available to establish the presumption of a fact, which,

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unless such can be refuted, **legally stands as fact**. So it is with the case for the existence of God. There is a vast body of evidence that makes an impregnable case for the existence of God—a case that cannot be refuted effectively.

It should be recognized that the Bible makes no formal effort to prove the existence of God in a systematic way. The fact that God **is**, is simply stated in the first verse of the English Bible: “In the beginning, God...” (Genesis 1:1). This plain but lofty affirmation of Jehovah’s being is in striking contrast to the pagan legends of many world religions. The Egyptians theorized that Osiris, the Sun, brought forth various gods who in turn produced others. The theology of India tells of Brahma, the father of all creatures, coming from a golden egg, etc. The Bible contains no such absurdities.

The arguments generally employed as proof for the existence of God have been criticized by a variety of “philosophers.” Some have suggested that they are inadequate to warrant such a firm conclusion, hence, total proof is unavailable. This assumption fails to note, however, that if God is, He is the most vast and comprehensive of realities. It would not be expected, therefore, that any single proof could totally do justice to such an infinite Being. All of the arguments in concert, though, testify eloquently to God’s existence.

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### MAN—THE RELIGIOUS CREATURE

The inclination to be religious is universally (and peculiarly) a human trait. Such has been recognized by students of human nature for millennia. Though far from united in their theism, the Greek and Roman philosophers, for example, agreed that some sort of extra-human deity (or deities) existed. One historian says: “The constant and general concurrence of men of all ages and countries in the firm belief of the existence of the Divinity, seemed to them an argument to which it was impossible to object any thing with sense or reason” (Rollin, 1854, 11:579). Even today, as one writer observed, the evidence indicates that “no race or tribe of men, however degraded and apparently atheistic, lacks that spark of religious capacity which may be fanned and fed into a mighty flame” (Dummelow, 1944, p. ci). If, therefore, the world is incurably **religious**, and if we assume that man is **rational**, it is impossible that a phenomenon so universal as religion could be founded upon illusion.

The question is quite appropriate, therefore: what is the source of this religious tendency within man? Several suggestions have been offered as a solution. First, atheism asserts that primitive man simply personified the forces of nature and made these his gods. Out of these many gods, a chief God, or one God, eventually evolved. This theory involves two false assumptions: (1) Man derived his ideas of God from nature. But J.R. Swanton of the Smithsonian

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Institute declared that such a view is “unproved and improbable” (quoted in Bales, 1962, p. 49). (2) It assumes that monotheism has been refined from an earlier polytheism. However, within the past several decades a vast body of evidence has come to light which reveals a degeneration of monotheism into polytheism. So testifies the ancient literature and archaeological data of North America, Assyria, China, India, Egypt, etc. (see Short, 1952, chapter 2).

Others have surmised that man merely invented the God idea. However, philosophers—both theistic and atheistic—agree that while the imagination may analyze, combine, compound and modify ideas which are received through the senses, it cannot **create** an extrasensory idea. Alexander Campbell, in his celebrated debate with Robert Owen, quoted the popular infidel, David Hume, who declared that “the creative power of the mind amounts to nothing more than the faculty of combining, transposing, augmenting, and diminishing the materials afforded to us by sense and experience” (1957, p. 124). Campbell then argued that since the idea of an uncaused First Cause (i.e., God) had been in the world since time immemorial, and as the skeptics claimed that such an idea **did not** originate through reason [skepticism contends that the idea is **unreasonable**], and **could not** originate through **imagination**, unbelievers were obliged to show the source of the theistic concept. He thus logically argued that the concept of God, though

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greatly perverted in heathen lands, is ultimately traceable to an original communication between the Creator and the creature.

Some have felt that there is an innate impression in the human mind of a Higher Power. H.W. Everest declared that the mind is so constituted that it “at once recognizes the reality of certain ideas,” e.g., the shortest path between two points is a straight line; things equal to the same thing are equal to each other; everything that began had a cause for beginning; we ought to do right, etc. (1884, pp. 11,12).

One thing is certain: the mind of man is somehow drawn towards the idea of a Supreme Being as surely as a compass needle is drawn to the north!

### CAUSE AND EFFECT

When the writer of Hebrews stated that “...every house is builded by someone...” (Hebrews 3:4), he suggested the well-known Law of Cause and Effect. This principle says that wherever there is an **effect**, there must be an adequate **cause**. Dr. Robert Jastrow, considered by many to be the finest science writer of the modern era, has observed that the notion of an effect without a cause is witchcraft, not science (1977, p. 5).

Here, then, is the problem: the Universe exists; it must, in some fashion, be explained. There are but three ways to account for it. (1) It is **eternal**. (2) It is not eternal; rather it **created itself** from nothing.

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(3) It is not eternal; it **was created** by something anterior, and superior, to itself. Let us now explore these ideas.

First, it is now clear scientifically that the Universe is not eternal. Jastrow declares: “...in science, as in the Bible, the World begins with an act of creation. That view has not always been held by scientists. Only as a result of the most recent discoveries can we say with a fair degree of confidence that our Universe has not existed forever; that it began abruptly, without any apparent cause, in a blinding event that defies scientific explanation” (p. 2). The very fact that scientists attempt to assign an age to the Universe admits to its having an origin!

Second, it is absurd to even suggest that matter could create itself. There is no known natural process whereby matter could, from nothing, fashion itself. Dr. George E. Davis, a physicist, has said: “No material thing can create itself” (1958, p. 71). The Universe is not self-explanatory.

Third, the only remaining alternative is that the Universe was created by: (a) something that existed before it did, i.e., some eternal, uncaused Cause; (b) something superior to it, for the created cannot be superior to the Creator, and; (c) something of a different nature since the finite, dependent Universe of matter is unable to explain itself!

In this connection, let us think about this: if there was ever a time when absolutely **nothing existed**,

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then there would be nothing now, for nothing produces nothing but nothingness! Since **something does exist**, it must follow logically that **something has existed always**. Exactly what was that?

Everything that exists can be classified either as **matter** or **mind**. Can you think of something that cannot be so categorized? Look, then, at this argument:

1. Everything that exists is either matter or mind.
2. Hence, either matter or mind must be eternal.
3. But, as shown already, matter is **not** eternal.
4. Therefore, it is **mind** that is eternal. That Mind, the original Cause, is identified in the Bible as God.

As a further extension of our “cause and effect” argument, we suggest that physical life itself can be explained only in terms of some eternal, **non**-physical life force that created life as we observe it. Consider the following.

Atheism is forced to assume that physical life, at some remote point in the past, was spontaneously generated from inorganic materials. But the **evidence** is squarely against that notion. Evolutionist George Gaylord Simpson and colleagues have admitted that the spontaneous generation of life “does not occur in any known case” (1957, p. 261). Others have confirmed that “there is no scientific evidence” for that idea (Green and Goldberger, 1967, pp. 406-407).



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Evolutionist Harold Morowitz estimated that the probability for the chance formation of the smallest, simplest form of living organism known is one in  $1 \times 10^{340,000,000}$  [that is 1 followed by 340 million zeros] (1968, p. 99). Do you know what a staggering figure this is? The entire Universe is said to contain only  $10^{80}$  electrons! Dr. Carl Sagan has estimated that the chance of life evolving on Earth is one in  $1 \times 10^{2,000,000,000}$  [1 followed by two billion zeros]. It would take 6,000 books of 300 pages each just to write that number! Yet they expect us to **believe** it just happened as a result of some freak accident! The late Professor Edwin Conklin of Princeton University put it this way: “The probability of life originating from accident is comparable to the probability of the unabridged dictionary resulting from an explosion in a printing shop” (1963, p. 92).

Let us thus sum up like this: (1) Life was either spontaneously generated by accident from inorganic substances, or it was created purposely by an eternal force. [NOTE: Evolutionists admit this. Dr. George Wald acknowledged that there are only two alternatives with reference to the origin of life—spontaneous generation or special creation (1954, p. 46).] (2) But all the **evidence** indicates it does not, and could not, start spontaneously by chance. (3) The evidence forces one to believe that life originally was created by an Eternal Life Force!

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In our next lesson, we will build upon the foundation just laid, and introduce additional evidences which support the proposition: **GOD IS!**

## The Case for the Existence of God—Part I

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### DISCUSSION AREAS

1. Discuss the assumptions involved in the theory that monotheism evolved from polytheism.
2. In terms of origin, there are but three ways to explain the Universe. What are these? Which is the most reasonable? Why?
3. Why do you suppose that certain scientists, who have forcefully argued for the mathematical impossibility of the “chance” origin of life, still believe such to be the case?
4. Can one logically claim that there was a time in the past when absolutely **nothing** existed? What are the implications of such an assertion?
5. Can faith in God’s existence be classified as: (1) a blind leap in the dark; (2) a religious “hunch”; (3) a probable proposition; (4) a reasonably **established** fact? Discuss the difference between “agnosticism” and “confident faith.”
6. How does the organization of the Universe argue for **one** God?
7. An experiment: Select five people at random. Ask them if they believe in the existence of God. If they do not, inquire as to what is the biggest obstacle to faith, in their judgment. If they do, what do they consider to be the most persuasive argument for God’s existence?

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# LESSON 3

## THE CASE FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD—PART II



In our previous study, we logically demonstrated that our Universe is not self-explanatory; being an **effect**, it requires something unlike itself, namely a pure **Cause**, to explain its existence. We will now add to this concept by showing that the Universe bears the marks of **design**.

### PURPOSEFUL DESIGN DEMANDS A DESIGNER

A deduction is commonly made that order and useful arrangement in a system suggest **intelligence** and **purpose** on the part of the originating cause. Now, the Universe—from the vastness of multiplied solar systems, to the microscopic world of molecules—evinces marvelous design and purposeful arrangement. The question is, therefore, is it more reasonable to believe that the design characteristic of the Universe was **planned**, or that it happened **by accident**? Consider the following.

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**1)** The Universe operates according to precise astronomical laws. This is why rockets can be launched to the moon, etc., and directed to land within feet of their intended target, and why solar/lunar eclipses can be forecast centuries in advance. Science writer Lincoln Barnett comments: “This functional harmony of nature Berkeley, Descartes, and Spinoza attributed to God. Modern physicists who prefer to solve their problems without recourse to God (although this seems to be more difficult all the time) emphasize that nature mysteriously operates on mathematical principles. It is the mathematical orthodoxy of the Universe that enables theorists like Einstein to predict and discover natural laws, simply by the solution of equations” (1959, p. 22). British astronomer Sir James Jeans declared that the Universe looks “more like a great **thought** than a great machine.” Based upon his scientific studies, he said: “We discover that the Universe shows evidence of a designing or controlling Power that has something in common with our own minds” (1930).

**2)** Let us consider our own solar system. The location of Earth within its solar system reveals remarkable purpose for the maintenance of human and animal life. The Earth is estimated to be 93 million miles from the Sun. That distance happens to be **just right**, temperature wise. The Earth travels in an elliptical orbit around the Sun, yet not at a constant rate. When we are closer to the Sun, we move faster,



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and when we are farther away, we move slower. The Earth rotates upon its axis at about 1,000 miles per hour at the equator. “Its rotation on its axis is determined so accurately that a variation of a second in a century would upset astronomical calculations” (Morrison, 1944, p. 14).

About three-fourths of the Earth is covered with water, which helps reduce temperature extremes. The oceans contain salt, which enables clouds and rain to form in the atmosphere and yet not to develop strong alkalinity or acidity (Clark, 1961, p. 90).

Our atmosphere exerts a pressure of approximately 15 pounds on every square inch of the Earth’s surface (this is some 30,000 pounds upon the human body). If we were not **designed** for such an environment, we would instantly disintegrate.

**3)** When the psalmist contemplated the living human organism, he exclaimed: “I am fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14; cf. 1 Corinthians 12:18). Did you realize, for example, that the human body is composed of multiplied trillions of cells? In the nucleus of each cell, hundreds of thousands of genes are present. Each gene consists of a complex chemical called deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). DNA has a complicated code for the mapping out of the entire development of the individual. If the coded instructions of a **single human cell** were put into English, “they would fill a 1,000-volume encyclopedia” (Platt, 1962, p. 148). It is estimated that the total DNA in a human

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body would span the solar system (Kendrew, 1966, p. 63). Without this intricately **designed** process of replication, life could not be passed along with continuity. DNA is the language of life.

Dr. James Coppedge, a Director of Probability Research in biology, raises this significant question:

By all the rules of reason, could there be a code which carries a message without someone originating that code? It would seem self-evident that any such complex message system, which is seen to be wise and effective, requires not only an **intelligence** but a **person** back of it. Who wrote the DNA code? Who is the author of this precise language? There is no evolutionary explanation that even begins to be an adequate answer (1973, p. 138, emp. in orig.).

In discussing the complexity of the DNA function, evolutionist C.P. Haskins notes that “the most sweeping evolutionary questions at the level of biochemical genetics are still unanswered....” He then concedes that were it not for evolutionary bias, “this puzzle would have been interpreted as **the most powerful sort of evidence for special creation**” (1971, p. 305, emp. added).

**4)** The human body is a veritable galaxy of related systems (skin, skeletal, muscular, digestive, circulatory, respiratory, excretory, nervous, reproductive, and endocrine) that all affirm design. Each of the body’s systems is composed of millions of interrelated components, and each system is dependent upon the others for its function. Did it all happen just

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by accident? Consider this analogy: a Boeing 747 is a collection of four million **non**-flying parts, yet when they are **organized** according to a pattern of **creative design**, they fly! How is the infinitely-more-complex human body able to function, unless by creative design?

In an amazing quotation, evolutionists Simpson, Pittendrigh, and Tiffany, compared the living system with a complex, highly-ordered structure like a modern building. They declared that the “**chance origin** of the particular arrangement which is a particular kind of living cell is utterly negligible” (1956, p. 305, emp. added).

**5)** Think about your brain for a moment [incidentally, humans are the only creatures that can think about their brains!]. The late atheist Isaac Asimov said that man’s brain “is the most complex and orderly arrangement of matter in the Universe” (1970, p. 10). Richard Dawkins, an atheist at Oxford, argues that the Universe is without design. In spite of that, when discussing certain characteristics of the brain he conceded: “The complexity of living organisms is matched by the elegant efficiency of their **apparent design**. If anyone doesn’t agree that this amount of **complex design** cries out for an explanation, I give up” (1986, p. ix, emp. added).

The ability of the brain to affect both voluntary and involuntary muscular function would be a marvel within itself, but along with that, consider the brain’s

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esthetic capacity and reasoning ability. In discussing the “complexity of organization” and the functions of the brain, evolutionist Sir Julian Huxley wrote: “The **miracle of the mind** is that it can transmute quantity into quality. This property of the mind is something **given**; it just is so. It cannot be explained; it can only be accepted” (1953, pp. 73,75, emp. added). Of course, the “miracle of the mind” cannot be explained—when **God** is ruled out! (For additional information, see Jackson, 2000.)

Are atheists actually trying to tell us, when they argue against the idea of an intelligent God, that their “arguments” are merely nonsensical sounds issuing from a disorganized mass of cerebral tissue? Any unbeliever, who assumes that he is rational, if he is logical, must ultimately be forced to conclude that his mind was designed by a rational Source.

### MORALITY

The conscience is that quality of the mind that either accuses or excuses human conduct (see Romans 2:14,15). While the conscience does not **determine** what is moral or immoral (Acts 23:1), it recognizes the **existence of morality**. If, then, one is logical, he is forced to recognize the presence of an ultimate Moral Source to Whom each individual is accountable. In this connection, there are some important questions that demand answers.

## **The Case for the Existence of God—Part II**

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**1) Whence the origin of morality?** If one does not acknowledge an eternal Mind with which intrinsic goodness is coexistent, how is “morality” to be explained? Is it feasible that somehow raw, inorganic matter was able, by means of an extended process, to concoct, promote, and maintain morality? It is not! Note these facts: (a) A need for morality is universally apparent. No sane person will argue that absolutely “anything goes.” The expressions, “ought” and “ought not” are as much a part of the atheist’s vocabulary as anyone else’s. Of course, one may become so insensitive that he virtually ignores his personal ethical responsibility, but he will never ignore the lack of such in those who would abuse him! (b) Even unbelievers admit that “morality” exists only in conjunction with personal minds. Dr. George G. Simpson conceded that “morals arise only in man” (1951, p. 179).

**2) What is the motivation for morality?** The theist attempts to live the moral life because he is convinced that a moral God exists Who has obligated humanity to morality for the good of the species. But what can atheism say? Has morality “evolved”? “Well, yes,” the skeptic would say, “society evolved it for its own welfare and preservation.” But animals have survived, and they have no moral code. Moreover, what if I decide to put my personal lusts ahead of the interests of society? What if I thus reason: “I have but one life to live and I will live it for myself alone.” But some would suggest that such a disposition is

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selfish. “So,” I might respond, “what’s wrong with selfishness?” The unbeliever simply has no answer. Atheist Bertrand Russell wrote: “We feel that the man who brings widespread happiness at the expense of misery to himself is a better man than the man who brings unhappiness to others and happiness to himself. I do not know of **any rational ground for this view...**” (1969, p. 29, emp. added).

**3) How is morality to be defined?** There is one issue that atheism dreads like a plague: what are the criteria by which the good is to be distinguished from the bad? If, as Simpson contends, there are no “universal, eternal or absolute ethical criteria of right and wrong” (1951, p. 180), then every man becomes **his own law**—actually then, **his own god**! This is precisely what the *Humanist Manifestos I and II* alleged. These infamous documents say: “Ethics is autonomous [meaning, ‘self-law’] and situational” (1977, p. 17). The truth is, the above statement is ridiculously contradictory. If one suggests that ethics is **situational**, he is implying that he could do “wrong” in certain situations. However, if ethics is **autonomous**, hence, man is his own law, how could he **ever** be in a situation in which his conduct would be wrong?

The plain fact of the matter is, if there is no God, **there is no such thing as “evil.”** And the bolder atheists admit this to be the case. Jean Paul Sartre wrote: “Everything is indeed permitted if God does not exist, and man is in consequence forlorn, for he

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cannot find anything to depend upon either within or outside himself.... Nor, on the other hand, if God does not exist, are we provided with any values or commands that could legitimize our behavior” (1961, p. 485).

**4) Does immorality have an ultimate consequence?** We are presently attempting to press the point that whenever one admits that man possesses moral responsibility, he must likewise concede that there is ultimate moral accountability, and that demands **God**. And this matter needs to be forcefully pressed upon the unbelieving world. Let us pose this problem. Suppose one steals \$10,000 from a multi-millionaire. The wealthy person is not hurt (either physically or economically), he never misses the money, and the thief is never apprehended. Has a **wrong** been committed? Will there ever be any consequence for the deed? In the final analysis will it produce any effect that is different, let us say, than if the man had fed a starving child? Let us look at this matter in another way.

Paul, the apostle of Christ, and Adolf Hitler, are two well-known historical characters. Both are now dead. **So far as they are now concerned**, does it really make any difference that they lived their lives in such divergent directions? Every atheist on the Earth, if he speaks truthfully, and consistent with his philosophy, must admit that it finally makes no difference how one lives! If, though, a man thinks deeply enough, he

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cannot but reject such a baseless and crude view. If there is no ultimate moral reckoning, nothing in life makes sense!

Atheism thus affirms: “In the beginning, Nothing was. And Nothing caused man to evolve from nothingness. With the passage of time, from nothingness man developed morality, which suggests that we ‘ought’ to do right, and not to do evil. But the time is coming when again there will be nothing. Let us, therefore, fall down before the throne of Nothing, and be good.”

Surely it ought to be obvious to every thinking person that if there are **no eternal consequences for one’s actions, then we are but brute beasts with absolutely no moral responsibility!**

Yes, morality exists. Conscience demands that such be the case. We all feel some ethical responsibility. We will give account for our earthly conduct. All of this points to a final reckoning before Someone!



## The Case for the Existence of God—Part II

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### DISCUSSION AREAS

1. Cite some examples of “design” in God’s creation—e.g., the eye, brain, etc.
2. A woman gives birth to a severely retarded baby. The child has virtually no self-awareness and will never be productive. Would it be wrong to kill that child? Does the existence of God have anything to do with the situation? What was Hitler’s rationale behind exterminating the Jews?
3. How is it that astronomers are able to predict solar/lunar eclipses many years in advance?
4. Have you ever met anyone who argues that “morality” does not exist—that “anything goes”? Someone who contends that there is nothing “wrong” with stealing from, or killing, **them**?
5. If the human brain is simply irrational matter-in-motion, as atheism claims, why should unbelievers expect us to respectfully listen to their “arguments” (which their minds have conceived) against the existence of God?
6. Show how the following statement is self-contradictory: “Ethics is situational and autonomous.”

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### RECOMMENDED READING

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# LESSON 4

## CREATION VS. EVOLUTION



In biology, one of the most widely used laws of science is the Law of Biogenesis. “Biogenesis” is composed of two words—“bio,” which means life, and “genesis,” which means beginning. Thus, this law deals with the beginning of life, and simply states that in this material Universe, life comes only from previous life of its own kind. We see this law played out everyday all around the world. Everyone knows that kittens come only from female cats, cows produce only calves, and puppies come only from dogs. A pig never gives birth to a horse, and a sheep never bears an iguana. [NOTE: We briefly discussed this law in lesson two, but believe that additional comment is warranted due to evolution’s heavy reliance on ideas that violate this recognized law of science.]

Over the years, thousands of scientists have documented the truthfulness of this law. The famous Louis Pasteur dealt a crushing blow to the notion of

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spontaneous generation (the idea that life arises on its own from nonliving sources). In earlier centuries, the idea that life arose from nonliving things was very popular. People believed that a person could take wheat grains, wrap them in an old rag, stuff them in the corner of a barn, and produce mice. They also believed that old meat left on a kitchen counter would generate maggots spontaneously. However, teachers and professors correctly point out today that Pasteur triumphed over this “mythology” when he disproved the concept of spontaneous generation through his well-designed scientific experiments. Evolutionist Martin Moe correctly commented that “a century of sensational discoveries in the biological sciences has taught us **that life arises only from life**” (1981, 89[11]:36, emp. added). Even the eminent evolutionist George Gaylord Simpson and his colleagues observed that “there is no serious doubt that **biogenesis is the rule, that life comes only from other life**, that a cell, the unit of life, is always and exclusively the product or offspring of another cell” (1965, p. 144, emp. added). Yet with almost the same breath, these same teachers and professors tell their students that nonliving chemicals produced living organisms some time in the distant past—that is, spontaneous generation occurred.

Consider an article by Frank Zindler. The article is titled “‘Creation Science’ and the Facts of Evolution.” It was posted on the American Atheists official Web

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site. From the fact that it is posted on the Web site of such a prominent atheistic organization, one can conclude only that the American Atheists organization concurs with the sentiments implied in the article.

The article in question is a caustic attack against creation, as well as any person who adheres to this idea. In his attempt to discredit creation, Zindler informs the reader that he believes that most of those who believe in creation are quite “devoid of any understanding of logic.” When listing one of the reasons why he thinks creation is not a viable idea, Zindler made this statement: “On the other hand, those components of creationism which involve certain types of magical events (e.g., the divine creation of a young universe with all of its components bearing the false imprint of great age) make the claims of creationism untestable—making creationism not a theory at all, because **theories must be testable**” (emp. added)!

Zindler then proceeded to explain that the conclusion that evolution has occurred is drawn from two simple observations: **Observation 1:** Living things come only from living things. Spontaneous generation is not possible when living things are already in existence. **Observation 2:** Fossil remains show that living things in the remote past were very different from living things today. Therefore: **Conclusion:** Life has changed through time (evolved).

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Voila! In three simple sentences, Zindler presents his strongest case for evolution. Let us briefly analyze Zindler's logic. Remember that he claimed that most creationists were "devoid of any understanding of logic," and that creationism could not qualify as a theory because, he says, it is untestable and "theories must be testable!"

Using his own criterion (testability) for a theory, apply his thinking to his first observation. He stated that spontaneous generation does not occur "when living things are already in existence." The implied statement here is that life **can** spontaneously generate where there is not already life. In fact, he had an explanatory note beside his first observation. He said: "Life cannot originate now for at least two reasons." The two reasons he listed were the fact that oxygen in the atmosphere would quickly destroy compounds necessary for life, and existing microbes would eat the compounds necessary for life. He went on to conclude, however, that "neither of these roadblocks to spontaneous generation existed before life had formed."

Please remember that his most important criterion for dubbing anything a legitimate theory is testability. Apply that to spontaneous generation. Can we do experiments that would test whether or not spontaneous generation could occur in an environment without oxygen and microbes to destroy the compounds necessary for life? Yes. And every



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origin-of-life experiment that has attempted such has failed miserably. Has any scientist anywhere, at any time, under any circumstance, ever been able to perform an experiment that could prove that spontaneous generation can occur? The answer is a resounding, **NO!** Spontaneous generation has failed in every single circumstance that humans have ever been able to observe or imagine. In fact, every experiment performed to date has shown that spontaneous generation does not occur. It cannot be proven that our Earth's atmosphere was at some time in the distant past devoid of oxygen and microbes. [Scientists actually have credible evidence that the early Earth's atmosphere did, in fact, contain oxygen; see Thaxton, et al., 1984).] Furthermore, experiments have been performed that imitate an environment devoid of these "life inhibitors" and still there has never been a verified case of spontaneous generation. Spontaneous generation has been **proven false**. If Zindler discredits the idea of creation based partially on his statement that certain components cannot be tested, then what, pray tell, does he do when his strongest case for evolution is based on an idea that **has been tested and found to be false?**

Consider also several statements made by Professor Robert Hazen. Dr. Hazen's list of credentials is nothing short of astounding. He earned a bachelors and Masters in Geology from MIT, a Ph.D. in Earth Science from Harvard University, he is a research

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scientist at the Carnegie Institution of Washington Geophysical Laboratory, has authored 250 articles and 19 books, has received a Fellowship in the American Association for the Advancement of Science, has been the president of Mineralogical Society of America, and is an official member of the elite International Society for the Study of the Origin of Life (ISSOL), and is a professor at George Mason University. In 2005, Dr. Hazen taught a course titled, “The Origins of Life,” which is presented by The Teaching Company. In that series of 24 lectures, each approximately 30 minutes, Dr. Hazen made some glaring admissions in regard to the scientific community’s knowledge concerning the origin of life on Earth. He began in the first lecture by stating:

First, and perhaps foremost, this course is unusual because at this point in time, there is so much that we **do not know** about how life emerged on Earth. There is a popular misconception that scientists know it all, that we have answers to every possible questions.... Well, that is just absurd. There are huge gaps in our understanding.... The origin of life has been a subject of immense complexity, and I have to tell you right up front **we do not know how life began**. It is as if we are trying to assemble a huge jigsaw puzzle. We have a few pieces clumped together here and there, but most of the puzzle pieces are missing. What is more, we have lost the box top, so we are not even sure what the complete picture is supposed to look like (2005, pp. 11-12, emp. added).

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After admitting that science knows precious little about the origin of life on Earth, Dr. Hazen commented on the “possibility” that the origin of life might be outside the realm of scientific experiment:

I have to be honest, even with a scientific approach there is a possibility that we will never know—in fact, that we can’t ever know—how life emerged. That is because it is possible that life emerged by an almost infinitely improbable sequence of difficult chemical reactions.... If that is true, **then any scientific attempt to understand life’s origin is doomed to failure**. You see, an infinitely improbable succession of chemical steps can not be duplicated in a program of lab experiments. If the origin of life was an infinitely improbable accident, then there’s absolutely nothing you or I or anyone else could do to figure out how it happened. **I must tell you that’s a depressing thought to someone like me who has devoted a decade to understanding the origin of life** (2005, p. 14, emp. added).

Notice that Dr. Hazen admitted that there is a possibility that no scientific experimentation can be done to ascertain the origin of life. In fact, Dr. Hazen conceded the possibility that the evolutionary scenario concerning life’s origin is untestable, the exact same charge that is often brought against the idea of a supernatural Creator. He further declared that such a prospect is rather depressing to him because he has devoted so much of his life attempting to prove that life could come from non-living chemicals. He then stated:

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I guess it's not too surprising then that virtually all origin of life researchers adopt the philosophical view that life is, indeed, a cosmic imperative. We **trust** that it's only a matter of time before we know how it happened. It is wonderful to think that, given the scenario, genesis occurs throughout the universe all the time. However, we **cannot prove** that idea until we find a second independent origin of life either on another world or in the laboratory (2005, p. 15, emp. added).

Observe Dr. Hazen's reasoning: We know very little about life's origin on Earth. There is a possibility that science will never be able to devise an experiment that would prove life came from non-living chemicals. But I have devoted 10 years of my life attempting to find a way to prove life comes from non-life. So I, along with other scientists who have devoted their lives to the study, **assume** it is possible.

Such an assumption simply cannot be granted. The fact of the matter is, evolution could not have occurred without some form of spontaneous generation. For this reason, scientists such as Robert Hazen have concocted experiments, attempting to create life from nonliving substances. But after all these attempts, life has never been created in the material Universe from something nonliving. If thousands of scientists have designed carefully planned experiments to create life from something nonliving, and yet have failed miserably every time, how in the world can we be expected to believe that nature did it by

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using accidents, chance, and blind forces? On the contrary, whether **in nature or in the laboratory, scientists have never documented a single case of spontaneous generation!** Life comes only from previous life of its own kind, which is exactly what the creation model teaches, and the exact opposite of what the evolutionary scenario suggests. To put it in the words of Genesis 1:24: “Then God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, each according to its kind’; and it was so.”

### EVOLUTION: CHANGE OVER TIME

It is important to realize that any discussion in which terms are not agreed upon can quickly turn into a quagmire of misunderstanding and confusion. For instance, the assertion is made: Evolution has occurred on Earth. The most important aspect of the assertion centers on what is meant by the term “evolution.” If, by evolution, one means that living organisms have the genetic ability to alter their appearance in minor ways over a period of time, as Darwin’s finches did, such an assertion would be accepted by both creationists and evolutionists. If, however, the term “evolution” is defined to mean organisms can genetically mutate into other kinds of organisms over millions of years, gradually changing from simple organisms like amoebas into complex organisms like humans, then evidence would fail to support such an assertion.

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Confusion enters when one definition is used but then replaced (using “sleight of hand” tactics) with a definition that is not agreed upon. For instance, science writers and textbooks often state that evolution is a fact. As evidence, they point to tiny variations in the size of a finch’s beak, color in a moth population, or length of a neck bone, and allege these minor variations prove “evolution.” Then, they say, since evolution is a proven fact, we know that monkeys and humans “evolved” from a common ancestor. By paying close attention, one can ferret out the “trick” and see that the definition of “evolution” was switched from “small changes within the same kind of organism” to “huge genetic changes turning one kind of animal into another.”

Understanding this situation becomes increasingly important when reading literature produced by the scientific community. In the July 14, 2006 issue of *Science*, Peter and Rosemary Grant presented a paper titled “Evolution of Character Displacement in Darwin’s Finches.” The thesis of the article is that one particular species of finch (*Geospiza fortis*) “evolved” a slightly smaller beak due to the arrival of a larger-beaked finch (*G. magnirostris*) competing for larger seeds of the *Tribulus cistoides* plant during a severe drought.

Randolph Schmid, an *Associated Press* author who wrote about the Grants’ latest article, opened his summary of their findings with these words: “Finches

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on the Galapagos Islands that inspired Charles Darwin to develop the concept of evolution are now helping confirm it—by evolving” (2006). Notice what Schmid did in his introduction. He commingled two separate definitions of evolution into his statement, falsely equating the two. The generally accepted definition for the concept of evolution proposed by Darwin is “huge genetic changes turning one kind of animal into another,” often called Darwinism. But the “evolving” accomplished by the finches on the Galapagos Islands was simply “small changes within the same kind of organism.”

Schmid interviewed Robert Fleischer, a scientist who works with the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History, who stated that the Grants merely had documented an instance of “microevolution” (small changes within the same kind of organism). Yet, the titles of the articles by both Schmid and the Grants misleadingly imply that Darwinian evolution has been proven by the finch research, and Schmid goes so far as to make this bold claim in his introductory paragraph.

What do the finches really prove? They prove that finches stay finches, and the only documented kind of “evolution” is microevolution—small changes within the same kind of organism. The Grants have been studying the finches for 33 years, and this change in beak size, which amounted to about .6 millimeters in beak length and .8 millimeters in beak depth (“Study:

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Darwin's...," 2006), was "the strongest evolutionary change seen in the 33 years of the study" (Grant and Grant, 2006). Even more ironic is the fact that this "evolutionary" change to a smaller beak that allegedly helped the finches to survive might not be so helpful after all. In the same article for *Science*, the Grants alluded to research done in 1977, when a drought struck the same island and killed many of the finches. The Grants noted: "Most finches died that year, and mortality was heaviest among those with **small beaks**" (2006, emp. added). Thus, if *G. fortis* keeps "evolving" a smaller beak size, a major drought in the future could easily spell its demise.

Scientific observation has never produced a single shred of evidence that proves even the possibility of "huge genetic changes turning one kind of animal into another." In fact, all the observable evidence proves that every living organism multiplies "according to its kind" exactly as stated in Genesis 1:24, small changes in beak size, body weight, or skin color notwithstanding.



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### **DISCUSSION AREAS**

1. What does the term “biogenesis” mean? What does the Law of Biogenesis state? How is this scientific law used in the field of biology?
2. Discuss how prevalent the Law of Biogenesis is. How do children learn the truth of this law at an early age? What day-to-day phenomena constantly verify this law?
3. What must have taken place in the past for evolution to be true? How does that fact violate the Law of Biogenesis? How do evolutionists attempt to explain this situation? What assumption renders their rationale faulty in this case?
4. Evolutionists often talk about “testability.” What do they mean by this term? Discuss several features of evolution that are not “testable.”
5. What are “origin-of-life” experiments? What has been the outcome of every one so far? How should those who believe in evolution respond to this data? How do they respond?
6. Discuss Dr. Hazen’s statements regarding biogenesis. What do such honest admissions do to evolutionary teachings? What does he say is a major assumption involved in his work on the origins of life?
7. What types of changes occur in nature? What types of changes do not occur in nature? How do “Darwin’s finches” fit into this discussion?

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### RECOMMENDED READING

The following works are recommended as supplementary reading for those who want additional material on the scientific evidences against evolution:

Behe, Michael J. (2003), *Darwin's Black Box* (New York: The Free Press).

Butt, Kyle and Eric Lyons (2007), *Truth Be Told: Exposing the Myth of Evolution* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).

Jackson, Wayne (1974), *Fortify Your Faith* (Stockton, CA: Courier Publications).

Wells, Jonathan (2000), *Icons of Evolution* (Washington, DC: Regnery).



# LESSON 5

## MILITANT ATHEISM



The stereotypical scientist in a white lab coat, who follows the facts wherever they may lead, and reports those data without prejudice, often does not correspond to reality these days. In fact, a large majority of scientists now believe that God does not exist. These scientists feel that they should militantly spread their ideas of atheism and evolution as far and wide as possible. They abhor the idea of a supernatural Creator and believe it should be eradicated from human consciousness. Just how determined are some of the leading atheistic evolutionists to expunge theism from the world? An issue of the journal *New Scientist*, which celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2006, sheds some light on the subject. In an article titled, “In Place of God: Can Secular Science Ever Oust Religious Belief—and Should It Even Try?,” Michael Brooks recounted a recent meeting of “some of the leading practitioners of modern science” in La Jolla,

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California (2006, 192[2578]:8). They had gathered to discuss, among other questions, “Should science do away with religion?” Their answers are alarming. [NOTE: The following quotations are extracted from Brooks’ report.]

Cosmologist Steven Weinberg was first to address the question, “Should science do away with religion?” He responded with an unequivocal “yes,” saying: “The world needs to wake up from the long nightmare of religion.... **Anything** we scientists can do to weaken the hold of religion should be done, and may in fact be our **greatest contribution to civilization**” (p. 9, emp. added). Since scientists at the symposium used the terms “religion” and “God” interchangeably, Weinberg, in essence, was saying that ridding the world from God would be one of science’s greatest achievements. He seemed so certain that scientists could achieve this goal that he actually admitted he would “miss it once it was gone” (p. 9). How were Weinberg’s comments received, you might ask? According to attendee Michael Brooks, he received “a rapturous response” (p. 9), before being heavily criticized by some, such as Richard Dawkins, surprisingly enough, “for not being tough enough on religion” (p. 9).

Dawkins, who is perhaps the most celebrated evolutionist alive today, was one of the most militant atheists at the conference. He stated: “I am utterly fed up with the respect we have been brainwashed into bestowing upon religion,” i.e., God (p. 9; cf. Ecclesiastes

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12:12-13). Passive atheism apparently should not be tolerated. Dawkins is “ready to mobilize” his “big... enthusiastic choir” of evolutionary colleagues (p. 11). He said: “There’s a certain sort of negativity you get from people who say ‘I don’t like religion but you can’t do anything about it.’ That’s a real counsel of defeatism. **We should roll our sleeves up and get on with it**” (p. 11, emp. added). Dawkins even compared evolutionary scientists’ position in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to that of homosexuals in the late 1960s: everyone needs to be “willing to stand up and be counted,” so that “they could change things” (p. 11).

Dawkins likely called for such drastic action because he has seen atheism lose some of its battles. In his book, *The Blind Watchmaker*, he admitted that modern creationists have been “disturbingly successful” in their attempts to combat evolution in “American education and textbook publishing” (1996, p. 241). He also wrote: “There are still those who seek to deny the truth of evolution, and there are disturbing signs that their influence is even growing, at least in local areas of the United States” (p. x). The influence of anti-evolutionists disturbs Dawkins greatly—so much so that he and his colleagues feel compelled to advance evolution, while doing “away with religion” (Brooks, 192[2578]:9).

Evolutionist Neil deGrasse Tyson of the Hayden Planetarium in New York “**spoke with an evangelist’s zeal**” (p. 10, emp. added). He referred to a recent poll

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taken of members of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences which revealed that 15 percent did not indicate they were atheists, and asked: “How come the number isn’t zero?... That should be the subject of everybody’s investigation. That’s something that we can’t just sweep under the rug” (p. 10). To Tyson, theistic members of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences represent “a problem that needs to be addressed” (p. 10). One wonders what Tyson would suggest if Louis Pasteur, Isaac Newton, Carolus Linnaeus, and other brilliant **theistic** scientists from the past were members of this group? Kick them out for not being atheists, even though their contributions to science likely far exceed any efforts put forth by most current members of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences? Even the staunch evolutionist Niles Eldredge admitted that “all the great biologists and geologists prior to Darwin were, in some sense at least, creationists” (2001, p. 49).

Dr. Harry Kroto of Florida State University also stepped forward at the conference, declaring himself “ready to fight the good fight” (Brooks, 192[2578]:11). He proposed the launching of “a coordinated global effort at education, media outreach and campaigning on behalf of science,” using especially the Internet to take evolutionary science into every home (p. 11). If you think students in private religious schools will be untouched and invulnerable to the efforts of



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modern-day evolutionists, consider that Kroto has these schools in his sights as well. He declared: “We must try to work against faith schooling” (p. 11).

Michael Brooks summarized the overall attitude at the La Jolla, California symposium in the following words: “science **can** take on religion and **win**” (p. 11, emp. added). So, in the words of Richard Dawkins, “We [evolutionists—KB/EL] should roll our sleeves up and get on with it” (p. 11).

The irony of this militant attitude toward religion is that evolutionists sometimes downplay such aggressive tactics in an attempt to lull the religious populace into thinking that no battle is taking place. Niles Eldredge, Curator in the Department of Invertebrate Paleontology at the American Museum of Natural History, wrote a book titled *The Triumph of Evolution and the Failure of Creationism*. In that book, he said: “Creationists have spuriously convinced many citizens that huge hunks of science are antithetical to their religious beliefs” (2001, p. 174). One would not have to read past the first page of Brook’s *New Scientist* article to understand that the evolutionists themselves openly admit that their atheistic, evolutionary beliefs are antithetical to religion. To add further irony to Eldredge’s statement, the back of his book quotes *Booklist* as saying that Eldredge’s book is “a clarion call rallying evolutionist [sic] to battle.”

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### IT STARTS EARLY AND STAYS LATE

In the mid-1990s, philosopher Daniel Dennett wrote a book titled *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*. Leading evolutionists such as Richard Dawkins, Steven Pinker, Philip Kitcher, and Edward O. Wilson highly recommended the book, calling it “surpassingly brilliant” and “essential,” as it persuades readers that “evolution by natural selection is vital to the future of philosophy.” One of the most disturbing comments in Dennett’s book concerned parents who teach their children (among other things) “that ‘Man’ is **not** a product of evolution” (1995, p. 519, emp. added). Dennett wrote: “[T]hose of us who have freedom of speech will feel free to describe your teachings as the spreading of falsehoods, and will attempt to demonstrate this to your children at our earliest opportunity” (p. 519). Notice the jab at religious parents—accusing them of lying and not “freely” telling the truth about man’s origins. More important, observe how he then proceeded to testify that evolutionists like himself will endeavor to convince the children of theists that evolution is not fiction, but a fact that will be communicated “**at our earliest opportunity**.” How early? Consider one example.

The pop-up “history” book for toddlers, titled *Life on Earth*, was published in 2002 by Barron’s Educational Series. It is 21 pages of colorful illustrations, captivating pop-ups, and evolutionary dogma. It tells the story of evolution with less than 10 words per page. Beginning

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with “the first living things” in the seas, it proceeds with fish crawling out onto land and becoming amphibians. It then tells of the reptiles’ appearance, followed by the mammals, and eventually the first “hairy” humans. In case a child misses the point of the book, the text on the back cover (placed strategically just above a baby in diapers sliding down the tail of a large dinosaur) reinforces the main point: “Millions of years ago life on Earth started in the oceans. Then it moved onto the land and eventually led to YOU!”

Those who teach evolution target children. Niles Eldredge wrote: “I maintain my conviction that the real **battleground** is in the classroom” (2001, p. 157, emp. added). In the same book, he asserted: “The real **battle** is still being fought at school board meetings and in public school classrooms” (p. 149, emp. added). Notice the military terminology. Mark it down. Many within the evolutionary community recognize that the ideas of a supernatural God and organic evolution are at war. Eldredge and others offer a glimpse into their battle strategy: start early in the school system.

Near the end of his book, Eldredge included a list from Eugenie Scott, Director of the National Center for Science Education, of 25 things “parents, teachers, and even scientists” can do to help evolution win its battle over creation. The number one thing listed: “Donate books and videos about evolution to **school and public libraries**” (p. 178, emp. added). Number eight: “Share your views with **school board**

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**members**, legislators, textbook commissioners, and other **educational policy makers**” (p. 179, emp. added). Number 16: “PARENTS: Make sure your child’s teacher knows s/he has your support for teaching about evolution” (p. 179). Number 22: “K-12 TEACHERS: Work with your colleagues to create a supportive atmosphere in your school and community” (p. 180). Number 23: “K-12 TEACHERS: Work with colleagues to develop or publicize workshops and in-service units about evolution; take advantage of them yourself” (p. 180). A cursory reading of the list shows exactly where evolutionists want to direct their attention—children and educational systems.

Dr. Dennett and his band of evolutionary guerillas are serious about teaching evolution at the “**earliest opportunity**.” It can start with what parents perceive as “innocent” pop-up books, and continue into elementary school, middle school, and high school. Then, usually with more fervor than ever previously seen, many evolutionary college professors make it their mission to verbally beat God out of their students.

Some time ago a gentleman visited one of our creation/evolution seminars. He had attended a large, well-known university in the southeastern United States. He recounted how he entered one of his science classes at the beginning of a semester, and heard his professor ask the class to stand up if they believed in God. Seven individuals stood up. The professor then said that by the end of the semester not one of them

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would stand up when he asked that question. Sure enough, toward the end of the semester the professor asked the question again, “How many of you believe in God?” Only one student stood up.

### WHERE WILL IT LEAD?

If militant evolutionists have their way, what ultimately will become of nonconformists and disbelievers of evolutionary theory? Let us allow the evolutionists themselves to tell us. Richard Dickerson, a molecular biologist, wrote an article titled “The Game of Science.” In that article, he insisted that science cannot tolerate a supernatural Creator Who would perform miracles or create the Universe in six, 24-hour days. He also proposed that real science can never resort to invoking miracles as a legitimate explanation for anything that happens in the real world. Dickerson said: “[I]nvolving miracles and special creation violates the rules of the game of science and inhibits progress” (as quoted in Scott, 2004, p. 254). According to Dickerson, then, what should be done with any person who does believe in a supernatural Creator and a straightforward reading of Genesis 1? He is quick to offer his opinion. He says: “People who do not understand that concept [evolution—KB/EL] can never be **real** scientists, and should not be allowed to misrepresent science to young people from whom the ranks of the next generation of scientists will be drawn” (as quoted in Scott, p. 254, emp. added).

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Richard Dawkins quipped: “No **serious** biologist doubts the fact that evolution has happened, nor that all living creatures are cousins of one another” (1996, p. 287, emp.).

Consider one example of intolerance toward creationism in 2002 at Texas Tech University. When undergraduate student Micah Spradling requested a letter of recommendation from a biology instructor in order to enroll in a pre-medical program, Professor Michael Dini informed him that he needed to “‘truthfully and forthrightly’ believe in human evolution to receive a letter of recommendation” (see Kitchen, 2002).

In the eyes of some, such as Dr. Dini, it is no longer acceptable simply to **know** about the theory of evolution and be able to discuss it intelligently. Now, if you do not profess it, even though, admittedly, “all of the details are not yet known,” you may risk the opportunity to further your education—a risk that Christians must be willing to take.

In 2003, following an investigation by the U.S. Justice Department, Dr. Dini supposedly “eliminated the evolution belief requirement from his recommendation policy and replaced it with a requirement that students be able to explain the theory of evolution” (Taylor, 2003, 27[4]:6). The **wording** in Dr. Dini’s policy changed to the following: “How do you account for the scientific origin of the human species? If you will not give a **scientific** answer to this question, then you should

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not seek my recommendation” (as quoted in Taylor, 27[4]:6, emp. added).

Notice that Dr. Dini simply changed his criteria to demand a “scientific” answer. Yet, when one explores the writings of these militant evolutionists, it becomes apparent that the word “scientific” is simply a synonym for “evolutionary.” For instance, Eugenie Scott wrote: “To scientists, using God to explain natural phenomena of **any kind** violates the practice of methodological naturalism, in which scientific explanations are limited only to natural causes” (2004, p. 119, emp. added). In other words, any idea that contains a hint of a supernatural, non-material Creator is, according to their definition, “unscientific.” In the National Academy of Science’s book *Science and Creationism*, the “steering committee” members, such as Stephen J. Gould, Eugenie Scott, Francisco Ayala, and others, put it like this: “[T]he teaching of evolution should be an integral part of science instruction, and creation science is in fact not science and should not be presented as such in science classes” (1999, p. 2). How convenient. Simply demand that all answers must be “scientific,” then define scientific as excluding any reference to a supernatural Creator. Needless to say, the great scientists of the past like Newton, Farraday, and Carver never would have accepted such a biased definition of science. Nor should thinking people today allow these sneaky, semantic tactics to go unchallenged and unanswered.

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Ultimately, evolutionists would like to marginalize completely those who believe in a supernatural Creator. They would like to relegate all non-evolutionists to a tiny band of “know-nothings,” or as Dawkins puts it, “backwoodsmen” who do not deserve the name “scientist” (1996, p. x). If these militant evolutionists have their way, no creationist will be allowed to enroll in the prestigious institutes of higher learning to earn advanced accredited degrees, much less have the opportunity to teach on college campuses. In the introduction to his 1996 edition of *The Blind Watchmaker*, Dawkins said as much: “I was reminded of the creationist student who, **through some accident of the selection procedure**, was admitted to the Zoology Department at Oxford University” (p. xi). To Dawkins, and others like him, a “properly” working selection procedure would have disallowed a creationist to enroll in an institute like Oxford, regardless of his or her intellectual accomplishments or abilities. Dawkins’ sentiments are clear from his 1989 statement: “It is absolutely safe to say that if you meet somebody who claims not to believe in evolution, that person is ignorant, stupid, or insane (or wicked, but I’d rather not consider that)” (1989, p. 34, parenthetical item in orig.). In contradistinction, the Bible says: “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God’” (Psalm 14:1; 53:1).

The fact that these militant evolutionists want to silence the idea of creation is ironic in light of beliefs



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held by Darwin himself. In his book, *Origin of the Species*, Darwin wrote:

I am well aware that scarcely a single point is discussed in this volume on which facts cannot be adduced, apparently leading to conclusions directly opposite to those at which I have arrived. **A fair result can be obtained only by fully stating and balancing the facts and arguments on both sides of each question...** (1956, p. 18, emp. added).

Judging from the comments by Dawkins and others, Darwin's suggestion that both sides should be heard was far too tolerant and soft on the "unscientific" idea of creation.

### ACKNOWLEDGE THE WAR! JOIN THE FIGHT!

Highly acclaimed evolutionary scientists recognize that a war is going on—a war between atheistic evolutionary science and anti-evolutionary science. Evolutionists are ready to "get on with it" (Brooks, 192[2578]:11). They are speaking "with an evangelist's zeal" and are "ready to fight the good fight" (pp. 10,11). Even now, they are attempting to position themselves to set evolution "in place of God" (p. 8).

Creationists must not shy away from this battle. We, too, must roll up our sleeves and heed the apostle Paul's admonition to "fight the good fight of faith" (1 Timothy 6:12). We must strive to "speak the words of truth and reason" (Acts 26:25), and "be ready to give a defense to everyone" (1 Peter 3:15). Indeed, "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty

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in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God” (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

What can creationists do? How can we fight against atheistic evolutionary science? If evolutionists have benefited from Eugenie Scott’s to-do list for the advancement of evolution, perhaps it is fitting to close this lesson with a list of suggestions for creationists in their fight against atheistic evolution.

1. **Recognize** that there is a battle over the most fundamental pillar of Christianity (the existence of God), and **resolve** to do **something**.
2. Begin teaching your children, grandchildren, nephews, nieces, etc. the case **for** creation and the case **against** evolution before they ever enter school. Continue this instruction as they get older.
3. Encourage your children to ask questions about God, creation, and evolution. If you don’t answer their questions, someone will—and that someone probably will be an evolutionist.
4. Give your children (and yourself!) the tools needed to build a strong faith—one that is based on both reason and revelation.
5. Familiarize yourself with Web sites such as [apologeticspress.org](http://apologeticspress.org) and [christiancourier.com](http://christiancourier.com), which provide immediate answers to many of your questions. They also aid students with term papers, reports, speeches, etc.

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[The final five suggestions are adapted from Eugenie Scott's list (see Eldredge, 2001, pp. 178-180).]

6. Donate books and videos about **creation** to school and public libraries.
7. Make it a point to share your views about **creation** with school board members, legislators, textbook commissioners, and other educational policy makers.
8. Let your children's teachers know that they have your support if they choose to teach about the errors and weaknesses of **evolutionary** theory.
9. Attempt to create an open-minded atmosphere in your school and community, so that creation and evolution can both be discussed.
10. Work with parents, teachers, churches, etc. to develop or publicize workshops or seminars about the errors of **evolution** and the evidence for God's existence.

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### DISCUSSION AREAS

1. Describe the attitude of militant atheists. How do the **actions** of militant atheists work against their philosophy of atheism?
2. When do many atheists attempt to start indoctrinating others with atheism? Where does much of this teaching take place? How long does it often last?
3. Why do you think children are primary targets of militant atheists? Discuss some situations you personally have seen in which children have been taught evolution.
4. What is the desired goal of militant atheists? Have they achieved many of their goals? Discuss the goals that they have already achieved.
5. List and discuss several ways that Christians can battle militant atheism. Why is it so important to fight this battle? What is at stake?
6. What would society be like if the majority adopted atheism? How does Nazi Germany fit into this discussion?

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### RECOMMENDED READING

The following works are recommended as supplementary reading for those who want additional material on the topic of militant atheism:

- Butt, Kyle and Eric Lyons (2005), *Truth Be Told: Exposing the Myth of Evolution* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).
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# LESSON 6

## DINOSAURS, REASON, AND REVELATION



What is so important about dinosaurs that it warrants them being the focus of a lesson in a book on Christian evidences? The reason we feel compelled to write about these extinct reptiles is largely because **they are the poster children for the theory of evolution**. In the widely used, 100-page middle school science textbook titled *Evolution—Change Over Time* (published by Prentice Hall), attempts are made to establish evolution as a fact by using a variety of alleged proofs. One piece of “evidence,” however, that appears on nearly **one out of every three pages** centers on dinosaurs. The first two chapters in this three-chapter textbook begin with pictures and text about dinosaurs. In several sections of the book (in which the main thrust is not dinosaurs), students are asked to participate in reading or writing activities that focus on dinosaurs. Truly, the authors and editors of this “science” textbook (which once was

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used throughout the United States) have attempted to indoctrinate young minds with the “truths” of evolution by using dinosaurs.

Inarguably, dinosaurs are the “sugar stick” that evolutionists use to capture the attention of both young and old alike. So what do reason and revelation have to tell us about these creatures? If dinosaurs and humans once walked the Earth together, it is logical to conclude that humans would have left behind at least two different types of evidence. First, just as we tell stories today of interesting things that we have seen and heard, the ancients likely would have told stories about dinosaurs, if they ever encountered these creatures. Second, similar to how we take pictures of places we visit and wildlife we see in modern times, people living hundreds or thousands of years ago (before the invention of cameras) would likely have drawn or carved pictures of dinosaurs, as well as many other animals. Does such evidence for the cohabitation of dinosaurs and humans exist?

### DINOSAUR STORIES

A wide variety of stories of reptiles have been passed down from cultures all over the world (see Shuker, 1995, pp. 6-7). The famed twentieth-century evolutionist, Carl Sagan, noted: “The implacable mutual hostility between man and dragon...is not a Western anomaly. **It is a worldwide phenomenon**” (1977, p. 150, emp. added). Militant evolutionist



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and *LiveScience.com* staff writer Ker Than admitted: “Dragons are...found in the myths and legends of cultures all around the world” (2007). What’s more, many of these creatures sound exactly like dinosaurs, or dinosaur-like (marine or flying) reptiles. However, they are not called dinosaurs in these stories, but “dragons.” Since the term “dinosaur” (from the Greek words *deinos*, meaning “fearfully great,” and *sauros*, meaning “lizard” or “reptile”) was not coined until the early 1840s, stories told previously of “fearfully great reptiles” would not have included the word dinosaur. Instead, the name “dragon” was attached to these creatures.

In 2003, a nearly complete dinosaur skull was excavated in the Hell Creek Formation in South Dakota. The long, knobby, spiky skull appeared so similar to descriptions and paintings of certain “legendary” dragons, it actually was named *Dracorex*, meaning “dragon king” (see Bakker, et al., 2006). The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis, which now possesses the skull, referred to it as “a new type of dinosaur” that is “66-million-years-old” and “**looks like a dragon**” (“*Dracorex...*,” n.d., emp. added). The Children’s Museum displayed a placard next to a *Dracorex* image that read: “When we saw this creature’s head, we weren’t sure what kind of dinosaur it was. Its spiky horns, bumps and long muzzle **looked more like a dragon.**” A dinosaur that looks more like a dragon? Interesting.

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Evolutionist Mark Norell admitted that “all the mythical creatures...have real underpinnings in biology” (as quoted in Hajela, 2007). What real animals prompted dragon legends? What **rational** explanation exists for why peoples in different places and times, separated by thousands of miles, all came up with stories of giant reptiles that sound more like extinct dinosaurs than any other animal on Earth? Why does history record the existence of large reptilian creatures with serpentine necks, elongated bodies, enormous tails, hard skin, stout legs, spiked backs, knobby heads, terrible teeth, snake-like tongues, horned or crested heads, sharp claws, and membranous wings? Why are the physical characteristics of dragons so similar to the anatomy of various dinosaurs, so much so that the Latin word for dragon (*draco*) would even be used to designate a specific dinosaur? **Because many dragon legends are simply the accounts of people seeing and/or interacting with dinosaurs.**

Have some elements of “dragon legends” been embellished over time? Of course. Just as people today tend to embellish the size of a fish they caught or the size of a dog that chased them, people in the past said some things about dragons that may not be true. But such inaccuracies do not negate the overall truth that reptiles of many different shapes and sizes once lived with humans—no more than the differences in worldwide flood legends mean we must discount the idea of the worldwide Flood (Lyons and Butt, 2003).

### DINOSAUR ILLUSTRATIONS

Perhaps more compelling than the stories that have been passed down about these creatures are the illustrations of dinosaurs that were drawn long before the term “dinosaur” was even coined. Consider three examples from three different continents.

#### Petroglyph at Natural Bridges National Monument

On the underside of the third largest natural bridge in the world (Kachina Bridge) located in the Natural Bridges National Monument just west of Blanding, Utah, are several petroglyphs and pictographs, which rock-art experts believe to be anywhere from 500 to 1,500 years old. The carvings are thought to be the work of the Anasazi Indians who once lived in the area. A mountain goat, a human figurine, multiple handprints, and many other carvings and drawings are seen quite easily underneath the bridge on both sides of the span. The most fascinating piece of rock art at Kachina Bridge, however, is the petroglyph of a dinosaur found to the right of the span, about ten feet up from the ground. This figure, which is carved into the rock, has a long, thick tail, a long neck, a wide midsection, and a small head. Any unbiased visitor to Kachina Bridge would have to admit that this particular petroglyph looks like a dinosaur—specifically an *Apatosaurus* (more popularly known as *Brontosaurus*).

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Interestingly, two distinguished rock-art experts have written about this particular petroglyph, and neither has suggested that it is a modern-day forgery. Francis Barnes, an evolutionist and widely recognized authority on rock art of the American Southwest, observed in 1979: “There is a petroglyph in Natural Bridges National Monument that bears a startling resemblance to a dinosaur, specifically a *Brontosaurus*, with long tail and neck, small head and all.” Barnes also pointed out that other animals, such as impalas, ostriches, and mammoths, are seen on rock-art panels in the southwest that either have been long extinct in the western hemisphere or were never thought to be here at all. More than 20 years later, evolutionary geologist Dennis Slifer wrote about this petroglyph in his *Guide to Rock Art of the Utah Region*.

At the base of Kachina Bridge are approximately one hundred elements, both petroglyphs and pictographs, dating from A.D. 700-1250. These include a series of red handprints and a large red butterfly-like figure, spirals, bighorn sheep, snake-like meandering lines, a white pictograph of a chain-like design, and some geometric petroglyphs.... One of the most curious designs is a petroglyph that resembles a dinosaur, which is apparently Anasazi origin based on its patination (2000, p. 105).

Following these comments, Slifer placed a diagram of the petroglyph in question—the diagram looks

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exactly like a dinosaur (specifically, some kind of large sauropod).

Both Barnes and Slifer know that the dinosaur petroglyph at Natural Bridges National Monument shows every sign of age. One can be sure that, if there were any orthodox way to explain it away, they would have attempted to do so. In fact, earlier in his book, Slifer did not hesitate to state his systematic objections to another particular piece of rock art that some have asserted is a pictograph of an extinct pterosaur (see pp. 59-63). The petroglyph at Kachina Bridge, however, was not, and could not, be explained away in any logical fashion.

### Rock Carving in Ancient Cambodian Temple

In A.D. 1186, King Jayavarman VII built a temple (near modern-day Phnom Pehn) to honor his mother. Beautiful stone statues and carvings decorate the walls and columns of the temple (known as Ta Prohm). Ornate carvings of monkeys, deer, lizards, parrots, swans, and water buffalo are only some of the animals depicted. On one particular 10-foot column in the temple is a carving of a stegosaurus. Why is a stegosaurus carving in an old temple a remarkable thing? Because the temple was built more than 600 years **before** we learned about dinosaurs from the fossil record. How would the individuals carving the temple have known what a stegosaurus looked like unless they had seen one, or someone had described it to them?

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### Ica Burial Stones

Javier Cabrera Darquea came into possession of his first burial stone (from the Ica section of the country of Peru) when he was given one as a paperweight for his birthday. Dr. Cabrera tried to find the origin of his unique gift, and eventually gathered over 11,000 of the stones. The rocks turned out to be ancient burial stones that the Indians had placed with their dead. Amazingly, several of the stones depicted specific types of dinosaurs (such as *Triceratops* and *Stegosaurus*) and various pterosaurs. The type of art form represented by these stones, and their location, dated them to around A.D. 500-1500. How could these ancient Indians have known how to draw these creatures if they never had seen them firsthand (or had them described by someone who had seen them)?

### DINOSAURS AND THE BIBLE

Although evolutionists are quick to discount anything that the Bible has to say about the coexistence of humans and dinosaurs, anyone who claims to be a Christian (and thus trusts the Bible to be God's revelation to man—2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21) must accept whatever information they find in the Bible to be accurate. In regard to the coexistence of humans and dinosaurs, many modern-day "Bible believers" either have rejected what the Bible has to say on the subject, or else they never have given it much thought in light of various Bible passages.

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According to the Scriptures, the whole of God's earthly creation was brought into existence within six days. Exodus 20:11 states: "For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and **all** that is in them, and rested the seventh day" (emp. added). This one verse should prove to the Christian that dinosaurs once lived with humans.

Exodus 20:11 simply summarizes the Creation account of Genesis chapter 1 wherein the reader learns what was created on each day of Creation. In Genesis 1, we find out that all animal life (whether sea creatures, land animals, or flying creatures) was created on days five and six of Creation—the sea creatures and flying animals on day five (Genesis 1:20-23) and land animals on day six (1:24-25). We also learn that God made the first humans, Adam and Eve, on day six (1:26-31). Thus, if all land animals were created on day six of Creation, and humans also were created on this day, then obviously humans and dinosaurs once lived as contemporaries.

### Why Isn't the Word "Dinosaur" Used in the Bible?

Admittedly, a person will not find the word dinosaur in most English translations of the Bible. However, this does not negate the fact that dinosaurs once cohabited the Earth with man. First, we must keep in mind that the Bible is not a taxonomical book. The Bible's main purpose is to tell us about God and His scheme of redemption, not to list every animal God created. The Bible mentions a **variety** of animals (including

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snakes, chickens, horses, goats, etc.), but not **every** animal. Simply because the Bible does not mention an animal does not mean that the Bible teaches the animal never existed alongside humans. There are many animals the Bible never specifically mentions, including kangaroos, elephants, aardvarks, anteaters, platypuses, and penguins. To say that these animals do not cohabit the Earth with man because the Bible does not mention them, would, of course, be false. To assume dinosaurs and humans never lived together on Earth because “the Bible doesn’t mention dinosaurs,” is equally erroneous.

Second, one must remember that whereas the Bible was completed 1,900 years ago and was translated into English fully by 1535 (by Miles Coverdale), the English word “dinosaur” was not coined until 1842—more than 300 years **after** the first complete English translation of the Old and New Testaments. Obviously, one would not expect to find the English term dinosaur—meaning “fearfully great” (*deinos*) “lizard” or “reptile” (*sauros*)—in a translation of the Bible that preceded its coinage.

Third, though most modern English Bible translators have elected to omit the term “dinosaur” in versions produced after 1842, such exclusion does not necessarily mean that Bible writers refrained from referring (either generally or specifically) to dinosaurs or dinosaur-like creatures. Consider the Hebrew term *tannin*. In Job 7:12, it is translated “sea monster” (ASV, NASB, RSV),



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“monster of the deep” (NIV), or “sea serpent” (NKJV). In Genesis 1:21 and Psalm 148:7 where the plural form of *tannin* is used (*tannim*) in literal contexts (like Job 7:12), the word is translated “great sea creatures/monsters” (NKJV, NIV; ASV, NASB, RSV). What are these “monsters” of the sea? No one knows for sure. It is possible that these are references to dinosaur-like, water-living reptiles (e.g., *Plesiosaurs*). Also of interest is the fact that Isaiah referred to the “flying serpent” (30:6). Although it is impossible to know the exact identity of the “flying serpent,” we do know that flying reptiles with long tails and slender bodies once lived (e.g., *Rhamphorhynchus*, *Dimorphodon*).

Even more impressive are the animals that God described in His second speech to Job in chapters 40-41: behemoth and leviathan. God described behemoth as having bones “like bars of bronze,...ribs like bars of iron” (vs. 18), and whose tail “moves...like a cedar” (vs. 17). This behemoth was “chief of the ways of God” (vs. 19, ASV). Leviathan had mighty power, an extremely strong neck, “terrible teeth all around,” tightly joined rows of scales that virtually were impenetrable, and a jagged underside that left pointed marks on the ground when it came up on land. Most impressive was its ability to expel “sparks of fire” from its mouth and “smoke” from its nose (41:18-21). Three possible explanations exist for the exact identity of behemoth and leviathan (of Job 40-41): (1) they are unreal, mythological monsters; (2) they

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are real animals that exist somewhere in the world today; or (3) they are some kind of real, yet extinct creature (e.g., dinosaurs). The biblical and scientific evidence makes it clear that the third choice is the most reasonable option (see Lyons, 2001, 21[1]:1-7 for more information on these creatures). Yet, sadly, as Henry Morris has observed:

Modern Bible scholars, for the most part, have become so conditioned to think in terms of the long ages of evolutionary geology that it never occurs to them that mankind once lived in the same world with the great animals that are now found only as fossils (1988, p. 115).

In truth, both reason and revelation testify to the one-time coexistence of dinosaurs and humans.

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### **DISCUSSION AREAS**

1. Explain how dinosaurs have been used to teach the General Theory of Evolution. Why do you think dinosaurs are icons of evolution?
2. If dinosaurs and humans once walked the Earth together, what types of evidence would humans likely have left behind?
3. What does the Bible have to say about dinosaurs? When does Scripture imply that they were created?
4. Discuss the animals that God described in Job 40-41.
5. Give some examples of ancient artwork of dinosaurs or dinosaur-like animals.
6. Explain why the term “dinosaur” was not used when the ancients talked about large terrestrial, aquatic, or flying reptiles. What have some evolutionists stated about dragon legends? Is it reasonable to conclude that “dragon legends” are stories of man’s actual interaction with dinosaurs? Why or why not?

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Shuker, Karl (1995), *Dragons: A Natural History* (New York: Simon & Schuster).

Slifer, Dennis (2000), *Guide to Rock Art of the Utah Region* (Santa Fe, NM: Ancient City Press).

Than, Ker (2007), "Top 10 Beasts and Dragons: How Reality Made Myth," *LiveScience.com*, [On-line], URL: [http://www.livescience.com/animals/top10\\_dragons.html](http://www.livescience.com/animals/top10_dragons.html).

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### RECOMMENDED READING

The following works are recommended as supplementary reading for those who want additional material on the coexistence of dinosaurs and humans:

Butt, Kyle and Eric Lyons (2005), *Truth Be Told: Exposing the Myth of Evolution* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).

Butt, Kyle and Eric Lyons (2008), *The Dinosaur Delusion: Dismantling Evolution's Most Cherished Icon* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).

# LESSON 7

## MAN AND THE AGE OF THE EARTH



According to evolution, man is a newcomer to planet Earth, far removed from the origin of the Universe. If the Universe was born 14 billion years ago, as many evolutionists, theistic evolutionists, and progressive creationists believe, man did not “come along” until about 13.996 billion years later. If such time were represented by one 24-hour day, and the alleged Big Bang occurred at 12:00 a.m., then man did not arrive on the scene until 11:59:58 p.m. Man’s allotted time during one 24-hour day would represent a measly two seconds.

If the Bible taught, either explicitly or implicitly, that man was so far removed from the origin of the Universe, a faithful, Bible-believing Christian would have no reservations accepting the above-mentioned timeline. Just as a Christian believes that God parted the Red Sea (Exodus 14), made an iron ax head float on water (2 Kings 6:5), and raised Jesus from the

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dead (Matthew 28:1-8), he would accept that humans appeared on Earth billions of years after the beginning of Creation—if that was what the Bible taught. The problem for theistic evolutionists and progressive creationists is that God’s Word never hints at such a timeline. In fact, it does the very opposite.

The Bible makes a clear distinction between things that took place **before** “the foundation of the world” and events that occurred **after** “the foundation of the world.” Jesus prayed to the Father on the night of His arrest and betrayal, saying: “You loved Me **before** the foundation of the world” (John 17:24, emp. added). Peter revealed in his first epistle how Jesus “was foreordained **before** the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” (1 Peter 1:20, emp. added). Paul informed the Christians in Ephesus how God “chose us in Him **before** the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love” (Ephesians 1:4, emp. added). **Before** “God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1), He was alive and well.

If theistic evolutionists and progressive creationists are correct, then man arrived on the scene, not **before** the foundation of the world (obviously), nor **soon after** the foundation of the world, but **eons later**—13.996 billion years later to be “precise.” This theory, however, blatantly contradicts Scripture.

Jesus taught that “the blood of all the prophets... was shed **from** (“**since**”—NASB) **the foundation**



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**of the world..., from the blood of Abel** to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple” (Luke 11:50-51, emp. added; cf. Luke 1:70). Not only did Jesus’ first-century enemies murder the prophets, but their forefathers had slain them as well, ever since the days of Abel. Observe that Jesus connected the time of one of the sons of Adam and Eve (the first couple on Earth, created on day six of Creation—Genesis 1:26-31) to the “foundation of the world.” This time is contrasted with the time of a prophet named Zechariah, whom, Jesus told His enemies, “**you** murdered between the temple and the altar” (Matthew 23:35, emp. added). Zechariah was separated from the days of Abel by thousands of years. His blood was not shed near the foundation of the world; Abel’s was. Certain early martyrs, including Abel, lived close enough to Creation for Jesus to say that their blood had been shed “from the foundation of the world.” If man arrived on the scene billions of years after the Earth was formed, and hundreds of millions of years after various living organisms such as fish, amphibians, and reptiles came into existence (as the evolutionary timeline affirms), how could Jesus’ statement make sense? Truly, man was not created eons after the beginning of the world. Rather, he has been here “from the foundation” of it.

On another occasion when Jesus’ antagonists approached Him, they questioned Him about the lawfulness of divorce. Jesus responded by saying, “But

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**from the beginning of the creation**, God made them male and female” (Mark 10:6, emp. added). According to Genesis 1 and 2, God made Adam and Eve on the sixth day of Creation (1:26-31; 2:7,21-25). Jesus referred to this very occasion and indicated that God made them “from the beginning of the creation.” Similar to the association of Abel’s day with “the foundation of the world,” the forming of Adam and Eve on day six of the Creation can be considered “from the beginning of the creation.”

In the epistle to the Christians in Rome, the apostle Paul also alluded to how long man has been on the Earth. He wrote: “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...” (Romans 1:20, emp. added). Who on Earth understands the eternal power and divine nature of God? Man. (NOTE: Although some might suggest that angels can understand God’s invisible attributes, the context of Romans 1:18-32 clearly refers to humans, not angels.) How long has man been aware of God and His invisible attributes? “Since the creation of the world.” How, then, could man logically have been “perceiving” or “understanding” God “**since** the creation of the world” (emp. added), if he is separated from the creation of “the heavens and the earth, the sea,” and so many of the animals (like trilobites, dinosaurs, and “early mammals”) by

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millions or billions of years? Such a scenario completely contradicts Scripture.

### THE DAY-AGE THEORY

Bible believers who desire to incorporate the long ages of evolutionary geology must find some way to fit billions of years into the biblical record. One popular theory concocted to add eons of time to the age of the Earth is the Day-Age Theory, which suggests that the days of Genesis 1 were not literal, 24-hour days, but lengthy periods of time (millions or billions of years). Is such a theory to be welcomed with open arms, or is there good reason to reject it?

The available evidence reveals several reasons why we can know that the days mentioned in Genesis 1 were the same kind of days we experience in the present age, and were not eons of time. First, whenever the Hebrew word for day (*yom*) is preceded by a numeral (in non-prophetic passages like Genesis 1), it **always** carries the meaning of a 24-hour day. The same occurs in the plural (cf. Exodus 20:11; 31:17). Just as Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for **three days** (and not 3,000 years), and just as the Israelites marched around Jericho once a day for **six days** (and not six long, vast periods of time), God created everything in “six days” (Exodus 20:11; 31:17), not six billion years.

Second, *yom* (day) is both used and defined in Genesis 1:5. The words “evening” and “morning” are

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used together in the Old Testament with the word *yom* over 100 times in non-prophetic passages, and each time they refer to a 24-hour day. Furthermore, if the “days” of Genesis 1:14, were “eons of time,” then what were the years? The word “years” can be understood correctly in this context only if the word “days” refers to normal days.

Third, if the “days” of Genesis were not days at all, but long evolutionary periods of time, then a problem arises in the field of botany. Vegetation came into existence on the third day (Genesis 1:9-13). If each day of Genesis 1 was a long geological age composed of one period of daylight and one period of darkness, how did plant life survive millions of years of total darkness? Also, how would the plants that depend on insects for pollination have survived the supposed millions or billions of years between “day” three and “day” five (when insects were created)? The Day-Age Theory collapses under a reasonable reading of Genesis 1.

### THE GAP THEORY

It often has been said, “The Bible is its own best interpreter.” When we do not understand something in one section of the Bible, frequently other passages in the Scriptures will clarify the “unclear” sections for us. Someone questioning the identity of the “seed” of Abraham, who would be a blessing to all nations (Genesis 22:18; cf. 26:4), can read Galatians 3:16 and

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learn that the “seed” mentioned in Genesis is Christ. If a person wanted to know what was involved in the water baptism Jesus and the apostles commanded, he could study Romans 6:4, Colossians 2:12, and Acts 8:38, and come to the correct conclusion that New Testament water baptism is a burial in water, and not the mere sprinkling of water on a person. Instead of approaching the Scriptures with the mindset of, “What do **I think** about...,” or “What do **you think** about...,” we first need to ask, “What does **the Bible** say about itself?” If there is one section of the Scriptures that we do not understand fully, we always should examine other passages in the Bible that deal with the same subject. Such is the case when we interpret what God “created” or “made” during the Creation week.

Some who read Genesis 1-2 have suggested that the Hebrew words translated “create” (Hebrew *bara*) and “make” (Hebrew *asah*) always mean entirely different things. They believe that *bara* means “to create,” while *asah* means “to re-create” or “to make over.” Thus, we are told that “God **created** the heavens and earth” in the beginning (vss. 1-2), and then supposedly billions of years later, He orchestrated a six-day “make over” (vss. 3-31). The problem with this theory (commonly known as the Gap Theory) is that the “explanatory notes” God has given us throughout the Old Testament concerning the events recorded in Genesis 1 reveal that the words “create” (*bara*) and “make/made” (*asah*) are used interchangeably in reference to the creation of

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the Universe and everything in it. They do not refer to two different events separated by billions of years.

Consider Exodus 20:11: “For in six days the Lord made [*asah*] the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day.” Gap theorists contend that this verse speaks only of God’s “re-forming” from something already in existence. Yet notice that the verse specifically speaks of the **heavens** and the **earth**—the very same things mentioned in Genesis 1:1. Notice also the psalmist’s commentary on Genesis 1:

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise Him in the heights! Praise Him, all His angels; praise Him, all His hosts! Praise Him, **sun** and **moon**; praise Him, all you **stars** of light! Praise Him, you heavens of heavens, and you waters above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the Lord, for He commanded and they were **created** (Psalm 148:1-5, emp. added).

The psalmist indicated that the Sun, Moon, and stars (among other things) were **created** (*bara*). Genesis 1:16 states: “God **made** (*asah*) two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He **made** (*asah*) the stars also.” When we “couple” Genesis 1:16 with Psalm 148:1-5, the only logical conclusion is that “to create” and “to make” refer to the same event—the making of heavenly bodies on the fourth day of Creation.

Consider what Nehemiah wrote concerning God’s creation:

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You alone are the Lord; You have made [*asah*] heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and everything on it, the seas and all that is in them, and You preserve them all. The host of heaven worships You (9:6, emp. added).

When Nehemiah wrote about some of the same events recorded in Psalm 148:1-5 and Genesis 1:1 [in which the word “created” (*bara*) was used], he employed the word “made” (*asah*).

What’s more, after surveying the Creation account, one finds that no distinction is made between God’s creating (*bara*) and His making (*asah*). These words are used 15 times in the first two chapters of Genesis in reference to God’s work. Genesis 1:21 states that God “created” (*bara*) the sea creatures and birds. Then in 1:25 we read where God “made” the animals of the Earth. Are we to believe that God created the birds and fish from nothing and then “refashioned” the land animals from materials he had made billions of years earlier? Preposterous! In Genesis 1:26-27 we read that God made (*asah*) man in His image. Yet, the very next verse says that He created (*bara*) him in His image. How can one assert (logically) that in these two verses “make” and “create” refer to completely different creations?

What does all of this prove, you may ask? It proves that we can know God created everything in six days—including the heavens and Earth mentioned in Genesis 1:1. The reason that some insist on the Hebrew words *bara* and *asah* having two different meanings when

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referring to God's creative acts is not because it is the most logical reading of the text (especially in light of other verses in the Bible), but because they are searching for a way to fit billions of years of alleged Earth history into the Bible, in order to accept the evolution-based geologic timetable.

### CONCLUSION

Gap theorists and Day-Age theorists who propose that billions of years of time preceded the creation of Adam and Eve need to give serious thought to the many Bible passages that teach otherwise. The Bible is not silent regarding our origins. God Almighty created the Universe (and everything in it) simply by speaking it into existence. He said, "Let there be light"; and there was light" (Genesis 1:3).

By **the word of the Lord** the heavens were made, and all the host of them **by the breath of His mouth**... Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For **He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast** (Psalm 33:6,8-9, emp. added).

The same God Who turned water into wine in a moment of time (without dependence on time-laden naturalistic processes such as photosynthesis; John 2:1-11), "the God Who does wonders" (Psalm 77:14), spoke the Universe into existence in six days.

Had God chosen to do so, He could have spent six billion years, six million years, or six thousand years creating the world. Had He given **any** indication in His



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Word that He used lengthy amounts of time—millions or billions of years—in order for naturalistic processes to take over during Creation, we could understand why Christians would believe such. However, God has done the very opposite. First, He revealed that the heavens and the Earth are the effects of supernatural causes (thus contradicting the General Theory of Evolution). Second, He gave us the sequence of events that took place, which further contradicts evolution theory (e.g., the Sun and stars were created after the Earth, not before—Genesis 1:14-19; birds were created before dinosaurs, not after—Genesis 1:20-23). What’s more, He told us **exactly** how long He spent creating. The first chapter of Genesis reveals that from the creation of the heavens and the Earth to the creation of man, He spent six days. On two occasions in the very next book of the Bible, He reminds us that the Creation took place not over six eons of time, but over six days: “For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day” (Exodus 20:11; cf. 31:17). He then further impressed on Bible readers that man is not 14 billion years younger than the origin of the Universe by referring to him as being on the Earth (1) “from the **beginning** of the creation” (Mark 10:6), (2) “**since** the creation of the world” (Romans 1:20), and (3) “**from** the foundation of the world” (Luke 11:50).

If God **did** create everything in six literal days, and expected us to believe such, what else would He have

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needed to say than what He said? How much clearer would He have needed to make it? And, if it does not matter what we think about the subject, why did He reveal to us the sequence of events to begin with?

Truly, just as God has spoken clearly on a number of subjects that various “believers” have distorted (e.g., the worldwide Noahic Flood, the return of Christ, etc.), the Bible plainly teaches that God, by the word of His mouth, spoke the Universe and everything in it into existence in six days.

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### **DISCUSSION AREAS**

1. According to evolution, how much time elapsed between the origin of the Universe and the origin of man? What do Bible verses such as Luke 11:50-51, Mark 10:6, and Romans 1:20 indicate about man's proximity to the beginning of Creation?
2. Discuss Luke 11:50-51. How long has the prophets' blood been shed? Did Jesus believe that Abel was far removed from the Creation? Explain.
3. List several reasons why we can know that the days mentioned in Genesis 1 were the same kind of days that we experience in the present age, and were not eons of time.
4. What is the Gap Theory? Does this theory contradict Scripture? Explain.
5. Does the Bible teach that God used time-laden evolution to "make" everything over a period of billions of years? Explain.
6. Why do you think many Christians have accepted the Day-Age Theory or the Gap Theory?

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The following works are recommended as supplementary reading for those who want additional material on the age of the Earth:

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Fields, Weston W. (1976), *Unformed and Unfilled* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker).

Jackson, Wayne (2003), *Creation, Evolution, and the Age of the Earth* (Stockton, CA: Courier Publications).

# LESSON 8

## THE BIBLE: INSPIRED OF GOD



As we saw in lesson two, there is a principle called the Law of the Excluded Middle. Simply stated, it is this: a thing either must be, or not be. A line is either straight, or it is not. There is no middle position. Applied to the Bible, one might therefore declare: **The Scriptures are either inspired of God, or they are not inspired of God.** If the writings of the Bible are not inspired of God, they are the mere productions of men, and as such would merit no religious respect; in fact, in view of their exalted claims, they would warrant only contempt.

Paul, an apostle of Christ, wrote: “Every scripture is inspired of God, and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The Bible asserts its own inspiration—of this there is no doubt. But **to what extent** does the sacred

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volume claim inspiration? This is a question that has perplexed many.

### SOME POPULAR, BUT FALSE THEORIES

Some have suggested that the Bible is “inspired” only in the sense that other great literary productions are inspired. That is, they all are simply the results of **natural genius**, characteristic of men of unusual ability. Such a notion must be rejected immediately for: (a) it makes liars of the biblical writers who claimed the **Holy Spirit** as the ultimate source of their documents (2 Samuel 23:2; Acts 1:16), and; (b) it leaves unexplained the mystery of why modern man, with his accumulated learning, has not been able to produce a comparable volume which has the capacity to make the Bible obsolete.

Others have claimed that only certain portions of the Scriptures are inspired of God. We often hear it said, for example, that those sections of the Bible that deal with faith and morals are inspired, but other areas, particularly those accounts that contain certain miraculous elements, are merely the productions of good, though superstitious and fallible, men. Again, however, such a concept is not consistent with the declarations of the divine writers. They extended inspiration to every area of the Scriptures, even emphasizing, in many instances, those very sections that modernists characterize as non-historical, mythical,

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etc. See, for example, Matthew 12:39,40; 19:4ff.; Luke 4:27; John 3:14,15.

Too, the allegation has been made that the Bible is inspired in “sense,” but not in “sentence.” By that, it is meant that in some sense the Scriptures are of divine origin, but that the actual **words** of the Holy Book are not to be construed as inspired. Such a view is nonsensical. If the words of the sacred narrative are not inspired, **what is inspired?** Is the binding? The paper? The ink? The truth is, **if the words of the Bible are not inspired of God, then the Bible contains no inspiration at all!**

### VERBAL INSPIRATION

What do we mean when we speak of the “verbal inspiration” of the Holy Scriptures? Noted scholar Frank E. Gaebelin declares that a sound view of inspiration holds that “the original documents of the Bible were written by men, who, though permitted the exercise of their own personalities and literary talents, yet wrote under the control and guidance of the Spirit of God, the result being in every word of the original documents a perfect and errorless recording of the exact message which God desired to give to man” (1950, p. 9). In his classic work, *Theopneustia—The Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*, L. Glaussen, Professor of Systematic Theology, Oratoire, Geneva, defined inspiration as “that inexplicable power which the Divine Spirit put forth of old on the authors of

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holy Scripture, in order to their guidance even in the employment of the words they used, and to preserve them alike from all error and from all omission” (n.d., p. 34).

Let us take a closer look at 2 Timothy 3:16. The Greek text says: *pasa graphe theopneustos*—“all scripture [is] God-breathed.” Something within this context is said to be “God-breathed.” What is it? All **Scripture!** The term “scripture” [*graphe*] denotes that which is **written**. But it is the **words** of the biblical text that are written; hence, **the very words of the Bible are God-breathed!** No one can appeal to 2 Timothy 3:16 as an evidence of Bible inspiration without, at the same time, introducing the concept of **verbal** inspiration. The truth is, the doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures is abundantly claimed throughout the sacred canon. Consider the following examples.

**1)** More than 3,800 times in the Old Testament, the claim is made that the Scriptures are the **word** [or **words**] of God. For instance, “And Jehovah **said** unto Moses, **Write this** for a memorial in a book...” (Exodus 17:14). David declared: “The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, and **his word** was upon my tongue” (2 Samuel 23:2). God instructed the prophet Jeremiah, “Behold, I have put **my words** in your mouth” (Jeremiah 1:9). The Scriptures are exalted as the Word of God some 175 times in Psalm 119 alone!

**2)** Jesus Christ certainly endorsed the concept of verbal inspiration. He affirmed that neither “one jot



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nor one tittle” would pass away from the law “until all things be accomplished” (Matthew 5:17,18). The jot was the smallest Hebrew letter, and the tittle was a tiny projection on certain Hebrew characters. Professor A.B. Bruce has noted: “Jesus expresses here in the strongest manner His conviction that the whole Old Testament is a Divine revelation, and that therefore every minutest precept has religious significance...” (1956, 1:104). The Lord frequently made arguments based upon the text of the Old Testament, wherein He stressed very precise grammatical points. His argument for the resurrection from the dead in Matthew 22:32 depends upon the present tense form of a verb—“**I am** [not “was”] the God of Abraham....”

Within the same context, Christ quoted Psalm 110:1, showing that David, speaking in the Spirit, said, “The Lord said unto my Lord...” (Matthew 22:41ff.). Again, the emphasis is on a single word. Jesus (affirming His own deity) asked the Pharisees why David referred to his own descendant, the promised Messiah, as **Lord**. Not recognizing the dual nature of the Messiah (i.e., as man, He was David’s offspring; as deity, He was David’s Lord), they were unable to answer. Had Christ not believed in the inspired words of the Old Testament, He could hardly have reasoned as He did (see also John 10:30ff.).

**3)** Jesus promised His apostles that the words of their gospel declaration would be given them. He told them: “But when they deliver you up, be not anxious

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how or what you shall speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what you shall speak” (Matthew 10:19). And, note Luke’s parallel that they were not to “meditate beforehand” how to answer their antagonists (Luke 21:14). That has to involve their actual words!

**4)** It is obvious that the penmen of Scripture were conscious of the fact that they were recording the words of God. Paul wrote: “I received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you” (1 Corinthians 11:23). Again, “This we say unto you by the word of the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:15). “When you received from us the word of the message, even **the word of God**, you accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also works in you that believe” (1 Thessalonians 2:13). When Philip preached in Samaria, those people to whom he spoke had heard “the word of God” (Acts 8:14).

In a remarkable passage, Paul asked: “For who among men knows the things of a man, except the spirit of the man, which is in him?” He means this: one cannot know what is in my mind until I, by my words, reveal to him what I am thinking. That is the apostle’s illustration. Here is his point. “...Even so the things of God no one knows, except the Spirit of God...which things [i.e., the things of God] we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches, but which the Spirit teaches; combining spiritual things with spiritual words” (1 Corinthians 2:11-13). There

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is not a more comprehensive statement of verbal inspiration to be found anywhere in the holy writings. The mind of God has been made known by means of the inspired words of those representatives whom He chose for that noble task.

**5)** The biblical writers considered one another's productions to be inspired of God. In 1 Timothy 5:18, Paul writes: "For the **scripture** saith, You shall not muzzle the ox when he treads out the corn. And, The laborer is worthy of his hire." In this passage, the apostle has combined Deuteronomy 25:4 and Luke 10:7, and classified them both as "scripture." Similarly, Peter refers to Paul's epistles as "scripture" in 2 Peter 3:15,16.

### MECHANICAL DICTATION—A STRAW MAN

Whenever you hear someone accusing advocates of **verbal inspiration** of believing in "mechanical dictation," most likely you are dealing with a theological liberal! The notion of "mechanical dictation" [i.e., that the Bible writers were only recorders or typewriters, hence, their cultural and personality factors did not enter into their works] is not taught by many conservative Bible scholars. Certainly, Paul's writings differ in style from those of John, etc. But that does not negate the fact that after God used the individual writers of Scripture, in the final process, only the exact words that **He** wanted in the text appear there!

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### HAS TRANSMISSION DESTROYED INSPIRATION?

“But suppose,” someone wonders, “the Bible **was** verbally inspired initially. Hasn’t the transmission of the text across the centuries caused a corruption of the original documents, so that the original inspiration has been virtually destroyed?” Not at all. The text of the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, has been remarkably preserved. For example, after many years of scientific research in connection with the text of the Old Testament, Professor Robert Dick Wilson, who was proficient in 45 languages, could state that “we are **scientifically certain** that we have substantially the same text that was in the possession of Christ and the apostles...” (1929, p. 8).

Evidence for the textual reliability of the New Testament is no less impressive. Scholars are now in possession of some 5,700+ Greek manuscripts (in part or in whole) of the New Testament, and some of these date to the early part of the second century A.D. (see Welte, 2005). It has been estimated that textual variations concern only about 1/1000th part of the entire text (Gregory, 1907, p. 528). Transmission, therefore, has not destroyed verbal inspiration (for further discussion, see Jackson, 1982, pp. 60ff.).

### DOES TRANSLATION AFFECT INSPIRATION?

Since the Holy Scriptures were originally penned in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, and have since been translated into many languages, some are concerned

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that the translation process has destroyed the Bible's initial inspiration. But there is no need for concern over this matter so long as **accurate** translation is effected. When a word is translated precisely from one language into another, the same thought or idea is conveyed; thus, the same message is received.

That translation need not affect inspiration is evinced by an appeal to the New Testament itself. In the 3rd-2nd centuries B.C., the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek. This version, which was begun in Alexandria, Egypt, is known as the Septuagint. Note this interesting fact: Jesus Christ Himself, and His inspired New Testament writers, frequently **quoted from the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament Scriptures!** For example, in Matthew 22:32, Christ quotes from the Septuagint (Exodus 3:6), and of that passage says, "have ye not **read** that which was **spoken unto you by God?**" (22:31). The translation from Hebrew to Greek thus did not alter the fact that the message was the **Word of God!**

It might also be observed in this connection that scholars generally agree that the Septuagint is not as reliable a translation as is the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. Yet in spite of this, the New Testament frequently quotes it. However, as one author observes, "the writers of the New Testament appear to have been so careful to give the true sense of the Old Testament, that they forsook the Septuagint version whenever it did not give that sense..." (Horne, 1841,

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1:312). The fact is, when a New Testament writer was quoting from the Greek Old Testament, the Holy Spirit sometimes led him to slightly alter the phraseology to give a more accurate sense. Thus, inspiration was still preserved though a less-than-perfect translation was being used.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Scriptures are the verbally inspired Word of God. This view has been entertained by reverent students of the Holy Writings for multiplied centuries. Fritz Rienecker noted that the Jewish “rabbinical teaching was that the Spirit of God rested on and in the prophets and spoke through them so that their words did not come from themselves, but from the mouth of God and they spoke and wrote in the Holy Spirit. The early church was in entire agreement with this view” (1980, 2:301).

Let us therefore exalt the Holy Scriptures as the living Word of God (Hebrews 4:12), and acknowledge them as the only authoritative source of religious guidance.

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### DISCUSSION AREAS

1. Cite an example showing that the translation process, if accurate, does not destroy the initial inspiration of the Scriptures.
2. Discuss the significance of the Greek term *graphe* as it relates to the question of inspiration.
3. Give some examples to illustrate the **degree** to which Jesus Christ acknowledged the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.
4. If one argues that the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God, but rarely seriously studies the Book, what would this suggest?
5. Do you feel there is less Bible knowledge now than in the past generation? Please explain why you feel that your answer is correct.
6. Discuss some of the alleged “mythical” or “nonhistorical” sections of the Old Testament in light of the Lord’s comments on these passages.
7. Discuss some of the ways that Christians today could help to re-establish the public’s faith in the divine origin of the Bible.

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# LESSON 9

## THE BIBLE: ITS UNITY & ACCURACY



That the Bible claims to be inspired is easily seen by anyone who takes the time to examine its text. The fact that such a claim is made, would not of itself, of course, guarantee that the claim is genuine. Other documents assert inspiration (e.g., *The Book of Mormon*), yet are clearly impious frauds. The question, therefore, is this: is there sufficient evidence to warrant the conclusion that the Bible is, in fact, a volume of **divine origin**? There is, and it is to such evidence that the reader's attention is now directed.

### THE UNITY OF THE SCRIPTURES

Do you think that it seems **reasonably possible** that forty men, from varying backgrounds, and scattered across more than a thousand years in time, could have designed some 66 metal components which accidentally came together to form a precision machine that revolutionized the world? Impossible!

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Exactly—**from the human vantage point!** But that is precisely the kind of thing that happened in the case of the Bible.

The sacred Scriptures were written by some 40 different persons, over a span of approximately 1,600 years. These authors, from a variety of cultural and educational backgrounds, writing in three different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek), produced a volume of 66 books that is characterized by such an amazing unity and beautiful continuity as to be inexplicable on the basis of merely **human origin**.

For example, from Genesis to Revelation there is a marvelous unfolding of the general theme of man's fall from his holy estate, God's plan for his redemption (as carefully worked out across the centuries), the atoning death of Jesus Christ, and the ultimate victory of the Christian system. No serious student of this matter can fail to be awed by this vast body of consistent evidence, which can argue only for an inspired document.

Moreover, there are countless thousands of instances of minute agreement between the biblical writers in matters of history, culture, geography, biography, etc., for which there is absolutely no explanation save that there was a **divine oversight** involved in the production. Those who would explore this point further are encouraged to study J.J. Blunt's *Undesigned Coincidences in the Writings Both of the Old and New Testament* (London, 1884), and William

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Paley's "Horae Paulinae" in *The Works of William Paley* (Edinburgh, 1839).

### THE FLAWLESS ACCURACY OF THE BIBLE

If the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God, one ought to expect it to be absolutely accurate in the various areas of subject matter upon which it touches. Works that are strictly human—no matter how scholarly or painstaking the authors—are always characterized by unintentional mistakes which reveal fallibility. For example, when the historian Tacitus penned his *History and Description of Germany*, it was flawed with so many errors that modern scholars are shocked. When the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* was first published, it contained so many mistakes regarding places in America that the publishers of the *New American Cyclopaedia* issued a special pamphlet exposing the blunders of its rival!

The Bible, though, is always amazingly accurate in its historical and geographical details. For example, biblical evidence indicates that Moses authored the Pentateuch (Exodus 17:14; Joshua 1:7; Mark 12:26). This is confirmed by Josephus (*Against Apion*, 1,8), and a number of pagan writers. Hecataeus, Manetha, Lysimachus, Eupolemus, Tacitus, Juvenal, and Longinus all credit Moses with the laws that distinguished the Jews from other nations (see Rawlinson, 1877, pp. 254ff.). Critics once scoffed at the mention of the Hittites in the biblical narratives [supposedly

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they never existed] (Genesis 23:10; 26:34), but the archaeological discoveries at ancient Boghazkoy (in Turkey) have exploded that criticism and confirmed the “authenticity of the ‘background material’ of the Old Testament” (*Bulletin...*, 1953, 129:18).

In the late 1800s, Sir William Ramsay, a scholar who was skeptical of the authenticity of the Book of Acts, set out upon an archaeological expedition in Asia Minor with the declared intention of **disproving** the historicity and accuracy of Luke’s narrative. After years of research, literally digging up the evidence, Ramsay was forced to conclude that Acts was historically accurate. In Acts, Luke mentions 32 countries, 54 cities, and nine Mediterranean islands. He also mentions 95 persons, 62 of whom are not named elsewhere in the New Testament. And his references, where checkable, are always correct. This is truly remarkable in view of the fact that the political/territorial situation of his day was in a state of almost constant flux. How does one account for Luke’s precision? Inspiration!

In his monumental work, *Lands of the Bible* (1881), J.W. McGarvey included a chapter entitled, “An Argument from the Agreement of the Land and the Book.” Therein he states: “A fictitious narrative, located in a country with which the writer is not personally familiar, must either avoid local allusions or be found frequently in conflict with the peculiarities of place and of manners and customs. By this conflict the

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fictitious character of the narrative is exposed” (p. 375). McGarvey goes on to observe that there are hundreds of instances in which the Bible can be checked for accuracy in such matters. For example, are the Scriptures always topographically correct, or are compass references accurate? Is Egypt “down” from Jericho (Joshua 7:2)? Is the way from Jerusalem to Gaza “south” of Samaria (Acts 8:26)? Is Bethel really “west” of Ai (Genesis 12:8)? McGarvey points out that “in not a single instance of this kind has any of the Bible writers been found at fault” (p. 378). In concluding his profoundly impressive argument, the author asks: “How could they [the Bible writers] have done what learned and careful men of their own age and of subsequent ages have failed to do, unless they were guided, as they claim to have been, by wisdom from on high?” (p. 386).

### PROPHECY

The prophet Isaiah based the credibility of his message on the validity of **predictive prophecy**. To the promoters of idolatry in his day, he issued a challenge: “Let them bring them forth, and declare unto us **what shall happen**: declare ye the former things, what they are, that we may consider them, and **know the latter end of them**; or show us the things to come” (Isaiah 41:22). He is asking this: “You, who claim to speak revelations in the name of your gods, does subsequent **history** corroborate

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your predictions?” What of the Bible? Does it pass the prophecy test?

Exactly what is predictive prophecy? Thomas H. Horne declared that it is “a miracle of knowledge, a declaration or representation of something future, beyond the power of human sagacity to discern or to calculate” (1872, 1:119). In order for prophecy to be valid, it must involve: (a) Proper timing, i.e., significantly preceding the fulfillment; (b) Specific details—not vague generalities or remote possibilities; (c) Exact fulfillment—not merely a high degree of probability. Consistent with these standards, the prophecies of the Bible come through with flying colors!

**1) NATIONS.** As God’s plan of redemption was unfolding, numerous prophecies were given regarding the rise, decline, and fall of various nations. For example: (a) Israel’s history is vividly portrayed in Deuteronomy 28:47-68. Study this narrative carefully and compare it with history. (b) When Israel became deeply involved in idolatry, Isaiah foretold that the Lord would raise up the Assyrians, as the “rod of [His] anger” to punish them (Isaiah 10:5,6), but, after that was accomplished, Jehovah announced, the Assyrians themselves would be destroyed (10:12,24,25). History reveals that this is exactly what happened (2 Kings 17:24; 18:13). (c) When the kingdom of Judah lapsed into a state of spiritual decay, the prophets announced that Babylon would arise to punish her (Jeremiah 25:9-11; Habakkuk 1:5) and to captivate her for 70 years



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(Jeremiah 25:11,12). The history of those events is available for all who care to read it (2 Kings 24,25; 2 Chronicles 36:21). (d) But even mighty Babylon, “the glory of kingdoms,” was to be destroyed by the Medes and Persians (Isaiah 13), and, as every school boy knows, that is precisely what happened (Daniel 5:28). Numerous other Old Testament examples complement the foregoing.

**2) PEOPLE.** In 2 Kings 18:13, we are informed that Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, came up against the fortified cities of Judah and took them [Assyrian records indicate that 46 cities were captured]. It was prophesied, however, that he **would not be able to take the city of Jerusalem** (2 Kings 19:32-34). Sennacherib’s forces came to Jerusalem—his annals boast that he shut up Judah’s king, Hezekiah, “like a bird in a cage” (Pritchard, 1955, p. 288)—but **for some unexplained reason** the city was never taken! [In a visit to the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago, where a prism recording Sennacherib’s exploits is housed, this writer [WJ] was amused at the guide’s puzzlement as to why the king never took Jerusalem. The Bible tells us. God destroyed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night (2 Kings 19:35ff.)!] It was further foretold that the Assyrian king would return to his own land and there fall by the sword (2 Kings 19:7). Some 20 years later, he was assassinated by his own sons, who smote him with the sword, while he was worshipping in his pagan temple (Isaiah 37:37,38).

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Or what of the good king Josiah? His work was foretold (and he was called by name) more than **300 years** before it was fulfilled (1 Kings 13:2; 2 Kings 23:15,16). The ministry of king Cyrus of Persia (also called by name) was prophesied more than a century and a half before the monarch was born (Isaiah 44:28; 45:1). It is on account of such remarkable prophecies that liberal critics want to re-date the books of the Bible at a very late period!

### MESSIANIC PROPHECY

Sidney Collett declares that of the approximately 800 prophecies in the Old Testament, no less than **333** center in the person of Jesus Christ (n.d., p. 192). The panorama of prophecy regarding the Son of God is nothing short of miraculous, and is a demanding evidence for Bible inspiration. For example, there are prophecies about:

**A) His Lineage**—He would be born of woman (Genesis 3:15; Galatians 4:4); of the seed of Abraham (Genesis 22:18; Luke 3:34); of the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10; Hebrews 7:14); of the royal lineage of David (2 Samuel 7:12; Luke 1:32); and to the virgin Mary (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:22).

**B) The Time of His Coming**—Christ was to appear during the days of the Roman reign (Daniel 2:44; Luke 2:1); while Judah still possessed her own king (Genesis 49:10; Matthew 2:22). He would be killed some 490 years after the command to restore

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Jerusalem at the end of the Babylonian captivity [457 B.C.], i.e., in A.D. 30. (Daniel 9:24ff.). [NOTE: For additional documentation and discussion of this material, see Jackson, 1997.]

**C) His Nature**—Jesus was to be both human and divine. Though born, He was eternal (Micah 5:2; John 1:1,14); though a man, He was Jehovah’s “fellow” (Zechariah 13:7; John 10:30; Philippians 2:6). He was to be gentle and compassionate in His dealing with people (Isaiah 42:1-4; Matthew 12:15-21). He was to be perfectly submissive to His heavenly Father (Psalm 40:8; Isaiah 53:11; John 8:29; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22).

**D) His Betrayal, Death, Resurrection**—It was foretold that the Lord would be betrayed by a friend (Psalm 41:9) for 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12). He was (John 13:18; Matthew 26:15). He would be spit upon and beaten (Isaiah 50:6), and in death His hands and feet would be pierced (Psalm 22:16). This is precisely what happened (Matthew 27:30; Luke 24:39). Though He would be killed, yet, amazingly, His flesh would not experience corruption, but He would be raised from the grave (Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:22ff.).

These are but a sampling of the more than 300 prophecies relating to the Lord Jesus Christ. In his interesting book, *Science Speaks*, mathematician Peter W. Stoner selected just eight of the Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ and estimated that the odds of these being **accidentally fulfilled** are

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approximately 1 in  $10^{17}$  (that's one followed by 17 zeros). He then illustrated it in the following fashion.

Suppose we take  $10^{17}$  silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state 2 feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? (1963, pp. 106-107).

### CONCLUSION

T.H. Horne was correct when he wrote: "The book which contains these predictions is stamped with the seal of heaven: a rich vein of evidence runs through the volume of the Old Testament; the Bible is true; infidelity is confounded forever; and we may address its patrons in the language of Saint Paul, 'Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish!'" (1872, 1:126).

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### **DISCUSSION AREAS**

1. Discuss the criteria of genuine prophecy. How does this compare with the “prophetic” utterances of some of today’s “seers” (for example, Jean Dixon “prophesied” that the Russians would be the first nation to land a man on the moon)?
2. How does one approach the lost soul who does not even believe that the Bible is inspired of God? Read Paul’s presentation to the Greeks in Acts 17. Did he quote from the Old Testament? Why not? What approach did he use?
3. If the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God, shouldn’t we expect it to be accurate in every area of human knowledge upon which it touches? Can you give some examples of biblical accuracy in various fields of knowledge—history, geography, science, psychology, etc.?
4. Some claim that the Bible is not inspired because it contains contradictions. Do you know how to correctly define a “contradiction”? Is a “difference” necessarily a “contradiction”? Explain.
5. Since there are so many Old Testament prophecies concerning Jesus, and since the Jews do believe that the Old Testament is the Word of God, why do you suppose that by and large they have rejected the Lord? Study 2 Corinthians 3.
6. Discuss the possibility of true predictive prophecy in the light of Isaiah 46:9,10. Does God’s foreknowledge of a matter cancel man’s freedom of will?

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# LESSON 10

## SCIENTIFIC FOREKNOWLEDGE AND THE BIBLE



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

That the first five books of the Old Testament are a product of Moses is a matter of historical record (Lyons, et al., 2003). Furthermore, the story of Moses' education among the Egyptian culture was well understood. In fact, even those Jews who did not

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convert to Christianity were so familiar with the historic fact that Moses was educated in “all the wisdom of the Egyptians” (Acts 7:22), that Stephen’s statement to that effect went completely undisputed. Moses had been trained under the most advanced Egyptian educational system of his day. With such training, it would have been only natural for Moses to include some of the Egyptian “wisdom” in his writings if he were composing the Pentateuch by using his own prowess and mental faculties.

A look into the medical practices from ancient Egypt and those found in the Pentateuch, however, reveals that Moses did not necessarily rely on “wisdom” of the Egyptians (which, in many cases, consisted of life-threatening malpractice). While some medical practices in the Pentateuch are similar to those found in ancient Egyptian documents, the Pentateuch exhibits a conspicuous absence of those harmful malpractices that plague the writings of the Egyptians. Moses penned the most advanced, flawless medical prescriptions that had ever been recorded. Furthermore, every statement recorded by Moses that pertained to the health and medical well-being of the Israelite nation could theoretically still be implemented and be completely in accord with every fact modern medicine has learned in regard to germ spreading, epidemic disease control, communal sanitation, and a host of other medical and scientific discoveries.

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The Egyptians were renowned in the ancient world for their progress in the field of medicine. Dr. Massengill noted that “Egypt was the medical center of the ancient world” (1943, p. 13). During the days of the Medo-Persian Empire, the ancient historian Herodotus recorded that it was king Darius’ practice “to keep in attendance certain Egyptian doctors, who had a reputation for the highest eminence in their profession” (3.129). Thus, while the medical practices of the Bible could be equally compared to those of other ancient cultures and found to be flawlessly superior, comparing them to that of the eminent Egyptian culture should suffice to manifest the Bible’s supernatural superiority in the field.

### **It Will Cure You—If It Doesn’t Kill You First**

Among the ancient documents that detail much of the Egyptian medicinal knowledge, the Ebers Papyrus ranks as one of the foremost sources. This papyrus was discovered in 1872 by a German Egyptologist named Georg Ebers (the name from which the papyrus acquired its moniker) (Bryan, 1930, p. 1). It consists of a host of medical remedies purported to heal, enhance, and prevent. “Altogether 811 prescriptions are set forth in the Papyrus, and they take the form of salves, plasters, and poultices; snuffs, inhalations, and gargles; draughts, confections, and pills; fumigations, suppositories, and enemata” (p. 15). Among the hundreds of prescriptions in the papyrus, there are disgusting treatments that caused much more harm

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than good. For instance, under a section titled “What to do to draw out splinters in the flesh,” a remedy is prescribed consisting of worm blood, mole, and donkey dung (p. 73). [NOTE: Doctors S.I. McMillen and David Stern note that dung “is loaded with tetanus spores” and “a simple splinter often resulted in a gruesome death from lockjaw” (2000, p. 10).] Remedies to help heal skin diseases included such prescriptions as: “A hog’s tooth, cat’s dung, dog’s dung, aau-of-samu-oil, berries-of-the-xet-plant, pound and apply as poultice” (Bryan, 1930, p. 92).

As medical doctor S.E. Massengill stated:

The early Egyptian physicians made considerable use of drugs. Their drugs were of the kind usually found in early civilizations; a few effective remedies lost in a mass of substances of purely superstitious origin. They used opium, squill, and other vegetable substances, but also excrement and urine. It is said that the urine of a faithful wife was with them effective in the treatment of sore eyes (1943, p. 15).

In addition, it seems that the Egyptians were among the first to present the idea of “good and laudable pus” (McMillen and Stern, 2000, p. 10). Due to the idea that infection was good and the pus that resulted from it was a welcomed effect, “well-meaning doctors killed millions by deliberately infecting their wounds” (p. 10). Needless to say, the modern-day reader would not want to be a patient in an ancient Egyptian clinic!

### PRESCRIPTIONS IN THE PENTATEUCH

The first five books of the Old Testament, admittedly, are not devoted entirely to the enumeration of medical prescriptions. They are not ancient medical textbooks. These books do, however, contain numerous regulations for sanitation, quarantine, and other medical procedures that were to govern the daily lives of the Israelite nation. Missing entirely from the pages of these writings are the harmful remedies and ingredients prescribed by other ancient civilizations. In fact, the Pentateuch exhibits an understanding of germs and disease that “modern” medicine did not grasp for 3,500 years after the books were written.

#### Germes, Labor Fever, and Biblical Sanitation

In their book, *None of These Diseases*, physicians S.I. McMillen and David Stern discussed how many of the hygienic rules established by God for the children of Israel still are applicable today. To illustrate their point, they recounted the story of Ignaz Semmelweis.

In 1847, an obstetrician named Ignaz Semmelweis was the director of a hospital ward in Vienna, Austria. Many pregnant women checked into his ward, but 18% of them never checked out. One out of every six who received treatment in Semmelweis’ ward died of labor fever (Nuland, 2003, p. 31). Autopsies revealed pus under their skin, in their chest cavities, in their eye sockets, etc. Semmelweis was distraught over the mortality rate in his ward, and other hospital wards

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like it all over Europe. Nuland noted that Australia, the Americas, Britain, Ireland, and practically every other nation that had established a hospital suffered a similar mortality rate (2003, pp. 41-43). If a woman delivered a baby using a midwife, then the death fell to only about 3%. Yet if she chose to use the most advanced medical knowledge and facilities of the day, her chance of dying skyrocketed immensely!

Semmelweis tried everything to curb the carnage. He turned all the women on their sides in hopes that the death rate would drop, but with no results. He thought the bell that the priest rang late in the evenings might be scaring the women, so he made the priest enter silently, yet without any drop in death rates.

As he contemplated his dilemma, he watched young medical students perform their routine tasks. Each day the students would perform autopsies on the dead mothers. Then they would rinse their hands in a bowl of bloody water, wipe them off on a common, shared towel, and immediately begin internal examinations of the still-living women. Nuland commented concerning the practice: "Because there seemed no reason for them to wash their hands, except superficially, or change their clothing before coming to the First Division, they did neither" (2003, p. 100). As a twenty-first-century observer, one is appalled to think that such practices actually took place in institutes of what was at the time "modern science." What doctor in

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his right mind would touch a dead person and then perform examinations on living patients—without first employing some sort of minimal hygienic practices intended to kill germs? But to Europeans in the middle-nineteenth-century, germs were virtually a foreign concept. They never had seen a germ, much less been able to predict its destructive potential. According to many of their most prevalent theories, disease was caused by “atmospheric conditions” or “cosmic telluric influences.”

Semmelweis ordered everyone in his ward to wash his or her hands thoroughly in a chlorine solution after every examination. In three months, the death rate fell from 18% to 1%. Semmelweis had made an amazing discovery. On the inside cover-flap of the book about Semmelweis, written by medical doctor and historian Sherwin Nuland, the text reads:

Ignác Semmelweis is remembered for the now-commonplace notion that doctors must wash their hands before examining patients. In mid-nineteenth-century Vienna, this was a subversive idea. With deaths from childbed fever exploding, Semmelweis discovered that doctors themselves were spreading the disease (2003, inside cover flap).

Had Semmelweis made a groundbreaking discovery, or is it possible that he simply “rediscovered” what had been known in some circles for many years? Almost 3,300 years before Semmelweis lived, Moses had written: “He who touches the dead body of anyone shall be unclean seven days. He shall purify himself

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with the water on the third day and on the seventh day; then he will be clean. But if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not be clean.” Germs were no new discovery in 1847; the biblical text recorded measures to check their spread as far back as approximately 1500 B.C.

### Quarantine

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

Concerning such quarantine practices, S.E. Massengill wrote in his book *A Sketch of Medicine and Pharmacy*:



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In the prevention of disease, however, the ancient Hebrews made real progress. The teachings of Moses, as embodied in the Priestly Code of the Old Testament, contain two clear conceptions of modern sanitation—the importance of cleanliness and the possibility of controlling epidemic disease by isolation and quarantine (1943, p. 252).

In regard to the understanding of contagion implied in the quarantine rules in the Old Testament, McGrew noted in the *Encyclopedia of Medical History*: “The idea of contagion was foreign to the classic medical tradition and found no place in the voluminous Hippocratic writings. The Old Testament, however, is a rich source for contagionist sentiment, especially in regard to leprosy and venereal disease” (1985, pp.77-78). Here again, the Old Testament exhibits amazingly accurate medical knowledge that surpasses any known human ingenuity available at the time of its writing.

### Circumcision

In the book of Genesis, the text relates that God chose Abraham and his descendants to be a “special” people who were set apart from all other nations. The covenant that God made with Abraham included a physical “sign” that was to be implemented in all future generations of Abraham’s descendants. According to the text, God said:

He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant. He who is

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born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant (Genesis 17:12-14).

Thus, the covenant with Abraham and his offspring was to be indelibly marked in the flesh of every male child.

The inclusion of this surgical practice provides another excellent example of the medical acumen of the biblical text. Two significant aspects of biblical circumcision need to be noted. First, from what modern medicine has been able to gather, circumcision can lessen one's chances of getting certain diseases and infections. Pediatrician Dorothy Greenbaum noted in regard to the health benefits of circumcision: "Medically, circumcision is healthful because it substantially reduces the incidence of urinary tract infection in boys, especially those under one year of age. Some studies cited in the pediatric policy statement report 10 to 20 times more urinary tract infection in uncircumcised compared with circumcised boys." She further noted that sexually transmitted diseases are passed more readily among men who have not been circumcised (2006). In addition, circumcision virtually eliminates the chance of penile cancer. In an article titled "Benefits of Circumcision," the text stated: "Neonatal circumcision virtually abolishes the risk [of penile cancer—KB]" and

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“penile cancer occurs almost entirely in uncircumcised men” (Morris, 2006). [NOTE: Morris’ work is of particular interest due to the fact that it has an evolutionary bias and was in no way written to buttress belief in the biblical record.]

Not only can a litany of health benefits be amassed to encourage the practice of infant circumcision, but the day on which the biblical record commands the practice to be implemented is of extreme importance as well. The encyclopedic work *Holt Pediatrics* remains today one of the most influential works ever written about child care, pediatric disease, and other health concerns as they relate to children. First written in 1896 by L. Emmet Holt, Jr. and going through several revisions until the year 1953, the nearly 1,500-page work is a master compilation of the “modern” medicine of its day. One section, starting on page 125 of the 12<sup>th</sup> edition, is titled “Hemorrhagic Disease of the Newborn.” The information included in the section details the occurrence of occasional spontaneous bleeding among newborns that can sometimes cause severe damage to major organs such as the brain, and even death. In the discussion pertaining to the reasons for such bleeding, the authors note that the excessive bleeding is caused primarily by a decreased level of prothrombin, which in turn is caused by insufficient levels of vitamin K. The text also notes that children’s susceptibility is “peculiar” (meaning

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“higher”) “between the second and fifth days of life” (1953, p. 126).

In chart form, *Holt Pediatrics* illustrates that the percent of available prothrombin in a newborn dips from about 90% of normal on its day of birth to about 35% on its third day of life outside the womb. After the third day, the available prothrombin begins to climb. By the eighth day of the child’s life, the available prothrombin level is approximately 110% of normal, about 20% higher than it was on the first day, and about 10% more than it will be during the rest of the child’s life. Such data prove that the eighth day is the perfect day on which to perform a major surgery such as circumcision.

How did Moses know such detailed data about newborn hemorrhaging? Some have suggested that the early Hebrews carried out extensive observations on newborns to determine the perfect day for surgery. But such an idea has little merit. McMillen and Stern noted:

Modern medical textbooks sometimes suggest that the Hebrews conducted careful observations of bleeding tendencies. Yet what is the evidence? Severe bleeding occurs at most in only 1 out of 200 babies. Determining the safest day for circumcision would have required careful experiments, observing thousands of circumcisions. Could Abraham (a primitive, desert-dwelling nomad) have done that (2000, p. 84)?

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In fact, such amazing medical accuracy cannot be accounted for on the basis of human ingenuity in the ancient world. If circumcision was the only example of such accuracy, and the Hebrew writings were laced with incorrect, detrimental medical prescriptions, such an explanation might be plausible. But in light of the fact that the entire Old Testament contains medical practices that would still be useful in third world countries, without a hint of error in regard to a single prescription, divine oversight remains the only reasonable answer.

### CONCLUSION

In reality, entire books could be written on the Old Testament's amazing medical accuracy. Medical doctors McMillen and Stern have done just that in their extremely interesting volume *None of These Diseases*. Many physicians who have compared Moses' medical instructions to effective modern methods have come to realize the astonishing value and insight of the Old Testament text. As Dr. Macht once wrote: "Every word in the Hebrew Scriptures is well chosen and carries valuable knowledge and deep significance" (1953, p. 450). Such is certainly the case in regard to the medical practices listed in its pages. Indeed, the accurate medical practices prescribed thousands of years before their significance was completely understood provide excellent evidence for the divine inspiration of the Bible.

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### DISCUSSION AREAS

1. Does the Bible present itself as a scientific journal or a medical textbook? What would you expect to see in the Bible, regarding scientific and medical information, if God truly did inspire it?
2. What is scientific foreknowledge? How does it help establish the Bible's inspiration?
3. What is missing from the Bible, especially in the medical prescriptions of the Old Testament, that helps verify its inspiration? List and discuss medical practices of other cultures that prove their writings were not inspired by God.
4. Discuss the Bible's treatment of germs. What aspects of germs do the Old Testament documents show an awareness of that "modern" medicine did not discover for almost 3,000 years after the Old Testament was written?
5. Discuss the medical advantages of circumcision being performed on the eighth day of a child's life. What factors are involved that make day eight ideal? What logical explanation can be given as to how such advanced knowledge was known to a wandering nomad like Abraham, or wilderness wanderers like the Israelites?
6. What other examples of scientific foreknowledge could be presented as evidence of the Bible's inspiration? (See [www.apologeticspress.org/articles/3309](http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/3309) for relevant information.) In light of this evidence, what group or groups of people should be among the first to recognize and admit that the Bible is inspired?

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Butt, Kyle (2007), *Behold! The Word of God* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).

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# LESSON 11

## ALLEGED BIBLE DISCREPANCIES



In his book *The Encyclopedia of Biblical Errancy*, skeptic Dennis McKinsey wrote:

Every analyst of the Bible should realize that the Book is a veritable miasma of contradictions, inconsistencies, inaccuracies, poor science, bad math, inaccurate geography, immoralities, degenerate heroes, false prophecies, boring repetitions, childish superstitions, silly miracles, and dry-as-dust discourse.

**But contradictions remain the most obvious, the most potent, the most easily proven, and the most common problem to plague the Book** (1995, p. 71, emp. added).

Dan Barker (a denominational preacher turned infidel) wrote in his book, *Losing Faith in Faith*: “People who are free of theological bias notice that the bible contains hundreds of discrepancies.... The bible is a flawed book” (1992, pp. 164,177).

Though the Bible has withstood centuries of abuse at the hands of infidels, the anvil of God’s Word seems

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to ring of the skeptic's blows much more often (and louder) today. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, people are asked to believe in the inspiration of the Bible while living in a much more cynical society. Thus, there is a great need to answer the allegations levied against the Bible.

### EXTRA INFORMATION

One of the most commonly neglected rules of interpretation that Bible critics overlook when attacking Scripture is that extra information is not necessarily contradictory information. When one Bible writer offers more details on a particular subject than another, it is inappropriate to assume that one of the writers is mistaken. When a journalist in the 21<sup>st</sup> century writes about a man on the side of the road who has just escaped death following a particular catastrophe, while another journalist writes how this same man **and** his wife (standing next to him) are suffering survivors of the devastating disaster, it does not mean that the first journalist was dishonest in his representation of truth. Similarly, countless times throughout Scripture, and especially within the gospel accounts, there is extra information that critics cannot prove to be contradictory.

Consider that Matthew, Mark, and Luke all wrote about how a man named **Joseph** took the body of Jesus following His crucifixion, “wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock” (Luke 23:53; cf. Matthew 27:59-60; Mark 15:46). The

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apostle John, however, noted that Joseph actually had help burying Jesus. He wrote: “Joseph of Arimathea... took the body of Jesus. And **Nicodemus**, who at first came to Jesus by night, **also came**, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. Then **they** took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury” (19:38-40, emp. added). Are the accounts of Jesus’ burial contradictory? Such could never be proven by skeptics. This is a simple example of extra information being given by one of the Bible writers. Had Matthew, Mark, and Luke stated that Joseph was the **only** person involved in Jesus’ burial, then skeptics would have a valid point to argue. But as it stands, John simply **added facts** to the story.

When Mark and Luke recorded how the Jews petitioned Pilate for the release of Barabbas, they both called him a murderer (Mark 15:7; Luke 23:18-19; Acts 3:14). Yet when John wrote about Barabbas, he omitted all discussion about his homicidal past and simply indicated that “Barabbas was a robber” (John 18:40). Is it possible that Barabbas was both a murderer **and** a thief? Of course. How many prisons around the world today house individuals who have committed both murder and burglary?

The Bible writers may not have worded things in the exact way some may think they should have, but such personal (or cultural) preferences do not invalidate their writings. Throughout the gospel accounts, statements

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are supplemented. Extra evidence frequently is given. And the truth is, such supplementation should be expected from inspired, **independent** writers who did not have to collude in order to convey accurately the Good News of Jesus Christ. When one recognizes that supplementation cannot inherently be equated with a contradiction, many of the so-called “Bible contradictions” are easily (and logically!) explained away.

### FIGURES OF SPEECH

Numerous alleged Bible discrepancies arise because skeptics often interpret figurative language literally. They treat God’s Word as if it were a dissertation on the Pythagorean theorem rather than a book written in ordinary language. They fail to recognize the inspired writers’ use of sarcasm, hyperbole, prolepsis, irony, etc. Such is the case in their interpretation of 1 Corinthians 15:5. Since Paul stated that “the twelve” (apostles) saw Jesus after His resurrection, these critics claim that Paul clearly erred. [There were not “twelve” apostles after Jesus’ resurrection and before His ascension. Judas already had committed suicide (Matthew 27:5), and Matthias was not chosen as an apostle until after Jesus’ ascension into heaven (Acts 1:15-26).] There actually were only eleven apostles during that time. Skeptics claim Paul’s use of the term “twelve” when speaking about “eleven” clearly shows that the Bible was not “given by inspiration of God.”

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One simple solution to this numbering “problem” is that “the twelve” to which Paul referred was not a literal number, but the designation of an office. This term is used merely “to point out the society of the apostles, who, though at this time they were only eleven, were still called the twelve, because this was their original number, and a number which was afterward filled up” (Clarke, 1996). Gordon Fee stated that Paul’s use of the term “twelve” in 1 Corinthians 15:4 “is a clear indication that in the early going this was a **title** given to the special group of twelve whom Jesus called to ‘be with him’ (Mark 3:14). Thus this is their collective **designation**; it does not imply that all twelve were on hand, since the evidence indicates otherwise” (1987, p. 729, emp. added).

This figurative use of numbers is just as common in English vernacular as it was in the ancient languages. In collegiate sports, one can refer to the Big Ten conference, which consists of 11 teams, or the Atlantic Ten conference, which at last count consisted of 14 teams. At one time these conferences only had 10 teams, but when they exceeded 10 teams, they kept their original conference names (designations). Their names are a designation for a particular conference, not a literal number. In 1884, the term “two-by-four” was coined to refer to a piece of lumber two-by-four inches. Interestingly, a two-by-four is still called a two-by-four even when it is trimmed to slightly smaller

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dimensions (1 5/8 by 3 5/8). Again, the numbers are more of a designation than literal numbers.

Critics such as Steve Wells, author of the *Skeptic's Annotated Bible*, misrepresent the text when they claim Paul taught: "Jesus was seen by **all** twelve apostles (**including Judas**) after Judas' suicide and before Jesus' ascension" (2001). Paul did not teach that Jesus was seen by **all** twelve of the **original** apostles (including Judas). The text says simply that Jesus "was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve." As already noted, skeptics reject the explanation that Paul used the term "twelve" in a figurative sense (yet they must admit that such numbers can be, and frequently are, used in such a way). These critics also disregard the possibility that the 12 may have included Matthias, the apostle who took Judas' place (Acts 1:15-26).

Matthias had been chosen as one of the apostles long before Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, and we know he was a witness of the resurrection of Christ (Acts 1:21-22). In fact, it is very likely that he was part of the group that "gathered together" with the apostles when Christ appeared to them after His resurrection (Luke 24:33). When Paul wrote of "the twelve," it may be that he was using a figure of speech commonly referred to as prolepsis (the assignment of something, such as an event or name, to a time that precedes it). Thus no one can say for sure that Matthias was not included in the twelve apostles mentioned by Paul.

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Does Paul's reference to "the twelve" in 1 Corinthians 15:5 contradict Jesus' appearances to ten of the apostles on one occasion (John 20:19-23) and eleven on another (John 20:26-29)? Not at all. Either he simply used a figure of speech common to all languages—where a body of persons (or groups) who act as colleagues are called by a number rather than a name—or he used the figure of speech known as prolepsis.

### **INNOCENT UNTIL PROVEN GUILTY**

One of the fundamental principles of nearly any study or investigation is that of being "innocent until proven guilty." A teacher cannot justifiably assume that a student who makes a perfect score on a test without studying for it, cheated. It might be that he had received all of the information elsewhere at another time. It could be that he learned everything well enough in class that he did not have to study at home. Or, it may be that he simply "got lucky" and guessed correctly on the questions he did not know. A policeman is not justified in assuming that because a murder was committed by a man wearing green tennis shoes, that the first person the policeman finds wearing green tennis shoes is the murderer.

In our daily lives, we generally consider a person to be truthful until we have evidence that he or she has lied. At the same time, when we read a historical document or book, the same rule should apply. It is considered to be truthful until it can be shown

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otherwise. A book is to be presumed internally consistent until it can be shown conclusively that it is contradictory. This approach has been accepted throughout literary history, and is still accepted today in most venues. Respected law professor, Simon Greenleaf, dealt with this principle in his book, *The Testimony of the Evangelists*:

The rule of municipal law on this subject is familiar, and applies with equal force to all ancient writings, whether documentary or otherwise; and as it comes first in order, in the prosecution of these inquiries, it may, for the sake of mere convenience, be designated as our first rule: “Every document, apparently ancient, coming from the proper repository or custody, and bearing on its face no evident marks of forgery, **the law presumes to be genuine, and devolves on the opposing party the burden of proving it to be otherwise**” (1995, p. 16, emp. added).

The accepted and only logical way to approach ancient writings is to assume innocence, not guilt. The Bible deserves this same treatment.

### WHAT CONSTITUTES A CONTRADICTION?

For there to be a legitimate contradiction in the Bible, one must be referring to the **same person, place, or thing** in the **same sense** at the **same time**. Suppose that someone says, “Terry Anthony is rich,” and “Terry Anthony is poor.” Do those two statements contradict each other? Not necessarily. How do you know the same Terry Anthony is under consideration



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in both statements? It could be that Terry Anthony in Oklahoma is rich, but Terry Anthony in Tennessee is poor. The same person, place, or thing must be under consideration.

Furthermore, the same time period must be under consideration. Terry Anthony could have made a fortune in his early 20s as a business consultant and been very rich, but after a terrible stock market crash, lost everything he owned. At one time, then, he was rich, but now he is poor. The two statements could have been accurately describing his life at the time each was made.

Also, the same sense must be under consideration. Terry Anthony could have more money than anyone else in the entire world, but if he is not following God, then he is poor. On the other hand, he could have absolutely no money, but be rich in spiritual blessings. After all, “Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith” (James 2:5)? These examples reveal that **a mere difference does not make a contradiction**. For a thing both to be and not to be for the same person, place, or thing in the same sense at the same time is a contradiction. But, if it cannot be shown that these three things are all the same, then one cannot say truthfully that there is a contradiction.

Consider how the proper understanding of what a contradiction is can help solve allegedly conflicting passages of Scripture.

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### Same Person, Place, or Thing

The book of Acts records the death of James in Acts 12, while later (Acts 15), James is prominent at the Jerusalem conference. Is this a contradiction? Not at all. The James murdered in Acts 12 was the brother of John (vs. 2), the son of Zebedee (Matthew 4:21), while the James of Acts 15 was Jesus' half-brother (Matthew 13:55; Acts 12:17; 15:13; Galatians 1:19).

### Same Time

A skeptic once charged the Bible with making a mistake after comparing Genesis 6:9 with Genesis 9:21. In the first verse, Noah is described as being "a just man, perfect in his generations." In the second passage, Noah's drunkenness is described. How is it that Noah could be "a just man," while also being a drunk? The same person, admittedly, is under consideration in both passages. The problem with this line of reasoning is that the two verses are separated by more than 100 years. Furthermore, one also would be incorrect in concluding from Genesis 9 that Noah was a drunkard. He may have continued to "walk with God" throughout his life, despite his struggles with sin (cf. Hebrews 11:7,13).

### Same Sense

In Philippians 3:12 Paul wrote that he had not yet been "made perfect" (ASV), but then, just three verses later, he indicated that he was "perfect." How do we harmonize Paul's denial of perfection in verse 12 with

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his affirmation in verse 15 that he was perfect? The former “perfection” is a faultlessness and excellence that cannot be expected in this life. Paul had not yet attained a state of total holiness and dedication when no additional progress would be possible or needed. The “perfection” or “maturity” of verse 15 was “used to mean mature in mind, as opposed to one who is a beginner in a subject” (Barclay, 1959, p. 81).

### **BE FAIR**

A final rule to keep in mind when interpreting alleged contradictory passages is that we need to be as fair with the Bible as we wish others to be toward us. Suppose you mentioned to a friend at work that you awoke at sunrise. How would you feel if your coworker responded by saying, “You are a moron. The Sun does not rise! That’s just the Earth rotating on its axis”? No doubt, you would think this person had serious problems, because it is common knowledge that the Sun does not literally rise in the east; however, people have no problem understanding the real meaning of this comment. We call this “phenomenal” language—language that is used in everyday speech to refer to ordinary phenomena. On occasion, the Bible also uses phenomenal language. In Psalm 50:1, the writer described the Sun as rising, and in 1 Corinthians 15:6 Paul described some of the Christians who had died as having “fallen asleep.” No one would accuse us of making a scientific mistake when we say that

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the Sun will rise, or that a dead person has “fallen asleep.” In the same way, the Bible should not be accused of containing mistakes simply because it describes things **as they appear**, and not always in scientific terms.

### CONCLUSION

The belief that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God is not based upon wishful thinking, but upon the reasonable examination of facts. When a person takes a little time and effort to analyze the allegations skeptics have made (and continue to make) concerning the Bible, the truth becomes evident: The Bible is innocent of the charges levied against it. It has been tried, and shown to be true. It is the inspired Word of God, free from the errors so prevalent in the writings of uninspired men.

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### **DISCUSSION AREAS**

1. Explain how extra information is not necessarily contradictory information. Give at least two examples from Scripture where one Bible writer provided more information than another writer that was not contradictory.
2. Discuss Paul's use of the term "twelve" in 1 Corinthians 15:5. In what ways could this term be understood without assuming Paul made a mistake? Give examples of similar figures of speech used in 21<sup>st</sup>-century America.
3. How do we generally assess the trustworthiness of historical books? Discuss law professor Simon Greenleaf's statement about ancient writings. How does the Bible fit into this discussion?
4. What constitutes a legitimate contradiction? Give one or more examples where two statements may sound contradictory on the surface, but actually are in perfect harmony.
5. What is "phenomenal" language? Discuss the Bible writers' use of this figure of speech.
6. Give an example of Bible critics not treating the Bible fairly. Why do you think many non-believers unjustifiably criticize the Bible?

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## **Alleged Bible Discrepancies**

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### **RECOMMENDED READING**

The following works are recommended as supplementary reading for those who want additional material on the topic of alleged Bible discrepancies:

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# LESSON 12

## WHAT THINK YE OF THE CHRIST?



On that stormy Tuesday of controversy, before the Lord was crucified the following Friday, Jesus asked some of His antagonists: “What think ye of the Christ? Whose Son is He?” (Matthew 22:42). They were unable to satisfactorily answer the question, for they did not understand the nature of Jesus of Nazareth. That question is, however, one that every person must encounter eventually. And it demands an answer.

Some religious movements require no historical basis, for they are founded upon **ideas** rather than **events**. Christianity is not one of these; it is dependent upon the historical existence and nature of Jesus Christ. It will stand or fall upon the basis of **objective evidence**, not subjective philosophy.

A few radical writers have gone so far as to deny the actual historical existence of Jesus of Nazareth. Around the middle of the 19th century, Bruno Baur, a German theologian and historian, concocted the

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notion that Jesus never lived; He was alleged to have been entirely mythical. Though Baur convinced few, some were influenced by him. Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965), the famous medical missionary, though acknowledging the existence of a “Jesus,” nevertheless asserted that the **real** Jesus of history was so different from the Christ revered by Christians, that the Jesus of the New Testament had little historical credibility. These men are rare exceptions. It is extremely difficult to find a credible historian who denies the historical existence of Jesus Christ.

### THE HISTORICAL CHRIST

The historicity of Jesus can be established along several solid lines of evidence.

**1)** There is the testimony of the New Testament documents. These bear abundant witness to the dominating presence of Christ in first-century Palestine. All of the New Testament narratives were completed within 60 years or so of the Lord’s death, and of the 27 New Testament books, no less than 10 were penned by personal companions of Jesus. Paul, an eye-witness of Christ, wrote at least 13 of the remainder. It used to be fashionable in liberal circles to ascribe most New Testament books to the second century A.D., but interestingly, even some liberal critics are now admitting that the New Testament documents are first-century sources of information. For example, modernistic theologian John A.T. Robinson of England, in his book,

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*Redating the New Testament* (1977), conceded that all of the New Testament books were written within 70 years of the death of Christ, and by the men whose names they bear!

**2)** Jewish testimony also bears witness to the historical presence of Jesus. Josephus (A.D. 37-100), the famous Jewish historian, mentions Christ twice in his *Antiquities of the Jews* (18.3.3; 20.9.1). Additionally, the Jewish Babylonian *Talmud* takes note of the Lord's existence. Put into writing in the fifth century A.D., it is derived from historical materials, some of which originated in the first century. Its testimony to Christ's existence is all the more valuable since it is extremely hostile. It charges, for example, that Christ (who is called Ben Pandera) was born out of wedlock after his mother was seduced by a Roman soldier named Pandera, or Panthera.

Concerning this, noted scholar Bruce Metzger declared: "The defamatory account of his birth seems to reflect a knowledge of the Christian tradition that Jesus was the son of the virgin Mary, the Greek word for virgin, *parthenos*, being distorted into the name Pandera" (1965, p. 76). The *Talmud* also refers to Jesus' miracles as "magic" and records that He claimed to be God. It further mentions His execution on the eve of the Passover.

**3)** Ancient secular history also bears record of Christ. Around A.D. 112, Pliny, the governor of Bithynia, wrote a letter to the Roman emperor Trajan asking

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advice as to how he should deal with Christians who made it a practice to meet on a certain day to sing hymns “to Christ as if to God” (*Epist.*, X.96). The Roman historian Tacitus, in his *Annals* (A.D. 115), refers to “Christus, who in the reign of Tiberias as emperor was condemned to death by the procurator Pontius Pilate” (XV.44). And the popular Roman writer Seutonius, about A.D. 120, declared that Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome as they “were continually making disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus” (*Via Claudii*, XXV.4). This doubtless refers to the Jewish persecution of Christians (see Acts 18:2).

The truth is, the impact of the Christian movement itself is eloquent testimony to the historical reality of Jesus Christ. It is absolutely inconceivable that a **myth** could have precipitated so powerful a movement as Christianity.

### WHO WAS JESUS?

Since Jesus of Nazareth was without doubt a real, historical person, this question **must** be answered: Exactly **who** was He? He claimed to be the Son of God. When Jesus was on trial before the high priest, He was asked: “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” To that question He replied: “I am” (Mark 14:62). In view of such an exalted claim, there are but three possible views that one may entertain with reference to Jesus. He was either a crooked con-artist, an irresponsible crazy person, or exactly Who He

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claimed to be—the Son of God! Let us briefly examine each of these views.

**1)** Was Christ a cheap charlatan, a messianic manipulator? Hugh Schonfield, in his infamous book, *The Passover Plot*, so claimed, but his theory has been ignored in critical circles. The truth is, even Christianity's bitterest foes have paid high moral tribute to the Lord. Rousseau, the infidel French philosopher, in contrasting Socrates with Christ, said: "Yes, if the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus were those of a God" (*Emile*, 1.4). Renan, the French humanist, called Jesus a "sublime person" and declared that in Him "is condensed all that is good and lofty in our nature" (1864, chapters 1,28). Goethe, the German pantheistic poet, referred to Christ as a "pattern and an example" and affirmed that He was "the divine manifestation of the highest morality" (Lewes, 1856, 2:307). Clearly, no intelligent person is willing to classify the Lord as a dishonest fraud. And consider this point: **what sane man is willing to die for that which he knows to be a lie?**

**2)** Is it possible that Jesus was some sort of psychotic lunatic who sincerely, though mistakenly, entertained grand notions of being deity? Irish playwright, George Bernard Shaw, claimed that Christ was once sane, but lost His mind when others began to exalt Him. Such an absurd view, though, has never been entertained by serious scholars. Even unbelievers

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have extolled the brilliance of Christ. The infidel philosopher John Stuart Mill wrote: “About the life and sayings of Jesus there is a stamp of personal originality combined with profundity of insight, which must place the prophet of Nazareth, even in the estimation of those who have no belief in his inspiration, in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius of whom our species can boast” (1874, p. 254). Is that the description of a lunatic? Hardly!

**3)** It only remains for us to acknowledge that Jesus of Nazareth was the divine Son of God. All the evidence points to this conclusion, and there is absolutely no reason for disregarding such, save on the grounds of subjective inclinations that reject the supernatural.

### THE DEITY OF CHRIST

The Holy Scriptures teach that Jesus Christ possessed two natures—the divine and the human. As an eternal Being (Isaiah 9:6; Micah 5:2; John 1:1), He was God [not the Father, but the divine *Logos* (“Word”)—John 1:1]; and yet, He became man (1 Timothy 2:5), made in the likeness of sinful flesh (Romans 8:3)—though He never sinned (Hebrews 4:15).

The amount of biblical evidence for the deity of Jesus Christ is staggering. We will review but a fraction of the available material.

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### OLD TESTAMENT EVIDENCE

In Isaiah 7:14, the prophet declared that the virgin would conceive, bear a son, and that His name would be called “Immanuel,” which means **God with us**. This prophecy was fulfilled in the birth of Christ (cf. Matthew 1:22,23). Subsequently, Isaiah referred to this Son as “Mighty God” (9:6). In fact, in the year that king Uzziah died, Isaiah saw “the Lord” sitting upon a throne (Isaiah 6:1ff.); overpowered by the scene, the prophet exclaimed: “Woe is me...mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts” (6:5). In the New Testament, we are informed that: “These things said Isaiah, because he saw His [Christ’s] glory” (John 12:36-41).

In Isaiah 8:12-14, God’s people are urged to sanctify “Jehovah of hosts,” yet this command is cited by Peter and applied to Jesus (1 Peter 3:14,15). Further, Isaiah’s “Jehovah” was to become a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense (8:14), which the New Testament applied to the Lord Jesus (Romans 9:33; 1 Peter 2:8). Isaiah foretold that John the Baptizer would prepare the way for the coming of **Jehovah** (40:3), and, as it is well-known, John was the forerunner of **Christ** (cf. Matthew 3:3; John 1:23). Clearly, the Old Testament record sets forth the deity of the Lord Jesus.

### NEW TESTAMENT EVIDENCE

The New Testament is also clear in its declaration of the Savior’s divine nature. Note the following:

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**1)** Jesus spoke and acted like God. He affirmed that He was “one” with the Father [neuter gender—oneness of nature or essence] (John 10:30). He claimed a special relationship with the Father that was distinct from that of others (John 5:17,18; 20:17). He forgave sins [a prerogative of God alone] (Mark 2:5,7). He accepted the worship of men (John 9:38), which is due only to God (Matthew 4:10), and which good men (Acts 10:25,26) and good angels (Revelation 22:8,9) refuse.

**2)** A number of times in the New Testament Jesus plainly is called “God.” In John 1:1, regarding Him who became flesh and dwelt among men (1:14), the Bible says, “The Word was God.” [NOTE: The Watchtower rendition, “...the Word was **a god**” is grossly erroneous and is utterly repudiated by respectable scholarship. See: *Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Doctrine of the Deity of Christ* by Wayne Jackson.] Christ is called “God, only begotten” (according to the better manuscripts) in John 1:18. In John 20:28, the disciple Thomas, when confronted with **scientific** evidence for the Lord’s resurrection, exclaimed, “My Lord and my God!” And significantly, Christ accepted the designation.

In Romans 9:5, Christ is called “God blessed forever.” A.T. Robertson notes that this is a “clear statement of the deity of Christ” (1931, 4:381). In Him “dwells all the fulness of the Godhead [deity] bodily” (Colossians 2:9). The Son is addressed as “God” in Hebrews 1:8,9—“Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.” In both Titus



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2:13 and 2 Peter 1:1, the Lord Jesus is referred to as “God and Savior.” There are numerous other passages that unquestionably establish the divine nature of the Son of God. One should study carefully such passages as Philippians 2:5ff., 2 Corinthians 4:4, Colossians 1:15, and Hebrews 1:1-3, noting especially the implications and statements about Christ’s deity.

### OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

Amazingly, there are those who actually claim that there is New Testament evidence **against** the doctrine of the Lord’s deity. We will quickly notice two of these absurd allegations.

**1)** Some argue that Jesus only claimed to be God in an accommodative sense—i.e., in the same way that certain Old Testament leaders who acted on Jehovah’s behalf were figuratively called “gods” (cf. Psalm 82:6; John 10:34). A study of John 10:22-39, however, reveals the very opposite. Christ argues from the lesser to the greater; if those Old Testament judges could be called “gods,” then surely it was not inappropriate for Him Whom the Father sent into the world to be called “God.” They understood His claim, and tried to kill Him (John 10:39)!

**2)** When the rich, young ruler addressed Jesus as “Good Teacher,” the Lord asked: “Why callest thou me good? None is good save one, even God” (Mark 10:17). Was Christ denying Godhood? No. Actually, He was asserting such, but wanted this young man

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to appreciate the significance of the title he had employed, and to realize to Whom he was speaking. R.C. Foster paraphrases it thusly: “Do you know the meaning of this word you apply to me and which you use so freely? There is none good save God; if you apply that term to me, and you understand what you mean, you affirm that I am God” (1971, p. 1022).

Yes, truly, Jesus Christ is the divine Son of the living God. But this final point needs to be made: **there is no virtue in verbally affirming the deity of Christ if one is not willing to do what the Lord taught, and in exactly the way He taught it!** Too many apologists have argued for the true nature of Christ who have never, in fact, obeyed the first principles of His gospel plan of salvation (see Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). May we strive to “confess” our Lord, not only with words, but with lives of submission!

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### DISCUSSION AREAS

1. Why do you think that sensationalists like Hugh Schonfield (who claimed that Jesus was a manipulating charlatan) have been largely ignored?
2. Discuss the value of the *Talmud's* testimony regarding Christ.
3. Discuss the significance of the pronouns “my” and “your” in John 20:17.
4. Why would it be accurate to call Thomas, “scientific Thomas”?
5. Is the Watchtower rendition of John 1:1, “a god” correct? Research this matter thoroughly.
6. How does one “confess” Jesus as Lord—in the fullest sense of that expression?
7. Discuss in detail the importance of the bodily resurrection of the Lord from the grave (cf. 1 Corinthians 15).
8. Discuss the possibilities that Jesus, rather than being the Son of God as He claimed, was instead: (1) a liar, or (2) a lunatic.
9. What part does prophecy have to play in proving Jesus Christ to be the Son of God (e.g., could so many messianic prophecies have been fulfilled so completely in just one man—by accident)?

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## What Think Ye of the Christ?

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The following works are recommended as supplementary reading for those who want additional material on the topic of the deity of Christ and related areas:

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- Buell, Jon and O. Quentin Hyder (no date), *Jesus: God, Ghost or Guru?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan).
- Butt, Kyle and Eric Lyons (2006), *Behold! The Lamb of God* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).
- Edersheim, Alfred (1972), *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans).
- Foster, R.C. *Studies in the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker).
- Guthrie, Donald (1972), *Jesus the Messiah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan).
- Harrison, Everett F. (no date), *A Short Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans).
- Liddon, H.P. *The Divinity of Our Lord* (London: Pickering and Inglis).
- McDonald, H.D., *Jesus—The Human and Divine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan).
- McDowell, Josh (1972), *Evidence that Demands a Verdict* (San Bernardino, CA: Campus Crusade For Christ).
- Morrison, Frank (1971), *Who Moved the Stone?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan).
- Pentecost, J. Dwight (no date), *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan).
- Smith, David H. (no date), *Days of His Flesh: The Earthly Life of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker).



# LESSON 13

## GOD'S GREAT PLAN CONSUMMATED



In this series of studies on Christian evidences, some of the most fundamental and vital questions of life have been addressed. Can man know that God exists? Is humanity the result of divine creation, or merely the consequence of impersonal, evolutionary forces? If man is a creature of God, fashioned in the divine image (Genesis 1:26), has the Maker communicated with His creature? If He has, for what purpose has that been? Is the Bible a revelation from God? Can it be trusted? And what of Jesus of Nazareth? Who was He? And why was He crucified? Such questions dramatically engage the mind and demand answers.

This lesson will focus our attention on the question framed by the psalmist of centuries past, but echoed by every intelligent mind since, “What is man, that thou [God] art mindful of him?” (Psalm 8:4).

## Surveying the Evidence

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### MAN THE CREATURE

Why did God create mankind? This is a question that we certainly cannot fully answer, for the Lord's purposes and ways are "unsearchable" and beyond our ability to analyze (Romans 11:33). We may suggest, though, that it definitely was not because He **needed**, for some reason, to create us. God, being infinite in all of His attributes (Psalm 147:5), from the very nature of the case, stands in need of nothing! Since "love" is an essential part of Jehovah's being (1 John 4:8), we may assume that as an act of **pure love**, consistent with His **sovereign will**, humanity was brought into existence. Heavenly beings at the throne of God were constrained to exclaim, "...thou didst create all things, and **because of thy will** they were created" (Revelation 4:11, emp. added). Though we have many unanswered questions, since it is a fact that we are "here," we may conclude that it is better "to be" than "not to be!"

### MAN THE SINNER

Of all living creatures on Earth, man was the solitary being made "in the image of God" (Genesis 1:26). Humanity was not fashioned in the **physical** image of deity, of course, for God is not physical (John 4:24; Luke 24:39; Matthew 16:17); rather, man was made in the spiritual, rational, and volitional image of God (Ephesians 4:24). As a volitional creature, man is a being capable of making **choices** (cf. Genesis 2:16,17;



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Joshua 24:15; Isaiah 7:15; John 5:39,40; 7:17; Revelation 22:17). Further, he was endowed with a responsibility to faithfully serve God (Ecclesiastes 12:13), and to glorify Him (Isaiah 43:7). Unfortunately, finite man made some woefully evil choices, and so entered that spiritual state that is biblically called “sin.”

### **SIN IS REAL**

How very pathetic it is that humanity frequently denies its own sinfulness. Atheism, for example, would argue that “sin” is but the concoction of insecure, emotionally disturbed, religious fanatics. Man’s “unacceptable behavior” must be explained, they suggest, in light of our evolutionary history. The defense by Clarence Darrow in the famed Leopold and Loeb trial (Chicago, 1924) was based upon this very premise! Some psychiatrists would rationalize the wickedness of man by simply styling it “sickness.” Even some religionists have denied the reality of sin. Mary Baker Eddy (founder of the “Christian Science” religion) affirmed: “Sin, disease and death have no foundations in Truth.”

The reality of sin, however, is affirmed from several sources. (1) The Scriptures clearly teach it. “There is no man that sinneth not” (1 Kings 8:46); indeed, “all have sinned” (Romans 3:23; cf. 1 John 1:8,10). (2) The conscience testifies to the presence of man’s moral sensitivity, hence, his responsibility to a moral law (Romans 2:14,15). No one of responsible maturity has

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ever been free from the sense of personal guilt—except Christ! (3) The witness of history underscores man's sense of sinfulness. The Roman philosopher Seneca said: "We have all sinned, some more, some less." A Chinese proverb declares: "There are two good men: one is dead and the other is not yet born!"

The reality of sin can also be seen in the horrible effects it has produced. Sin has affected man:

**1)** Physically—Disease and death were introduced into this world as a consequence of evil (Genesis 2:17; Romans 5:12);

**2)** Geophysically—Many features of the Earth's surface, which allow for storms, earthquakes, etc., are the result of the great Flood of Noah's day—which came as the effect of sin (Genesis 6:5ff.);

**3)** Culturally—The communication problem that man has, due to the multiplicity of human languages, is traceable to ambitious rebellion on the part of our ancestors (Genesis 11:1-9);

**4)** Psychologically—Man is generally without the peace of mind for which his heart longs [look at the number of psychiatrists listed in the Yellow Pages!]. "They have made them crooked paths; whosoever goeth therein doth not know peace" (Isaiah 59:8; cf. 57:21);

**5)** Spiritually—By sin, man has created a chasm between himself and God. "Your iniquities have separated you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, so that he will not hear" (Isaiah

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59:2). The “wages” of sinfulness is spiritual “death,” i.e., separation from God forever (Romans 6:23).

It is thus quite clear that sin is a past and present reality and that it has wrought havoc within the human family. Few would deny this obvious fact. Thus, all sensitive people want to know—“**Is there a remedy?**”

### THE PLAN TO SAVE

Here is an intriguing question: “Did God, before He ever created man, know that man would sin?” The answer to that appears to be, “Yes,” for inspiration informs us that the role of Christ in redemption was a part of the divine plan even “before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:20). If Jehovah knew that man would rebel, why then did He create him? We do not know, except to say that since whatever God does is right (see Genesis 18:25), His creation of beings of choice, hence, potential sinners, is not inconsistent with His holy nature. Aside from that, any seeming problem in this regard is negated by Heaven’s offer of **pardon** to wicked humanity.

One cannot but wonder **why** God wanted to save this ungrateful creature who had so haughtily turned away from Him. Consider here an important truth—the Lord was not under **obligation** to do so! This seems apparent from the fact that angels sinned (2

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Peter 2:4; Jude 6), and yet, “not to angels doth he give help, but he giveth help to the seed of Abraham” (Hebrews 2:16). Rebellious angels seem to be without any redemptive plan. No wonder the psalmist wanted to know, “What is **man** that thou art mindful of **him**?” (Psalm 8:4, emp. added).

A careful study of the Scriptures makes one thing abundantly clear—the Creator’s efforts on behalf of sinful man are the result of pure love. Here are some facts that need to be carefully considered: (1) Jehovah’s love for mankind was strictly **undeserved**. Salvation is offered to us even though we are ungodly, sinners, and enemies (note the use of those three terms in Romans 5:6-10). “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us...” (1 John 4:10). (2) The love of God is **universal**, thus, not discriminatory (John 3:16). He would have all men be saved (1 Timothy 2:4)—**if they would be** (John 5:40)—for He is not willing that **any** should perish (2 Peter 3:9). (3) The Lord’s love was not merely theoretical, rather, it was practical and **sacrificial**. Love **gives**, and so God gave His Son for the sin of the world (John 3:16); moreover, the Son, with identical love, cooperated, in that He also **gave Himself** (Galatians 1:4; 2:20; 2 Corinthians 8:9). (4) The love of Deity is **unquenchable**. Read Romans 8:35-39 and be thrilled! Only man’s wanton rejection of that love can put him beyond the practical appropriation of the same.

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### THE PLAN IN PREPARATION

The inspired Paul announced: “When the fulness of time came, God sent forth His Son...” (Galatians 4:4). This remarkable passage reveals that Heaven’s scheme of redemption was unfolded according to a precise program. It was meticulously designed so as to be most advantageous to human reception. Let us briefly consider this matter.

After the initial fall of man (Genesis 3), humankind progressively dredged itself deeper and deeper into wickedness. When more than a century of righteous preaching by the godly Noah produced but little results, Jehovah sent the great Flood to purge the Earth (Genesis 6-8). From Noah, several generations later, the renowned Abraham was descended, and through him, the Hebrew nation was founded—from whom the Messiah would come eventually.

Some four centuries following Abraham, the Lord, through Moses, gave to the Hebrew family a **written revelation**, called the law of Moses. It was basically designed to accomplish three goals: (1) It **defined sin** and sharpened Israel’s awareness of the same. To use Paul’s expression, it made “sin exceeding sinful” (Romans 7:7,13). (2) Additionally, the law was designed to show man that he could never, by his own merit or efforts, justify himself. For example, the law demanded perfect obedience and since no man (except Christ) could keep it perfectly, all were condemned by it (Galatians 3:10,11). And so, the law underscored

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our need for a **Justifier**—Someone who could do for us that which we are unable to do for ourselves. (3) In harmony with that need, the Old Testament law, therefore, pointed the way to the coming Messiah. The Old Testament prepared the human race for the coming of Jesus in several ways.

First, there were **theophanies**—temporary appearances of God in various forms (cf. Genesis 16:7ff.; 18:1ff.; 22:11ff.; etc.). A careful consideration of all facts can only lead to the conclusion that these manifestations were of the preincarnate Christ. Second, the Old Testament contains scores of **types** (i.e., pictorial previews, visual aids) of the coming Lord. For instance, every bloody sacrifice was a symbol of the “Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Finally, in more than three hundred **prophecies** containing countless minute details, the first advent of Jesus was made known. Jehovah left “no stone unturned” in preparing the world for the coming of His Son.

### THE DEATH OF CHRIST

No one who studies the Bible for long can be unaware of the fact that the entire Sacred Volume is centered on the **death and resurrection** of Jesus of Nazareth. But this question haunts us: **why** did Christ **have to die**? Was there no other way in which God could deal with the human sin-problem? Obviously not. Surely Jehovah did not choose the death of His Son

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as a whimsical option! There are several important truths that must be considered here.

First, the Bible forcefully affirms that our great Maker is an absolutely **holy** Being (see Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8), and as such, He simply cannot ignore sin. The prophet Habakkuk expressed it like this: “Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong” (1:13a). But in the second place, another of the Lord’s attributes is His absolute justice. Righteousness and justice are the very foundation of His throne (Psalm 89:14). In view of these facts, namely that God is both holy and just, the irresistible truth is this: **sin must be punished!**

Now if the Almighty were a cold, totally vengeful God [as infidels and religious modernists have frequently characterized Him], He could simply banish man from His divine presence forever and that would end the matter. But the truth is, **He is not that kind of God!** Our Creator is loving (1 John 4:8) and He is “rich in mercy” (Ephesians 2:4). Here, then, is the problem: How does a loving, merciful God pardon wickedly rebellious man, and, at the same time, preserve His holy justice? The answer to that puzzle is: **CHRIST!**

Paul addresses this very matter in Romans 3. How can God be just, and yet a justifier of sinful man? Jehovah is able to freely extend His grace (favor) on the basis of the redemptive life and death of His Son, Jesus Christ (3:24ff.). Here is how the divine plan was implemented.

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As an eternal, divine Being, the personal Word (*Logos*) took upon Himself the form of a man. He came to Earth as a human being (John 1:1-4,14; Philippians 2:5-11; 1 Timothy 3:16). He thus fully shared our nature and human experience. He was even tempted in all points just as we are, yet He never yielded to temptation, and so, never sinned (Hebrews 4:15). But what has this to do with **us**? Simply this: since Christ was a tested person (Isaiah 28:16), and yet found perfect (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22), the Father **allowed Him to stand in for us** (i.e., to take our place), to receive our punishment. Isaiah summarized it as follows: “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (53:5,6). Christ thus became a **substitution** sacrifice, paying the price for human salvation.

In the gift of Christ, Heaven’s mercy is extended; in the death of the Lord, divine justice is satisfied; in the resurrection of Jesus, God’s plan is historically documented!

### SALVATION APPROPRIATED

There is one matter yet to be considered in this study. What is man’s role (responsibility) in the matter of salvation? Even though some religious leaders have so



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alleged, salvation is not **unconditional**. Man must, by the exercise of his will-power, reach out and accept the pardon that is offered by the Savior (John 1:12).

Across the centuries Jehovah has repeatedly stressed the principle that man, if he would be justified, must live “by faith” (see Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38). [NOTE: Salvation for fallen man has been available through the centuries. It was conditioned upon God’s foreknowledge of what would transpire at the Cross—the atoning death of Jesus (see Galatians 4:4,5; Hebrews 9:15-17; 10:1ff.).] But it is important to note that “faith” in the biblical sense has never denoted a mere passive acceptance of certain facts; rather, it is a term of **active obedience**. Actually, faith consists of three elements: (1) an acknowledgment of historical facts; (2) a willingness to trust the Lord, and; (3) a wholehearted submission to the divine will. One cannot but notice how “faith” is demonstrated to be an action term in Hebrews 11. “By faith” Abel **offered**; Noah **prepared**; Abraham **obeyed**; etc. The inspired James made it wonderfully clear that faith, divorced from obedience, is dead (James 2:26).

After the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, by the instruction and power of the Holy Spirit, the apostles began to proclaim the “good news” [gospel] concerning Jesus of Nazareth. Read, for example, the stirring account found in Acts 2. Many accepted the documented evidence of the resurrection of Christ,

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hence, believing in His deity, were instructed to repent of their sins (i.e., be sorry for them and turn away from a habitual practice of evil). They were commanded to demonstrate their confidence in the Lord's resurrection by being baptized [the word means "immersed" (cf. Romans 6:3,4)] in water. The design of this ordinance was said to be "for [in order to obtain] the forgiveness of sins" (Acts 2:38). Thousands did just that, and the Christian movement was launched into the ancient world.

### THE CHURCH

The result of obedience to the Lord's holy will was the establishment of His church—a divine organism He had promised to build (Matthew 16:18). The word "church" translates the Greek term, *ekklesia*, meaning "to call out." The church was not some material building, but was a "called out" body of people who had purposed to submit to the will of God in all matters.

It was not the aim of Jehovah that the church be merely a first-century arrangement; rather, it was to continue, in its same form, down through the ages until Christ's return. It was to pursue the same divine pattern in work and worship, following the New Testament as its only creed and guide for religious instruction.

You will be thrilled to know that it exists today. If you are unacquainted with the churches of Christ, please contact us for information on how to locate a

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nearby congregation. These Christians will be happy to assist you with your spiritual needs. The churches of Christ salute you (Romans 16:16).

## **Surveying the Evidence**

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### **DISCUSSION AREAS**

1. Cite several areas of evidence that establish the “reality” of sin.
2. Discuss some of the purposes of God’s written, Old Testament revelation, in terms of how it prepared man for the coming of Christ.
3. Explain why God cannot simply “let mango free,” and thus save the whole of humanity, irrespective of the death of Christ, man’s responsiveness, etc.
4. List some of the biblical truths regarding Jehovah’s love for mankind.
5. Discuss the emphasis of the expression “by faith,” as used in Hebrews 11.
6. Explain how Christ was qualified to be the perfect “stand in” for us, thus bearing the penalty for our sins.

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### RECOMMENDED READING

The following works are recommended as supplementary reading for those who want additional materials on the topics of salvation and the church of Christ.

Brownlow, Leroy (1972), *Why I Am a Member of the Church of Christ* (Ft. Worth, TX: Brownlow Publishing).

*The Church of Christ—Essential, All-Sufficient, Indestructible, Perpetually Relevant* (1971), (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate).

Howard, V.E. (1972), *What is the Church of Christ?* (West Monroe, LA: Central Printers & Publishers).

Miller, Dave (2007), *What the Bible Says About the Church of Christ* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).

Wharton, Ed. (1977), *Christianity: A Clear Case of History* (West Monroe, LA: Howard).

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Winkler, Wendell (1988), *The Church Everybody is Asking About* (Tuscaloosa, AL: Winkler Publications).





