



# Evidence *for* Christianity

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## Instructor Biography

**Instructor:** Branyon May

**Biography:**

Branyon May serves as the General Manager of World Video Bible School. He has a B.S. in Physics from Angelo State University and a Ph.D. in Astrophysics from the University of Alabama. Having a passion for teaching, he combines his scientific and biblical studies to help the Lord's church. Dr. May also serves as an Auxiliary Scientist for Apologetics Press, where he has written several articles and books supporting God's design in the Universe. Branyon and his wife, Alana (who also has degrees in Astrophysics), worship with their children at the Southwest church of Christ in Austin, Texas.

# Evidence for Christianity

## Overall Course Goal:

- I. To recognize how Christianity can be practically defended.
- II. To identify reasonable arguments we can make, especially in application to our own unique interests in life.
- III. The most persuasive evangelism is one that presents consistency in reason and application.

## Introduction to Christian Evidences:

### I. Introduction

#### A. What is meant by Christian Evidences or Apologetics?

1. **Apologetics** is broadly defined as the process of forming rational arguments for and in defense of a particular belief.
  - a) This term does not necessarily have any biblical or religious meaning, other than when aspects of reasoning are applied to those topics.
2. **Christian Evidences** is a term that describes the application of reasoning, evaluation of evidence, and formulation of logical arguments in promotion of Christianity.
  - a) It could also be called Christian Apologetics as it is the specific case of applying apologetics to the questions of Christian beliefs.

#### B. Why do we need to study Christian Evidences?

1. Freedom of Choice
  - a) Not our choice to freely choose this topic or not, but because God has given free will to all of mankind.
  - b) Each person then has the opportunity and responsibility to choose what to believe, and many will make their choice without having all of the facts.
  - c) We must offer knowledge, reason, and truth for our fellow man so they can make a good choice.
    - (1) Joshua did the same in 24:14-15: *“Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord! And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”*
  - d) Mankind’s freedom to choose God, to ignore God, or to deny God is apparent when we consider the relative proportions of belief systems:
    - (1) “Bible” believers = ~2 billion
    - (2) Muslim = ~1.5 billion
    - (3) Hinduism = ~1 billion

(4) Buddhism = ~1 billion

(5) Atheist/Agnostic/Humanists = ~1 billion

2. Great Commission:

a) We need to study Christian Evidences because Christ said to “go into all the world and preach the gospel,” and “to teach all nations.”

(1) *Matthew 28:19-20 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*

b) For today’s climate, just as in the 1st century, this means meeting people and starting a “dialog” in whatever state we find them.

c) What are we to “teach all nations”? We might simply say, we are to teach the **Truth**: the truth of Jesus’ sacrifice, the truth of the Father’s love, the truth of God’s plan for saving man from the beginning of time.

d) But “how” does a teacher teach and how does a student learn? **Reason**

(1) Truth exists whether we acknowledge its existence or not, whether we accept or dismiss it.

(2) Truth exists prior to our coming into knowledge of it, therefore is outside of our determination.

(3) Reason is our faculty to investigate, consider, and understand the world.

(4) Reason is what we use to evaluate “truth claims” and to identify truth.

C. **What is the desired result** of applying a dialogue of Christian Evidences?

1. It’s the same as for any conversation/opportunity we have with non-Christians...leading them to Christ and the Gospel’s saving power.

2. Specific results (Pillars):

a) Acknowledge God as Creator,

b) Recognize the Bible’s inspiration,

c) Believe in Jesus as Christ

D. **Who are the desired audiences?**

1. Worldviews for God’s existence:

a) Atheist = “I believe there is no God.”

b) Skeptic = “I doubt there is a God.”

c) Agnostic = “I don’t know (or you can’t know) there is a God.”

d) Deist = “God exists, but not involved in the Universe.”

e) Pantheist / New Age = “God is all or in all, and all is God or in God.”

f) Theist = “God exists and is involved in His Creation.”

(1) Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and others.

2. Worldviews on the Bible and Jesus:

a) Atheist, Skeptic = “The Bible is not of divine origin.”

b) Agnostic = “Since it cannot be known whether God exists, a divine origin for the Bible cannot be shown.”

- c) Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist = “The Bible is not divine, but may hold beneficial teachings.”
- d) Even those who profess to be “Believers” in God and/or Christ can hold agnostic views of the Bible’s inspiration or Jesus’ Messiahship, or often both, claiming there isn’t enough information to decide a divine origin or not.

## II. Biblical commands to defend with reasoned responses:

- A. Beyond the Great Commission’s command to preach and teach the Gospel to the world (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16), there are numerous other verses providing commands to engage in an apologetics approach.
  - 1. Isaiah 1:18 – *“Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the Lord, “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”*
  - 2. 1 Peter 3:15 – *Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a **defense** to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;*
  - 3. Philippians 1:17 – *knowing that I am appointed for the **defense** of the gospel.* (Note verses 16 and 17 are swapped in order in the ESV and NASB.)
    - a) Philippians 1:7 – *just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the **defense** and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace.*
  - 4. Colossians 4:6 – *Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to **answer** each one.* (different Greek word, but similar intent)

## III. Objections to the concept of Christian Evidences:

- A. “The Bible does not need to be defended.”
  - 1. Romans 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to **salvation for everyone who believes**, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”
  - 2. Romans 10:14 “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom **they have not heard?** And how shall they **hear without a preacher?**”
    - a) The Bible does not gain its veracity or effectiveness from humans, these qualities exist within it outside of our application. However, both the proclaiming and the accepting of its message are a human responsibility.
    - b) Let’s consider an example. If you have an honorable father or mother, their character of honor does not exist because you have identified it or accepted it. Rather it is a trait inherent to them. But when their trait of honor is questioned, attacked, or promoted as dishonor, our defense of it does not change the true nature of our parents inherently, but we seek to persuade others to consider the full facts and reality of their reputation.
    - c) God, Jesus, and the Bible have a nature inherent within themselves that exists whether we do anything to support or attack it. But we defend right, good, and honor in the considerations of our fellow man so that truth is

seen and deception does not reign

B. "God cannot be known by human reason."

1. 1 Corinthians 1:21 "For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the **message preached** to save those who believe."
  - a) This passage does not condemn human reason, but rather human ego. There is still a message to be expressed through human messengers and to be believed by human listeners.
  - b) "To know God" is not a degree of study to complete or a fact to graduate beyond. It is not something conquered or a milestone reached.
  - c) Let's consider the analogy to our relationships, where we recognize that as children our parents sustain our existence. We eventually come to understand the mechanics of how they sustain our existence, but only through our entire lives do we learn the depth of love for "why" they were our parents. Nowhere along the way did we have full knowledge of everything they did, planned, felt, or thought, but we still knew them. And along the way, based on what they said and did, we could see the consistency of their actions and have an idea for how they might respond in future experiences.

C. "Without faith one cannot please God."

1. Hebrews 11:6 "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."
  - a) To move from faithlessness to faithfulness, what must happen? Does man have a free will response to God? If man has a free will response, then he must respond to something. The Gospel is the powerful message that needs accepting, and to be accepted it must be heard and obeyed. There are no magic words that will convince everyone, instead some need more information or more time before they come to accept.

D. "No one is converted through apologetics."

1. True in some respects, but in order to come to the knowledge of salvation one must build a solid foundation.
2. The study of Christian apologetics is one of only a narrow topic in the scope of Christian doctrine, and its application is one of only a narrow range in the scope of Christian living. As such it is not to stand as the entirety of the proclamation of the Gospel. It is only a stage or portion of discussion towards obeying the Gospel, and needs to be only as lengthy as is needed.
3. One might consider the analogy that benevolence in and of itself does not convert someone, but few would deny the power of kindness as a stage in one's building of a relationship to share the Gospel.
4. One might consider that attending a worship of the Church for the first time does not convert someone, but few would deny that seeing a loving family of believers sincerely following God is not beneficial to one's openness to consider God's Word.

5. It is true that on their own apologetic arguments do not convert, but they can serve to prepare the “soil” of the heart for the seed of the Gospel. Especially for those with no acquaintance to the Bible or Christianity, or those who for some reason have taken the belief of atheism.

#### IV. **Biblical examples of using reasoning (apologetics)**

##### A. Job:

1. Job 38-42
2. God spoke directly to Job, using much of the natural world to demonstrate His power and Sovereignty.
3. Processes of weather and on land, aspects of the sky and heavens, and then a host of various animal examples.

##### B. Psalms:

1. The Psalmist regularly appealed to the natural observation or common sense understanding to appreciate God or make spiritual analogies.
2. Psalm 8:3 – *When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained,*
3. Psalm 14:1 – *The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.”*
4. Psalm 19:1 – *The heavens declare the glory of God*
5. Psalm 33:8-9 – *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.*
6. Psalm 107:23-24 – *Those who go down to the sea in ships, who do business on great waters, they see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep.*

##### C. The Gospel accounts (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John)

1. Historical Apologetics: These accounts use specific people, places, and events to document Jesus’ life, thus providing enduring evidence to future generations.
2. Luke specifically addresses his apologetics purpose.
  - a) Luke 1:1-4 – *Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, 2 just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, 3 it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, 4 that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.*

##### D. Peter

1. Acts 2 – Peter used the rational argument of the empty tomb to prove Jesus’ Deity.
  - a) Acts 2:29 Peter speaks of David as a revered and recognized leader in Israel’s history, whose tomb was known to the audience on that day. Peter used the observable nature to compare David’s occupied tomb to Jesus’ empty tomb. Then he extended the connection that David had spoken about the relationship between himself and the future Messiah, being his Lord.

##### E. Paul

1. Acts 17 – Paul used the natural world and existence of a Creator
  - a) Acts 17:2 (in Thessalonica) “And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures”
  - b) Acts 17:16-17 (Areopagus, Mars’ Hill) “disputed” (same word as reasoned in v.2)
2. Other references to “reasoning/disputing/preaching”
  - a) Acts 18:4 (Corinth); 18:19 (Ephesus); 19:8,9 (Ephesus and School of Tyrannus); Acts 20:7,9 (Troas, preach), Acts 24:25 (before Felix) “reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come, Felix trembled...”
3. Paul’s legal defense of himself: Acts 22:1; Acts 25:16; 1 Corinthians 9:3; 2 Timothy 4:16

**V. What does apologetics look like for you?**

- A. It is common to encourage young Christians, as they look toward deciding a future career, by saying they have lots of good choices but they need to be a Christian first.
  1. They can be a Christian teacher, Christian lawyer, Christian engineer, Christian police officer, Christian chef, etc.
  2. Similarly, we need Christianity defended in each of these areas of life.
- B. Anyone and everyone in the Church can defend Christianity. The Church was established by God to have its members from all walks of life and to represent all talents and abilities. Therefore, Christianity can and should be defended from every background and area of life that its members are found, whatever interests and careers they have.

**VI. How can we formulate our defense?**

- A. Three areas of apologetical arguments
  1. Positive Arguments for Christianity
    - a) Aim – to show that Christianity is reasonable / rational. Using philosophical arguments and evidence from science, archaeology and history to show that the Christian faith has greater power than any alternative belief system to explain and interpret the world we live in.
  2. Defending from Accusations
    - a) These might be considered “negative” arguments, as they are designed to refute accusations made against the Christian faith
    - b) Aim – to show that Christianity is not unreasonable / irrational. Removing objections that are made against Christianity, for example claims of contradictions in the Bible, alternative interpretations of historical and scientific evidence and misconceptions about Christian belief.
  3. Refuting Competing Worldviews
    - a) Aim – to show that non-Christian belief systems do not represent the truth. Focuses not on specific attacks against Christianity but on undermining the foundations of other belief systems.
- B. Through the next several main sections of the notes, we will outline some fundamental arguments for God’s existence.
  1. When we use the word “argument,” we are not referring to some emotional exchange between people. Rather, we are using the definition of “argument” that

means “a reason that aims to persuade” which is the older more original meaning of the Latin root *argumentum*: proof or evidence.

2. General Principles for God’s Existence and Christianity:
  - a) Existence
    - (1) Cosmological Argument addressing material existence.
    - (2) Cause and Effect
  - b) Order and Function
    - (1) Design argument addressing complexity and functionality
  - c) Fine-Tuning
    - (1) Design argument addressing precision of order
  - d) Morality
    - (1) Moral argument addressing good and evil
3. We can see some or all of these principles in every career, hobby, or topic of interest.

## God's Existence: Cosmological Argument

### I. Introduction: God's Existence from Revelation

- A. As we begin looking at arguments for God's existence, we need to consider an important aspect of how information can be revealed.
- B. First and most obvious, if God exists then He can reveal Himself and any message to His creation through means made understandable by humanity.

### C. How We Learn about God: Forms of Revelation

1. **Special Revelation** is the miraculous or specific revelation from God to humanity. The revealing of God's mind communicated to man.
  - a) For Christians, this special communication is seen as the Bible, and in it we do learn about God's character and creative nature.
    - (1) Genesis 1:1 *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*
    - (2) Revelation 1:8 *"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."*
    - (3) John 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*
  - b) Direct communication by language and words can convey an incredible depth and span of knowledge, command, and motivation.
  - c) However, can some knowledge, albeit more limited, still be gleaned from the non-verbal, non-language, natural environment?
    - (1) Can we learn about God from nature?
2. **Natural Revelation** (or General Revelation) is that which is revealed through the natural world.
  - a) If the natural world is the product of a Creator, then observing the product can reveal insight into the Creator Himself.
  - b) For Christians, a more specific question then is, "Can we learn about the nature of God from outside of the Bible?"
    - (1) Learning information about God from outside of the Bible may seem like it is disrespecting the solemn, special, and unique role of God's Word, given by His inspiration, God-breathed, His mind communicated to humanity. However, if we approach it with reasoning, common sense, and allow the bounds of our observation to define the extent of what is understood, then we will see how **nature can inform humanity's direction of inquiry as opposed to inquiry's end.**
3. **Can nature replace Scripture?**
  - a) The answer is a clear, "**NO!**"
    - (1) Let's be clear...there is no Gospel in the stars and no trail of salvation in the woods.

(2) **While nature can reveal that the Creator is Mind, it cannot reveal the Mind of the Creator.**

b) Example:

(1) We draw understanding from present situations to help understand past activities. We view an end result to understand what happened prior.

(2) We view the **scene of an accident** or the scene of a crime to draw logical understandings of actions that occurred...damage to cars involved in a crash, broken windows with rocks and glass on the floor, broken pieces of a cookie jar on the floor with a young child nearby holding a cookie. We didn't have to have any verbal or written account of what happened to understand what actions had led to the scene. However, we do understand that before judgment can be passed and guilt assigned, that the physical scene may not provide the necessary depth of information to have a full and complete understanding.

c) As we consider the view of our natural world with considerations to its origin, we can reason logically to characteristics that must have existed or played a part. Answers to questions like "What, Where, and When" can be identified from the observation, and questions of "Who or How" may be partially identified, but questions of "Why" would still reside in the Mind of the Creator.

II. **Scripture references with appeal to Cosmological (Existence) Argument:**

A. **Biblical References**

1. Psalm 8:3-4 *When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?*
2. Psalm 19:1-4 *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their **line** has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.*
  - a) Romans 10:18 *But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: "Their **sound** has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world."*
  - b) It appears Paul makes use of similar phrasing, when applying the going forth of the Gospel as the going forth of the Natural revelation in Psalm 19. The Greek Septuagint, which Paul had access, uses the same Greek word for "line" that Paul uses for "sound."
3. Acts 14:17 *Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.*
4. Romans 1:20 *For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.*

### III. Cosmological Argument

- A. **Approach:** The name “Cosmological Argument” is used, because we want to use the Cosmos itself as the focus of our logical defense or evidence. So, in practicality we could call it “Cosmological Evidence.”
1. The reasoning behind this argument follows two simple observations or principles that are acknowledged by theists and atheists: **Existence** and **Causality (Cause and Effect)**.
- B. Practical Argument: Cause and Effect
1. *Every effect has a reasonable cause.*
  2. This statement is how we live our lives. We expect that choices have consequences, that actions have reactions, and that physical processes follow the behaviors governed by their physical laws.
- C. Formal Argument #1<sup>1</sup>
- 1) Every material effect has an adequate cause.
  - 2) The Universe is a material effect.
  - 3) Therefore, the Universe must have an adequate cause.
1. This argument considers the physical or material nature of the Universe, and the demands placed on its origin.
  2. Analysis of premises
    - a) The first premise uses an assertion from our understanding of the physical world around us. A most basic reasoning of scientific inquiry is that changes observed can be experimented and investigated for questions of what and how. Our physical reality follows regular, well-ordered, and most often repeatable processes, so that causes can be deduced from effects, and effects can be predicted from applied causes.
    - b) The second premise asserts that our Universe is “material,” which can be validated from our observations, and then also asserts that it is an “effect” meaning it is contingent or dependent on something else. It is not the causal agent itself and does not exist by necessity.
- D. **Characteristics of the Cosmos**
1. **Existence (Effect):** Existence is the obvious observation...we exist, the world around us physically exists. The Earth is an enormous conglomeration of physical matter.
    - a) Earth:  $6 \times 10^{24}$  kilograms ( $6.6 \times 10^{21}$  tons) (35% Fe, 30% O, 15% Si, 13% Mg), which means that Earth is composed of approximately  $1.3 \times 10^{50}$  atoms
      - (1) Contains numerous distinct biomes, with around 2 million distinct species of animal life, and currently over 8 billion people.
    - b) Earth is average sized among the 8 planets encircling our enormous star we call the Sun.
      - (1) Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune
      - (2) The Sun has over 300,000 times the mass of Earth.

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<sup>1</sup> Jeff Miller, “The Cosmological Argument for the Existence of God” in *Does God Exist?*, ed. Dave Miller (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press, 2017), 31-32.

- c) The Milky Way galaxy is composed of an estimated 100 billion to 1 trillion stars
- d) Our entire Universe is estimated to contain approximately 100 billion galaxies.
- 2. **Causality:** We are contingent beings, which means our existence depends upon something or someone prior to us. Our existence depends on our parents, our grandparents, our great grandparents, our great, great, great... you get the idea. But additionally, not only are we dependent on our ancestry and lineage biologically, but also our existence depends upon sustenance (food, water, air), and various other needs of life (protection, warmth, shelter).
- E. Formal Argument #2 (*Kalam*)<sup>2</sup>
  - 1) Everything that begins to exist has a cause.
  - 2) The Universe began to exist.
  - 3) Therefore, the Universe must have a cause.
- 1. This argument focuses on the aspect of beginning. Rather than focusing on any internal characteristic of the Universe, it focuses on what it means to “begin” existence. It has a more conceptual approach to the issue and leans more on what we might consider as a time concept.
- 2. Analysis of the premises
  - a) The first premise uses an assertion based on the definition of “begin”. That there is a change of state, non-existence to existence, and this change is marked by a beginning. Thus, if there is a change, there is a logical requirement for a cause. The form or attributes of this cause are not required for the recognition of its need.
  - b) The second premise asserts that our Universe is not eternal. There was a change that occurred from non-existence to existence. So, a key rebuttal would be to say that our Universe is eternal. This will be dealt with in an upcoming section.
- F. Both formal arguments are stated in such a way that if both the first and second premises are true, then the third must be accepted.

#### IV. **Origin of the Physical Universe: only 3 choices**

##### A. Uncaused (Eternal Universe)

- 1. What are its consequences or desired motivations?
  - a) No beginning; No ending.... If the Universe is eternal, then God’s existence was not prior, but at best coexistent.
  - b) Therefore, it is sometimes the motivation of atheists to claim an eternal Universe to erase a dependence on God.
- 2. Problems
  - a) Contingent existence is characteristic of physical matter.
    - (1) Entropy (2nd Law of Thermodynamics)
      - (a) Physical matter is not eternal.
    - (2) Matter and energy are finite entities with limited timescales. In order for the Universe to be eternal it would need an infinite

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<sup>2</sup> William Lane Craig, *On Guard* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2010).

reserve of energy. However, an actual infinite number of physical entities is impossible. Infinity is a concept to help understand large sets, and can be used in mathematics as a concept, but not as a real characteristic of an actual set.

- b) To arrive at the Universe we observe today, even the idea of eternal physical existence requires a causal agent to transition from a prior state to the current entropy-following state of our Universe.

3. Quotes: Eternal Universe quotes:

- a) *The lingering decline predicted by astronomers for the end of the world differs from the explosive conditions they have calculated for its birth, but the impact is the same: modern science denies an eternal existence of the Universe, either in the past or in the future* (Robert Jastrow, 1977, p. 30).<sup>3</sup>
- b) *And concurrently there was a great deal of discussion about the fact that the second law of thermodynamics, applied to the Cosmos, indicates the Universe is running down like a clock. If it is running down, there must have been a time when it was fully wound up.... Now three lines of evidence—the motions of the galaxies, the laws of thermodynamics, the life story of the stars—pointed to one conclusion; all indicated that the Universe had a beginning* (Robert Jastrow, 1978, pp. 48-49, 111).<sup>4</sup>
- c) *“several different models of the universe that dodge the need for a beginning while still requiring a big bang. But recent research has shot them full of holes. **It now seems certain that the universe did have a beginning.**”*<sup>5</sup>

B. Self-created (Caused by itself)

1. What are its consequences or desired motivations?

- a) This view claims our contingent, physical existence came from the complete lack of any prior existence.
- b) Stephen Hawking: “Because there is a law such as gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing.” (Hawking, *The Grand Design*)
- c) This quote sounds like it leans on some eternal or necessary existence (law), but then uses the phrase “create itself from nothing” that references a state of nothingness (non-eternal) and “create itself” implying the idea of self-creation.

2. Problems

- a) It is also non-sensical to require the existence of the Universe to cause its own existence.
- b) Physical producing physical is a chicken and egg problem, and creates an infinite regress without an answer. A causal agent is needed that is not contingent on another existence.

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<sup>3</sup> Jastrow, Robert (1977), *Until the Sun Dies* (New York: W.W. Norton).

<sup>4</sup> Jastrow, Robert (1978), *God and the Astronomers* (New York: W.W. Norton).

<sup>5</sup> “The Genesis Problem” New Scientist, January 11, 2012, <https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg21328473-500-the-genesis-problem/>.

- c) In response to Stephen Hawking's statements, John Lennox (Oxford mathematician) wrote the following: "Laws themselves do not create anything, they are merely a description of what happens under certain conditions. What Hawking appears to have done is to confuse law with agency." (John Lennox, *God and Stephen Hawking*)
- C. Caused by external agent (Created Universe, contingent existence)
  - 1. Is the external agent eternal (necessary) or temporal (contingent)?
    - a) In order to avoid an infinite regress, the ultimate cause to contingent existence must be a necessary existence (eternal).
    - b) This negates any claim to a multiverse theory being the ultimate cause for contingent reality such as our Universe.
  - 2. Created by God
    - a) The concept of a necessary being, like God's definition, is the only external agent that truly fulfills the logical needs for the ultimate existence of physical nature.
    - b) What does a creation by God **not imply**?
      - (1) Acknowledging God as creator does not imply investigation ceases.
      - (2) Instead seeking evidence of God's creative nature and design signature can serve as a motivating factor for scientific exploration.

V. **Characteristics of God based on the Universe's existence**

- A. Remember the characteristics of our physical Universe discussed earlier. It is vast in both size and material components, which requires a proper cause for its existence.
- B. It is possible to determine some of the characteristics of the Being that brought the Universe into existence through the observations and logical conclusions of considering physical existence.
- C. Divine Nature and Character:
  - 1. *Uncaused (First Cause)*:
    - a) Logical Argument
      - (1) For there to be contingent existence, there must be a necessary existence.
      - (2) The Universe is contingent.
      - (3) Therefore, the Creator must have necessary existence (Uncaused).
    - b) Biblical view:
      - (1) Exodus 3:14 "And God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.'"
      - (2) John 8:58 "before Abraham was, 'I AM'"
        - (a) Jesus applies the same character as God, but also extends the timeframe of this application prior to even when it was spoken to Moses.
  - 2. *Timeless (Eternal)*:
    - a) Logical Argument
      - (1) Time is an aspect of our Universe.

- (2) The Creator is not bound by the Universe's existence.
- (3) Thus, the Creator is timeless, which is by definition eternal.
- b) Biblical view:
  - (1) Psalm 90:2 "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God."
  - (2) Deuteronomy 33:27 "The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Moses blessing the tribes)
  - (3) Romans 16:26 "but now made manifest (*the gospel*), and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith"
- 3. *Spaceless (Omnipresent or Infinite)*:
  - a) Conclusions
    - (1) Space and its dimensions are an aspect of our Universe.
    - (2) The Creator exists outside of and not bounded by physical dimensions, and therefore is spaceless.
    - (3) Being without measure, the Creator is therefore infinite.
    - (4) Being without location and infinite, the Creator can be in (or affect) all locations simultaneously, which is by definition omnipresent.
  - b) Biblical view:
    - (1) Psalm 139:7-8 "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? 8 If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there."
- 4. *Non-physical (Spirit or Mind)*:
  - a) Logical Argument
    - (1) Our Universe is physical
    - (2) Existing eternally, prior to, and outside of our Universe, the Creator is non-physical.
    - (3) Therefore, as non-physical, we can describe the Creator as spirit or mind.
  - b) Biblical view:
    - (1) John 4:24 "God is spirit"
- 5. *Omnipotent (Complete Power)*:
  - a) Logical Argument
    - (1) The Universe contains all energy, matter, and law in existence.
    - (2) As the originator of all existence, the Creator has power over all.
    - (3) Thus, relative to creation, the Creator can be described as omnipotent.
  - b) Biblical view:
    - (1) Genesis 1:1;
    - (2) Psalm 139:13-16 "For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well.

- (3) Isaiah 55:8-9 “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,’ says the Lord. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”
- (4) Job 42:2 “I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.”
6. *Personal Creator*. Since the Universe is not eternal, it began because God *chose* to create it. God therefore has free-will (free-volition), and therefore has a personal character as opposed to an impersonal, merely eternal condition that exists.
- a) The Universe is not eternal. For finite existence to begin in eternity, a change must have occurred.
  - b) Thus, the Creator has choice (volition), and is not simply an impersonal condition.
    - (1) The cause of our existence must either be characterized as personal (having volition, choice) or not. Some may view the Universe as beginning to exist, but not from a Creator’s personal volition, but by an impersonal condition. They would say that since some form of eternal existence is true, then a finite Universe must exist. Therefore, it is a condition of eternity to have a finite existence. However, this is not logical. If the existence of the natural world was simply a direct consequence of the existence of an eternal being, then the Universe should be eternal as well. If the effect is merely a result of a condition, then the effect’s time frame should be equivalent to the condition being met.
      - (a) Consider that water is frozen at temperatures below 0° Celsius (32° Fahrenheit). If this condition had existed eternally then water would be frozen eternally. The temperature does not make a choice to change.
  - c) Atheistic/Skeptic view:
    - (1) Stephen Hawking has stated something similar to the eternal condition idea: “The question is: is the way the universe began chosen by God for reasons we can't understand, or was it determined by a law of science? I believe the second. If you like, you can call the laws of science 'God', but it wouldn't be a personal God that you could meet, and ask questions.”<sup>6</sup>
      - (a) Why deny God in concept if you ultimately ascribe god-like characteristics to Nature?
      - (b) But we can understand from the implications of the Cosmological Argument that Hawking’s conclusion about

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<sup>6</sup> Roberts, Laura. (2010) “Stephen Hawking: God was not needed to create the Universe.” <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/science/science-news/7976594/Stephen-Hawking-God-was-not-needed-to-create-the-Universe.html>

the impersonal origin of the Universe does not meet the criteria of what we observe and follow logically.

d) Biblical view:

- (1) Genesis 1:26 Let Us make man in Our image
- (2) Psalm 33:13-15 The Lord looks from heaven
- (3) Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
- (4) God has communicated to mankind through time. In direct communication with special messengers; making covenants and promises with patriarchs and prophets. The revealing of Himself through flesh in Jesus, the Son of God.

## God's Existence: Design Argument

### I. Introduction: Cosmological vs Design Argument

- A. In the previous section, we discussed the Cosmological Argument. As we begin to discuss the Design Argument it is good to notice the distinction between these two:
  - 1. The Cosmological Argument addresses simply the aspect of existence.
    - a) There exists physical matter and physical processes (or laws) in the Universe, and its specific condition is not under consideration but rather simply that it exists.
    - b) This argument asks the question, "What is the cause of its origin?"
  - 2. The Design Argument addresses the **function** of existence
    - a) Not only is there a physical existence, but the existence shows evidence of function, complexity, purpose, order, and therefore design.
    - b) Oftentimes you will see this argument termed the Teleological Argument, which comes from "Telos" which means "end or purpose." The physical world demonstrates design, functionality, and purpose which are dependent on a designer or creator.
    - c) The Design Argument asks the question, "What is the cause of design?"
- B. Everyday Analogies to the Design Argument
  - 1. **House Builder:** The existence of raw material on a build site is important, but it doesn't make a house. A builder or architect has to take the stacks of lumber, boxes of nails, screws, and strappings to make use of them. He would not hand over the keys before the construction of the design was finished
  - 2. **Musician:** The existence of sound, individual pitch and notes, and an instrument that generates music, is a far cry from having a completed musical score that considers multiple parts, instruments, and structure for a symphony to play.

### II. Practical and Formal Construction

- A. Practical Arguments
  - 1. Design demands a designer.
  - 2. A painting demands a painter.
  - 3. A watch demands a watchmaker.
- B. Formal Argument
  - 1) If something has evidence of design, it must have a designer.
  - 2) The Universe has evidence of design.
  - 3) Therefore, the Universe has a designer (God).

### III. Scripture References Appealing to Design:

- A. Genesis 1:14,27
  - 1. "Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years;"
  - 2. "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."
  - 3. Note these verses describe a particular design/purpose for creation

B. Job 38-42

1. God demonstrates both His sovereignty and power through His design of the natural world.
2. Job 38:12 “Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place”
3. Job 38:33 “Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you set their dominion over the earth?”
4. Job 39:26-29 “Does the hawk fly by your wisdom, and spread its wings toward the south? Does the eagle mount up at your command, and make its nest on high? On the rock it dwells and resides, On the crag of the rock and the stronghold. From there it spies out the prey; Its eyes observe from afar.”

C. Psalm 139:14

1. “I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well.”

D. Isaiah 45:18

1. “For thus says the Lord, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: ‘I am the Lord, and there is no other.’”
2. Note the purpose given to Earth’s creation. It was not done “in vain” (purposeless).

E. Hebrews 3:4

1. “For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God.”

IV. **Observations of Design in the Cosmos**

A. Earth is not only vast in its size and scale, but it contains incredible design. It not only has the raw materials that compose it, but those raw materials are arranged into functionally complex systems. Functional in that they perform a variety of specific purposes, but complex in that many involve the interworking of multiple parts and often integrated with other complex systems.

1. Earth’s Systems
  - a) Water Cycle
  - b) Ocean Systems
  - c) Atmospheric Systems
  - d) Rock Cycle
  - e) Magnetic Field

B. Fundamental Forces of Nature

1. The fundamental forces of gravity, electromagnetism, the strong, and weak nuclear forces, form the basis of all interactions between physical matter. The forces are independent in their character, but in complex systems is it rarely one force existing alone.
2. Scientific laws form complex applications of the fundamental forces
  - a) Physics: Laws of motion (particles, projectiles, and planets)
  - b) Chemistry: inorganic, organic, and biochemical interactions

C. Periodic Table: Design in the arrangement of matter

1. The simplicity of the periodic table's arrangement is clear evidence that within the physical world and physical laws, there is a beautiful order to its composition.
- D. The Design of Life
1. Life displays one of the greatest levels of complexity. Even the simple life cycle of plants: seed to sprout to plant to flower to seed again, has within each stage the amazing complexity of replicating systems that allow exponential increase in size from an original compact information container.
  2. How did life originate? (Created as life, or Spontaneously from non-life)

## V. Recognition of Design

- A. Going back to the ancient Greeks, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, who lived hundreds of years before Christ and the New Testament, we find their observations of nature pointed them to understanding design and purpose.
- B. Ancient scientific view: Michael Fowler (Physicist) wrote the following about the views of Aristotle (4th BC) and Plato (late 5th early 4th BC)<sup>7</sup>
  1. "Thus both Aristotle and Plato saw in the living creatures around them overwhelming evidence for 'final causes,' that is to say, evidence for design in nature, a different design for each species to fit it for its place in the grand scheme of things."
- C. Skeptic View: Michael Shermer (*Why Darwin Is Important*)
  1. "The design inference comes naturally. The reason people think that a designer created the world is because it looks designed."
- D. Atheistic View: Richard Dawkins (*The Blind Watchmaker*)
  1. "Animals give the appearance of having been designed by a theoretically sophisticated and practically ingenious physicist or engineer...."
- E. Atheistic View: Stephen Hawking
  1. "The question is: is the way the universe began chosen by God for reasons we can't understand, or was it determined by a law of science? I believe the second. If you like, you can call the laws of science 'God', but it wouldn't be a personal God that you could meet, and ask questions."
- F. Theistic View: Isaac Newton:
  1. "Though these bodies may, indeed, persevere in their orbits by the mere laws of gravity yet they could by no means have at first derived the regular position of the orbits themselves from those laws... [Thus] this most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being."<sup>8</sup>

## VI. Determining characteristics of God based on Design Argument

- A. It is possible to determine some of the characteristics of the Being that brought the Universe into existence through the observations and logical conclusions of considering physical existence.
- B. Divine Nature and Character:

<sup>7</sup> <http://galileoandeinstein.physics.virginia.edu/lectures/aristot2.html>

<sup>8</sup> Isaac Newton, *Newton's Principia: The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, trans. Andrew Motte (New York: Daniel Adee, 1846), 504.

1. *Prime Mover (First Agent)*: There exists functioning processes in “motion” in the Universe. Thus, a Prime Mover is necessary to begin those processes.
  - a) **Law of Gravitation: displayed in the Gravitational Force equation**
  - b) A law governing the interaction of gravity between massive bodies, but whose parameters and scale are designed into nature and only recognized by science.
  - c) Acts 17:28 “For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, for we are also his offspring.”
2. *Logical/Rational*: From the laws governing the creation, we see there is function, order, and sustaining balance. An irrational mind could not produce such results; thus, God is a rational being.
  - a) **Periodic Table**: Its logical and rational order was not prescribed by mankind, but only recognized and visualized. The order existed and we only arranged the chart.
  - b) Isaiah 1:18 “come now let us reason”; 1 Peter 3:15 “asks you a reason”
  - c) Jeremiah 10:12 “It is he who made the earth by his power, who established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding stretched out the heavens.”
3. *Omniscient (All Knowing)*: As the designer for everything that exists, God knows every detail about the Creation. There is nothing within the Creation that God does not know about, and thus by definition is Omniscient.
  - a) **Pollen Grains**: Design can be seen even in the detail of the complex shape and structure of pollen grains.
  - b) Psalm 139:2-4 “You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O Lord, You know it altogether.”
  - c) Hebrews 4:13 “And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”
  - d) Matthew 6:8 “Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.”
4. *Omnipotent*: As we see powerful processes and the forces of nature, we recognize that they have derived their power from a prior source.
  - a) **Forces of Nature**: Power of energy generation (burning of coal and gas is releasing of energy through electrical and chemical composition. The power locked away in the nuclear
  - b) Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”
  - c) Psalm 139:13-16
  - d) Job 42:2 “I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.”
5. *Personal Creator*
  - a) Like the choice to create the Universe from nothing, the choice to create a design-filled Universe demonstrates free will.

- b) Therefore, the Designer is a being of personal choice, and not merely an impersonal condition.
- c) Genesis 1:26 "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness'"
- d) Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

6. *Concerned Creator:*

- a) The Universe contains functional design, and beneficial processes.
- b) Therefore, the Creator who chose optimal, life-sustaining physical laws demonstrates His concerned character.
- c) 1 Peter 5:6-7 "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you."

## God's Existence: Design Argument: Categories and Examples

### I. Introduction

- A. God's existence is evidenced by the design we see in the Universe.
- B. We recognize design through the functional complexity exhibited in the detail, structure, or processes of the subject we are examining.

### II. Categories of Design

#### A. Fundamental Functionality

- 1. Order and function that are fundamental to many other processes, such as overall physical cycles and biological processes.
- 2. Examples
  - a) Physical Laws: Laws of Motion, Law of Gravitation, Laws of Thermodynamics, Law of Conservation of Energy, Laws of Electromagnetism
  - b) Natural Cycles: Water cycle, Carbon cycle, Rock cycle, etc.
  - c) Biological Cycles: life cycles of plant growth, animal development stages, DNA code within life

#### B. Fine-tuning

- 1. Definition: Precise balance between contributing parts, properties, or processes, suitable for life.
- 2. Examples
  - a) Force Constants: Gravitational constant and Coulomb's constant
  - b) Subatomic particles: Electron and proton mass ratio and mass to charge ratio
  - c) Abundances of Matter and Antimatter

#### C. Anthropic Principle: Designed for Life

- 1. Definition: Conditions in the Universe, and for Earth specifically, are designed to support life.
- 2. While this overlaps the fine-tuning category above, we will distinguish it in terms of larger-scale processes that promote protection and continuing existence of life
- 3. Examples
  - a) Earth's orbit in the habitable (goldilocks) zone
    - (1) The habitable zone is usually determined for a given star to identify the region where liquid water could exist, given certain atmospheric conditions.
    - (2) Thus, the Sun's habitable zone is just past Venus' orbit and extends out just past Mars' orbit. So, Earth is positioned very near the central region. While for some calculations, Mars is inside the habitable zone, it does not have the planetary characteristics for supporting life or even sustaining very large quantities of liquid water.
  - b) Earth's cocoon of protection: Atmospheric layers and magnetic field
    - (1) The atmospheric layers are such to protect from harmful radiation such as X-ray and Ultraviolet, where the density of atmosphere

helps protect from X-rays and the Ozone layer blocks much of the most harmful UV radiation.

- (2) Earth's magnetic field provides protection from the high energy charged particles streaming out from our Sun. The continuous solar wind and large outbursts known as coronal mass ejections are the source of this dangerous radiation. However, the magnetic field deflects these charged particles around Earth, as they move out to the outer solar system.

#### D. Irreducible Complexity<sup>9</sup>

1. Definition: "By irreducibly complex I mean a single system which is composed of several well-matched, interacting parts that contribute to the basic function, and where the removal of any one of the parts causes the system to effectively cease functioning." (Michael Behe)<sup>10</sup>
2. Physical Laws and Matter
  - a) When we consider law and matter, such as the Law of Gravity and mass. It reduces to a form of chicken and egg problem. What came first, the law or the matter?
  - b) The problem comes from the fact that the formulation for the law, that is, what gives it meaning is the existence of mass. Without mass the law of gravity is meaningless. However, to have mass without the law means that there are no means to interact or processes that can occur for the mass.
3. Bacterial Flagellum
  - a) Some bacteria have means of movement. One of these means is called a flagellum, and acts in some regards like a propeller motor on a boat. The bacterial flagellum whips around in a rotating motion to induce movement.
  - b) Yale School of Medicine: "The flagellum has three components—the motor, hook, and filament. The rotation of the filament allows bacteria to move around in their environment. The motor embedded in the bacterial cell membrane rotates—just as a car motor spins beneath the hood of the vehicle—to drive the movement of the filament outside."<sup>11</sup>
  - c) This incredible component is sometimes called a "molecular machine," as you can see the comparison from the above quote.
  - d) Without all of the components, the flagellum would cease to provide the function that is needed. All the parts are needed simultaneously and could not be a gradual product of evolution.

#### E. Biomimicry

1. Design from Biomimicry
  - a) Definition: "Biomimicry = the imitation of natural biological designs or processes in engineering or invention" (Merriam-Webster)
2. Examples of organizations involved in researching biomimicry:

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<sup>9</sup> <https://creation.com/refuting-evolution-2-chapter-10-argument-irreducible-complexity>

<sup>10</sup> Michael Behe (1996) Darwin's Black Box. p.39

<sup>11</sup> <https://medicine.yale.edu/news-article/how-bacteria-swim-yale-researchers-discover-new-mechanisms/>

- a) Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) - Biomimetics Robotics Lab
- b) Harvard University - Wyss Institute for Biologically Inspired Engineering<sup>12</sup>
- c) Arizona State University - Biodesign Institute has a sub-center “Center for Molecular Design and Biomimetics”
  - (1) “Biomimetics, or biomimicry, is the emulation of materials, systems or processes found in nature to help solve challenges in health care, national security and energy.”<sup>13</sup>
- d) George Washington University - Center for Biomimetics and Bioinspired Engineering:
  - (1) “Nature's solutions are smarter, more energy-efficient, agile, adaptable, fault-tolerant, environmentally friendly and multifunctional. Thus, there is much that we as engineers can learn from Nature as we develop the next generation machines and technologies....”<sup>14</sup>

### 3. Examples of Biomimicry:

- a) Flight
  - (1) In numerous different systems from birds to bats to bugs, engineers have looked to nature to inspire how flight can be achieved.
  - (2) Modern airplanes typically use two wings, similar to birds, to achieve lift as they fly. Though the flexibility and adaptability of birds’ wings makes them much better to adapt to their conditions. Not to mention that wings can serve a host of different purposes for the bird during its everyday life.
- b) Velcro
  - (1) “Probably the best-known example of biomimicry, Velcro was created in the 1940s by George de Mistrals, a Swiss electrical engineer. He was inspired after a hunting trip in 1941 when burrs (hooked seed pods) from burdock plants (*Arctium*) repeatedly became stuck to his clothes, as well as the fur of his dog.”
  - (2) Upon closer inspection the small burs had small hook like projections that allowed them to catch to various other surfaces.
  - (3) Thus, the classic hook and loop construction of Velcro was born and has aided generations since.
- c) King Fisher and Shinkansen Bullet Train (Japan)
  - (1) When the bullet train was first designed, it was a modern marvel, allowing passengers to travel across the country at speeds nearly 200 mph. The problem came when traveling in and out of tunnels, these high speeds caused pressure waves to build up in front of the train. These waves would create loud “booms” when exiting

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<sup>12</sup> <https://wyss.harvard.edu/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://biodesign.asu.edu/molecular-design-and-biomimetics/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://cbbe.engineering.gwu.edu/>

the tunnels. So, engineers sought for a way that the train could travel quietly while not losing the benefit of speed.

- (2) The King Fisher is a bird that hunts by diving into the water after its prey. This sudden change of environment from less dense atmosphere to more dense water gave engineers the idea that maybe they could mimic the King Fisher's bill and head shape.
- (3) After the redesign they found that not only the sound had been decreased, but the train could travel 10% faster using 15% less energy.

## God's Existence: Moral Argument

### I. Introduction: Establishing Basics

#### A. Establishing the Basic Concept of Rightness and Wrongness

1. Do you believe correct is better than incorrect?
  - a) If you were to ask this question to anyone, the rational response would be "Yes." A correct concept is always better to understand than an incorrect concept. Correct information is more beneficial than incorrect information.
2. Do you believe true is better than untrue?
  - a) Again, this comparison is between a positive and negative form. So yes, the negative form is not adding to but taking away. In a fact-based since, everyone would want the true answer than some deception.
3. Do you believe right is better than wrong?
  - a) Now this question begins to move from a "truth statement" to a "value statement."
  - b) Similarly, the rational response to this question is "Yes". Of course, we want the right information. To be in a right state is a better than to be in a wrong state.
  - c) At this moment, we are not talking about "biblical right" or "biblical wrong," whether a certain action is sin against God or not, but rather if the simple concepts of "right" and "wrong" are valid.
4. Do you believe moral is better than immoral?
  - a) Now this question brings into view accountability. While some may want to fidget and think of ways to justify the idea of "immorality," it follows the same line of reasoning. Moral is a positive and immoral is a negative. Yes, to be in a moral state of being is better than being in an immoral state of being. Pleasure or pain doesn't enter into our evaluation, simply the logical definitions of these terms.
5. Anyone who believes, even in the extreme philosophies of Situation Ethics or Relativism, still discusses the rightness or wrongness of actions.
  - a) While some may try to argue that stealing is justified, they would change their argument if asked to defend the theft by someone else of their own car, savings, or house.
  - b) Even in a worldview of relativism, where did the feeling of **any** 'moral' obligation come from. How can we say, "I ought to do this or that"?

### II. Moral Argument Stated

#### A. Practical Statements

1. Golden Rule: "Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them" (Matthew 7:12)
2. Love your neighbor as yourself. (Matthew 22:39)
3. Common statements illustrating faulty origins for morality
  - a) "Might makes right"

(1) First used by abolitionist Adin Ballou in 1846,<sup>15</sup> reversed by Abraham Lincoln (1860) “Let us have faith that **right makes might**, and in that faith, let us, to the end, dare to do our duty as we understand it.”<sup>16</sup>

- b) “He who has the gold makes the rule.” (*The world’s golden rule*)
- c) “The consensus is correct.”

4. Common statements illustrating proper moral origin

- a) “Don’t follow the crowd”
- b) “Love of money is the root of evil”

## B. Formal Arguments

1. The moral argument for the existence of God has been stated in a variety of ways through the centuries. We will discuss 2 approaches for evaluating its existence.
2. Formal Statement #1: Positive construction
  - a) If objective moral values exist in humanity, then by necessity an objective lawgiver must exist.
  - b) Objective moral values do exist.
  - c) Therefore, an objective lawgiver exists.
3. Formal Statement #2: “Subject of Critique” Construction
  - a) If the actions of people can be subjects of criticism, then there must be an objective standard.
  - b) The actions of people can be subjects of criticism.
  - c) Therefore, there must be an objective standard with an obligatory character.

## III. Evidence for Objective Morality

### A. Where did morality originate?

1. Nonliving material has no morality. Morality is not inherent to physical life. Only rational human beings display morality. Thus, if humanity cannot be the origin, where and who?
2. Atheist Bertrand Russell: “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...”<sup>17</sup>
3. George Gaylord Simpson (atheistic evolutionist): “good and evil, right and wrong, concepts irrelevant in nature except from the human viewpoint, become real and pressing features of the whole cosmos as viewed morally because morals arise only in man.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>URL: <https://archive.org/stream/christiannonres02ballgoog#page/n124/mode/2up/search/might+makes+right>

<sup>16</sup> *The Address of the Hon. Abraham Lincoln, in [V] indication of the Policy of the Framers of the Constitution and the Principles of the Republican Party, Delivered at Cooper Institute, February 27th, 1860*, Issued by the Young Men’s Republican Union, (659 Broadway, New-York,) with Notes by Charles C. Nott & Cephas Brainerd, Members of the Board of Control. New-York: George F. Nesbitt & Co., Printers and Stationers, 1860. URL: <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/l/lincoln/lincoln3/1:199.1?rgn=div2;view=fulltext>

<sup>17</sup> Bertrand Russell, *Autobiography*, Vol. III (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1969), 29.

<sup>18</sup> George Gaylord Simpson, *The Meaning of Evolution* (New York: Mentor, 1951), 179.

## B. Universally Condemned Actions<sup>19</sup>

1. For Objective Morality to exist, and therefore an Objective Moral Standard to exist, we need only show 1 example where it is universally acknowledged that a moral atrocity was committed.
2. A few examples of condemned actions:
  - a) Someone walks into a random house, shoots everyone in it, and steals their valuables.
  - b) An adult tortures an innocent child.
  - c) A man beats and rapes a woman.
  - d) Parents have children then abuse them physically or sexually.

## C. "Subject of Critique" (Formal Argument #2)

1. Thomas B. Warren (Christian philosopher) worded the argument in a more detailed manner in his debates with atheists Antony Flew (Warren and Flew, p. 173) and Wallace Matson (Warren and Matson, p. 285).
  - a) If the moral code and/or actions of any individual or society can properly be subjects of criticism (as to real moral wrong), then there must be some objective standard (some "higher law which transcends the provincial and transient") which is other than the particular moral code and which has an obligatory character which can be recognized.
  - b) The moral code and/or actions of any individual or society can properly be subjects of criticism (as to real moral wrong).
  - c) Therefore, there must be some objective standard (some "higher law which transcends the provincial and transient") which is other than the particular moral code and which has an obligatory character which can be recognized.
2. Most people, including many atheists, have admitted that real, objective good and evil exist.
  - a) Thomas B. Warren's debates with atheists demonstrate recorded recognition of atheists acknowledging objective morality. (Warren: Professor of Philosophy of Religion and Christian Apologetics at Harding Graduate School of Religion in Memphis, Tennessee.)
  - b) **Antony Flew** was one of the most well-known atheistic philosophers and authors in the late 20th century, and was Professor of Philosophy at the University of Reading in England. Dr. Warren and Dr. Flew met for four-night in September 1976. In preparation for their debate Dr. Warren asked Dr. Flew to respond in writing to several questions, including:
    - (1) "True/False. In murdering six million Jewish men, women, and children the Nazis were guilty of real (objective) moral wrong." Flew answered "True." He acknowledged the existence of "real (objective) moral wrong".<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Eric Lyons, "The Moral Argument for the Existence of God" in *Does God Exist?*, ed. Dave Miller (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press, 2017), 45.

<sup>20</sup> Warren and Flew, 1977, p. 248

- (2) In 2004, Antony Flew published a book announcing that he now believed in God and acknowledged the impossibility of a purely naturalistic explanation for life.
- c) **Dr. Warren also debated Wallace Matson** in a public debate in 1978 on the existence of God in Tampa, Florida. Dr. Matson was Professor of Philosophy at the University of California in Berkeley, California. Again, Dr. Warren and Dr. Matson asked written questions of each other in preparation for the debate. Similar to his questions to Dr. Flew, Warren asked:
- (1) "True/False. In murdering six million Jewish men, women, and children the Nazis were guilty of real (objective) moral wrong." Like Flew, Matson answered "True:" "real (objective) moral wrong" exists. Matson even acknowledged in the affirmative (i.e., "true") that "[i]f you had been a soldier during World War II and if the Nazis (1) had captured you and (2) had given you the choice of either joining them in their efforts to exterminate the Jews or being murdered, you would have had the objective moral obligation to die rather than to join them in the murder of Jewish men, women, and children."<sup>21</sup>
  - (2) Do not miss the point: Matson not only agreed that the Nazis were guilty of objective moral wrong, he also affirmed that a person would have the "objective moral obligation to die" rather than join with the murderous Nazi regime.
- d) Though at times atheist **Michael Ruse** has seemed opposed to the idea of moral objectivity, even he admitted in his book *Darwinism Defended* that "[t]he man who says that it is morally acceptable to rape little children, is just as mistaken as the man who says that  $2 + 2 = 5$ ."<sup>22</sup>
- (1) It's important to note the objectivity that Ruse uses. He takes the concrete, mathematical objective truth that  $2+2$  does not equal 5, then makes comparison with the Moral Rejection of rape. Thus, the concept of morality can be understood as objective a concept as mathematics.
3. Consistent Naturalistic Atheism: Example of following through with the atheistic worldview, which denies objective morality.
- a) William Provine (Professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Cornell University)
    - (1) "No inherent moral or ethical laws exist, nor are there absolute guiding principles for human society. The universe cares nothing for us and we have no ultimate meaning in life." (1988, *The Scientist*)<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Warren and Matson, 1978, p353.

<sup>22</sup> Michael Ruse (1982). *Darwinism Defended*. p275.

<sup>23</sup> William Provine (1988), "Scientists, Face it! Science and Religion are Incompatible," *The Scientist*, 2[16]:10, September 5, <http://classic.the-scientist.com/article/display/8667/>.

- (2) About a decade later, Dr. Provine wrote the following in an abstract to a keynote address at the second annual Darwin Day:
- (a) “Naturalistic evolution has clear consequences that Charles Darwin understood perfectly. 1) No gods worth having exist; 2) no life after death exists; 3) no ultimate foundation for ethics exists; 4) no ultimate meaning in life exists; and 5) human free will is nonexistent” (1998, Darwin Day Speech, UT Knoxville)<sup>24</sup>.
- (3) If there is no foundation upon which to base any ethical conclusions, then how could an atheist label any action or occurrence as “evil,” “bad,” or “wrong”?
- b) Jean-Paul Sartre (atheistic French philosopher; 1905-1980)
- (1) “Everything is indeed permitted if God does not exist, and man is in consequence forlorn, for he cannot find anything to depend upon either within or outside himself. He discovers forthwith, that he is without excuse. For if indeed existence precedes essence, one will never be able to explain one’s action by reference to a given and specific human nature; in other words, there is no determinism – man is free, man is freedom. Nor, on the other hand, if God does not exist, are we provided with any values or commands that could legitimise our behaviour. Thus we have neither behind us, nor before us in a luminous realm of values, any means of justification or excuse. – We are left alone, without excuse.”<sup>25</sup>

#### IV. **Characteristics of God based on the Moral Argument**

A. It is possible to determine some of the characteristics of the Being that provides the existence of objective morality within humanity.

##### 1. *Logical/Rational:*

- a) Objective morality can be applied in rational understanding through laws.
- b) Therefore, the lawgiver must also be rational and logical.
- c) Bible
- (1) Exodus 20 (Ten Commandments as example of order)
- (2) Matthew 7:12 Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.
- (3) Matthew 22:36-40 “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” Jesus said to him, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘YOU SHALL LOVE

<sup>24</sup> Provine, William (1998), “Evolution: Free Will and Punishment and Meaning in Life” (University of Tennessee, Knoxville Darwin Day Address Abstract) URL:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20120218122001/http://eeb.bio.utk.edu/darwin/Archives/1998ProvineAbstract.htm>

<sup>25</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, “Existentialism Is a Humanism” (1946 lecture) in *Existentialism from Dostoyevsky to Sartre*, Walter Kaufman. Meridian Publishing Company, 1989.

YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

2. *Truth/Righteous:*
  - a) If objective right and wrong exist, then there is objective truth
  - b) Now if objective truth exists, then it must exist outside of humanity in the Creator.
    - (1) John 14:6
    - (2) John 17:17
3. *Omnibenevolent (All Good):*
  - a) As the source for moral law and therefore the identification of what is good, God supplies all good and thus is defined by absolute goodness (holiness, justice)
  - b) Bible
    - (1) 1 Peter 1:15-16 "but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 because it is written, 'BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.'"
    - (2) Psalm 100:5 "For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, And His truth endures to all generations."
    - (3) 1 John 1:5 "...God is light and in Him is no darkness at all."
4. *Loving Creator:*
  - a) As the source of morality, the Lawgiver is the source of Love.
  - b) As the source of love and humanity, the Lawgiver can be defined as a Loving Creator.
  - c) Bible
    - (1) 1 John 4:8 "He who does not love does not know God, for God is love."

## God's Existence: Moral Argument - "Problem of Evil, Pain, and Suffering"

### I. Introduction

- A. For many, the existence of evil, pain, and suffering is a major stumbling block or hurdle to belief in God or even to their maintaining a solid faith in Him.
- B. I am not here to say that the solution is that none of these exist, because that is not true. It is not the reality of our world. Every person who has ever lived or living today has been impacted by all of these...evil, pain, and suffering.
- C. This topic is one that by its very nature carries a whole host of emotions. And I am not here to disregard your emotions. They are real and a part of your struggles.
- D. But what I do ask is that as we work through and discuss this universally important topic, that we take a few moments to try and separate the context for these concepts apart from our own emotions. It is as if we are an advisor outside of the stressful event, trying to give guidance that is unbiased by the emotional pressures.

### II. Statement of the Atheistic Argument of Evil

- A. Skeptics' statements:
  - 1. A good God would not allow so much evil in the world.
  - 2. An all-powerful God would stop suffering from happening.
  - 3. If God is all powerful and all loving, then why does evil exist?
  - 4. "If there is a good God, then why does He allow all the evil and injustice in this world?"
- B. Skeptical argument:
  - 1. If God is all loving and all powerful, but...
  - 2. Will not stop evil, then He is not all good.
  - 3. Cannot stop evil, then He is not all powerful
- C. Epicurean construction as provided by David Hume:<sup>26</sup>
  - 1. "Is he [God] willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then is he impotent."
  - 2. "Is he [God] able, but not willing? Then is he malevolent."
  - 3. "Is he [God] both able and willing? Whence then is evil?"
- D. The atheist critique emphasizes two fundamental, defining characteristics of God: all powerful and all loving.
  - 1. As a contrast, many religions have deities or gods that within their own description lack these traits.
  - 2. The God of the Bible is defined and described to meet these characteristics:
    - a) 1 John 4:8 "God is love"
    - b) Genesis 17:1 "I am the Almighty God";
    - c) Job 42:2 "I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You."
    - d) Matthew 19:26 "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible"

### III. Is it a Problem of Evil, of Pain, or of Suffering?

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<sup>26</sup> David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (London, 1779), 186, URL: [https://archive.org/details/bub\\_gb\\_E7dbAAAAQAAJ/page/n7/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_E7dbAAAAQAAJ/page/n7/mode/2up)

A. Response to evil:

1. By recognizing the existence of evil, you are also recognizing the contrast...good.
2. By critiquing an action or behavior as evil, you are calling upon an objective standard.
3. Far from using evil to prove God does not exist, establishing evil's existence proves there must be an objective good existence.
4. As C.S. Lewis made his journey from atheism to theism, he realized that the "problem of evil" presented more of a problem for atheism than it did for theism. He stated:
  - a) My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust?... Of course, I could have given up my idea of justice by saying it was nothing but a private idea of my own. But if I did that, then my argument against God collapsed too—for the argument depended on saying that the world was really unjust, not simply that it did not happen to please my private fancies. Thus in the very act of trying to prove that God did not exist—in other words, that the whole of reality was senseless—I found I was forced to assume that one part of reality—namely my idea of justice—was full of sense. Consequently, atheism turns out to be too simple.<sup>27</sup>
5. The question then becomes not whether God exists, but how we understand the biblical God's existence and ours.

B. Response to pain:

1. For pain to be an argument against God's existence, it must be shown that pain is contrary<sup>[SEP]</sup> to God.
2. Is pain objectively evil?
3. If pain can be beneficial at any time then it is not objectively evil, and therefore not against God by its simple existence.
4. Can pain be beneficial?
  - a) Symptom of worse problem: sickness or infection
  - b) Temporary pain for long-term benefit
5. Some pain is not beneficial, but it is caused by the evil actions of others.
  - a) Therefore, it is not a problem with pain but rather the existence of evil actions.

C. Response to suffering:

1. For suffering to be an argument against God's existence, in general. It must be shown that suffering is contrary to God.
2. Is suffering objectively evil?
  - a) If suffering can be beneficial, at any time, then it is not objectively evil and therefore not against God.

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<sup>27</sup> C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952). 45-46.

3. Can suffering be beneficial?
  - a) Suffering the consequences of your own poor decisions can be corrective.
  - b) Suffering by choice for the benefit of others. This brings joy in their life, and a selfless attitude can be deeply rewarding for the sufferer.
4. Thus, all suffering is not objectively evil, and therefore is not an overall argument against God.
5. Useless Suffering
  - a) In response to the restriction of not being able to generally use all of suffering as an argument against God, the approach often turns to focus on suffering that does not appear to serve any purpose.
  - b) The question then becomes why does God allow pointless, useless, needless suffering?
    - (1) For addressing this issue, we need to first consider the perspective: who is deciding it is useless or needless? So often we are limited in knowledge to our immediate surroundings, our immediate context, and our immediate time. Is there something outside of our situation for which this suffering plays a role?
    - (2) Let's address this issue, by looking at some reasons why suffering may be in our lives, in the next section.

#### IV. **Why Do We Experience Suffering?**

- A. The fact still remains that we experience pain and suffering in our lives. And, we do wonder why God allows this to happen. Why does God allow a child to be diagnosed with terminal cancer? Why does God allow a young mother to be tragically taken from her family?
  1. Free Will (Freedom of Choice)
    - a) It is a fundamental aspect of humanity's creation
    - b) Sometimes we suffer because humans (you and I) have the freedom to make choices.
    - c) From the very earliest pages of Genesis, we are shown how this freedom is also a responsibility, which has consequences both good and bad.
  2. Our personal choices
    - a) There are consequences to the choices we make.
    - b) While some choices bring joy and contentment, other choices bring suffering.
    - c) If you choose to smoke or drink, then there are consequences to your health.
    - d) If you decide to disregard wise counsel, on a variety of life issues, then negative consequences and suffering are likely.
    - e) 1 Peter 4:15-16 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.
  3. Choices of others

- a) Our personal choices can also bring suffering to others.
  - b) Choosing to engage in dangerous, reckless, even immoral behavior, will affect others around us with suffering.
  - c) Being the innocent party, we can receive the impact of unwise or immoral behavior.
  - d) Drugs, alcohol, and illegal activities are common reasons that suffering affects many people.
4. Past generations
- a) Similar to the suffering caused by the choices of others, this addresses longstanding consequences.
  - b) Sometimes caused by unwise or immoral decisions, but it can also be rash or not fully evaluated.
  - c) Immoral: Decisions by world leaders have long lasting consequences.
  - d) Unwise: Asbestos, lead paint, pesticides
  - e) We also benefit from past generations.
    - (1) Innovations and conveniences to life. Technologies that allow us to do new tasks.
    - (2) Health care advances, procedures, and medicines that promote better lives.
5. Natural Laws
- a) Sometimes we can suffer from the consequences of the natural world.
  - b) Physical Laws can result in suffering. Sometimes we think we can jump farther, climb higher, or run faster than we really can.
    - (1) Gravity can hurt when you fall from a large height.
    - (2) Electricity is a wonderful aspect of our Universe, but it can also be quite painful or deadly.
  - c) Natural phenomena like hurricanes, tornados, tsunamis, earthquakes, volcanos, landslides, and wildfires can cause much devastation and suffering.
  - d) Should God suspend the laws of nature any time there is suffering?
  - e) We reasoned from regularity, consistency, and <sup>[SEP]</sup>design in the Cosmos for the necessary <sup>[SEP]</sup>existence of God.

V. **Conclusion: Lessons learned from evil, pain, and suffering**

A. Standard Recognized

- 1. This claim invokes a comparison of good and evil, <sup>[SEP]</sup>which requires an objective standard...God.
- 2. By proposing the “problem of evil, pain, and suffering” the Moral Argument is invoked.

B. Source Recognized

- 1. God giving freewill to mankind was not evil.
- 2. Freewill demands choice, which brings responsibility.
- 3. Our choices, other’s choices, and choices of past generations all have an impact on suffering that might affect us.
- 4. Left with natural pain and suffering. Is it pointless?

- C. Recognition of the **Solution** (what solution are atheists looking for? What solution has God given)
1. Do atheists want God to remove all suffering?
    - a) What about good and bad suffering?
    - b) Is suffering we deem pointless, really of no use for us or others?
    - c) What timeframe do they want it removed, because God has promised there will be a time and place (heaven) where we will have no suffering.
  2. Where is God when we suffer? - Same place when His Son died for our sinful decisions.

## God's Existence: Harmony of Faith and Science

### I. Introduction:

A. Sometimes our world considers these two concepts: faith and science, as being completely separate, divided in such a way as they are exclusive from one another. This prevailing viewpoint says that faith should not enter into a science discussion, that any religious concept must be checked at the door of the laboratory. To have as an element of your thought, a belief in God, while you are engaging in scientific discovery is ridiculous and even harmful to progress.

B. And then the counter position is also sometimes discussed, that to engage in a religious discussion that incorporates scientific thinking or concepts is equally absurd.

C. So, let's take a few moments to think about these concepts: science and faith

### D. Definition of Terms

#### 1. What is science?

a) Ask this question of the world, and the common response might include: Biology, Physics, Geology, Astronomy, Chemistry, or other specific fields.

b) Dictionary:

(1) "(1) the state of knowing; knowledge as distinguished from ignorance or misunderstanding. (2) a department of systematized knowledge as an object of study" (Merriam-Webster)<sup>28</sup>

(2) Summarized: Quest for knowledge

#### 2. What is faith?

a) Ask this question of the world, and you will commonly get something like:

(1) "Faith is believing when common sense tells you not to." (Movie: *Miracle on 34th Street*)

(2) This is an irrational view of faith, a seemingly "blind faith."

b) Dictionary

(1) English: "(1) strong belief or trust in someone or something; (2) a system of religious beliefs" (Merriam-Webster)<sup>29</sup>

(2) Greek: conviction of the truth of anything, belief (Thayer's)

(3) Summarized: Belief, Trust, Confidence

c) What is biblical faith?

(1) Faith has a Past, Present, and Future structure

(2) Hebrews 11:1 "Now faith is the **assurance** of things hoped for, the **conviction** of things not seen."

(a) PRESENT "assurance/conviction"

(i) assurance = "placed under, foundation, substructure"

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<sup>28</sup> "Science." Merriam-Webster.com Merriam-Webster, 2016. Web. November 2016. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/science>

<sup>29</sup> "Faith." Merriam-Webster.com. Merriam-Webster, 2016. Web. November 2016. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/faith>

- (ii) Our faith in God has a “foundation aspect” because of the trust and confidence built from our past experiences with God’s faithfulness and fulfillment of promises.
  - (b) based on PAST knowledge/experience
  - (c) of FUTURE hope/rewards
    - (i) Our faith can walk into the unknown future, where we cannot see (2 Cor 5:7) because of our past confidence that God will continue to be Who He is.
- (3) Hebrews 11:6 “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”
  - (a) PAST/PRESENT - “must believe that He (God) is (exists)”
  - (b) FUTURE - “a rewarder” God is able to reward

## II. Views on God and Science

### A. Bible’s View: Science Begins with God

1. Proverbs 1:7 “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.”
  - a) Latin Vulgate: “timor Domini principium **scientiae** sapientiam atque doctrinam stulti despiciunt”
  - b) “Scientiae” is a root for the modern English term “science,” showing the defining characteristic of this term being knowledge.
2. Romans 1:19-21 “because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.”
  - a) This verse plainly shows that God’s existence can be known and observed.


### B. Atheist’s View:

1. “God of the gaps” mentality
  - a) Student: “So you don’t believe in God?”
  - b) James Watson: “Oh, no. Absolutely not. The biggest advantage to believing in God is you don’t have to understand anything, no physics, no biology... I wanted to understand.”
2. Science Expels God: Headlines
  - a) Will Science Someday Rule Out the Possibility of God? LiveScience
  - b) Big Bang: Is there room for God? (BBC News)
  - c) Has String Theory Unraveled God? (Veritas.org)
  - d) Stephen Hawking ‘Science Makes God Unnecessary’ (ABC News)
3. Stephen Hawking (1942-2018)
  - a) *Spontaneous creation is the reason there is something rather than nothing, why the universe exists, why we exist. It is not necessary to*

*invoke God to light the blue touch paper and set the universe going.*  
(Hawking, The Grand Design)

- b) *The question is: is the way the universe began chosen by God for reasons we can't understand, or was it determined by a law of science? I believe the second. If you like, you can call the laws of science 'God', but it wouldn't be a personal God that you could meet, and ask questions.*  
(Roberts, The Telegraph, 2010)<sup>30</sup>

C. Past Scientists' View:

1. The following scientists are quoted, not because we agree with their theology or that they are a religious guide, but because they have each been recognized for scientific endeavors that have provided lasting impact.
2. Can a scientist believe in God and do incredible science? The previous atheistic quotes would seem to imply an answer of "No", but the following quotes will provide evidence saying emphatically "Yes!"
3. Johannes Kepler (1571-1630)
  - a) Father of Planetary Motion, Kepler's Laws
  - b) *I thank Thee, my Creator and Lord, that Thou hast given me this joy in Thy creation, this delight in the works of Thy hands; I have shown the excellency of Thy works unto man, so far as my mind was able to comprehend Thine infinity.*<sup>31</sup>
4. Robert Boyle (1627-1691)
  - a) Father of Modern Chemistry
  - b) Boyle's Law
  - c) *When with bold telescopes I survey the old and newly discovered stars and planets when with excellent microscopes I discern the unimitable subtlety of nature's curious workmanship; and when, in a word, by the help of anatomical knives, and the light of chymical furnaces, I study the book of nature I find myself oftentimes reduced to exclaim with the Psalmist, How manifold are Thy works, O Lord! in wisdom hast Thou made them all!*<sup>32</sup>
5. Isaac Newton (1643-1727)
  - a) Newton's Laws of Motion, Law of Gravity, invented Calculus, and reflecting telescope
  - b) *This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being.*<sup>33</sup>
6. Max Planck (1858-1947)
  - a) Father of Quantum Mechanics

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<sup>30</sup> Roberts, Laura. (2010) "Stephen Hawking: God was not needed to create the Universe."  
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/science/science-news/7976594/Stephen-Hawking-God-was-not-needed-to-create-the-Universe.html>

<sup>31</sup> Northrop, Stephen Abbot. n.d. *A Cloud of Witnesses*. Cincinnati, OH: John F. McCurdy.

<sup>32</sup> Boyle, Robert. 1660. *Seraphic Love*.

<sup>33</sup> Hutchins, Robert M., ed. 1952. *Great Books of the Western World*. Vol. 34. Chicago, IL: Encyclopedia Britannica. p. 369.

- b) *There can never be any real opposition between religion and science; for the one is the complement of the other. Every serious and reflective person realizes, I think, that the religious element in his nature must be recognized and cultivated if all the powers of the human soul are to act together in perfect balance and harmony.*<sup>34</sup>
  - c) *Both religion and science need for their activities the belief in God, and moreover, God stands for the former in the beginning, and for the latter at the end of the whole thinking.*<sup>35</sup>
  - d) *All matter originates and exists only by virtue of a force which brings the particles of an atom to vibration and holds this most minute solar system of the atom together. We must assume behind this force the existence of a conscious and intelligent Mind. This mind is the matrix of all matter.*<sup>36</sup>
7. Wernher von Braun (1912-1977)
- a) Father of Rocket Science
  - b) *"It is as difficult for me to understand a scientist who does not acknowledge the presence of a superior rationality behind the existence of the universe as it is to comprehend a theologian who would deny the advance of science...Far from being independent or opposing forces, science and religion are sisters. . . There is certainly no scientific reason why God cannot retain the same position in our modern world that He held before we began probing His creation with the telescope and cyclotron (1981, 35,38)."*
8. Allan Sandage (1926-2010)
- a) *Observational Cosmologist, assisted Edwin Hubble*
  - b) *I find it quite improbable that such order came out of chaos. There has to be some organizing principle. God to me is a mystery but is the explanation for the miracle of existence - why there is something rather than nothing. (New York Times, March 12, 1991. B9; as quoted in Lennox, 44)*
  - c) *Romans 1:19–21 seems profound. And the deeper any scientist pushes his work, the more profound it does indeed become. (Sandage, 1985, 54)*
- D. Bible's View: God Is Observable
1. Romans 1:19-21 "because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened."
    - a) "God has shown it to them"
    - b) "His invisible attributes are clearly seen"
    - c) "being understood...eternal power and Godhead"

<sup>34</sup> "Where Is Science Going?" 1932.

<sup>35</sup> Planck, Max. *Religion und Naturwissenschaft*. 1958.

<sup>36</sup> Cited in Eggenstein, 1984.

d) "although they knew God"

III. Conclusion

A. I hope what we have shown breaks down the arbitrary wall that the world has constructed between faith and science. Both concepts are important to have as part of our lives...a quest for knowledge (science) and strong conviction (faith) for what and Who we believe.

## Bible's Inspiration: Revelation and Claims of Inspiration

### I. Introduction

- A. In this section, we begin making the transition from questions of God's existence to those questions focused on the Bible. What does the Bible contain? What does it claim to be? And, what does a message inspired by God mean for our evaluation?
- B. Defining terms: What is "inspiration" or "inspire"?
  - 1. English (Merriam-Webster): "Inspire"
    - a) "To spur, motivate, influence"
    - b) "to breathe or blow into or upon"<sup>37</sup>
  - 2. Greek lexicon: *theopneustos*; *theos* = God; *pneu* = breathe (stem of pneumonia)
  - 3. Biblical: 2 Peter 1:21 "for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."
    - a) To say the Bible is inspired is to say it has been motivated, influenced by, or breathed out by God.
- C. Therefore, inspiration by God is the process by which He made His message known to humanity.
- D. In viewing the inspiration of the Bible, we must show that the Bible is not merely the writings of men, but instead is **beyond human production**.

### II. Implications of Inspiration (Divine Origin)

- A. God exists.
  - 1. If the evidence leads us to recognize the Bible as having divine origin, then it by necessity serves as a proof for God's existence.
- B. The message must be considered.
  - 1. A message directly from God to humanity must be given significance in our lives.
  - 2. While it doesn't remove our free will, its origin forces our consideration.
- C. The Bible makes demands on your life.
  - 1. It requires certain behaviors, but helps you form healthy boundaries while offering promises to benefit you.
- D. Christians cannot be agnostics.
  - 1. A message of divine origin provides absolute truth and certainty to what it addresses. So, Christians cannot walk away from studying it with the position, "I cannot fully know or be certain about..." This view goes against the Bible's foundational doctrine.
  - 2. Psalm 46:10 *Be still and know that I am God*
  - 3. John 8:32 "And you shall **know** the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
  - 4. 1 John 5:13
    - a) This truth establishes the entire framework for Christianity
    - b) Example: 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of your local bank
    - c) John has indirectly established the validity of the entire structure.
      - (1) Since we can know we are saved, then we can know Jesus is the Son of God
      - (2) Since we only learn Jesus is the Son of God from the Bible, then we can know it is the Word of God
      - (3) If the Bible is God's Word, then God exists as the Bible unequivocally declares.

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<sup>37</sup> "Inspire." Merriam-Webster.com. Merriam-Webster, 2016. Web. November 2016. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/inspire>

### III. The Bible's Claims of Inspiration

#### A. Does the Bible claim inspiration?

1. There is no need to continue discussing inspiration of the Bible, if it does not claim to be inspired within its own pages.
2. Very few books actually make such a bold claim. If we could take all the books and pull out all the "spiritual," then sort through all those for books of doctrine, then pull out only those that claim inspiration from God, then you would be left with only a handful of books. Some of those few would be the Koran of Islam, the Vedas of Hinduism, the Book of Mormon, maybe a few others, and then the Bible.

#### B. The Bible claims emphatically to be inspired from God.

1. Statements such as: "God said..." or similar attributions to God's speaking, saying, or commanding are made some 2,700 times.
2. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."
3. 1 Corinthians 2:12-13 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.
4. Jesus said in Matthew 22:31 "Have you not read what was spoken to you by God?"

### IV. Understanding Inspiration and Revelation

#### A. Important Distinction—Revelation is not the same as inspiration

1. Inspiration is the process by which God made His message known to humanity.
2. Revelation is the body of truth God wanted humanity to know, and can come from God revealing truths through normal understanding (natural revelation) or through divine communication (special revelation).
3. In application, all of the Bible is inspired but not all of the Bible came by special revelation.

#### B. The Bible contains: Known Facts and Special Revelation

##### 1. Known Facts:

- a) By this we mean the Bible includes information generally known by the people of that time and place. The inclusion of the information was not necessarily new or unknown information, but rather were aspects that worked to convey the full account.
- b) Examples:
  - (1) Existing Nations: Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Roman, Philistines, Hittites, and many others
  - (2) Existing Lands: Egypt, Canaan, Judea, Samaria, Mesopotamia, Cyprus, Crete, Macedonia, Greece, Malta, and Italy
  - (3) Known Geography: Specific rivers (Nile River, Jordan River, Tigris, Euphrates), mountains (mountains of Ararat, Mount Sinai, Mount Nebo, Mount Carmel), valleys (Kidron Valley, Valley of Elah, Valley of Achor), seas (Mediterranean Sea, Salt Sea, Sea of Galilee), and a host of cities.
  - (4) Everyday experiences: shepherding, fishing, traveling, sleeping, eating, etc. The description of these events would not have required God's special revelation of what they involve.
  - (5) Statements referencing eyewitness perspective:

- (a) Luke 1:1-3 “just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, 3 it seemed good to me also, having [b]had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account...”
- (b) Acts 2:22 “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know”
- (c) See also: John 20:30-31; Acts 1:9; Acts 10:39-42; Acts 26:24-28; 1 Corinthians 15:6-8; 1 Peter 5:1; 2 Peter 1:16; 1 John 1:1-3
- (6) Personal relationships:
  - (a) Paul’s relationship with Timothy, Titus, Epaphroditus, etc.
  - (b) John’s relationship with Gaius, Demetrius, etc.
  - (c) Peter’s relationship with Paul, Silvanus, etc.
- 2. Special Revelation:
  - a) By this we mean the divine information that was specially given; facts, commands, truths that were unknown to man or could not have been known on his own.
  - b) Examples
    - (1) Direct Communication
      - (a) By voice (Genesis 2:16)
      - (b) Dreams (Numbers 12:6; 1 Samuel 28:6)
      - (c) Visions (Daniel 1:17)
      - (d) Teachings of Jesus (Hebrews 1:1-2)
    - (2) Appearing to the people
      - (a) Above the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:22)
      - (b) Pillar of cloud/fire (Exodus 13:21)
      - (c) Whirlwind (Job 38:2)
      - (d) Jesus as a man (Colossians 1:19)
    - (3) Revelation to Writers
      - (a) Moses when writing of Israel's wanderings in the wilderness, did not have to have a revealing of the information—he observed it.
        - (i) Contrast: when Moses penned the Creation account, he received revelation from God, because Moses would have had no way of observing it.
      - (b) Luke when writing said, *traced the course of all things* (1:3)
        - (i) Contrast: When John described the beauty of heaven in human terms in the book of Revelation, it was specially revealed to him.

V. **How was the Bible Inspired?**

- A. When we search for “How the Bible was inspired?,” we find No verse with a direct answer.
  - 1. But by the Scriptures we can reason correctly
- B. Different mechanisms for “How”:
  - 1. Universal Inspiration:
    - a) Defined: The writers were given great writing ability from God, but without any supernatural guidance. The Bible is only a human production.
    - b) Issue: The writers never credited the work to human reason, but to God.

- (1) 2 Samuel 23:2 *The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue.*
  - (2) Acts 1:16 *The Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David...*
  - (3) 1 Corinthians 2:12-13 *not with man's words, but the Spirit's words*
2. Concept Inspiration:
- a) Defined: The writers were given a divine concept to present. We are left only to gather spiritual ideas, rather than the specifics.
  - b) Issue: The writers conveyed that the very words given were very important.
    - (1) Psalm 119:160 *The entirety of Your Word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.*
    - (2) *Matthew 5:17-18 Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled*
      - (a) Jot (smallest Hebrew stroke) and tittle (smallest projection). Analogous to crossing your t's and dotting your i's.
3. Mechanical or Dictation Inspiration:
- a) Defined: God dictated to the writers every word they were to write, and they were merely scribes mechanically copying the message they were given.
  - b) Issue: There is both language (syntax) variation and interpersonal references that are found throughout the Bible.
    - (1) If every word was dictated by God, then one might expect the same style, structure, vocabulary, etc. to be found throughout the Bible. However, there is variation in style, structure, and vocabulary among the books credited to different authors.
    - (2) This description of dictation would remove the interpersonal references embedded in Scripture, or at the least would say that those personal commendations, rebukes, and encouragements represent uninspired statements within inspired text.
4. Verbal, Plenary Inspiration:
- a) **Defined:** The writers wrote exactly what God wanted, without error or mistakes, yet within their personal approach. The Holy Spirit guaranteed the message was inspired from God through each man.
  - b) **Human element** is seen by the type of language used, vocabulary, fears expressed, prayers offered, personal relationships called upon as examples, and personal life struggles listed.
  - c) **Inspiration of every word** seen as well
    - (1) *Matthew 5:17-18 Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. 18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled*
      - (a) Jot (smallest Hebrew stroke) and tittle (smallest projection). Analogous to crossing your t's and dotting your i's.
    - (2) In several passages, Jesus defended against the Jewish leaders (both Sadducees and Pharisees) basing His argument on the very tense or number of a word.
      - (a) Matthew 22:32 'I **am** the God of Abraham, the God of

Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

(b) Yet Abraham had been dead 400+ years.

(c) John 8:58 "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

(3) Jesus used quotations from Scripture to fend off Satan's temptations, as opposed to simply giving a godly concept.

(4)

(5) Galatians 3:16 "Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ."

(a) Paul quotes Old Testament prophecy and points to it being singular not plural to make the reference directly to Jesus.

## **VI. Conclusion:**

A. Whether what Bible writers were conveying 1) Previous knowledge, 2) Eyewitness record, or 3) Special revelation from God, inspiration guaranteed it was the exact content God desired to be recorded.

## Bible's Inspiration: Internal Evidences (Brevity and Unity)

### I. Introduction

- A. In our previous section we addressed what the Bible contains in terms of God's revelation, the Bible's claims for inspiration and the Bible's descriptions for how the writers were inspired.
- B. However, to claim a position or a quality does not make it so. While the Bible directly and repeatedly claims inspiration, the claim does not make it so. However, it does press upon us the responsibility to evaluate and ask the question, "Is the Bible inspired by God?"
- C. Let's think about that question and begin to formulate our response.

### II. Practical and Formal Arguments

- A. Practical Statement
  - 1. Humans make mistakes, but the Bible does not.
  - 2. The Bible provides information humans could not have known.
- B. Formal Argument
  - 1. If the Bible contains elements beyond human production, then the Bible must be of divine origin.
  - 2. The Bible does contain elements beyond human production.
  - 3. Therefore, the Bible is a divine production.

### III. Brevity

- A. Many history writings have multiple volumes to cover less time.
- B. Often works endure because of their succinct way of communicating.
- C. The Bible is thorough but concise<sup>38</sup>
  - 1. Covers ~4,000 years of history (Creation to 1st century)
  - 2. 1,189 chapters, 31,102 verses, and over 780,000 words in the King James Version

### IV. Unity

- A. **1600** – Timespan for the Bible to be written
  - 1. Remember the history of the Bible is from the Creation through the first century, but Moses wrote the Pentateuch as one of the earliest portions of the Old Testament around 1500 BC.
  - 2. The apostle John wrote Revelation in the late first century AD.
  - 3. This time frame covers a tumultuous period of human history...the rise and fall of various empires Egypt, Israel's United Kingdom, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and the early days of Rome.
- B. **40** – Number of biblical writers (approximate)
  - 1. Writers came from diverse and sometimes opposing backgrounds.
    - a) Moses (Pentateuch) was a Hebrew child raised by Egyptian aristocracy.
    - b) Samuel and Ezekiel - priests
    - c) David and Solomon - kings of Israel
    - d) Daniel - became a statesman in Babylon
    - e) Nehemiah - royal cupbearer
    - f) Ezra - scribe
    - g) Matthew was a tax collector for the Roman government.
    - h) Luke (gospel and Acts) was a physician.
    - i) Peter and John were fishermen.
    - j) Paul was trained at the foot of Gamaliel, a Pharisee.

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<sup>38</sup> Interesting Bible statistics for verse and word counts: <http://www.biblebelievers.com/believers-org/kjv-stats.html>

- k) James and Jude were likely the half-brothers of Jesus
- C. **3** – Languages of original texts
  - 1. Old Testament primarily written in Hebrew
  - 2. Daniel and Ezra have some sections in Aramaic
  - 3. New Testament in Greek
  - 4. Having different languages makes sense and reinforces the long timeline of writing, as world empires and common languages changed over that time.
- D. **2** – Regions where writers were located
  - 1. Middle East and Europe
- E. **1** – Theme of the Bible: Jesus Christ, the Messiah
  - 1. We're told that He was with God at creation (John 1:1), and He will be there at the end (Revelation 22:13).
  - 2. He can be seen throughout the books of the Bible:
    - a) Old Testament
      - (1) Promise for man's redemption (Genesis)
      - (2) Passover Lamb (Exodus)
      - (3) Bright and morning star (Numbers)
      - (4) Fulfillment of law (Deuteronomy)
      - (5) Take away evil oppression (Judges)
      - (6) Seed of David (Ruth)
      - (7) King of kings and Lord of lords (Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles)
      - (8) Shepherd (Psalms)
      - (9) Wisdom (Proverbs)
      - (10) Babe of Bethlehem (Micah)
      - (11) Suffering Servant (Isaiah)
    - b) New Testament
      - (1) Promised King (Matthew)
      - (2) Great Servant (Mark)
      - (3) Perfect Son of Man (Luke)
      - (4) God made flesh (John)
      - (5) Ascended Lord (Acts)
      - (6) Power unto salvation (Romans)
      - (7) Firstfruits from the dead (Corinthians)
      - (8) Freedom (Galatians)
      - (9) Joy (Philippians)
      - (10) Will return (Thessalonians)
      - (11) Mercy (Philemon)
      - (12) High Priest (Hebrews)
      - (13) Love (1,2,3 John)
      - (14) To Contend for (Jude)
      - (15) To die for (Revelation)

## V. Charges against the Bible's Unity

### A. "The Bible writers **copied** each other."

- 1. Accusation: The Bible is not inspired, similarities must have been from writers copying each other.
- 2. Implication: The Bible is so united in details that it needs an explanation. If only accepting human production, it must have been copied from each other.
- 3. This seems to not appreciate that within the few books of the Bible, very few cover exactly the same time period or topical focus. So, copying does very little to address the consistent nature from a human production viewpoint.

### B. "The Bible writers **colluded** with each other."

1. Accusation: The Bible is not inspired; the writers simply discussed their writings with each other in order to avoid inconsistencies.
  2. Implication: The Bible is so united in message that there must be an explanation other than its inspiration by God.
  3. This view may appreciate the diverse writings of the Bible and that no 2 books are copies of each other, but what it doesn't appreciate is that many of the writers were separated by hundreds and if not over a thousand years. For those writers who were contemporary with each other, they were often physically separated by hundreds and thousands of miles. They also often referenced their interactions with each other as opposed to hiding them.
- C. "The Bible **contradicts** itself."
1. Accusation: The Bible makes statements of detail and message that contradict each other, and therefore show inconsistency as characteristic of a human production.
  2. Implication: This view must deal with the positive evidence already proposed for the Bible's consistency. It also contradicts the negative charges of collusion or copying.
  3. Due to the diversity of content in the Bible, addressing differing times, events, and people, the charges of alleged discrepancies can each be evaluated according to simple logical understandings.

## VI. **Conclusion**

- A. We can see the impressive brevity in how much information is conveyed, but how concise the Bible really is.
- B. Although the Bible was written over such a long time period, in numerous places, and by so many writers, the unity of its theme gives the hallmark of unique inspiration.

## **Bible's Inspiration: Internal Evidences (Consistency and Interdependency)**

### **I. Introduction**

- A. In our previous section, we began looking at the question, "Is the Bible inspired by God?" and focused on 2 evidences that point to the Bible's inspiration: Brevity and Unity.
- B. In this section, we are going to continue our discussion and add 2 more Internal Evidences for inspiration: that of Consistency and Interdependency.
- C. As we begin let's remember the formulations we introduced for the "Inspiration Argument"

### **II. Practical and Formal Arguments**

#### **A. Practical Statement**

- 1. Humans make mistakes, but the Bible does not.
- 2. The Bible provides information humans could not have known.

#### **B. Formal Argument**

- 1. If the Bible contains elements beyond human production, then the Bible must be of divine origin.
- 2. The Bible does contain elements beyond human production.
- 3. Therefore, the Bible is a divine production.

### **III. Bible's Consistency**

#### **A. Consistency in content**

##### **1. Creation**

- a) Genesis 1 (creation from nothing in six days)
- b) Exodus 20:11 (in six days)
- c) Psalm 33:6 ("by the word of the Lord," "by the breath of His mouth")
- d) Mark 10:6 (He made them male and female)
- e) Romans 1:20 (since the creation of the world)

##### **2. Noah and the Flood**

- a) 1 Chronicles 1:4; Isaiah 54:9; Ezekiel 14:14;
- b) Matthew 24:37; Hebrews 11:7; 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5
- c) Unique word used for the "flood" in the Old Testament (Genesis and Psalm 29).
- d) Same intent found in the New Testament with a unique word not used for other water or weather events.

##### **3. Abraham**

- a) Abraham's story is found in the book of Genesis, but his example and the promises made from God to him are found in 16 Old Testament books and 11 New Testament books.
- b) These references show consistency in the details of his story, but also the significance it would play in subsequent generations.

##### **4. Moses**

- a) Similarly, Moses' story is found directly in Exodus through Deuteronomy, but his name is referenced in 19 Old Testament books and 12 New Testament books.
- b) As the man to whom God gave the Ten Commandments and through inspiration provided all of the laws, the reference back to this covenant is often termed "The Law of Moses". This again shows the consistent significance of his life for all of history and in New Testament application.

#### IV. Bible's Interdependency

##### A. Writers referenced each other<sup>39</sup>

1. Moses in Joshua 8:32; 2 Chronicles 34:14; Ezra 3:2
  - a) 2 Chronicles 34:14 "Now when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the Lord, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the Lord given by Moses."
2. Isaiah referenced in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles
  - a) 2 Chronicles 32:32 "Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his goodness, indeed they are written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, and in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel."
3. Jeremiah mentioned in 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel
  - a) Ezra 1:1 "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia"
4. Jonah in 2 Kings 14:25 "the prophet"
5. Micah in Jeremiah 26:18 "prophesied in the days of Hezekiah"
6. Haggai and Zechariah in Ezra 5:1 "prophets"
7. Ezra in Nehemiah 8:1 "the scribe"
8. Paul in 2 Peter 3:14-16

##### B. Interdependency between books

1. Especially significant is how the New Testament makes extensive use of the Old Testament. Though there are different ways to divide, considering direct quotes, similar phrasings, or specific references, there are around 900 references in the New Testament.
2. If you were to visualize this interdependency, with Old Testament books on one edge and New Testament books on another, then it would look like a complex web of interconnections, weaving between Old Testament passages and books to their New Testament references and applications.
3. Diversity of use:
  - a) Acts quotes 15 Old Testament books, with over 100 references
  - b) Revelation quotes 16 books, with over 80 references
  - c) Romans quotes 19 books, with over 80 references
  - d) Hebrews quotes 20 books, with over 100 references
  - e) Matthew quotes 22 books, with over 120 references
  - f) It's also been noted that Jesus quotes from 22 Old Testament books.<sup>40</sup>
4. Extent of use:
  - a) Genesis is quoted/referenced over 120 times
  - b) Exodus is quoted/referenced over 90 times
  - c) Isaiah is quoted/referenced over 130 times
  - d) Psalms is quoted/referenced around 140 times
  - e) Psalm 110:1-4 most quoted Old Testament passage, 17 times in 9 NT books
    - (1) The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool." The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies! Your people shall be volunteers in the day of Your power; in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the

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<sup>39</sup> Encyclopedia of Bible Facts (Mark Water)

<sup>40</sup> Encyclopedia of Bible Facts (Mark Water)

dew of Your youth. The Lord has sworn and will not relent, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."

5. Considering some of the different ways that the New Testament uses and interconnects with the Old, let's take a few examples from the book Luke.
  - a) Luke 1:76 - Malachi 3:1 **quoting** a prophecy about John the Immerser's role in preparing the way.
  - b) Luke 4:18-19 - Isaiah 61:1-2 includes a quotation as Jesus reads in the synagogue from the scroll of Isaiah, which relates a prophecy of the Messiah.
  - c) Luke 2:34 - Isaiah 8:14-15 uses similar **phrasing** as Simeon blesses and makes the prophetic connection about Jesus to Mary.
  - d) Luke 11:30 - Jonah 4:1-11 makes a **specific reference** to Jonah going to the Ninevites preaching repentance, and a greater, the Son of Man, also preaching repentance.

## V. Conclusion

- A. You know when you see a beautiful painting, a masterpiece of design and elegance, you recognized that behind that incredible end result are a thousand brush strokes carefully and consistently placed.
- B. And when you see, in nature, the beautiful intricacy of a spider's web, you realize the painstaking care that little spider had to take to create just the right interconnections.
- C. How much more impressive is the consistency and interdependency found in the Bible.

## Bible's Inspiration: External Evidences (Manuscript Evidence)

### I. Introduction: Transition from Internal to External Evidences

- A. In the transition from Internal Evidences of the Bible's inspiration to External Evidences, we should first recognize the Bible's place in documented history.
- B. The Bible is the most well-documented work in all of history. This should bring incredible confidence to the internal evidences discussion on unity and consistency, because we are not dissecting and evaluating only a few fragments of information with absent sections or holes in its completeness. Rather we are analyzing and discussing a work whose individual phrases, words, and even strokes of letters are comparable across thousands of ancient manuscripts.

### II. Manuscript Evidence

- A. But manuscript evidence, or sometimes it is called the Bibliographical Test, also builds the case from an external evidence perspective. This makes the textual discussion of the Bible as relevant, and even dramatically more appropriate, than even some of the great literary works of the ancient world that well-studied men and women spend years analyzing.
- B. The table below shows well-known ancient works with notes on when they were written, date of earliest existing manuscript, and the number of separate manuscripts and fragments available:<sup>41</sup>

Title	Date Written	Date of Earliest Manuscript	Number of Manuscripts
Old Testament	1500 - 400 BC	~600 BC	~10,000
<i>Iliad</i> by Homer	800 BC	400 BC	1,757
<i>Histories</i> by Herodotus	480-425 BC	AD 900	109
<i>Tetralogies</i> by Plato	428-348 BC	AD 895	210
<i>History of Rome</i> by Livy	59 BC - AD 17	AD 400	150
<i>Natural History</i> by Pliny (Elder)	AD 49-79	AD 400	200
<i>Annals</i> by Tacitus	AD 100	AD 850	33
New Testament (Greek) <sup>42</sup>	AD 50-100	AD 100-150	>5700
New Testament (Latin)	AD 50-100	AD 300	>10,000

<sup>41</sup>For the manuscript comparison chart, the Old Testament details were taken from: McDowell, Josh (1999). *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*. 71-73. With the earliest manuscript date being updated to include the Ketef Hinnom scrolls (<https://armstronginstitute.org/45-ketef-hinnom-scrolls>).

The remaining information was taken from the following publication. Jones, Clay (2012). "The Bibliographical Test Updated." *Christian Research Journal*, 35:3. URL: <https://www.equip.org/articles/the-bibliographical-test-updated/>

<sup>42</sup> Another source that catalogs the Greek manuscripts is the "Kurzgefasste Liste," which is the international database overseen by the Institute for New Testament Textual Research (INTF), URL: <https://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/intfblog/-/blogs/what-is-the-kurzgefass>

- C. In looking at the works in this table, they have been ordered in chronological order for when they were first written. The Old Testament begins with Moses writing the Pentateuch around 1500 BC and ends with Malachi around 400 BC.
1. You can see that the earliest manuscript or fragment is dated around 600 BC well after Moses, but still before the last books were written. These fragments are known as the Ketef Hinnom Scrolls and include quotations from Numbers and Deuteronomy.
  2. Also, take note that the number of Old Testament manuscripts in existence is well over 10,000. Old Testament fragments are scattered around the world in museums, libraries, and private collections.
- D. The next work on the list represents fictional literature that was written in a contemporary time as the later books of the Old Testament, around 800 BC. *The Iliad*, by Homer, is the most extensive and oldest secular work in the world. This ancient Greek epic poem has been a classic work for study and plays for over two thousand years.
1. Up until the 1990s, there were only a little over 640 confirmed papyrus manuscripts known to exist, but some large discoveries since then have increased that number to almost 1,800.
  2. So, the first comparison to consider, is the fact that *The Iliad* and much of the Old Testament were similar times in history. However, when you look at the number of ancient manuscript evidence, *The Iliad* has about 20% of the manuscript documentation as the Old Testament.
- E. As we move through the historical works noted on the chart, we have some foundational historical documents and people represented: Plato represents one of the most well-known philosophers of history, while Herodotus, Livy, Tacitus, and Pliny the Elder represent ancient historians.
1. You can quickly see that for all that is discussed and respected for these secular works (they never claimed inspiration from God) that their manuscript evidence is all based on a couple hundred or less manuscripts.
  2. The earliest manuscripts for many of these are in the range of hundreds to well over one thousand years from the time they were originally written.
- F. So now, when we compare the New Testament manuscript evidence we see quite a contrast with the contemporary secular works of Tacitus or Pliny the Elder.
1. The Greek manuscripts of the New Testament have been extensively analyzed and catalogued through the years and number over 5,700. This is well over 50 times more manuscripts than Herodotus, 25 times more than Plato or Pliny the Elder, and over 3 times more than the most documented ancient **secular** work in history, *The Iliad*.
  2. On top of that contrast, is also that very early in history the New Testament books began to be translated into numerous languages: Latin, Syriac, and Coptic, with Latin being one of the earliest and most widely used. As you can see Latin language manuscripts of the New Testament add another 10,000 documents to the archive.
  3. And one more important component to consider, is that fact that the earliest New Testament fragment, known as the Ryland Papyrus (P52), is dated in the early part of the second century (AD 100-150).<sup>43</sup> This papyrus fragment includes a quotation from John 18, which means it was made only around 50 years after

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<sup>43</sup> <https://biblearchaeologyreport.com/2019/02/15/the-earliest-new-testament-manuscripts/>

John wrote his account.

### III. **Detail and Factual Accuracy**

- A. Related to the internal unity of the Bible's message and details, is the evidence of factual accuracy when compared to external sources.
- B. If a book wanted to avoid contradiction or mistakes in regards to the full context of life and history, then the writings would likely maintain generality and vagueness. However, when we seek to evaluate the Bible's inspiration, it has provided ample specifics. It has opened itself up to being analyzed, evaluated, and critiqued
  - 1. The Bible contains over 2,500 proper names<sup>44</sup> for men and women.
  - 2. It has specifically named around 1,500 places<sup>45</sup>
    - a) Political: countries, nations, cities
    - b) Geographical: regions, valleys, mountains, seas, rivers
- C. Now before beginning to look at some of the verified details in the Bible, I want to mention a claim sometimes used by atheists to counter this line of reasoning.
  - 1. They will say that specifics are meaningless, because lots of fictional stories include real places, real items, and maybe even real people or events. Their claim goes like this:
    - a) "You are just making a Spiderman Fallacy. The Spiderman comics are set in a real place, New York City, and they talk about real things: buildings, cars, and newspapers. They name specific people, Peter Parker, Mary Jane Watson, Harry Osborn. So, you are just like someone in the future digging up a Spiderman comic and saying all of those stories really happened."
  - 2. The problem is this line of reasoning makes its own fallacy in not considering the context of internal claims and the external evidence.
    - a) The Bible claims to be inspired by God. The Bible claims to provide historical accounts?
    - b) Do the Spiderman comics claim to be inspired? Do they even claim an historical nature? No, they claim neither, so we read them as a fanciful story and that's it.
    - c) I hope that if someone far in the future ever dug up a Spiderman comic, or any written story or document for that matter, that they would use common sense and evaluate the context for the degree of concern they ought to have.
    - d) If the Spiderman comics did claim inspiration or even historical truth, then we would employ the same lines of evaluation that we apply to all the other areas of our lives to determine truth. We'd look for the hallmarks of accuracy and validity.

### IV. **Historically Verified People**

- A. The following is a list of specifically named individuals in the Bible, whose existence has been externally verified by ancient historians, inscriptions on tablets, inscriptions on prisms and cylinders, both text inscriptions and large artistic reliefs on the walls of ancient palaces, and even enormous obelisks, statues, busts, and monuments...declaring their existence.
- B. Old Testament
  - 1. Ahab (king of Israel)
    - a) Bible: Kings and Chronicles
    - b) Secular: Kurkh Monolith inscription of Shalmaneser III describing the

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<sup>44</sup> Hitchcock's Bible Names Dictionary: [http://www.ccel.org/ccel/hitchcock/bible\\_names](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/hitchcock/bible_names)

<sup>45</sup> Encyclopedia of Bible Facts (Mark Water)

- defeat of “Ahab of Israel” at the battle of Qarqar. (Craig, 1887)<sup>46</sup>
2. Ahaz (Jehoahaz, king of Judah)
    - a) Bible: (Kings, Chronicles, Isaiah, Hosea 1:1 and Micah 1:1)
    - b) Secular:
      - (1) Summary Inscription of Tiglath-Pileser III
      - (2) Clay bulla, “Ahaz [son of] Jotham king of Judah.”
  3. Ahaziah (king of Judah)
    - a) Bible: 2 Kings 8:26
    - b) Secular: Tel Dan Stele “[Ahaz]iahu, son of [... kin]g of the house of David”
  4. Apries (Hophra, pharaoh of Egypt)
    - a) Bible: Jeremiah 44:30
    - b) Secular
      - (1) Numerous inscriptions (detailed below)
      - (2) Herodotus (*Histories*, 2.161–171)
  5. Artaxerxes I (king of Persia)
    - a) Bible: Nehemiah
    - b) Secular: Thucydides (*History of the Peloponnesian War*, Bk. 1 Ch. 137)
  6. Ashurbanipal (king of Assyria)
    - a) Bible: Ezra 4:9-10 “great and noble Osnappar”
    - b) Secular:
      - (1) Many reliefs and inscriptions, including Rassam Cylinder
      - (2) Royal Library of Ashurbanipal (30,000 clay tablets)
      - (3) Diodorus Siculus (Bk. II, 21)
  7. Baruch ben Neriah (scribe)
    - a) Bible: Jeremiah 32, 36, 43, and 45
    - b) Secular:
      - (1) Seals discovered reading 'to Berachyahu son of Neriyaahu the scribe'.
      - (2) Josephus (*Antiquities of the Jews*, 10.6.2)
  8. Belshazzar (coregent of Babylon)
    - a) Bible: Daniel 5-8
    - b) Secular: Nabonidus Cylinder
  9. Benhadad son of Hazael (king of Aram Damascus)
    - a) Bible: 2 Kings 13
    - b) Secular: Zakkur Stele
  10. Cyrus II (king of Persia)
    - a) Bible: Isaiah 45; Daniel 1:21
    - b) Secular
      - (1) Numerous inscriptions, especially the Cyrus Cylinder
      - (2) Herodotus (*Histories*, 1.95-140)
  11. Darius I (king of Persia)
    - a) Bible: Haggai, Zechariah, and Ezra
    - b) Secular: Behistun Inscription
  12. David (king of Israel)
    - a) Bible: 1 Samuel 16
    - b) Secular: Tel Dan Stele mentions “House of David”
  13. Esarhaddon (king of Assyria, son of Sennacherib)
    - a) Bible: 2 Kings 19:37; Ezra 4:2; Isaiah 37:38
    - b) Secular: Clay tablets in the Royal Library of Ashurbanipal; various

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<sup>46</sup> Craig, James A. (1887) *The Monolith Inscription of Salmaneser II. Hebraica*, Volume 3.

- inscriptions and prism
14. Evil-Merodach (king of Babylon, son of Nebuchadnezzar II)
    - a) Bible: 2 Kings 25:27; Jeremiah 52:31
    - b) Secular: Vase from his palace and several cuneiform tablets
  15. Hazael (king of Aram Damascus)
    - a) Bible: 1 Kings 19
    - b) Secular:
      - (1) Shalmaneser III of Assyria records that he defeated Hazael in battle and captured many chariots and horses from him.
      - (2) Hazael was likely the author of the Tel Dan Stele.
  16. Hezekiah (king of Judah)
    - a) Bible: 2 Kings 16; Hosea 1; Micah 1; Isaiah 1
    - b) Secular:
      - (1) Taylor Prism has an account preserved by Sennacherib of how he besieged 'Hezekiah, the Jew', who 'did not submit to my yoke', in his capital city of Jerusalem.
      - (2) Bulla with royal seal and inscription, "Belonging to Hezekiah [son of] Ahaz king of Judah"<sup>47</sup>
  17. Hoshea (king of Israel)
    - a) Bible: 2 Kings 15
    - b) Secular: Mentioned in the Annals of Tilgath-Pileser III, king of Assyria.<sup>48</sup>
  18. Jehoash (king of Israel)
    - a) Bible: 2 Kings 13; 2 Chronicles 25:17
    - b) Secular: Mentioned in records of Adad-nirari III of Assyria as 'Jehoash of Samaria'.
  19. Jehoiachin (king of Judah)
    - a) Bible: 2 Kings 24:15
    - b) Secular: Texts from Nebuchadnezzar's Southern Palace record rations given to "Jehoiachin king of the Judeans"
  20. Jehu (king of Israel)
    - a) Bible: 1 Kings 19; Hosea 1:4
    - b) Secular: Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser
  21. Johanan (high priest of Israel, during reign of Darius II)
    - a) Bible: Nehemiah 12:22-23
    - b) Secular: Elephantine Papyri
  22. Manasseh (king of Judah)
    - a) Bible: 2 Kings. 20; Jeremiah 15
    - b) Secular: Writings of Esarhaddon, who lists him as one of the kings who had brought him gifts and aided his conquest of Egypt.
  23. Menahem (king of Israel)
    - a) Bible: 2 Kings 15:19
    - b) Secular: Annals of Tiglath-Pileser
  24. Mesha, king of Moab
    - a) Bible: 2 Kings 3:4
    - b) Secular: Mesha Stele
  25. Merodach-baladan (king of Babylon)
    - a) Bible: 2 Kings 20:12; Isaiah 39:1

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/news/king-hezekiah-in-the-bible-royal-seal-of-hezekiah-comes-to-light/>

<sup>48</sup> <https://biblearchaeologyreport.com/2019/11/08/tiglath-pileser-iii-an-archaeological-biography/>

- b) Secular: Great Inscription of Sargon II<sup>49</sup>; Taylor Prism
  - 26. Nebuchadnezzar II (king of Babylon)
    - a) Bible: 2 Kings 24; Daniel 1
    - b) Secular: Inscription on the Ishtar Gate
  - 27. Necho II (pharaoh of Egypt)
    - a) Bible: 2 Kings 23; Jeremiah 46
    - b) Secular: Writings of Ashurbanipal
  - 28. Omri (king of Israel)
    - a) Bible: 1 Kings 16:23
    - b) Secular: Mesha Stele
  - 29. Pekah (king of Israel)
    - a) Bible: 2 Kings 15:25
    - b) Secular: Annals of Tiglath-Pileser III
  - 30. Sanballat (governor of Samaria)
    - a) Bible: Nehemiah 2:10; 13:28
    - b) Secular: Elephantine Papyri
  - 31. Sargon II (king of Assyria)
    - a) Bible: Isaiah 20:1
    - b) Secular: Inscription in his royal palace; clay tablets in the Royal Library of Ashurbanipal
  - 32. Sennacherib (king of Assyria)
    - a) Bible: 2 Kings 18:13; Isaiah 36:1
    - b) Secular: Sennacherib (Taylor) Prism; clay tablets in the Royal Library of Ashurbanipal
  - 33. Shalmaneser V (king of Assyria)
    - a) Bible: 2 Kings 17:3; 18:9
    - b) Secular: Inscribed on weights in Nimrud palace
  - 34. Taharqa (pharaoh of Egypt, king of Kush)
    - a) Bible: Isaiah 37:9, 'Tirhaka, the king of Cush'
    - b) Secular: Inscriptions on statues in Nineveh
  - 35. Tattenai (governor of 'Beyond the River')
    - a) Bible: Ezra 5:3; 6:13
    - b) Secular: Babylonian documents
  - 36. Tiglath-Pileser III (king of Assyria)
    - a) Bible: 2 Kings 15, 16; 1 Chronicles 5:6
    - b) Secular: Annals of Tiglath-Pileser III, the Assyrian king list inscriptions, and an inscription of Barrakab, king of Sam'al
  - 37. Xerxes I (Ahasuerus) (king of Persia)
    - a) Bible: Ezra and Esther
    - b) Secular: the 'Gate of All Nations' in Persepolis
- C. New Testament
1. Ananias (high priest, son of Nedeбайos)
    - a) Bible: Acts 23:2
    - b) Secular: Josephus
  2. Annas (Jewish high priest)
    - a) Bible: Luke 2:3; John 18:13, 24
    - b) Secular: Josephus records he was appointed by Quirinius
  3. Antonius Felix (governor of Judea)
    - a) Bible: Acts 23:24

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<sup>49</sup> <https://archive.org/details/recordsofthepast09unknuoft>

- b) Secular: Josephus (*Antiquities*, B. XX Chr. 7), Suetonius (*The Twelve Caesars*, Book V, par. 28), and Tacitus (*Annals*, Book XII Chr. 54)
- 4. Aretas IV Philopatris (king of the Nabateans)
  - a) Bible: 2 Corinthians 11:32
  - b) Secular: Josephus, several inscriptions, and numerous coins.
- 5. Augustus Caesar (emperor of Rome)
  - a) Bible: Luke 2:1
  - b) Secular: Tacitus (*Annals* Book I), buildings, coins and monuments
- 6. Berenice (daughter of Herod Agrippa I)
  - a) Bible: Acts 25:23
  - b) Secular: Josephus, called 'Queen Berenice' in Tacitus' *Histories*
- 7. Caiaphas (high priest)
  - a) Bible: mentioned in Matthew, Luke, and John
  - b) Secular: Josephus' *Antiquities* and discovery of family tomb of Caiaphas
- 8. Claudius Caesar (emperor of Rome)
  - a) Bible: Acts 11:28
  - b) Secular: Tacitus (*Annals* Book XI); numerous coins and monuments (e.g., Porta Maggiore in Rome)
- 9. Drusilla (daughter of Herod Agrippa I)
  - a) Bible: Acts 24:24
  - b) Secular: Josephus
- 10. Gamaliel the Elder (rabbi of the Sanhedrin)
  - a) Bible: Acts 5:34; 22:3 Paul's teacher
  - b) Secular: Josephus (*The Life of Flavius Josephus*), Talmud and Mishna (Sotah 9:15)
- 11. Herod Agrippa I (king of Judaea, Galilee, and Palestine; grandson of Herod the Great)
  - a) Bible: Acts 12:1
  - b) Secular: Josephus, Jewish coins (Kanael, p.51)<sup>50</sup>
- 12. Herod Agrippa II (king of Judaea)
  - a) Bible: Acts 25:23
  - b) Secular: Josephus (*Antiquities* B. XX Chr. 7), Jewish coins (Kanael, p.52)
- 13. Herod Antipas (tetrarch of Galilee and Perea)
  - a) Bible: Matthew 14:1
  - b) Secular: Josephus (*Antiquities*, *War of the Jews*); Jewish coins (Kanael, p.51)
- 14. Herod Archelaus, (etnarch of Judea, Samaria and Edom)
  - a) Bible: son of Herod the Great (Matthew 2:22)
  - b) Secular: Josephus and coins (Kanael, p.50)
- 15. Herod the Great (king of Judea)
  - a) Bible: Matthew 2:1
  - b) Secular: Josephus, and Jewish coins (Kanael, p.48)
- 16. Herodias (wife of Herod Antipas)
  - a) Bible: Mark 6:17
  - b) Secular: Josephus
- 17. James (brother of Jesus)
  - a) Bible: Mark 6:3; Galatians 1:19
  - b) Secular: Josephus records he was condemned by the Sanhedrin led by

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<sup>50</sup> Kanael, Baruch. "Ancient Jewish Coins and Their Historical Importance." *The Biblical Archaeologist*, vol. 26, no. 2, 1963, pp. 38–62. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3210995>. Accessed 23 Mar. 2025.

the high priest Ananus ben Ananus and then stoned to death.

18. Jesus
  - a) Bible: Gospel accounts and many other passages
  - b) Secular: Full details in later section; Tacitus, Josephus, Suetonius, and Pliny the Younger
19. Judas of Galilee (leader of a Jewish revolt)
  - a) Bible: Acts 5:37
  - b) Secular: Josephus
20. Lucius Iunius Gallio Annaeanus (proconsul of Achaea)
  - a) Bible: Acts 18:12
  - b) Secular: Seneca (his brother); inscription in Delphi
21. Philip the Tetrarch (son of Herod the Great and ruled over Iturea and Trachonitis)
  - a) Bible: Luke 3:1
  - b) Secular: Josephus and coinage from the period
22. Pontius Pilate (procurator and prefect of Judea)
  - a) Bible: ordered Jesus' execution (John 19:15-16)
  - b) Secular: *Pilate Stone* reads, "[Po]ntius Pilatus, [Praef]ectus Iuda[ea]e"; Philo of Alexandria (*Embassy to Gaius*); Josephus (*Jewish Wars*, and *Antiquities*); Tacitus (*Annals* Book XV)
23. Porcius Festus (governor of Judea)
  - a) Bible: Acts 24:27
  - b) Secular: Josephus (*Antiquities*, Book XX, Chr. 8)
24. Quirinius (governor of Syria)
  - a) Bible: Luke 2:2
  - b) Secular: Josephus and tomb inscription of Quintus Aemilius Secundus
25. Salome (daughter of Herodias)
  - a) Bible: Matthew 14:6
  - b) Secular: identified with Salome, Herodias' daughter, mentioned in Josephus (*Antiquities*)
26. Tiberius Caesar (emperor of Rome)
  - a) Bible: Luke 3:1
  - b) Secular: many inscriptions, Roman coins, historian Velleius

#### D. Historically Verified Nations and Empires

- |               |                     |
|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. Ammonites  | 17. Judah           |
| 2. Amorites   | 18. Kush            |
| 3. Assyria    | 19. Lebanon         |
| 4. Babylon    | 20. Libya           |
| 5. Canaanites | 21. Macedonia       |
| 6. Corinthia  | 22. Malta           |
| 7. Crete      | 23. Mesopotamia     |
| 8. Cyprus     | 24. Moabites        |
| 9. Edom       | 25. Perizzites      |
| 10. Egypt     | 26. Persia          |
| 11. Ethiopia  | 27. Pontus          |
| 12. Greece    | 28. Philistia       |
| 13. Hittites  | 29. Samaria         |
| 14. Hivites   | 30. Sheba           |
| 15. Israel    | 31. Syria (or Aram) |
| 16. Jebusites |                     |

#### E. Specific Examples of Nations and People

1. Moab

- a) The Mesha Stele, or Moabite Stone, is an inscription from the mid-9th-century BC. The black basalt monument is in the Moabite language, and was found in the ruins of ancient Dibon (modern Dhiban, Jordan).
  - b) In its content it confirms:
    - (1) Mesha, King of Moab
    - (2) Omri, King of Israel,
  - c) *More details will be discussed in a later section.*
2. Assyria
- a) Excavations at Khorsabad of Sargon II's royal palace, before the capital was shifted to the city of Nineveh, where another palace was found containing a large number of inscriptions and artifacts.
  - b) Rulers:
    - (1) Sargon II (reigned 722-705 BC)
      - (a) Bible: Isaiah 20:1
      - (b) Secular: Royal palace excavated; victory stele found in Ashdod (matching Isaiah 20:1); Nimrud Prism<sup>51</sup> mentions that conquering of Samaria and deporting Israel (though it was at least started under Shalmaneser V who Sargon II deposed in a coup.
    - (2) Sennacherib (reigned 705-681 BC)
      - (a) Bible: 2 Kings 18:13; Isaiah 36-37
      - (b) Secular: The Taylor Prism mentions numerous people and places that are consistent with Old Testament references: Merodach-Baladan (king of Babylon), various kings of the Medes, Sidon (Hittite-land), Ashkelon, Egypt, and Hezekiah the Jew.
3. Egypt
- a) The existence of empires in Egypt is well-documented by the large-scale structures, including many pyramids, sphinx statues, temple monuments, obelisks, and ruins.
  - b) Egyptology is the formal name given to the study of the civilization, language, and history of the ancient Egyptian empires.
  - c) Rulers:
    - (1) Pharaohs mentioned: Hophra, Necho, and Taharka
    - (2) Hophra (or Apries) (reigned 589-570 BC)
    - (3) Secular:
      - (a) Herodotus (*Histories* II, 161-171)
      - (b) Diodorus Siculus (*Library of History*)<sup>52</sup>
      - (c) Apries' Obelisk taken to Rome somewhere between 1st-3rd Century AD and rediscovered in 1600s
      - (d) Sphinx of Hophra in Louvre Museum
      - (e) 1909 - discovery of his royal palace with his name inscribed on columns
      - (f) 2011 - Egyptian military found sandstone inscribed with his cartouche (hieroglyphs representing his royal name)
      - (g) 2021 - Egyptian farmer unearthed "Stele of Hophra"<sup>53</sup> -

<sup>51</sup> <https://biblearchaeologyreport.com/2024/02/22/sargon-ii-an-archaeological-biography/>

<sup>52</sup> Diodorus, *Bibliotheca Historica*, 1.68. Online:

[https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Diodorus\\_Siculus/1C\\*.html](https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Diodorus_Siculus/1C*.html)

<sup>53</sup> <https://armstronginstitute.org/661-farmer-discovers-victory-stele-of-a-biblical-pharaoh>

Possibly connected to his aid of Zedekiah from the Babylonians.

(h) Stele of Pharaoh Hophra at museum in Memphis

(4) Bible:

(a) Jeremiah 37:3-11 Pharaoh Hophra had an alliance with Zedekiah and came up to try and help, but did not sustain help against the Babylonians.

(b) Ezekiel 17:11-18 References the alliance between Zezekiah and Hophra and how Hophra would not be able to bring much help against Babylon.

(c) Ezekiel 29:1-16;

(d) Ezekiel 30:20-26 This passage references Pharaoh's arms, both his strong one and the one that was broken. This could be a reference to Pharaoh Hophra who had fled Egypt and was trying to retake it, and Amasis (his former general) who would be defeated by Nebuchadnezzar in 568/567.

(e) Jeremiah 44:30 Prophesied decades before Hophra was killed by the Egyptian people when he tried to regain power from his former general Amasis as he marched back into Egypt from Babylon.

#### 4. Babylon

a) Nebuchadnezzar II (reigned 605-561 BC)

b) Bible: Daniel 1:1; Ezra 26:7; 2 Kings 24

c) Secular:

(1) Inscription on Ishtar Gate

(2) Image on "Tower of Babel" Stele

(3) Nebuchadnezzar Chronicle tablet:

(a) This small several 3x2.5-inch tablet contains a description of conquering Jerusalem, Jeconiah's surrender, and installment of Zedekiah as king. Matches aspects of what the Bible says in 2 Kings 24.

(b) "besieged Jerusalem (literally: the city of Judah) and seized it on the second day of the month Adar. He then captured its king and appointed a king of his own choice, having received heavy tribute from the city, which he sent back to Babylon."<sup>54</sup>

#### 5. Medo-Persian

a) Cyrus II (or Cyrus the Great, reigned 550-530 BC)

b) Bible: Isaiah 45; Daniel 1:21

c) Secular

(1) Herodotus (*Histories*, 1.95-140)

(2) Josephus (*Antiquities of the Jews*, XI.1)

(3) Arrian the Nicomedia (*The Anabasis of Alexander*, 6.29)

(4) Numerous inscriptions, possible Tomb of Cyrus in Iran

(5) Cyrus Cylinder - Records an account of Cyrus allowing people to return and refurbish their worship shrines:

(a) "From [Babylon] to Ashur and Susa, Agade, Eshnunna, the cities of Zamban, Meturnu, Der as far as the borders of the

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<sup>54</sup> D.J. Wiseman. 1956. *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*. The Trustees of the British Museum. London. p33

Gutians – I returned to these sanctuaries on the other side of the Tigris, sanctuaries founded in ancient times, the images that had been in them there and I made their dwellings permanent. I also gathered all their people and returned to them their habitations. And then at the command of Marduk, the great lord, I resettled all the gods of Sumer and Akkad whom Nabonidus had brought into Babylon to the anger of the lord of the gods in their shrines, the places which they enjoy. May all the gods whom I have resettled in their sacred cities ask Marduk and Nabu each day for a long life for me and speak well of me to him;” (British Museum)<sup>55</sup>

V. Conclusion

- A. The few nations and empires that we discussed as being recorded in Scripture, but then externally verified represents only a sample. There are dozens of nations, countries, and people mentioned in the Bible that are also known from their own history or histories of neighboring nations. The same is true for the larger lists of people we have given.
- B. However, I hope that you have seen how the internal consistency of Scripture that we discussed also has an external historical consistency that carries over to provide evidence for the Bible’s inspiration.

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<sup>55</sup> [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W\\_1880-0617-1941](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1880-0617-1941)

## Bible's Inspiration: External Evidences (Archaeological)

### I. Introduction

A. While an entire course could be taught on archaeology and the Bible, and incredible stories and details of excavation projects through the centuries could be provided, this section will endeavor to present some significant examples. While they may not even be the grandest or most impressive, they will connect with various aspects we have already discussed and give you a starting point for deeper study.

### II. What can archaeology provide?

A. Definition: Archaeology is the “the scientific study of material remains (such as tools, pottery, jewelry, stone walls, and monuments) of past human life and activities.” (Merriam-Webster)<sup>56</sup>

B. Since the Bible is written in such a way as to include so many specifics of people, places, and events, archaeology has the opportunity to investigate whether evidence exists to support its claims.

1. Archaeology does offer an incredible amount of physical evidence for the Bible's accounts.

### III. Archaeological Evidence: Examples through different historical periods

A. Dead Sea Scrolls: A general statement

1. Before we begin to look at some archaeological discoveries that focus on some larger physical artifacts, I want to first mention what may have been the greatest archaeological discovery in relation to the biblical text...the Dead Sea Scrolls. The discovery of thousands of preserved scrolls in the caves of Qumran supplied textual content helping to extend back the oldest dates of Old Testament manuscripts and supplying amazing confirmation for the integrity of the manuscripts that had existed.

B. Examples after the Exodus and Early Canaanite Conquest:

1. Soleb Inscription<sup>57</sup>

a) In the mid-1900s an archaeological excavation began in northern Sudan, in the region where the ancient Egyptian and Nubian empires bordered. Towards the end of the 15th century BC, Pharaoh Amenhotep III built a temple at Soleb in Nubia to honor his gods and to celebrate his status. The ruins of the temple contain a series of columns with various reliefs of bound slaves and a cartouche (hieroglyphic nameplate) representing the territories he was claiming to have conquered. There are a variety of different regions represented both North and South of Amenhotep's kingdom.

b) The most interesting for our discussion of the biblical perspective is a column relief naming “the land of the Shasu (nomads) of Yahweh”. While there are dissenting views and alternate proposals for the hieroglyph representing the name “Yahweh,” numerous scholars see this as the most logical connection. The time period puts it after the Exodus and maybe during the wilderness wanderings, which would match the connection between nomads and Yahweh.

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<sup>56</sup> “Archaeology.” Merriam-Webster.com. Merriam-Webster, 2020. Web. July 2020. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/archaeology>

<sup>57</sup> Kennedy, Titus (2019). "The Land of the š3sw (Nomads) of yhw3 at Soleb". Dotawo: A Journal of Nubian Studies. 6. UC Santa Barbara: 175–192.

- c) One of the major significances of this brief inscription is that it is the oldest discovered use of Yahweh.
- 2. Merneptah Stele (Israel Stele)<sup>58</sup>
  - a) The Merneptah Stele (or Israel Stele) is a black granite monument describing the victories of Pharaoh Merneptah. It was discovered at Thebes by the British archaeologist Flinders Petrie in 1896.
  - b) While most of the 28 lines of engraved text discuss the conquering of the Libyans, the last few lines shift to Canaan:
    - (1) “Canaan is captive with all woe.  
Ashkelon is conquered, Gezer seized,  
Yanoam made nonexistent;  
Israel is laid waste, bare of seed”<sup>59</sup>
  - c) This last line represents the earliest extra-biblical reference to the specific name of Israel. The dating of this piece is around 1200 BC, so it demonstrates the establishment of Israel’s organized presence by this time.
- C. Examples from the Divided Kingdom
  - 1. Mesha Stele (Moabite Stone)
    - a) The Mesha Stele, or Moabite Stone, is an inscription from the mid-9th-century BC. The black basalt monument is in the Moabite language, and was found in the ruins of ancient Dibon (modern Dhiban, Jordan).
    - b) The stele is significant because it provides an external perspective on Moab’s rebellion under King Mesha against Israel.
    - c) The stone references both Omri and his son (Ahab) as kings of Israel, and includes a reference to Yahweh in contrast to the Moabite god, Chemosh, referenced throughout.<sup>60</sup>
      - (1) “Omri was king of Israel, and oppressed Moab during many days”
      - (2) “I took from there the hearth altars of Yahweh”
    - d) 2 Kings 3 is thought to be a parallel account.
  - 2. Tel Dan Stele<sup>61</sup>
    - a) In 1993 a black basalt stone was found at Tel Dan written in Aramaic describing the siege and defeat of a king of Israel and a king from the house of David. This stele is ascribed to Hazael king of Aram.
      - (1) Portion of text: “[I killed Jeho]ram son of [Ahab] King of Israel... And [I] slew [the king] of the house of David”<sup>62</sup>
      - (2) The dating, location, names, and events of the stone inscription reference it to the time of King Ahaziah and the events of 2 Chronicles 22.
    - b) This inscription is significant because of its reference to a central figure in the Bible. David is mentioned over 1,000 times in the Bible, playing a significant role in both the Old and New Testament discussions of God’s plan for the Messiah to come.

<sup>58</sup> Meynell, Josh (2024) “Artefact in focus: Merneptah Stele” URL:

<https://tyndalehouse.com/explore/articles/merneptah-stele/>

<sup>59</sup> <https://armstronginstitute.org/122-merneptah-stele-proving-israels-3200-year-existence>

<sup>60</sup> Pritchard, James B. 1969. “Palestinian Inscriptions (W.F. Albright): The Moabite Stone.” p320.

<sup>61</sup> Wood, Bryant (2011) “The Tel Dan Stela and the Kings of Aram and Israel” URL:

<https://www.biblearchaeology.org/research/topics/amazing-discoveries-in-biblical-archaeology/2233-the-tel-dan-stela-and-the-kings-of-aram-and-israel>

<sup>62</sup> “Tel Dan Stele, c. 840 BCE.” Center for Online Judaic Studies. 2025 Web. January 2025

[https://cojs.org/tel\\_dan\\_stele-\\_c-\\_840\\_bce/](https://cojs.org/tel_dan_stele-_c-_840_bce/)

- c) So, an external reference to his royal house is one that is significant to confirm the Bible's focus on David.
3. Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III
- a) Now an interesting overlap with the Tel Dan Stele is found on this artifact. This obelisk is a black limestone monument discovered at Nimrud (ancient Kalhu) in modern-day Iraq. It commemorates King Shalmaneser III's 31 years of military campaigns, and is especially important for its depiction of Jehu, King of Israel, bringing tribute.
  - b) Now Jehu is mentioned in the passage we were just previously discussing in 2 Chronicles 22, as the one who would bring judgment by God on the evil descendants of King Ahab. So Jehu killed Ahaziah and his family and assumed the throne.
  - c) So only a few years after the Tel Dan inscription and King Hazael of Syria, we have King Shalmaneser III of Assyria who conquered and forced tribute from his expanding empire.
  - d) Translation of accompanying text:
    - (1) "The tribute of Jehu, son of Omri: I received from him silver, gold, a golden saplu-bowl, a golden vase with pointed bottom, golden tumblers, golden buckets, tin, a staff for a king, (and) wooden puruhtu [spears]"<sup>63</sup>
  - e) This depiction of a Jewish monarch is thought to be the earliest visual depiction of an Israelite king on an ancient artifact.
- D. Examples during the time of Assyrian captivity
1. Sennacherib Annals or Prisms: Taylor Prism, Chicago Prism, and Jerusalem Prism
- a) Though the Taylor Prism in the British Museum is the most famous, there are 3 prisms that all date around 690 BC and provide essentially identical records of Sennacherib's conquests. They mention numerous people and places consistent with Old Testament references: Merodach-Baladan (king of Babylon), various kings of the Medes, Sidon (Hittite-land), Ashkelon, and Egypt.
  - b) Especially important is its reference to "Hezekiah the Jew" and the siege of Jerusalem.
    - (1) "As for Hezekiah the Judahite, who did not submit to my yoke: forty-six of his strong, walled cities, as well as the small towns in their area, which were without number, by levelling with battering-rams and by bringing up siege-engines, and by attacking and storming on foot, by mines, tunnels, and breeches, I besieged and took them."<sup>64</sup>
    - (2) Bible: 2 Kings 18:13
      - (a) And in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them.
    - (3) "Himself, like a caged bird I shut up in Jerusalem, his royal city. I threw up earthworks against him— the one coming out of the city-gate, I turned back to his misery.... As for Hezekiah, the terrifying

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<sup>63</sup> Wood, Bryant (2012) "Israelite Kings in Assyrian Inscriptions" URL: <https://www.biblearchaeology.org/research/chronological-categories/divided-monarchy/3993-israelite-kings-in-assyrian-inscriptions>

<sup>64</sup> [https://archive.org/details/annalsofsennache00senn\\_0/page/32/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/annalsofsennache00senn_0/page/32/mode/2up)

splendor of my majesty overcame him.... In addition to the thirty talents of gold and eight hundred talents of silver, (there were) gems, antimony, jewels, large sandu-stones, couches of ivory, house-chairs of ivory, elephant hide, ivory (lit. elephant's "teeth"), ebony, boxwood, all kinds of valuable (heavy) treasures...."<sup>65</sup>

(4) 2 Kings 18:14

(a) Then Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, "I have done wrong; turn away from me; whatever you impose on me I will pay." And the king of Assyria assessed Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.

c) 2 Kings 18-19 and Isaiah 36-37.

d) These annals of Sennacherib discuss the siege of Jerusalem, but never identify conquering or completing the conquest. Definitely doesn't mention the enormous defeat detailed in Scripture.

2. Siloam Inscription (Hezekiah's Tunnel)

a) This ancient Hebrew inscription was found in the Siloam (Hezekiah's) Tunnel in Jerusalem, commemorating its construction. The tunnel brought water from the Gihon Spring to the Siloam Pool. The inscription details the tunnel's excavation, including how two teams worked from opposite ends and ultimately met.

b) Translated text:

(1) "The boring through [is completed]. And this is the story of the boring through: while yet [they plied] the drill, each toward his fellow, and while yet there were three cubits to be bored through, there was heard the voice of one calling unto another, for there was a crevice in the rock on the right hand. And on the day of the boring through the stone-cutters struck, each to meet his fellow, drill upon drill; and the waters flowed from the source to the pool for a thousand and two hundred cubits, and a hundred cubits was the height of the rock above the heads of the stone-cutters."<sup>66</sup>

c) The biblical record tells of King Hezekiah blocking the spring's water outside the city and diverting it through a tunnel to the Pool of Siloam. This was in response to Assyria's aggression and potential siege of Jerusalem.

(1) 2 Kings 20:20; 2 Chronicles 32:3-4

E. Examples from New Testament times

1. Pilate Inscription

a) Pilate Inscription is a large engraved stone found in 1961 in Caesarea Maritima, and is significant because it bears the inscription:

(1) "[Pon]tius Pilate ... [Praef]ect of Judea"<sup>67</sup>

b) Pilate is a Roman official in Judea according to the Bible, and is a central figure in the crucifixion of Jesus

(1) Luke 3:1; 13:1; Matthew 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 18

c) He is also known through secular records and histories:

(1) Philo of Alexandria (Embassy to Gaius);

<sup>65</sup> [https://archive.org/details/annalsofsennache00senn\\_0/page/32/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/annalsofsennache00senn_0/page/32/mode/2up)

<sup>66</sup> George A. Barton. 1916. *Archaeology and the Bible*. Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union. p377.

<sup>67</sup> "Latin dedicatory inscription mentioning Pontius Pilate, the procurator of Judea." 2025.

<https://www.imj.org.il/en/collections/395572-0>

(2) Josephus (Jewish Wars, and Antiquities);

(3) Tacitus (Annals Book XV)

## 2. Balustrade Inscription

- a) Two Inscriptions have been found that are dated from the first century and relate to the Temple grounds in Jerusalem. The inscriptions seem to serve as warning signs between the outer court of the Gentiles and the inner court, and would have been placed on the outside of the wall encompassing the inner court of the complex.
  - (1) They read: "No man of another nation to enter within the fence and enclosure round the temple, and whoever is caught will have himself to blame that his death ensues."
- b) We also know that this entire inner sanctuary was surrounded by massive walls and doors. Outside this inner sanctuary, but located within this enormous temple complex, was a court area for the Gentiles--a place where they could come but were forbidden to go past the wall separating the courts.
- c) It was at this location that an actual barrier existed, separating Jews from non-Jews, and where Josephus described the wall:
  - (1) "Proceeding across this towards the second court of the temple, one found it surrounded by a stone balustrade, three cubits high and of exquisite workmanship; in this at regular intervals stood slabs giving warning, some in Greek, others in Latin characters, of the law of purification, to wit that no foreigner was permitted to enter the holy place..." (Jewish Wars V.193-194)<sup>68</sup>
- d) The Temple Balustrade Inscriptions, along with Josephus' description, match the discussion found in Acts 21:28-29. Here the Bible records that Paul, who had traveled with some Gentile Christian converts, was accused by the Jews of violating this law and barrier by bringing them into the inner court. Paul was arrested and dragged out of the Temple complex and the Jews were beating him before the Roman commander arrived to take custody of Paul. This initial situation would lead to Paul's eventual appeal to be heard by Caesar.

## IV. Conclusion

- A. I know that there are many, many discoveries that we did not even allude to in our short time. But if this is your passion, if this is your area of interest by which you can draw someone closer to belief in God and the Bible, then please continue to deepen your understanding.

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<sup>68</sup> Josephus, Flavius. Josephus Volume III: The Jewish War, Books IV-VII. Translated into English by H. ST. J. Thackeray. Harvard University Press. p259.

## Bible's Inspiration: External Evidences (Scientific Accuracy and Foreknowledge)

### I. Introduction

- A. As evidence for the Bible's inspiration, we can consider concepts and statements that would relate to knowledge not fully known or fully understood by the writer from a scientific perspective at that time. Knowledge outside of what the writer knew would demand a source outside of man, meaning divine. Thus, foreknowledge represents a mark of inspiration.

### II. Scientific Foreknowledge: Nature

#### A. Ship building: Noah's Ark - Genesis 6

1. Moses, writing about 3,500 years ago in 1500 BC, recorded details of an event that had occurred about 1,000 years before he was born. The Global Flood in the days of Noah was such a catastrophic and pivotal event in human history that its story would be passed down from generation to generation and we see it throughout ancient civilizations around the world. Would Moses have likely been told some of this story, very possibly.
2. But just as we have seen throughout the Bible, what Moses writes includes such details that (1) Moses would not have known, and (2) would prove to be scientifically useful thousands of years later.
3. Genesis 6-9 includes the details of a boat-like construction project so large that it seems out of place. Critics of the Bible's inspiration have said this seems like a fanciful story, and such an enormous vessel at this time in history could not have occurred.
4. Admittedly we do not have the structure available to see in all its glory today, there are several possibilities for where it could have come to rest, but for sure we can't go to a museum and see the Ark.
  - a) However, when we consider its dimensions, scientific considerations have confirmed that the ratio of dimensions is one that has proven to be one of stability: 300 cubits long by 50 cubits wide by 30 cubits tall.
5. This ratio of length to width to height (30x5x3) has been shown to be a desired ratio for cargo-carrying, extremely stable ships. Simply consider that while there are ships of all shapes and sizes, 4-5 thousand years after the time of Noah and 3500 years after Moses recorded these details, humanity is still using this ratio in shipbuilding:
  - a) Numerous mid-19th century passenger ships, and specifically the SS Great Britain used a ratio almost the same (32.2x5x3.2).
  - b) In World War 2, cargo ships built by the United States called Liberty Ships followed a similar ratio, one specific example is the SS Jeremiah O'Brien.
  - c) And livestock is found floating on ocean waters in modern livestock carriers, which many of them have similar dimensions, one such example is the Zaher I.
6. No ship has the exact purpose as Noah's Ark, to be a floating barge for about 1 year during a Global Flood, but marine engineering and naval architecture has confirmed it had the right dimensions for that task.

#### B. Oceanography

1. People have been sailing the seas for almost all of human history. The cataclysmic event of the global flood seemed to have changed the geography and arrangement of the continents. Ancient civilizations around the world have since had aspects of exploration, industry, and trade involving navigating the waters. As such understanding the oceans has been part of human investigation.

2. Psalm 8 speaks about the wonder of God's Creation and how even man is such a small part of Creation, God is still mindful of him. Then we find a small reference to the seas:
  - a) "The birds of the air, and the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas." (Psalm 8:8)
3. The Psalmist spoke of something possibly considered or observed in the natural world, but the full understanding would be thousands of years afterward.
4. Matthew Fontaine Maury is sometimes called "pathfinder of the seas" or the "father of oceanography" for his contribution in understanding the details of these paths of the seas.<sup>69</sup>
  - a) *I have been blamed by men of science, both in this country and in England, for quoting the Bible in confirmation of the doctrines of physical geography. The Bible, they say, was not written for scientific purposes, and is therefore no authority in matters of science. I beg pardon! The Bible is authority for everything it touches. What would you think of an historian who should refuse to consult historical records of the Bible, because the Bible was not written for the purposes of history? The Bible is true and science is true.*<sup>70</sup>

C. Water Cycle: Ecclesiastes 1:7; 11:3; Amos 9:6

1. Precipitation->Evaporation->Condensation->repeat
  - a) Ecclesiastes 1:7 - *All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; to the place from which the rivers come, there **they return again**.*
  - b) Ecclesiastes 11:3 - *If the clouds are **full of rain**, they empty themselves upon the earth;*
  - c) Amos 9:6 - [speaking of God] *Who calls for the waters **of the sea**, and pours them out on the face of the earth*
2. Natural observations easily provide the knowledge of precipitation by rain, snow, and hail. These forms of water originating from clouds and storms is a straightforward understanding, and one that the Bible makes many references in its usual occurrence.
3. However, what Solomon brings up is the less obvious and unknown processes of how the waters make their way from Earth back to the sky and clouds, which today we understand as the evaporation process of water from the liquid form to a gaseous form. Then from that vapor form it must condense back into water droplets to form clouds and eventually to rain back down.

III. **Scientific Foreknowledge: Medical**

- A. While we most often think of the Old Law given through Moses in the religious application of sacrifices that were to be given, special feast days, and how the priests were to serve in the tabernacle, we also find that God gave laws that would guide the people in both general health and sanitation.
- B. Historical Context of the Old Law
  1. This may seem like a strange aspect of the Old Law, but when we notice the context in which the Israelites found themselves it may give us some insight into some of the reasoning.
  2. The Israelites had just spent hundreds of years in Egypt. Part of that time they

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<sup>69</sup> Monument in Virginia to Maury that references his inspiration being "Holy Writ" - [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/03/Matthew\\_Fontaine\\_Maury\\_memorial\\_at\\_Goshen\\_Pass\\_overlooking\\_the\\_Maury\\_River.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/03/Matthew_Fontaine_Maury_memorial_at_Goshen_Pass_overlooking_the_Maury_River.jpg)

<sup>70</sup> Lewis, Charles Lee (1927), *Matthew Fontaine Maury: The Pathfinder of the Seas*. Annapolis, MD: United States Naval Institute, 1969 reprint by AMS Press, New York. p99.

were free, fared well, and lived slightly segmented in the land of Goshen. For the later years, they were enslaved, oppressed, and forced to abide by Egyptian standards.

### 3. Ebers Papyrus

- a) While Egypt was definitely an advanced civilization in many ways, they would perfect the process of mummification to a high degree, and along the way document the understanding of internal organs.
- b) However, their writings can be seen as simply man's discovery and interpretation, as we find various misconceptions for how to avoid infection or correct smaller issues.
- c) In the Ebers Papyrus that dates to the mid-16th century BC, placing it around the time of Hebrew captivity. We see they combined a medical viewpoint with their magical views including specific verbal incantations that accompanied the prescribed remedy.

4. The Old Testament books of law, Exodus through Deuteronomy, contain laws and guidelines given to the Israelites as they began to structure themselves into a new nation.

## C. Health

1. Leviticus 17:11 "Life of the flesh is in the blood"
2. Example: Bloodletting
  - a) Here the connection of life and health with one's blood
  - b) George Washington is thought to have died from bloodletting. He had 5-7 pints of blood drained in a 16-hour period.<sup>71</sup> (Where a usual blood donation is 1 pint.)

## D. Sanitation

1. Deuteronomy 23:12-14 - Burying human waste outside the camp
2. Example: The Black Death (Bubonic Plague)
  - a) Poor sanitation across Europe and Asia was a large contributing factor to the spread of disease, especially in poor and densely populated areas.
  - b) One of the most notable examples, was the Black Death that swept across Europe in the mid-1300s, killing 13 million people in Europe (conservatively, 75-200 million across Europe and Asia)

## E. Food Consumption

1. Leviticus 11 - Food Consumption Restrictions
  - a) 11:7 - Prohibits pigs (cloven hoof but does not chew the cud)
    - (1) Today pork is a known meat that needs extra cooking attention.
  - b) 11:9-12 - Prohibits various aquatic animals
    - (1) A United States Navy survival manual says, "All of the important fish with poisonous flesh...lack ordinary scales...Instead, these poisonous fish are covered with bristles or spiny scales, strong sharp thorns, or spines, or are encased in a bony box-like covering. Some of them have naked skin, that is, no spines or scales."<sup>72</sup>

## F. Disease Prevention

1. Numbers 19 - Laws of Purification
  - a) 19:9 - *Then a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and store them outside the camp in a clean place; and they shall be kept*

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<sup>71</sup> <https://www.history.com/news/a-brief-history-of-bloodletting>

<sup>72</sup> Survival on Land and Sea. 1944. Publications Branch Office of Naval Intelligence, United States Navy. p48-49.  
URL: <https://library.si.edu/digital-library/book/survivalonlandse00ethn>

- for the congregation of the children of Israel for the water of purification*
- b) 19:11 - Touching of a dead human body required 7 days of being unclean. Washing with the mixture on 3rd and 7th day to purify.
  - c) 19:14 - Also, where the person died had to be cleaned with water.
  - d) 19:17 - use of "running water" in contrast to stagnant water
2. The mixture described in Numbers 19 resembles the process for making lye, which was the primary cleaning agent used in lye soaps.
    - a) Using water to leach through ashes formed an alkali solution known as lye. When mixed with rendered animal fat, a thickened substance was formed that could be used as soap for cleaning.<sup>73</sup>
  3. Example: Ignaz Semmelweis (1818-1865)
    - a) In the mid-1800s, an obstetrician named Ignaz Semmelweis was the director of a hospital in Vienna, Austria. While directing the hospital's facilities, Semmelweis observed that their death rate for mothers giving birth was 18%, but the usual rate of death among midwives was only 3%. This did not seem reasonable as the hospital had the most advanced medical knowledge, facilities, and talent at that time.
    - b) When autopsies were performed it seemed that the mothers mainly died of what they called labor fever. Semmelweis had tried numerous different approaches from birthing positions to having religious priests change how they came to attend to those already dead.
    - c) As the story goes it wasn't until a fellow surgeon died, from the same symptoms as labor fever, after nicking himself during surgery. Semmelweis noted while watching the young medical students, that they would perform an autopsy, then rinse their hands in a common bowl of water, dry on a common towel, and then begin to perform examinations on healthy mothers.
    - d) When he ordered everyone in his hospital to thoroughly wash their hands in a chlorine solution after every examination. The mortality rate plummeted from 18% down to 1-2%.<sup>74</sup>

#### IV. Conclusion

##### A. Summary

1. Genesis - written by Moses **1500 BC** about an event that occurred about 2500 BC
2. Psalms written about **1000 BC** during the time of King David
3. Ecclesiastes written in the **mid-900s BC** by Solomon

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<sup>73</sup> Alice Morse Earle. 1898. Home Life in Colonial Days. The Berkshire Traveller Press, Stockbridge, Massachusetts. p254. URL: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/22675/22675-h/22675-h.htm>

<sup>74</sup> <https://apologeticspress.org/scientific-foreknowledge-and-medical-acumen-of-the-bible-2024/>

## Bible's Inspiration: Introduction to Alleged Contradictions

### I. Introduction

- A. I want you to think back to our introductory lessons in this course. In those lessons we discussed several approaches we could formulate our defenses. We discussed that some arguments are positive, presenting the existing evidence for Christianity.
- B. We also discussed the contrast, formulating our defense in defending from accusations or attacks made on Christianity.

### II. Principles of interpretation

- A. Bible writers are innocent until proven guilty.
  - 1. In general, this approach is good to have in all of life, but it is also a principle that applies to the textual critique of ancient documents. If an ancient document has come from a proper origin (first discovered in a reasonable place), has the consistency matching its particular claimed time, and within its content has no signs of forgery. Then textual critics work from the understanding that it is valid until proven to be false.
  - 2. So much more can we take this approach when we consider claims of contradiction within the Bible's text. We spent numerous lessons looking at both internal and external evidences of the Bible's inspiration, and so when claims are made against the Bible's integrity, our first principle of interpretation is to hold the writers innocent.
- B. Consider the context.
  - 1. A second principle to consider when evaluating claims of contradiction is to make sure we are considering the context. This comes in several levels of depth in evaluating the immediate context of the chapter or section where it is, and then also the larger context of the book, but then we also need to consider who is talking. We discussed in earlier lessons that the Bible's inspiration is an umbrella that whatever is written is accurately recorded for us, but there are passages such as dialogue where the conversation truly happened, but not everything in the conversation is true. We'll explain later.
- C. Contradictions must have no other possibilities.
  - 1. For a contradiction to be true, there must be no other possibility. This isn't saying that we are trying to justify inaccurate or untrue messages. But it is saying that we are holding the Bible innocent until proven guilty, and the only way for something to be proven guilty is if there is no means of maintaining innocence.
  - 2. Thus, as long as there is an option that abides by all of the details, does not contradict one of the known facts, and stays consistent with the context, then really you cannot disprove the possibility and the innocence is maintained.

### III. Principles of Evaluation

- A. So, the burden for proving a contradiction does fall on those seeking to prosecute the Bible's integrity. Therefore, here are some reasonable questions that must be addressed to prove that a contradiction is true.
  - 1. Is it involving the same person, place, or thing?
  - 2. Is it considering the same time period?
  - 3. Is it addressing the same sense?
  - 4. Is it supplementing with complementary details (not contradictory)?

### IV. Generic Example

- A. "John Doe is rich." and "John Doe is poor."
  - 1. Both valid if different John Does are being referenced.
  - 2. Both valid if it is the same man, but different times in his life.

3. Both valid if different senses of the phrase are being used, physical and spiritual, or if different contexts are being compared, such as poor in terms of the average in the United States but rich when compared to the average in a poor country.
4. Both are valid if the statements are offering supplementation, such as John Doe is rich in his dwelling, but John Doe is poor in his car. This would mean he has a valuable house but his car is not very valuable.

V. **Basic Biblical Examples of Alleged Contradictions**

- A. Is it involving the **same person, place, or thing**?
  1. James dead in Acts 12, but alive in Acts 15
    - a) Acts 12:1-2 “Now about that time Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church. Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword.”
    - b) Acts 15:13-14 “And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, “Men and brethren, listen to me: Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name.”
  2. In the New Testament there are several different “James” including (1) James the son of Zebedee and brother of John; (2) James the son of Alphaeus; (3) James the brother of Jesus; (4) James the father of Judas (not Iscariot).
  3. In Acts 12 it is specified as “James the brother of John”. In Acts 15 it is not specified, but we have numerous options and most believe it is James the brother of Jesus.
  4. No contradiction here.
- B. Is it considering the **same time** period?
  1. Creation is very good, but God also regretted creating man
    - a) Genesis 1:31 “very good”
    - b) Genesis 6:6 “And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.”
  2. I think we can see pretty simply the differences in time these 2 verses are discussing. It is not wrong or contradictory for God to see the perfect Creation in the Garden of Eden and declare it is very good. However, over 1600 years later when God looks at the heart of man and sees that “every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually,” we can understand the anguish this must have caused.
  3. So different times, there is no contradiction here.
- C. Is it addressing the **same sense**?
  1. Now we can also use Genesis 1 and 6 as a comparison for different “things” (our first question person, place, or thing), but especially for different “senses,” which is our third question, “Is it addressing the same sense?” We can see a focus in Genesis 1 to the creation of the physical world and operation of laws and see perfection. In Genesis 6, the physical laws of the world were still operating to perfection and the world may have looked physically beautiful, but God was looking at the spiritual sense and condition of man, which was horrible.
- D. Supplementation Is Not Contradiction
  1. Women at the Tomb:
    - a) Matthew 28:1 - Mary Magdalene and the other Mary
    - b) Mark 16:1 - Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome
    - c) Luke 24:10 - Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women
    - d) John 20:1 - Mary Magdalene
  2. So, did any of the accounts use restrictive terms like, “only” Mary Magdalene went to the tomb, or “no other women” went with Mary the mother of James? No,

in fact Luke records the phrase “and the other women” noting there was more but not specifying by name.

3. This is a great example of supplementation and not contradiction.
  4. So, from these accounts what women can we say were for sure part of the group? Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Salome, Joanna, possibly a different Mary specified by Matthew as “the other Mary”, and then because Luke says “and the other women” we cannot restrict ourselves from allowing that there may have been other women in the group that went to the tomb.
  5. No contradiction proven here.
- E. Who’s Talking: Inspired Speaker or Inspired Documentation?
1. Does the Bible record some statements made directly by Satan? Yes.
    - a) When Satan spoke to Eve, do we have the correct content of his speech? Yes. But was his speech correct in its contents? Absolutely not.
    - b) Do we have the statements by Satan to Jesus in the wilderness? Yes. Did he quote some other Bible passages? Yes. But should we follow what Satan asked Jesus to do? Absolutely not.
    - c) These are fairly easy to decipher how the difference in inspiration of facts and God’s special revelation of divine commands can be distinguished.
  2. One more example would be from the book of Job.
    - a) Did Job’s friends have lengthy conversations with Job? Yes. Should we doubt that his friends said the things recorded? No. Should we agree with what they said, and declare their statements as truth? Absolutely not
    - b) At the end of Job, the friends were sorely rebuked by God:
      - (1) Job 42:7-8 “My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has. Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and My servant Job shall pray for you. For I will accept him, lest I deal with you according to your folly; because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has.”

VI. Conclusion:

- A. That final rebuke we read by God to Eliphaz, had as its cause a lack of evaluating and seeking to understand God’s will. Job’s friends failed to consider Job’s innocence, to evaluate his context, and then to even consider there were possibilities available that met all of the details but still maintained God’s sovereignty and Job’s righteousness.

## Christ's Deity: Secular History

### I. Introduction

- A. Having looked at a variety of powerful arguments for God's existence and the Bible's inspiration, we must now consider the central theme of the Bible's message—Jesus' life and role as the prophesied Messiah.
- B. In this section, we will look at the first issue, the life of Jesus, and address the foundational question, "Did He really live and walk this Earth as a man?"
- C. If Jesus was a real person and one that has become so well-known across the world and through history, then we would expect to find evidence of His physical existence. So, let's do some investigation of ancient history to see what evidence there is.

### II. Argument for Jesus' History and Deity

- A. Practical Statement
  - 1. Jesus lived, taught, and influenced the world.
  - 2. His life and death fulfilled Messianic prophecy.
- B. Formal Statement
  - 1. If evidence of Jesus' historical nature and fulfillment of Messianic prophecy can be shown, then Jesus is the Messiah (Christ).
  - 2. Historical evidence does exist, and fulfillment of prophecy is beyond coincidence and conspiring.
  - 3. Therefore, Jesus was truly the Christ.

### III. Modern Historian's Perspective

- A. "In the enthusiasm of its discoveries the Higher Criticism has applied to the New Testament tests of authenticity so severe that by them a hundred ancient worthies - e.g., Hammurabi, David, Socrates - would fade into legend." (Will Durant, *Caesar and Christ*, p.557)
- B. "The revolution he sought was a far deeper one... If he could cleanse the human heart of selfish desire, cruelty, and lust ... all those institutions that rise out of human greed and violence, and the consequent need for law, would disappear... Christ was in this spiritual sense the greatest revolutionist in history." (Will Durant, *Caesar and Christ*, p.566)

### IV. Hostile Witnesses

- A. Flavius Josephus (AD 37/38-100)<sup>75</sup>
  - 1. Often, he is referenced simply as Josephus, a Jewish historian, but for full context it is important to note the full name Flavius Josephus as this shows the context in which was writing his more well-known works, *Jewish Wars* and *Antiquities of the Jews*. While in his early life he served as military leader, he was subsequently captured and kept in service by both Vespasian and Titus. Some may claim he was a traitor to the Jewish people, but others hold that his historical writings are some of the best sources outside the Bible for understanding the life and times of Roman ruled Judea.
  - 2. So, in this context of a noted historian, fully acquainted with both the Jewish and Roman world, who was no friend of Christianity we find two passages in reference to Jesus' life.
    - a) "But this younger Ananus, who, as we have told you already, took the high priesthood, was a bold man in his temper, and very insolent; he was also of the sect of the Sadducees, who are very rigid in judging offenders,

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<sup>75</sup> <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/testimonium.html>

above all the rest of the Jews, as we have already observed; when, therefore, Ananus was of this disposition, he thought he had now a proper opportunity. Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the sanhedrim of judges, and brought before them the **brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James**, and some others; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned: but as for those who seemed the most equitable of the citizens, and such as were the most uneasy at the breach of the laws, they disliked what was done;" (Antiquities of the Jews, 20.9.1)

(1) This passage has the least controversy, because the passage is first about Ananus' actions, then about the death of James, then only in a secondary reference to "Jesus, who was called Christ".

b) "Now there was about this time **Jesus**, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. **He was the Christ**; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the **tribe of Christians**, so named from him, are not extinct to this day." (Antiquities of the Jews, 18.3.3)

(1) While this passage has controversy around it because of the complimentary attributions and the phrase "He was the Christ", we can even drop it and all of the positives out and see that the factual details and full context confirms the historical nature of Jesus' life and death.

#### B. Tacitus (AD 55-117)

1. Roman historian, sometimes called the "Father of History"
2. "Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called **Christians** by the populace. **Christus**, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired. Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle, and was exhibiting a show in the circus, while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer or stood aloft on a car. Hence, even for criminals who deserved extreme and exemplary punishment, there arose a feeling of compassion; for it was not, as it seemed, for the public good, but to glut one man's cruelty, that they were being destroyed." (Annals, 15:44)

#### C. Pliny the Younger (AD 61-112)

1. Pliny was a Roman governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor. We have the contents of a

letter he wrote to the Roman Emperor Trajan specifically regarding how to deal with Christians, their religion, and their faithful adherence.

2. "It is my custom, Sir, to refer to you in all cases where I do not feel sure, for who can better direct my doubts or inform my ignorance? I have never been present at any legal examination of the Christians, and I do not know, therefore, what are the usual penalties passed upon them, or the limits of those penalties, or how searching an inquiry should be made. I have hesitated a great deal in considering whether any distinctions should be drawn according to the ages of the accused; whether the weak should be punished as severely as the more robust; whether if they renounce their faith they should be pardoned, or whether the man who has once been a Christian should gain nothing by recanting; whether the name itself, even though otherwise innocent of crime, should be punished, or only the crimes that gather round it.

In the meantime, this is the plan which I have adopted in the case of those Christians who have been brought before me. I ask them whether they are Christians; if they say yes, then I repeat the question a second and a third time, warning them of the penalties it entails, and if they still persist, I order them to be taken away to prison. For I do not doubt that, whatever the character of the crime may be which they confess, their pertinacity and inflexible obstinacy certainly ought to be punished. There were others who showed similar mad folly whom I reserved to be sent to Rome, as they were Roman citizens. Subsequently, as is usually the way, the very fact of my taking up this question led to a great increase of accusations, and a variety of cases were brought before me. A pamphlet was issued anonymously, containing the names of a number of people. Those who denied that they were or had been Christians and called upon the gods in the usual formula, reciting the words after me, those who offered incense and wine before your image, which I had given orders to be brought forward for this purpose, together with the statues of the deities - all such I considered should be discharged, especially as they cursed the name of Christ, which, it is said, those who are really Christians cannot be induced to do. Others, whose names were given me by an informer, first said that they were Christians and afterwards denied it, declaring that they had been but were so no longer, some of them having recanted many years before, and more than one so long as twenty years back. They all worshipped your image and the statues of the deities, and cursed the name of Christ. But they declared that the sum of their guilt or their error only amounted to this, that on a stated day they had been accustomed to meet before daybreak and to recite a hymn among themselves to Christ, as though he were a god, and that so far from binding themselves by oath to commit any crime, their oath was to abstain from theft, robbery, adultery, and from breach of faith, and not to deny trust money placed in their keeping when called upon to deliver it. When this ceremony was concluded, it had been their custom to depart and meet again to take food, but it was of no special character and quite harmless, and they had ceased this practice after the edict in which, in accordance with your orders, I had forbidden all secret societies. I thought it the more necessary, therefore, to find out what truth there was in these statements by submitting two women, who were called deaconesses, to the torture, but I found nothing but a debased superstition carried to great lengths. So I postponed my examination, and immediately consulted you. The matter seems to me worthy of your consideration, especially as there are so many people involved in the danger. Many persons of all ages, and of both sexes alike, are being brought into peril of their lives by their accusers, and the process will go on. For the contagion of this

superstition has spread not only through the free cities, but into the villages and the rural districts, and yet it seems to me that it can be checked and set right. It is beyond doubt that the temples, which have been almost deserted, are beginning again to be thronged with worshippers, that the sacred rites which have for a long time been allowed to lapse are now being renewed, and that the food for the sacrificial victims is once more finding a sale, whereas, up to recently, a buyer was hardly to be found. From this it is easy to infer what vast numbers of people might be reclaimed, if only they were given an opportunity of repentance.” (Pliny the Younger, Letters 10.96)<sup>76</sup>

3. Trajan’s reply to Pliny the Younger:

“You have adopted the proper course, my dear Pliny, in examining into the cases of those who have been denounced to you as Christians, for no hard and fast rule can be laid down to meet a question of such wide extent. The Christians are not to be hunted out; if they are brought before you and the offence is proved, they are to be punished, but with this reservation - that if any one denies that he is a Christian and makes it clear that he is not, by offering prayers to our deities, then he is to be pardoned because of his recantation, however suspicious his past conduct may have been. But pamphlets published anonymously must not carry any weight whatever, no matter what the charge may be, for they are not only a precedent of the very worst type, but they are not in consonance with the spirit of our age.” (Pliny the Younger, Letters 10.97)<sup>77</sup>

a) As an interesting note, Tertullian around AD 200 referenced in his writings this documented exchange between Trajan and Pliny, even referencing some of the specifics in Trajan’s reply (*Apology* 2:6-9). Tertullian was a Christian convert living in Carthage, and his writings give us a secondary secular source to confirm the primary source, which confirms both Jesus’ life and the trials of the early Christians.

D. Suetonius (AD 69-122)

1. Roman historian who was a contemporary and friend of Pliny the Younger. Pliny would describe Suetonius as “a man of the highest integrity, probity, and learning.” (Pliny, *Letters*, 10.94) He also wrote to Trajan asking for a special favor be granted to Suetonius, for being childless. Pliny documented his letter and Trajan’s reply immediately before the letter he wrote about dealing with the Christians.
2. “He [Claudius] restored to the Senate the provinces of Achaia and Macedonia, which Tiberius had taken into his own charge. He deprived the Lykians of their independence ... restored theirs to the Rhodians, ... He allowed the people of Ilium perpetual exemption from tribute ... **Since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he expelled them from Rome.** He allowed the envoys of the Germani to sit in the orchestra, ... saw the Parthian and Armenian envoys sitting with the Senate, ... He utterly abolished the cruel and inhuman religion of the Druids among the Gauls, which under Augustus had merely been prohibited to Roman citizens” (Life of Claudius, chapter 25)<sup>78</sup>
3. “During his reign many abuses were severely punished and put down, and no fewer new laws were made: a limit was set to expenditures; the public banquets were confined to a distribution of food, the sale of any kind of cooked viands in the taverns was forbidden, with the exception of pulse and vegetables, whereas

<sup>76</sup> <https://www.attalus.org/old/pliny10b.html#96>

<sup>77</sup> <https://www.attalus.org/old/pliny10b.html#97>

<sup>78</sup> <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/suet-claudius-rolfe.asp>

before every sort of dainty was exposed for sale. **Punishment was inflicted on the Christians, a class of men given to a new and mischievous superstition.** He put an end to the diversions of the chariot drivers, who from immunity of long standing claimed the right of ranging at large and amusing themselves by cheating and robbing the people.” (Lives of the Caesars, Nero 16)<sup>79</sup>

E. Lucian (AD 120-180)

1. Lucian was a Greek writer of rhetoric and satire
2. **“The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day - the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account....** You see, these misguided creatures start with the general conviction that they are immortal for all time, which explains the contempt of death and voluntary self-devotion which are so common among them; and then it was impressed on them by their original lawgiver that they are all brothers, from the moment that they are converted, and deny the gods of Greece, and worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws. All this they take quite on faith, with the result that they despise all worldly goods alike, regarding them merely as common property.” (*The Death of Peregrine*, 11-13)<sup>80</sup>

F. Babylonian Talmud (or Gemara) (6th century AD)

1. The Talmud is a Jewish document bringing together the Mishna (writings on the oral Torah) and the Gemara (commentaries on the Mishna).
2. The Talmud was developed over the period from the first century to about the seventh century. One of the most documented Talmud works is the Babylonian Talmud.
3. “On Passover Eve they hung the corpse of Jesus the Nazarene after they killed him by way of stoning. And a crier went out before him for forty days, publicly proclaiming: Jesus the Nazarene is going out to be stoned because he practiced sorcery, incited people to idol worship, and led the Jewish people astray.” (Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 43a)
4. While the details in this later work conflict with specific details in the Bible of Jesus’ crucifixion and death, the intent is to show that the earliest hostile references were not trying to claim the complete non-existence of Jesus as true historical figure. Rather they were trying to impugn Him and the message He taught.

V. **Friendly Witnesses**

- A. As friendly witnesses, the following quotations are expected to both claim Jesus as the Christ and to speak positively of His teachings, which they do providing quotations from Scripture and giving cross references to other disciples and Christians. At the very least though, they provide historical confirmation of Jesus’ life joining the non-Christian, hostile witnesses to provide the counter view of first century and second century life.
- B. Clement of Rome (AD 30-100)
  1. “The Apostles received the Gospel for us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ was sent forth from God. So, then Christ is from God, and the Apostles are from Christ. Both therefore came of the will of God in the appointed order. Having therefore received a charge, and having been fully assured through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and confirmed in the word of God with full assurance of the Holy Ghost, they went forth with the glad tidings that the kingdom of God should come.” (*Corinthians*, p. 42)
- C. Ignatius (AD 70-110)

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<sup>79</sup> <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/suet-nero-rolfe.asp>

<sup>80</sup> <http://carm.org/questions/about-bible/non-biblical-accounts-new-testament-events-andor-people>

1. "Jesus Christ, who was of the race of David, who was the Son of Mary, who was truly born and ate and drank, was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate, was truly crucified and died in the sight of those in heaven and on earth and those under the earth; who moreover was truly raised from the dead, His Father having raised Him, who in the like fashion will so raise us also who believe in Him." (*Trallians*, p.9)
- D. Polycarp (AD 70-156)
1. For I am persuaded that ye are well trained in the sacred writings, and nothing is hidden from you. But to myself this is not granted. Only, as it is said in these scriptures, *Be ye angry and sin not*, and *Let not the sun set on your wrath*. Blessed is he that remembereth this; and I trust that this is in you. Now may the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the eternal High-priest Himself the Son of God Jesus Christ, build you up in faith and truth, and in all gentleness and in all avoidance of wrath and in forbearance and long suffering and in patient endurance and in purity; and may He grant unto you a lot and portion among His saints, and to us with you, and to all that are under heaven, who shall believe on our Lord and God Jesus Christ and on His Father *that raised him from the dead*. (Letter to the Philippians, 12:1-2, Polycarp, trans. by Lightfoot)<sup>81</sup>
  2. Polycarp's letter to the Philippians references Ignatius and also letters written by Paul to the Philippians.
- E. Justin Martyr (AD 100-165)
1. "And hear what part of earth He was to be born in, as another prophet, Micah, foretold. He spoke thus: "And thou, Bethlehem, the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come forth a Governor, who shall feed My people." Now there is a village in the land of the Jews, thirty-five stadia from Jerusalem, in which Jesus Christ was born, as you can ascertain also from the registers of the taxing made under Cyrenius, your first procurator in Judaea." (*First Apology*, 34)
  2. Cyrenius = Quirinius (mentioned in Luke 2)
- F. Irenaeus (AD 130-202)
1. Mentions Polycarp and his associations with the Apostles and those that had seen Christ:
    - a) "But Polycarp also was not only instructed by apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also, by apostles in Asia, appointed bishop of the Church in Smyrna, whom I also saw in my early youth, for he tarried [on earth] a very long time, and, when a very old man, gloriously and most nobly suffering martyrdom, departed this life..." (*Against Heresies*, Book 3, Chapter 3, Section 4)<sup>82</sup>

## VI. Conclusion

- A. As we conclude, the life of Jesus has taken on so much impact and influence on the world because of the Bible's account and the recognition of its inspiration. The evidence for the Bible's inspiration provides an enormous weight to the question, "Did Jesus truly live and walk this Earth?"
- B. However, we have added evidence from some of the most well-known ancient, and even contemporary, secular historians. The fact that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, lived and taught throughout Judea is beyond doubt. You can ask the question, but the answer is clear.

<sup>81</sup> <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/polycarp-lightfoot.html>

<sup>82</sup> <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/irenaeus-book3.html>

## Christ's Deity: Messianic Prophecy

### I. Introduction

- A. In our last section, we surveyed some of the most prominent historians through secular history, with the singular question: "Did Jesus truly live?" The answer from outside the pages of the Bible is a resounding "Yes."
- B. In this section, we are going to look at the second aspect of our Formal Argument for Jesus' Deity...that of fulfilling Messianic prophecy.

### II. Argument for Jesus' History and Deity

#### A. Formal Statement

1. If evidence of Jesus' historical nature and fulfillment of Messianic prophecy can be shown, then Jesus is the Messiah (Christ).
2. Historical evidence does exist, and fulfillment of prophecy is beyond coincidence and conspiring.
3. Therefore, Jesus was truly the Christ.

### III. Modern Jewish Views: The Messiah

#### A. Judaism 101: Mashiach (The Messiah)<sup>83</sup>

1. The following quotation comes from a Jewish website under the overall title of "Judaism 101: The Mashiach (The Messiah)."
2. **The Messianic Idea in Judaism**  
"Belief in the eventual coming of the mashiach is a basic and fundamental part of traditional Judaism. It is part of Rambam's 13 Principles of Faith, the minimum requirements of Jewish belief."
  - a) Rambam is a reference to Moses ben Maimon or Maimonides.  
Sometimes called one of the greatest medieval Jewish scholars.
3. **The Mashiach**  
"The mashiach will be a great political leader descended from King David (Jeremiah 23:5). The mashiach is often referred to as 'mashiach ben David' (mashiach, son of David). He will be well-versed in Jewish law, and observant of its commandments (Isaiah 11:2-5). He will be a charismatic leader, inspiring others to follow his example. He will be a great military leader, who will win battles for Israel. He will be a great judge, who makes righteous decisions (Jeremiah 33:15)."
4. **What About Jesus?**  
"Jews do not believe that Jesus was the mashiach. Assuming that he existed, and assuming that the Christian scriptures are accurate in describing him (both matters that are debatable), he simply did not fulfill the mission of the mashiach as it is described in the biblical passages cited above. Jesus did not do any of the things that the scriptures said the messiah would do."

### IV. Jesus' Appeal to Prophecy Fulfillment

- A. Matthew 5:17 [Sermon on the Mount] *Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.*
- B. Luke 4:17, 20-21 [In a synagogue] *And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written.... Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."*
- C. John 5:39, 46-47 [After healing at the Pool of Bethesda] *You search the Scriptures, for in*

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<sup>83</sup> <http://www.jewfaq.org/mashiach.htm>

*them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?*

- D. Matthew 21:42 [To the Chief Priests and Pharisees following the Parables of the Two Sons and the Wicked Vinedressers] *Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?'"*
- E. John 15:25 [Speaking to the disciples in the Upper Room] *But this happened that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, "They hated Me without a cause."*
- F. Luke 22:37 [With the disciples prior to going to pray on the Mount of Olives] *For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: "And He was numbered with the transgressors." For the things concerning Me have an end.*
- G. Matthew 26:56 [At His arrest in the garden] *"But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.*
- H. Luke 24:25-27 [On the road to Emmaus] *Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.*
- I. Luke 24:44 [Disciples in the Upper Room] *Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me."*

#### V. **Prophecies concerning the Messiah**

- A. Over 300 Messianic prophecies fulfilled in Jesus<sup>84</sup>
- B. It is sometimes claimed that Jesus simply worked to meet the requirements of Old Testament prophecies in a purely human effort. This claim looks at Jesus simply working down a checklist of Messianic prophecies so that He could be considered as the Christ.
  - 1. It is important to notice that in the following list, broken down by time periods of Jesus' life (birth, ministry, and death), if He was merely a man and not divine then He would not have control over His birth or ancestry. Then in death He would have very little control over what would take place, especially when involving the brutal acts of others.

#### C. **Birth**

- 1. Seed of woman (Genesis 3:15; Galatians 4:4)
- 2. Would conquer Satan (Genesis 3:15; Hebrews 2:12-14)
- 3. Seed of Abraham (Genesis 12:3; Luke 3:34; Matthew 1:1-2)
- 4. Son of Isaac (Genesis 17:19-21; 26:4; Luke 3:34; Matthew 1:1-2)
- 5. Son of Jacob (Numbers 24:17; Genesis 35:10-12; Luke 3:34; Matthew 1:1-2)
- 6. From the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10; Hebrews 7:14)
- 7. Branch from stem of Jesse (Isaiah 11:1; Luke 3:32)
- 8. House of David (Jeremiah 23:5; Luke 1:32)
- 9. Born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1)
- 10. During Roman reign (Daniel 2:44; Luke 2:1)
- 11. Young virgin (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:22-23)
- 12. He would be God (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23)
  - a) called "Immanuel" [same form of word in Hebrew and Greek]
- 13. Brought out of Egypt (Numbers 24:8; Matthew 2:15)

#### D. **Ministry**

- 1. Announced by forerunner (Isaiah 40:3; Matthew 3:1-3)
- 2. Would be Worshiped (Psalm 72; Isaiah 60:3-9; Matthew 2:11)

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<sup>84</sup> McDowell, Josh D. (1999) *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*. Thomas Nelson Publishers. p168.

3. The Spirit of the Lord shall be upon Him (Isaiah 11:2; Luke 4:18-19)
4. Submissive to God (Psalm 40:8; John 8:29)
5. Would be a Prophet (Deuteronomy 18:18; Matthew 21:11; Luke 24:19)
6. Would be a Priest (Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 3:1)
7. He shall be called Lord (Psalm 110:1; Jeremiah 23:6; Matthew 22:43-45)

#### E. Death

1. Betrayed by a friend (Psalm 41:9; Matthew 26:49-50; Matthew 10:4; John 13:21)
2. Hands and feet pierced (Psalm 22:16; Luke 24:40; John 20:25-27)
3. He would be born a servant not an earthly majesty (Isaiah 53:1-2)
4. Be rejected by His own people (Isaiah 53:3; John 1:11; 7:5,48; Matthew 21:42-43)
5. Would know grief (Isaiah 53:3; Matthew 26:37-38)
6. Spit upon, beaten, bruised, scourged (Isaiah 50:6, 53:5; Matthew 26:67; 27:26; Luke 22:63)
7. He will bear our iniquities (Isaiah 53:6; Galatians 1:4; 1 John 2:2; 4:10)
8. Would not make defense for Himself (Isaiah. 53:7; Matthew 27:12)
9. Bones would be unbroken (Psalm 34:20; Psalm 22:17; John 19:33)
10. His side pierced (Zechariah 12:10; John 19:34)
11. Numbered with criminals (Isaiah 53:12; Mark 15:27-28)
12. Placed in a rich man's tomb (Isaiah 53:9; John 19:38-42)
13. Flesh without corruption, He would be raised (Psalm 16:8-11; Acts 2:25-31)
14. Ascension (Psalm 110:1-3; Acts 2:32-36; Hebrews 1:3)

### VI. Jewish Perspective for Messianic Prophecies<sup>85</sup>

#### A. Ancient Jewish Perspective

1. Targums or Targumim are ancient translations of the Hebrew scriptures (Old Testament) mainly into Aramaic, which combine additional material in an effort to provide biblical interpretation or understanding.
2. They range from literal translation to paraphrases, and from few word additions to larger sections of commentary.
3. It is interesting to note that they originated mainly in the 1st to 7th centuries AD, which would at least overlap with the Jewish mindset of the first century. As such they provide an ancient perspective for how Jews understood the application of various passages, which can specifically be considered for Messianic passages applied by Christians in the life of Jesus.
4. Major Targumim include:
  - a) Targum Onkelos (Torah, Pentateuch): early second century AD
  - b) Targum Jonathan ben Uzziel (Prophets): lived around the time of Christ
  - c) Targum Pseudo Jonathan (also known as Targum Jerusalem) is of later origin.
  - d) Palestinian Targumim (includes Targum Neofiti I) is of later origin.
5. Babylonian Targum: Onkelos and Jonathan are connected with Mesopotamia by tradition, though current thought says they were written in the Palestinian region.

#### B. Messiah's Birth and Purpose: From Woman to Defeat Satan

1. Prophecy: Genesis 3:15 "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."
2. Fulfillment: Galatians 4:4; Luke 1:34-35
3. Jewish view: *Targum Onkelos* "And I will put enmity between thee and between the woman, and between thy son and her son. He will remember thee, what thou

<sup>85</sup> McDowell, Josh. (1999) *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*. 168-192.

didst to him (at) from the beginning, and thou **shalt be observant unto him at the end.**"

4. *Targum Pseudo Jonathan* "However, for them there will be a remedy, but for you there will be none, and in the future they will make peace with the heel in the **days of the king, Messiah.**"

#### C. Messiah's Birth: Virgin Born

1. Prophecy: Isaiah 7:14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel."
2. Fulfillment: Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-35
3. Jewish view: *Septuagint* (translated by Jews before the birth of Jesus) uses the Greek word *parthenos* specifying virginity. Their translation carries with it the understanding of its application to a virgin birth.

#### D. Messiah's Birth: Abraham & Isaac

1. Prophecy: Genesis 12:2-3 "I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."
2. Fulfillment: Galatians 3:16; Matthew 1:1
3. Prophecy: Genesis 21:12 "for in Isaac your seed shall be called."
4. Fulfillment: Matthew 1:2; Luke 3:34
5. Jewish view: They look to Abraham and Isaac as their fathers.

#### E. Messiah's Birth: Jacob

1. Prophecy: Genesis 35:12 "The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land."
2. Numbers 24:17 "I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; a Star shall come out of Jacob; a Scepter shall rise out of Israel"
3. Fulfillment: Luke 1:33 reign over the house of Jacob forever
4. Jewish view: *Targum Onkelos* "I see him, but not now; I behold him but not nigh. When a king shall arise out of Jakob, and **the Meshiha be anointed from Israel.**"
5. Jewish view:
  - a) In the early 2nd century, a Jewish revolt leader was given the name Bar Kokhba "The Son of the Star" by the prominent Rabbi Akiva in reference to Numbers 24:17.
  - b) According to Eusebius of Ceasaria (c.260-c.340), Bar Kokhba claimed to have been sent to the Jews from heaven (Church History 4.6.2). However, Simon's own letters show him to be of a pragmatic military and political mind. There is indeed evidence, however, that the Talmudic sage Rabbi Akiva considered him to be the deliverer. Akiva reportedly said of him, "This is the King Messiah" (Yer. Ta'anit iv. 68d).<sup>86</sup>

#### F. Messiah's Birth: Judah

1. Prophecy: Genesis 49:10 "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes"
2. Fulfillment: Luke 3:33; Hebrews 7:14
3. Jewish view: *Targum Jonathan* "Kings shall not cease, nor rulers, from the house of Jehuda, nor sapherim teaching the law from his seed, till the time that the **King, the Meshiha**, shall come.... How beauteous is the King, and **Meshiha who will arise from the house of Jehuda!**"
4. *Targum Pseudo Jonathan* "How noble is the King, Messiah, who is going to rise

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<sup>86</sup> "Bar Kochba." *New World Encyclopedia*. [https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Bar\\_Kochba](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Bar_Kochba)

from the house of Judah.”

#### G. Messiah's Birth: Root of Jesse

1. Prophecy: Isaiah 11:1-4 “There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.”
2. Fulfillment: Luke 3:33; Hebrews 7:14
3. Jewish view: *Targum* on Isaiah “And a King shall come forth from the sons of Jesse and **an Anointed One (or Messiah) from his son's sons shall grow up**. And there shall rest upon him a spirit from before the Lord, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord: and the Lord shall bring him to his fear: and not according to the sight of his eyes shall he judge, nor exercise judgement according to the hearing of his ears. But he shall judge with truth the poor, and adjudge with faithfulness the needy among the people.” (J.P. Stenning, *The Targum on Isaiah*, chap. 11:1, p. 40)

#### H. Messiah's Ministry: The Spirit of the Lord

1. Prophecy: Isaiah 11:2 “The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.”
2. Fulfillment: Matthew 3:16-17 (Jesus' baptism); Luke 4:19-21 (Jesus' reading of passage from Isaiah 61)
3. Jewish view: *Targum* on Isaiah “And a King shall come forth from the sons of Jesse and an Anointed One (or Messiah) from his son's sons shall grow up. **And there shall rest upon him a spirit from before the Lord**, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord” (J.P. Stenning, *The Targum on Isaiah*, chap. 11:1, p. 40)
4. *Babylonian Talmud*, the Sanhedrin II says, “**The Messiah—as it is written, And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him** the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge of the fear of the Lord. And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord.”

#### I. Messiah's Death: Isaiah 53

1. Prophecy: Isaiah 53
2. Fulfillment:
3. Jewish view: (*Targum Jonathan* on Isaiah 53) “Behold my servant Messiah shall prosper; he shall be high, and increase, and be exceeding strong: as the house of Israel looked to him through many days, because their countenance was darkened among the peoples, and their complexion beyond the sons of men.”
4. Jewish view: (*Babylonian Talmud*) “The Messiah—what is his name?...The Rabbis say, the leprous one; those of the house of Rabbi say, the sick one, as it is said, ‘Surely he hath borne our sicknesses.’” (Sanhedrin 98b)
5. Jewish view: (Moshe Kohen, a 15th-century rabbi in Spain) “This passage, the commentators explain, speaks of the captivity of Israel, although the singular number is used in it throughout. Others have supposed it to mean the just in this present world, who are crushed and oppressed now...but these too, for the same reason, by altering the number, distort the verses from their natural meaning.... [H]aving forsaken the knowledge of our Teachers, and inclined “after the stubbornness of their own hearts,” and of their own opinion, I am pleased to interpret it, in accordance with the teaching of our Rabbis, of the King Messiah.”
6. Modern Jewish View: Modern-day interpretation says the subject is the nation of Israel rather than a person.

## **VII. Conclusion**

- A. When we stop and consider the Messianic prophecies found within Scripture, their vast number, their specific requirements, and their application to the entire life of the Messiah is such that it is a complete impossibility for all of these to be contained within the Jesus' life...by coincidence.
- B. And the style and intent of the prophecies are such that it could not have been collusion or conspiracy.
- C. The reason we included in our discussion some of the historical Jewish perspectives, was to show that Jesus' fulfillment of Messianic prophecy was not outside of what their understandings had been.
- D. Many Jews made the connection and recognized Jesus as the promised Messiah, while some allowed their bias and desire to cloud their view.
- E. The same happens today, many recognize the full scope and validity of Christianity, while some do not.

## Earth's Age and Creation Questions

### I. Introduction

- A. In this course we have covered a lot of ground, and in doing so I hope that we have connected with an area of your life and your interest. I also hope that we have introduced you to some new evidences for Christianity, or at least extended some depth of knowledge that you already had.
- B. In this section, I want to address various questions about Creation, some of these you may have already asked to yourself.

### II. How old is Earth?

- A. One of the first questions when we consider the Creation account is, "How old is Earth?" As we answer this question, I want to remind you of what we learned in the course by observing our Cosmos.
  - 1. The Cosmological Argument and the Design Argument proved to us that God must exist and that our Universe requires an Intelligent Designer. This Designer chose to begin our Universe out of His eternal, spaceless, and non-physical existence.
  - 2. The specific design principles, Fine-tuning and Anthropic Principle, showed us that both matter and physical law must exist together to make scientific sense. For a Universe with a planet like Earth that nurtures life, all of the balanced conditions had to originate together and could not have slowly come together from previous unbalanced conditions.
  - 3. Life exists within the precise arrangement of Earth's cycles, which only exists within the precise arrangement of the Sun-Earth-Moon system, which only exists within the precise order of the Universe's laws.
  - 4. Thus, the timing for the creation of life, planet Earth, and our Universe was synchronized together from their beginning.
- B. Since we also confirmed the evidence for the Bible's inspiration, and one implication of recognizing an inspired message from God is that we must consider and respect its message.
  - 1. The inspired Genesis account provides clear understanding that ALL of Creation occurred in short succession...Earth, water, atmosphere, land, plants, Sun, Moon, stars, birds, fish, land animals, and man were created fully functional within only a few days into a Universe with all of its appropriate physical laws.
  - 2. From Scripture we see an overall accounting for history that leads from the first Messianic prophecy given in the Garden of Eden through the lineage of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, and David until Jesus came in fulfillment of all.
  - 3. Therefore, Adam and Eve were created by God in the garden of Eden roughly 2,000 years before Abraham (according to genealogies), roughly 4,000 years before Christ (according to genealogies and secular history), and approximately 6,000 years before our current time.
- C. Humanity's common origin then was on the sixth day of Creation from the common origin for our planet Earth and the Cosmos on day one. This historical event, as described in the Bible and consistent in Science, occurred only thousands of years ago, and not billions of years ago like the non-inspired evolutionary account says.

### III. This may bring to your mind other questions about Creation, and how to consistently consider its implications...for instance, **how did humanity come from only 2 individuals?**

- A. The first thought may be that our current world has over 8 billion people currently living. So how did we get from 2 to 8 billion in only 6,000 years? That doesn't even sound

mathematically possible?

- B. Actually, there is more than enough time, and it is actually a much larger problem for evolutionary models than the Creation view. Population growth rates are seen to follow exponential functions, meaning the larger the population becomes the faster the population increases generation after generation.
- C. One analysis in an article by Apologetics Press titled, "Population Statistics and a Young Earth," took a conservative approach factoring into the scenario the length of time before the next generation is able to have children, the death rate that would reduce the growth, and factored that the Global Flood reset the population to only 8 individuals (not 6,000 but only 4,300 years ago). So, using a conservative estimate for the generational growth rate they found that the resulting population would end up being what we see today, billions of individuals populating the world.<sup>87</sup>

IV. Now another question that follows right along with this same line of thought, "**How do we have so much variation in humans from only one initial couple?**"

- A. In Genesis 1, it says, "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." Genesis 2 details the specific details for how both man and woman would come into existence. Then in Genesis 3:20 we read, "Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living."
  - 1. From these simple statements, we can understand that God did not create multiple people groups, different cultures in different parts of the world. Acts 17:26 would confirm this when it says that God "has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on the earth."
- B. So, if Adam and Eve were the first couple, how did we get such a diverse array of skin colors today?
  - 1. This question about skin color, could also be applied to other variations we see among the varying characteristics in people today, and it all stems from the genetics behind the variations.
  - 2. So, the simple answer is, if the original couple had the proper genetic makeup, then they could easily have produced all the variations that we see today.
  - 3. Alright, let's think about skin color. Different levels of melanin, the pigment in skin that produces color, is what causes differences that we see where some people have darker skin, some lighter skin, and lots of variations in-between.
- C. Through genetic studies we have learned how the genes of two parents can be passed and how each child's genetics can be different based on how the parents genes combine.
  - 1. An important note is that some traits may be caused by one gene, while most traits are affected by multiple genes. The more genes involved in the outcome, the more variation is possible to be seen in the children. A recent study found that the production of melanin, which affects skin color, but also eye color and hair color, has over 100 genes that impact the resulting traits. Just in potential, that is room for a wide variation.
- D. But for even a very simple illustration, let's take a basic approach where everyone's skin color is derived from only two genes from the parent, then we can evaluate on a basic level, what type of genetics Adam and Eve could have had.
  - 1. In genes we often discuss them in terms of dominant and recessive, where a dominant gene has greater influence over a recessive. For instance, if a husband and wife both carry two sets of dominant genes (represented by AABB, then all of their children's genes will be dominant and the same skin color, let's assume

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<sup>87</sup> Jeff Miller, "Population Statistics and a Young Earth," *Reason & Revelation* (May 2011) (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press) URL: <https://apologeticspress.org/population-statistics-and-a-young-earth-3840/>.

darker skin is dominant.

2. On the opposite side, if a husband and wife have all recessive genes (represented by aabb), then all of their children will have recessive genes and the same lighter color skin. Now if the husband and wife both have an equal mix of dominant and recessive, called heterozygous (represented by AaBb), then their children could have the full range of fully dominant (darker), fully recessive (lighter), and variations of heterozygous (mid-tones).
- E. Remember, skin color has been found to be much more complicated than this, which actually makes the ability to have even more variation in those initial generations than this. Thus, the Creation account, with one original couple, is perfectly consistent with what we see today.
- V. Well speaking of the children of this first original couple, Adam and Eve, our next question might come from the events we read in Genesis 3, where Cain murdered his brother Abel. Cain was punished for his sin and was sent away, banished from his family, and forced to live as a vagabond and wanderer. The text says he settled in the land of Nod, married his wife, and begin his own family lineage (which we see in chapter 4). **So where did Cain get his wife?**
- A. Sometimes, considering modern day scenarios if someone is banished they would travel to the next populated area to reset their life and begin again.
  - B. However, according to Genesis and being consistent with the Creation account, God did not create other peoples. Eve was created out of man and was said to be “the mother of all living.” So instead of inserting new requirements into Scripture, we should let the details in Scripture be our boundary.
  - C. Cain then would have married a descendent of his mother Eve. Now as we consider options that could fit within Scripture and not contradict this boundary, we can begin considering the genealogy of female descendants of Eve. First, there is a daughter of Eve, Cain’s sister. We see that Adam and Eve had many other sons and daughters according to Genesis 5:4. Next, we might consider a granddaughter of Eve, which would have been Cain’s niece. This could be the daughter of Seth or one of the other siblings. Next, there is a great-granddaughter of Eve, which would have been a great niece of Cain.
  - D. Alright the first thing, to our modern ears this sounds gross, marrying a close relative...even a sister! I agree. But we also have to note that God’s Creation in the Garden of Eden is described as “very good.” The genetic mutations and harmful issues we see occur today and carry through would reasonably not be present in their genetics. Abraham would marry his half-sister, Sarah, about 2,000 years later. Then in the giving of the law to Moses, God would establish a restriction on these close marriages.
  - E. Now another important consideration comes from those long genealogical records of Genesis 5. In this first genealogy we learn that the early generations immediately after the Garden of Eden lived for long periods of time (800 to 900 years - good genetics) and often didn’t begin having children until later than what we are used to today...say 105 years old for Seth (Adam’s son) and 90 years old for Enosh (Seth’s son).
  - F. So, if we think about Cain possibly living as long as his father Adam or brother Seth, then Cain (who we don’t have an age in the Bible) could have lived to be around 900 years old. Now for every 100 years that he may have waited to start his family there would be one more generation born. So, if he was 300-400 years old, then he would have seen 2 to 3 generations of women in Eve’s descendants. Note that around 1,600 years from Creation, Noah didn’t have Shem until he was almost 600 years old.
  - G. So, Cain could have been that old, which would have provided even more generations separating him from direct siblings. So where did Cain get his wife? From the descendants of Adam and Eve, could it have been a sister? Maybe. Could he have married a niece, great-niece, or even great-great niece? Possibly.

VI. What about fossils and dinosaurs?

- A. As we think about our world, one exciting subject is the ability to dig down into the earth and uncover past history. We talked about archaeology in our Evidence for Christianity course, and the exciting insight and confirmation of the biblical text that it presents. But what about when we dig into the ground and find fossils of past life? What does it mean when we find the bones of creatures we have never seen, or even at least are not the creatures that live where we are right now? What about dinosaurs?
1. Paleontology is the study of past life or ancient life, and yes, for many the pinnacle of an exploration dig might be to uncover the large fossilized remains of a terribly great lizard, or dinosaur.
    - a) While by far, dinosaurs are the rare fossil find, I agree they are the most impressive. Walking into a museum and seeing a full Tyrannosaurus Rex staring down at you, or seeing some Apatosaurus with its long neck towering above you, or maybe seeing one of the flying reptiles like a Pteranodon hanging from the rafters...these are impressive sights.
  2. Where do dinosaurs fit in Creation? Well, as land-living reptiles (which is what the specific term dinosaurs applies to) they would have been created along with all of the other land-living animals on Day 6. The dinosaur-like flying reptiles or the dinosaur-like sea reptiles would have been created on Day 5 with the birds and fish.
  3. In a Creation and Genesis perspective, there is nothing wrong with dinosaurs. We have animals that are larger, most whales, and we have large reptile species not extinct. Most dinosaurs were not like T-rex, the average was instead between the size of a dog and a cow, with more species being smaller.
    - a) If they were alive at the time of the Flood, then representative kinds would have been on the Ark (juvenile or younger probably).
  4. Which brings up another good point. The Flood is the perfect fossil making event. If you need to rapidly bury lots of animals, with lots of pressure, a lack of oxygen to restrict decay, what better opportunity than the silt, mud, and debris caused by thousands of feet of water pressing down and remaining in place for over 1 year. Why do we see so many fossils, while Earth is only 6,000 years old? Well the Flood provides the perfect scenario.

VII. Conclusion

- A. Remember, as you have questions...that Scripture has proven itself to be inspired by God, and this requires us to give it deep consideration, to stay within what it says and what it says only, and that God's Word doesn't change—man's ideas and philosophies change.