

## EVIDENCE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

“And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6).

Is it reasonable to believe in God? Is Christianity a credible religion? Yes! God has revealed Himself to us in at least three ways: the creation (His orderly universe), the incarnation (His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ), and the written revelation (His Word, the Bible).

Each of these ways can be supported by three areas of evidence. Creation is credible because of the Second Law of Thermodynamics, the fossil record, and the evidence for a young earth. The incarnation is credible because of fulfilled prophecy, Christ’s unique life, and the resurrection. And the written revelation is credible because of manuscript evidence, fulfilled prophecy, and the unity of the Scriptures.

Taken together, these areas clearly demonstrate the credibility of the Christian message.

### CREATION

The Bible declares, “that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.” (Romans 1:19)

Dr. Arthur Compton, a Nobel prize winner in physics, once said: “For myself, faith begins with a realization that a supreme intelligence brought the universe into being and created man. It is not difficult for me to have this faith, for it is incontrovertible that where there is a plan there is intelligence--an orderly, unfolding universe testifies to the truth of the most majestic statement ever uttered--‘In the beginning God.’”

#### Models of Origins

When considering origins, it is useful to think in terms of models. Many today advocate the evolution model of origins, which basically states that higher levels of order occur over a long period of time by the innate properties of matter (particles to people). The creation model states that we came into being by a supernaturalistic, directed, purposive and complete act in the past.

These two models exhaust the possible explanations for the origins of living things. Either we are the product of chance processes, or the product of design. Evidence that supports one model is evidence against the other; conversely, evidence against one model is evidence for the other.

Is it reasonable to believe in creation? At least three areas show that creation is true: the Second Law of Thermodynamics, the fossil record, and the evidence for a young earth.

#### The Second Law of Thermodynamics

The Second Law is the law of energy decay; every system, left to itself, tends to move from order to disorder. As far as we know, all changes are in the direction of increasing entropy, of increasing disorder, of running down.

Dr. Henry Morris, Ph.D., Director of the Institute for Creation Research, said this concerning the Second Law: “the whole evolutionary idea is negated by the Second Law.”

#### The Fossil Record

N. Heribert-Nilsson, of Lund University in Sweden, after 40 years of study in paleontology and botany, finally was forced to conclude: “It is not even possible to make a caricature of an evolution out of the paleobiological facts. The fossil material is now so complete that...the lack of transitional series cannot be explained as due to the scarcity of the material. The deficiencies are real; they will never be filled.”

Professor Corner of the Botany department of Cambridge University, though as evolutionist himself, has said: “but I think that to the unprejudiced, the fossil record of plants is in favor of special creation.”

#### Evidence for a Young Earth

Scientifically speaking, no one has proof for any dates prior to the beginning of written records, which was about 6000 years ago. Dates prior to this must be based on assumptions, such as constant process rates, closed systems, and so on.

Jack Eddy, of the High Altitude Observatory in Boulder, Colorado, has claimed that the sun is shrinking at a rate that means the solar system could not possibly be very old--only a few hundred thousand years at the most. Eddy has said, "I suspect that we could live with Bishop Ussher's value for the age of the earth and sun [4004 B.C.]. I don't think we have much in the way of observational evidence in astronomy to conflict with that."

Dr. Henry Morris, commenting on the observation of the shrinking sun, has written, "This strong evidence of a young earth and solar system is supported by a great abundance of other evidences....My book...has a tabulation of 68 worldwide processes which yield ages far too small to support the standard geological time table or the supposed evolution of life on earth....The Biblical record of a young earth and worldwide flood fits all the real facts of science." (Some of the processes that indicate a young age for the earth include the decay of the earth's magnetic field, the influx of radiocarbon to the earth system, the influx of meteoritic dust from space, the development of the total human population, the decay of short period comets, the formation of river deltas, and the influx of materials into the ocean.)

God has not only revealed Himself through what has been made, but He has also revealed Himself to us by becoming a man, the man Jesus Christ.

## INCARNATION

Jesus Christ is the God/man. The Bible says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth....grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ." (John 1:1,14,17)

Jesus said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father...I and the Father are one." (John 14:9, 10:30)

C. S. Lewis, who was a professor at Cambridge University and was once an agnostic, wrote: "I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic--on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg--or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse."

Three areas demonstrate that Jesus is the God/man. These areas are fulfilled prophecy, His unique life, and His resurrection from the dead.

### Fulfilled Prophecy

Over 300 prophecies about the coming Messiah, made hundreds of years before His birth, were written in the Old Testament Scriptures. Historically they were fulfilled in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some of these prophecies and their fulfillment are shown below:

Born in Bethlehem....Micah 5:2, Matthew 2:1

Mighty God.....Isaiah 9:6, John 20:28

Time of arrival.....Daniel 9:25, Luke 2:1,2; 3:1,2, 19:35-48

Pierced.....Psalm 22:16, Zechariah 12:10, John 20:25-27; 19:34

Garments divided.....Psalm 22:18, Matthew 27:35

Bore our sins.....Isaiah 53:5,6, 1st Peter 2:24

Resurrection.....Psalm 16:10, Acts 13:34-37

### His Unique Life

No one else in the history of the world is like the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus performed many miracles (John 10:38; 14:11), led a sinless life (John 8:46; 2nd Corinthians 5:21), and taught with authority and power (Luke 4:32,36). His life demonstrated that He was who He claimed to be--God in the flesh (John 10.30,33; 14:9).

### His Resurrection

The Bible states that Jesus "was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4). The resurrection is a historical fact that was observed by many witnesses (Acts 1:3; 1 Corinthians 15:6). Professor Thomas Arnold, author of History of Rome, chairman of Modern History at Oxford, once said: "I know

of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, to the understanding of a fair inquirer, than the great sign which God has given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead.”

## WRITTEN REVELATION

God has revealed Himself to us through His creation, through His Son the Lord Jesus, and also through the Holy Scriptures, His Word. The Bible says this about itself: “All Scripture is inspired by God” (2nd Timothy 3:16) and “men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God” (2nd Peter 1:21). Manuscript evidence, fulfilled prophecy, and the unity of the Scriptures are just a few of the areas that demonstrate that the Bible is unique and true.

### Manuscript Evidence

Josh McDowell, a magna cum laude graduate of Talbot Theological Seminary, once said: “...there is more evidence for the historical reliability of the New Testament than any ten pieces of classical literature considered.” John Warwick Montgomery said that “...to be skeptical of the resultant text of the New Testament books is to allow all of classical antiquity to slip into obscurity, for no documents of the ancient period are as well attested bibliographically as the New Testament.”

### Fulfilled Prophecy

Over 25% of the Bible is prophetic in nature; many of the prophecies have already been fulfilled. It is amazing that of all the hundreds of predictions made by the Bible, not one has been proven incorrect. No other book, no person outside of the Bible, has such a track record. The rise to power of Alexander the Great (Daniel 8), the place of Christ’s birth (Micah 5:2), the time of His arrival (Daniel 9:25), the manner of His death (Psalm 22; Isaiah 53), and the rebirth of Israel as a nation (Ezekiel 36-39) are just a few of the prophecies made by the Bible that have been fulfilled. The amazing accuracy of these prophecies leads to only one conclusion--they were authored by God.

### Unity of the Scriptures

The Bible was written over a period of about 1500 years by more than 40 different human authors. These authors came from a variety of backgrounds, wrote on three different continents and in three different languages, and wrote about hundreds of controversial subjects. Yet the Bible is a unity. There is complete harmony, which cannot be explained by coincidence or collusion. From beginning to end, there is one unfolding story of God’s plan of salvation for mankind through the person of Jesus Christ (John 14:6).

Jesus “presented Himself alive, after His suffering, by many convincing proofs” (Acts 1:3); He told us to love God “with all your mind” (Mark 12:30). Creation, the incarnation, and the written revelation demonstrate that Christianity is a reasonable and credible faith.

If Christianity is true, then what is the significance of that fact to our lives? If God has revealed Himself to us, then what is it that He wants us to know?

God wants us to know the good news--the gospel.

The Bible tells us that God is both loving (1st John 4:8) and just (Deut. 32:4). God in His love desires a right relationship with everyone, but God in His justice cannot ignore sin. Man was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27), but man rebelled against God (Romans 5:12). Man, by his nature and deeds, is a sinner (Romans 3:23). Sin results in separation (Isaiah 59:2) and death (Romans 6:23). Man, because of his sin, is separated from a right relationship with God; man is spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1). Unless this condition of spiritual death is remedied in this life, it will lead to eternal death (Heb. 9:27, 2nd Thess. 1:8,9), eternal separation from God.

Men have tried to bridge the separation between themselves and God by good works (Eph. 2:8,9) or by keeping the law (Romans 3:28), but man on his own can do nothing to save himself.

The good news is that God sent his Son Jesus to save us and provide the way for us to have eternal life. Jesus is God the Son (John 1:1,14,17) and is the only way to God the Father (John 14:6). Jesus Christ came to die for our sins and provide the way back to God: “For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God” (1st Peter 3:18). (See also 1st Cor. 15:3,4.) Eternal life (salvation) is a free gift (Romans 6:23) offered to anyone who truly believes in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:16). True belief includes repentance (Acts 17:30,31); that is, a change of

mind about who Jesus is and what He did, and about our relationship with God. It means that Jesus is accepted and received as Lord and Savior (Romans 10:9,13). Saving faith is trusting Jesus Christ alone for eternal life (Acts 4:12, John 8:24).

How can a person become a Christian? Many have expressed their faith in Jesus Christ through a prayer, such as the following: “Lord Jesus Christ, I know I am a sinner and that I cannot have a right relationship with God through my own efforts. But I believe that You died for me and paid the penalty for my sin. I now ask You to come into my life as my Lord and Savior. I now place my trust in You alone, Lord Jesus, for my salvation. Help me to follow and obey you as Lord of my life.”

The Bible says, “Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (2 Corinthians 5:17). When a person becomes a Christian, he is not only delivered from the penalty of sin; he is also delivered from the power of sin. We can’t live the Christian life in our own strength, but God has provided all the resources we need--such as His promises (2 Peter 1:4), His grace (2 Corinthians 9:8), and His Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19)--to live a life that is pleasing to Him.

Jesus promises an abundant, eternal life for all who put their trust in Him (John 10:10, John 5:24).