

Why Believe in God, Jesus, and the Bible? A Source Book of Biblical Evidences

by David E. Pratte



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Why Believe in God, Jesus, and the Bible?
A Source Book of Biblical Evidences

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**“He who glories, let him glory in the Lord”
– 1 Corinthians 1:31**

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Table of Contents

Introduction	6
Testimony #1: Creation.....	34
Testimony #2: John the Baptist.....	58
Testimony #3: The Father and the Son	65
Testimony #4: Fulfilled Prophecy	76
Testimony #5: Miracles	100
Testimony #6: The Resurrection of Jesus	119

(Due to printer reformatting, the above numbers may be off a page or two.)

Notes to the Reader

This material is a highly condensed study of evidence to serve as helpful resource material for study, teaching, or preaching intended to establish and strengthen faith in God, Jesus, and the Bible.

Unless otherwise indicated, Bible quotations are from the New King James Version. Often - especially when I do not use quotations marks – I am not quoting any translation but simply paraphrasing the passage in my own words.

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Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the evidence for the major claims of the Bible. We will focus our attention especially on the evidence provided in the Bible itself.

The Bible Makes Three Fundamental Claims.

1. The Bible claims that the God of the Bible exists and is the one true God.

Genesis 1:1 - In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Hebrews 11:6 – We must believe that God exists.

Deuteronomy 4:35,39; 6:4 – The God who claims to speak through the Bible is the one and only true God.

[See also Isaiah 43:10-13; 44:6-8,24; 45:5,6,14,18,21-23; 52:6; Matthew 4:10; 2 Samuel 7:22; 1 Chronicles 17:20; Exodus 20:3-6; 34:14; Deuteronomy 6:13-15; 32:39; Psalm 86:10; Zech. 14:9; Mark 12:29; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; James 2:19; 1 Timothy 2:5]

2. The Bible claims to be an inspired revelation of God's will.

2 Timothy 3:16,17 – The Scriptures are inspired by God to provide us with instruction in righteousness and every good work.

1 Corinthians 14:37 – Paul claimed that the things he wrote are commandments of the Lord.

[See also 1 Corinthians 2:10-13; Ephesians 3:3-5; John 16:13; Matthew 10:19,20; Galatians 1:8-12; 2 Peter 1:20,21; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Luke 10:16.]

3. The Bible claims that Jesus is God's Son.

John 20:26-31 – Jesus allowed Thomas to call him “my Lord and my God.” To have eternal life, we must believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God.

John 4:42 – The Samaritans claimed Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.

Each person is responsible to consider whether or not these claims are true. This requires giving careful consideration to the evidence, such as is presented in this study. Our eternal destiny hangs in the balance.

If we conclude the claims are true, we are then responsible to learn to present the evidence to others – 1 Peter 3:15; Philippians 1:7,17.

It follows that all people, believers and unbelievers, need to carefully study the evidence for the claims of the Bible.

[See also John 1:1-3,14; 8:24; Luke 19:10; Matthew 16:15-18; 10:37; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:2,8,9; Philippians 2:5-8.]

There Can Be No Middle Ground Regarding These Claims.

The nature of these claims is such that we cannot take a middle-ground position. We cannot say, “The Bible is just a good book but not the inspired, infallible word of God,” or “Jesus was just a great man but not divine.” The Bible claims to be God’s own word, and Jesus claimed to be God in the flesh. If these claims are not true, then Jesus is a liar and the Bible is a fraud!

Bible writers often warned against those who falsely claimed to speak for God and those who followed myths and fables instead of Divine truth.

Jeremiah 14:14 - If a man presents a man-made idea but falsely claims it is a message from God, that man is a false prophet and deserves to be punished and rejected as a prophet (23:16,26; Ezekiel 13:2-7,17).

Ezekiel 3:26,27 - A prophet was not to speak until God opened his mouth. When God did move him to speak it would be as though he says the Lord God.

Matthew 10:19,20 – Jesus claimed that, when His apostles spoke, it would not be them who spoke but the spirit of the Father speaking in them.

1 Corinthians 2:4,5 – Paul’s preaching was not with words of human wisdom, so the faith of those who read the message should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 - The message is not the word of men but the word of God.

Galatians 1:8-12 - The gospel did not come from man, but was revealed from Jesus. To preach another gospel is to be accursed.

So, to preach a message that is human in origin is to bring God's curse upon us.

Revelation 22:18,19 - If men **add** their teachings to the book, God will add to them the plagues written. The Bible writers claimed, not just that their message contained truth from God, but that it was entirely from God. They were forbidden to add anything human to it.

1 Timothy 4:7 — We must reject “old wives’ fables” and instead follow after godliness. [1:4]

2 Timothy 4:4 — Paul warned about some who would not want sound doctrine, but would turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables.

2 Peter 1:16,20,21 — Specifically, Peter claimed that the apostles did not follow cunningly devised fables when they made known the power and coming of Jesus Christ. Prophecy never came by will of man, but holy men spoke as moved by the Holy Spirit.

So, the Bible writers claimed that they did not write fables, legends, or human doctrines. If Bible writers or if Jesus Himself claimed to speak for God when it was not true, then they would stand condemned by their own teaching. They could not possibly be good men or great teachers, nor could the Bible be a good book. If their claims of inspiration are not true, then they should all be entirely rejected as frauds and false pretenders.

[2 Cor. 11:13-15; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; Acts 20:28-30; 1 John 4:1; Titus 1:9-14; 2 John 9-11; Romans 16:17,18; 2 Peter chap. 2]

Bible writers and prophets severely rebuked those who made or accepted untrue claims of religious exaltation.

Matthew 23:5-11 — Jesus severely rebuked religious leaders who seek to be exalted religiously beyond their proper position.

Acts 10:25,26 — Cornelius fell down to worship Peter. Peter forbade it saying that he himself was just a **man**. [Rev. 22:8,9; 19:10; Rom. 1:25]

Acts 12:20-23 — Herod allowed people to call Him a god, not a man. He did not make the claim himself, but was slain for simply allowing others to make it on his behalf.

Acts 14:11-18 — When Paul and Barnabas healed a lame man, the idol worshipers called them gods and wanted to offer sacrifice to them. They refused to accept such claims, saying that they were men and not gods.

When applied to such teachings of those of Mohammed in the Koran or Joseph Smith in the Book of Mormon, for example, the above principles would show that we must either accept these books as being inspired by God or else reject them entirely as being fakes and frauds. We cannot take a middle-ground position.

But the same is true of the claims of Jesus and the Bible. If Jesus or Bible writers made untrue claims, or even if they knowingly permitted others to make untrue claims regarding their work, they would stand condemned. There is no middle ground. Either the Bible claims are true, or else we must totally reject Jesus and the Bible as being false and unworthy of our trust.

The Relationship among the Claims

It is possible to believe in a god(s) without believing in the Bible or in Jesus as the Son of God. However, note how the claims of the Bible and of Jesus mutually support the other claims.

The Bible supports the claim that God exists and Jesus is the Son of God.

We have already cited passages where the Bible makes these claims. So, if the Bible is the inspired word of God, then the claims it makes must be true. Therefore, any evidence that demonstrates the Bible to be the word of God simultaneously validates the Bible's claims that God exists **and** that the God of the Bible is the true God **and** that Jesus is the Divine Son of God.

Jesus supports the claims of both the Old Testament and the New Testament writers to be inspired of God.

Jesus demonstrated the existence and nature of God.

John 1:14,18 – Jesus was the only begotten of the Father, the eternal Creator who possesses the full nature of Deity, yet came to earth in the flesh (vv 1-3). Although we cannot see God, the only begotten Son has declared Him.

John 14:6-9 – He who has seen Jesus has seen the Father. Jesus' teaching and character reveal and exemplify the character of God.

This means that men have personally seen one who was God in the flesh and who revealed the nature of God. The life and teaching of this One can be investigated by the same means used to investigate the lives and teachings of any other men of history.

Jesus quoted Old Testament Scripture as authoritative revelation from God.

Matthew 15:1-6 — He quoted Old Testament Scripture (v4) as being what God said (v4), the command of God (v3), the Word of God (v6).

Matthew 22:31,32 — He quoted Moses' writing as an accurate record of what "God said."

John 10:35 — "The Scripture cannot be broken."

Matthew 4:4,7,10; 22:23-33; Luke 10:25-28 - Jesus obeyed Old Testament law, taught others to obey it, and rebuked those who did not understand or obey it.

[Matt. 8:1ff; 21:42-45; 15:7-9; 22:41-45; 24:15; 21:13; 13:13-15; Mark 7:6; 12:10; Luke 4:16-21; 2:23; 16:29-31; 4:17ff; 24:27,44-46; John 6:44,45; 8:17ff; 5:39,45-47; 1:45; Matt. 26:54,56; Luke 3:4; 7:27; 18:31; 21:22; 22:37; John 2:22; 7:38; 13:18; 17:12; 19:24,28,36,37; 20:9; Matt. 2:5; 11:10; 26:24,31; Mark 1:2; 9:1-14; Matt. 5:17; John 12:14,16; 15:25]

Jesus also confirmed that the apostles and prophets, who wrote the New Testament, spoke authoritative revelation from God.

John 16:13 — Jesus promised the apostles that the Spirit would guide them into all truth. [John 14:26]

Matthew 10:19,20 — The Holy Spirit would give them what and how to speak.

Luke 10:16 — He who hears the apostles hears Jesus; he who rejects them rejects Jesus and rejects God Who sent Jesus.

Jesus was a real individual who lived and walked on earth. His claims can be investigated. If we accept Jesus as being a true spokesman for God, then we must also accept the existence of God and the Bible as the inspired word of God. The claims of the Bible and Jesus stand or fall together. We cannot accept either one and reject the other.

The Importance of the Evidence Found in the Scriptures

God the Father is invisible (1 John 4:12). We cannot perform laboratory experiments to determine if He exists. Likewise, neither Jesus nor the men who personally wrote the Bible are alive on earth today. But this does not mean we must accept a "blind faith" without evidence.

The Bible claims that it itself provides sufficient grounds to produce faith.

Romans 10:17 – So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

2 Timothy 3:16,17 – Scripture itself is sufficient to provide us to every good work. If believing is a good work, then the Bible should be adequate to provide what we need.

Acts 9:22; 17:2,3 – The men who wrote the Bible claimed that their teaching proves Jesus to be the Christ. [Acts 15:7]

John 20:30,31 – Bible writers recorded the evidence sufficient to convince us to believe that Jesus is the Christ, so we can have life in His name.

John 17:20 – People believe on Jesus through the word of the apostles.

Note John 7:17; 1 Peter 3:15.

Many authors have offered evidences from outside the Bible itself (“external evidences”) to demonstrate the validity of the Bible’s claims. External evidences may have some value in confirming and supporting the evidence found in the Bible itself. We will include some of it. But if the Bible is true, it should itself provide us with sufficient evidence to believe. This study will focus primarily on evidence presented in the Bible itself. As we proceed, note how often Bible writers claimed to be giving such evidence.

The value of historical and logical evidence

In our daily lives, all of us determine fundamental beliefs on the basis of historical and logical evidence. This is the principle of belief (faith) based on evidence. Consider some examples:

* A hunter may not see an animal, but from its footprints, he knows it exists and can tell much about its nature. In the same way, God has left His “footprints on the sands of time.”

* How many people are convinced beyond reasonable doubt who their parents are? On what basis do they believe this? Do they remember personally seeing their parents at their birth? No, they believe because of the testimony of witnesses. Their parents and many other people tell them who their parents are. Perhaps they have a birth certificate that identifies their parents. But this is simply the **written** testimony of witnesses.

You accept who your parents are on the basis of **faith**. Without remembering the event personally, you believe on the basis of the testimony of witnesses. Likewise, the Bible claims to

give you written testimony regarding who is your *spiritual* Father!

* The testimony of witnesses is also used in our courtrooms. A judge and jury do not physically observe a crime. Yet they reach a verdict about what did or did not happen on the basis of the testimony of witnesses. This verdict determines whether or not a defendant will be punished for his crimes. Likewise, the Bible gives eyewitness testimony, and your faith (or lack of faith) in that testimony will determine your eternal destiny.

* Historians also use this principle in writing records of history. They study the statements of witnesses, especially primary evidence from eyewitnesses – i.e., first-hand accounts from people who were personally present. Also of great value are records left by people who personally heard the testimony of eyewitnesses.

* The Bible claims that this is the kind of evidence it gives that its basic claims are valid.

Deuteronomy 19:15 – The guilt or innocence of one accused of a crime was determined on the testimony of two or more witnesses. See also Matthew 18:16; 2 Corinthians 13:1; 1 Timothy 5:19; Hebrews 10:28.

John 8:17 – Jesus recognized this principle and used it as evidence for His claims.

The Bible claims that Jesus was God in the flesh. He was Divine from eternity, but He came to earth to live as a man. If this claim is true, then God has been seen! He has walked among men, who saw Him, touched Him, and heard Him. Many who saw him have left in the Bible their eyewitness testimony of what He did and said. His life, including His miracles and resurrection, can be investigated like any other historical events. Likewise, the claims of miracles and prophecies by Bible writers can be investigated by logical and historical evidence.

We will see that this is the approach the Bible uses to convince us to believe its claims. It presents evidence that, if examined honestly, will convince us that its claims are true.

Some claim that the Bible cannot be permitted as evidence for itself.

But since when is the one who is on trial not allowed to present his case? Simple justice requires us to consider the evidence offered by one who seeks to prove his claim.

If a book claimed to be written by George Washington, who would argue that we must determine the validity of the claim without examining the book itself? On the contrary, examination of the book would be of first priority. We would seek to determine whether or not it contained the kind of information that would be expected to come from the supposed author.

Suppose, after a man's parents die, he finds a written document claiming to be their last will and testament. How would the man determine whether or not the will is genuine? Who would claim that such a determination must be made without ever examining the will itself, and that any evidence presented from within the will should automatically be rejected? What nonsense! There might be external evidence from outside the will that helps determine its authenticity, but we would expect the primary evidence to be found within the will itself. We would expect to find within it the testimony of the man's parents and of witnesses that it was genuine.

Likewise, if the Bible really is a written statement of the will of God, we should expect to find within it the evidence of its authenticity. We should expect the contents of the book itself to be our primary source of evidence.

If all the Bible did was make claims without offering evidence, we should not accept those claims as true. But the Bible does more: it provides evidence for its claims. To refuse to consider the evidence the Bible offers for its claims would be a total disregard of common sense and logic.

So God "did not leave Himself without witness" (Acts 14:17). We will consider the evidence of the witnesses, just as is done by historians, by judges and juries, and by everyone in making common sense decisions about matters we have not personally seen.

The Qualifications of Bible Writers as Witnesses and Historians

We will see that many Bible writers repeatedly claimed they were giving testimony intended to convince people to believe the claims of the Bible. However, the Bible often acknowledges that witnesses may give false testimony (Exodus 20:16). So how can we have confidence that the testimony of the Bible writers is valid? Several criteria should be considered when evaluating the strength and persuasiveness of witnesses. Consider how these apply to Bible writers.

The number of witnesses

As already discussed, the Bible writers plainly acknowledged the need for a plurality of witnesses to establish the validity of any historical event. See Deuteronomy 19:15; John 8:17 [Matthew 18:16; 2 Corinthians 13:1; 1 Timothy 5:19; Hebrews 10:28]. Since anyone can make unsubstantiated claims, one witness alone cannot conclusively prove a fact. A plurality of witnesses is more convincing. And as the number of witnesses increases, the more convincing the evidence becomes (until we reach a saturation point).

The Bible consists of 66 books written by 40 different men over a period of 1500 years. These men were of widely different backgrounds, separated by time and distance. There were kings, slaves, fisherman, physicians, etc. They lived in Palestine, in Babylon, and in Rome, from 1400 B.C. to 100 A.D.

Nearly all of these writers, at some point in their writings, provide evidence that helps confirm the Bible claims. We will consider evidence from many of these writers (though not all of them). As we study various line of evidence, please observe the number of different witnesses who offer testimony. We will make note of the numbers of witnesses from time to time.

The number of confirming events

The strength of the evidence depends, not just on the number of witnesses, but also on the number of confirming events. For example, if one person claims a man robbed a bank, the evidence is relative weak. But the evidence is much more conclusive if dozens of witnesses claim to have seen the same man rob banks on numerous occasions in different places.

So the Bible claims to give many evidences for its claims.

John 20:30,31 – Jesus did so many signs that not all were recorded. But enough have been recorded to convince the honest person to believe.

John 21:24,25 – John wrote his testimony and affirmed it to be true. But Jesus did so many other things that the world could not contain the books that could be written.

Acts 1:3 – The Bible provides “many infallible proofs.”

Our study of these proofs will include six different major lines of evidence with many specific examples in each category. This will include many evidences for creation, many examples of fulfilled prophecy, many examples of miracles done by Jesus and

other inspired men, and many events in which Jesus appeared to people to prove He was alive again after His death.

Ability and opportunity of the witnesses to observe what they report

The more distant the witnesses are from the events they record, the less convincing their evidence becomes. There is little value in hearsay evidence passed from person to person, or in legendary claims recorded generations after the alleged events occurred. Most convincing is first-hand eyewitness testimony, in which people testify about events they personally saw and experienced. Nearly as important are historical statements recorded by people who personally interviewed the first-hand eyewitnesses.

Notice just a few of the many passages showing that Bible writers were first-hand eyewitnesses of the events they wrote about or else they carefully recorded accounts they heard or read from those who were eyewitnesses.

*** Statements from Luke**

Luke 1:1-4 — Luke wrote a history of the life of Christ and a history of the early church in the book of Acts (cf. Acts 1:1-3). He did not claim to be a personal eyewitness of Jesus' life, but he served as an historian to record events that were witnessed by the apostles and others. He himself was, however, an eyewitness of many events in the early church (note his use of "we").

Note that Luke did not write legends handed down for generations. Rather, he wrote what had been told him by eyewitnesses, so we could know that these things are "certain" (v4), not myth or fable. As an historian, his reputation is well established.

*** Statements about the apostles**

The apostles followed Jesus personally, traveling all over Palestine with Him for a period of over three years. They personally observed His miracles and saw Him alive again after His death. They repeatedly claimed that their statements were based on personal eyewitness testimony, and that in fact God chose them specifically for that purpose.

Acts 1:1-3 — Jesus presented Himself to His apostles, so they saw and spoke with Him for a period of forty days following His death. In this way He demonstrated Himself to be raised from the dead by "many infallible proofs."

Acts 1:8 — Jesus told the apostles they would be His witnesses throughout the earth.

Acts 1:21,22 — To be an apostle one had to be an eyewitness of Jesus' resurrection.

Acts 2:32 — Peter stated that he and the other apostles were witnesses that God had raised Jesus. They saw Him die and they saw Him alive again. This was preached, not hundreds of years later, but fifty days after the events occurred (Pentecost was fifty days after the Passover).

Acts 10:39-41 — Peter and the other apostles were witnesses of all things Jesus did. The people killed Him, but God raised Him up on the third day, and showed Him openly to witnesses. The witnesses ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead.

Acts 9,22,26 — Luke spent much time traveling with Paul on his preaching trips. As a result, he often witnessed miracles done by Paul's hand. He also often heard Paul's testimony regarding Jesus' appearance to him on the road to Damascus. Note that other men were present who could verify details of that event.

*** Statements from John**

John 20:30,31 — John recorded Jesus' miracles in writing so we could believe and have life in His name. The miracles were done in the very presence of the disciples, so John had personally witnessed them. [20:19,20; 21:1]

John 21:24 — John wrote his personal testimony and testified that it was true. [Cf. 19:35]

John 14:26 — The Holy Spirit assisted the apostles in remembering what Jesus taught them, but they presented to others what they had personally witnessed from Jesus Himself.

1 John 1:1-3 — He bore witness about what he and others heard, saw with their eyes, and handled with their hands.

*** Statements from Peter**

2 Peter 1:16-18 — Peter testified that, rather than following fables about Jesus, the apostles were eyewitnesses of His majesty. Specifically he testified regarding the transfiguration that they heard the voice that spoke on the mountain, saying that this was the Son of God. [5:1]

*** Statements from Paul**

Acts 9:22 — Luke records that Paul went about “proving that this Jesus is the Christ.” (Cf. 17:2,3.)

1 Corinthians 15:1-8 — Paul declared the gospel he had preached, including the resurrection of Jesus and his appearances. Paul lists various appearances, including the one to him. Paul's testimony is also that of an eyewitness. He names other eyewitnesses, and claims that most were still alive at the time he wrote. 1 Corinthians was one of the first books Paul wrote, just 20-25 years after Jesus' death. Paul says the other witnesses were still alive and could be examined.

15:14,15 — Paul acknowledged that, if Christ was not raised, Paul and others were false witnesses, because they testified that He was raised.

[Acts 13:31; 22:15; 26:16]

These and other Bible writers claimed to write what they personally witnessed or what they had personally heard from personal eyewitnesses. Please notice the emphasis on this kind of testimony as we study specific lines of evidence. We will comment regarding this from time to time.

Reputation for integrity, honesty, and truthfulness

1 Corinthians 15:15 - Paul acknowledged that, if Jesus did not rise from the dead, he and other apostles would be false witnesses, since they testified that He had been raised. Sometimes the testimony of a witness may be discredited on the grounds that he is known to be a liar, deceitful, or dishonest. Is there evidence that the Bible writers were dishonest, or should we consider them to be honest, truthful witnesses?

Bible writers repeatedly spoke against religious teachers who taught error or made false claims.

Bible writers clearly knew it would be wrong to give false testimony, and they strongly professed to be opposed to false teaching in religion. See passages about this listed previously. If their own testimony is false, then they are deliberately wicked and hypocritical men. Does the character of all these Bible writers fit the pattern of deliberately wicked, hypocritical men?

Matthew 7:15-23 — Jesus taught that false teachers can be known by their fruits. We can observe the teaching and lives of men and know whether they are good or wicked. What is there about the lives of the Bible writers that proves them to be wicked?

Bible writers revealed the highest moral standard ever known.

Is it reasonable to believe that deliberately dishonest, hypocritical liars and deceivers could have revealed the moral standard found in the Scriptures?

Matthew 12:33-35 - Good things come from good sources. Bad things come from bad sources. How could the obviously righteous moral standard found in the Bible have come from wicked, evil men?

Bible writers honestly recorded their own faults.

They did not hide their own faults or the errors they saw in one another. Rather, they openly admitted them. Consider some examples in which Bible writers calmly record their errors:

Confusion and inability to understand Jesus' teaching – Matthew 15:15,16; 16:5-11 [Matthew 26:6-13]

Failure to understand the need for Jesus to die – Matthew 16:21-23; Luke 9:43-45 [Mark 9:30-32]

Desire for personal exaltation in the kingdom – Mark 9:33-35; Luke 9:46-48; 22:24-26

Sleeping in the garden, after Jesus asked them to pray – Matthew 26:36-46

Forsaking Christ at His arrest, trials, and crucifixion – Matthew 26:56

Peter's denials of Jesus - Matthew 26:31-35,69-75

Apostles' doubts about the resurrection – Luke 24:11; Mark 16:12-14; John 21:2-4

Thomas' doubts about the resurrection – John 20:24-29

Paul's persecution of Christians – 1 Timothy 1:12-15; Acts 8:1-3; 9:1,2; 22:4,5; 26:9-11; 1 Corinthians 15:9; Galatians 1:13; Philippians 3:6

Peter's hypocrisy regarding converted Gentiles – Galatians 2:11-14

Why would men admit their own errors and faults unless they sought to be honest? Note that they tell these errors with the same calm honesty with which their other testimony is given.

[Cf. Luke 5:8]

Bible writers required substantial evidence to convince them to believe.

They were not gullible nor easily persuaded by weak or deceitful evidence. They required proof before they would accept the facts.

Thomas had doubts about the resurrection until he personally saw proof– John 20:24-29

The apostles had doubts about the resurrection till they saw convincing proof– Luke 24:11; Mark 16:12-14

Paul persecuted Christians till Jesus appeared to him personally– 1 Timothy 1:12-15; Acts 8:1-3; 9:1,2; 22:4,5; 26:9-11; 1 Corinthians 15:9; Galatians 1:13; Philippians 3:6

Sometimes people are skeptical because so much of our evidence is given by personal friends of Jesus. Actually, we will see that enemies also give much useful evidence, though we would not expect them to do so willingly. However, the apostles themselves were doubters and unbelievers until they were convinced by the evidence that they personally witnessed.

These men were not easily persuaded to believe the message they later preached. Only overwhelming evidence would have led them to believe such amazing events. Their refusal to believe, except on the basis of strong evidence, not only demonstrates their honesty, but also provides additional certainty to their testimony to us.

The message they preached made great changes in the lives of the Bible writers.

As already noted, the apostles were confused, unbelieving, self-seeking men until Jesus died and arose. Much of what Jesus taught confused them, because they had misconceptions about His kingdom. They sought personal glory instead of Jesus' purpose. They fled when Jesus was arrested, and Peter denied Him repeatedly while He was on trial. Then they refused to believe the evidence of His resurrection after they began to hear people say they had seen Him alive.

Acts 2:14,22-24,36; 3:13-15; 4:8-13,19,20; 5:26-32,40-42 – Less than two months later, however, those same men stood boldly before the very same people who had crucified Jesus and proclaimed to them Jesus as the resurrected Lord and Christ. When arrested for this message, they stood before the highest council of the Jewish leaders and openly rebuked them for having unjustly slain Jesus. When beaten and commanded not to

continue preaching about Jesus, they rejoiced to suffer for His cause and boldly continued preaching openly.

Acts 9:1-30 - Paul traveled great distances to find Christians to imprison and persecute. He blasphemed and voted to put Christians to death. Suddenly, he ceased his opposition, was baptized, and immediately began preaching Christ in the synagogues. This amazed people, because they knew he was preaching the very message he had previously sought to destroy. Cf. Acts 22:1-21 (especially v18-20); 26:1-23.

What can possibly explain this swift, overwhelming direct turnabout in these men? Their explanation was that they truly had seen Jesus alive from the dead and He (and the Holy Spirit) had revealed to them the proper understanding of the events surrounding His death and resurrection. What other explanation can honestly and adequately explain such changes?

Bible writers faced overwhelming persecution, yet never recanted.

If these men did not really receive the revelations they claimed to receive, and if they did not really witness the things they claimed to witness, they would have been false teachers, liars, deceivers, and hypocrites, and they would have known this to be the case. Consider now the treatment they received for their preaching and testimony. Would they have been willing to continue to preach this message under these circumstances, knowing that it was not true?

Matthew 23:29-36; 5:10-12; Acts 7:51-60; John 15:18-21; 16:1-4 – Prophets in every age were persecuted and even slain, including those who preached to God’s chosen nation Israel. Even Moses, although he was greatly honored by later generations of Jews, had been continually criticized and disobeyed by Israel during his own lifetime. Jesus repeatedly warned that similar treatment would be given to His apostles and disciples.

Acts 4:13-21; 5:17-42; 12:1,2 – Exactly as Jesus had predicted, the apostles were imprisoned, beaten, and even slain for preaching the gospel.

2 Corinthians 11:22-28; 1 Corinthians 4:9-13 – Paul was an eminent example of one who suffered for his testimony regarding Jesus. Read the record in Acts from his conversion in chapter 9 till it ends with Paul a prisoner awaiting trial in Rome in Acts 28. In virtually every city where he went, he was persecuted, imprisoned, beaten, and/or had to flee for his life.

None of the apostles ever became wealthy, none was ever held in high esteem by society in general, none was ever elected to high political office, none was ever honored as a great social or military leader. Instead, all suffered a lifetime of persecution, imprisonment, beatings, rejection, and ridicule, and nearly all died for their testimony regarding Jesus. Who would willingly suffer a lifetime of opposition and even martyrdom for a testimony he knew to be a lie?

What evidence can be presented that convincingly demonstrates the Bible writers to be false witnesses? Where is the proof they were dishonest, deceitful liars? If there is none, then surely we should recognize their testimony as a convincing attempt to honestly state the facts they truly experienced as eyewitnesses.

Possible ulterior motives for testifying

Related to the last point is the possibility that a witness may give untrue testimony if they expect some personal gain or benefit. Such ulterior motives make the testimony doubtful at best.

Matthew 28:11-15 – The soldiers, who had been responsible to guard Jesus' body in the tomb, testified that the body disappeared because the disciples stole it. But they were paid a large sum of money to make this claim. And furthermore, they were given assurance that, if they gave this testimony, they would not die for having lost their prisoner (as was often done – note Acts 12:19). So, their testimony is worthless, because they had obvious ulterior motives.

What evidence is there that the Bible writers had ulterior motives for their testimony?

Bible writers often gave testimony that contradicted their own expectations.

* Personal exaltation – Mark 9:33-36; Luke 9:46-48; 22:24-26. As already discussed, during Jesus' lifetime the apostles anticipated great personal glory and exaltation when Jesus came into His kingdom. But by the time they actually began preaching Jesus' resurrection, they had humbled themselves to realize this would never happen.

* The nature of the kingdom – John 18:36. Originally, the disciples believed Jesus would establish a great earthly civil government in which He would defeat His enemies, reign as king, and raise the nation of Israel to worldwide prominence, such as

had occurred under David's reign. Instead, they ended up preaching that Jesus came to establish a spiritual kingdom, the church, which exists to help people worship and serve God so they can have eternal life.

* Failure to understand the need for Jesus to die – Matthew 16:21-23. Their expectations of an earthly kingdom had confused the disciples so that they objected when Jesus said He had to die. They had no desire for a Messiah who suffered and died at the hands of His enemies. They sought for Him to instead defeat His enemies and have a long, glorious reign over an earthly kingdom. But they ended up preaching a message of a suffering Messiah, rejected by the people, who died to save men from sin and who reigns over a spiritual kingdom the church.

If the apostles had acted on the basis of false motives, they would have preached anything but what they actually ended up preaching. What they preached was a thorough contradiction to all their personal desires. How could they possibly have ulterior motives for preaching what they did? All their motives would have led them to believe and preach just the opposite!

Opponents gave testimony contrary to their own desires.

Paul was an adamant opponent of the gospel – Philippians 3:3-11; 1 Timothy 1:12-15; Acts 8:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:9; Galatians 1:13. He was well educated and highly honored, with great expectations of high position among the Jews. The last thing he expected or wanted was to believe in Jesus and preach His gospel. But in the end he turned his back on all he had held dear, dedicated his life to testifying what he had personally witnessed regarding Jesus, and eventually gave his life for that testimony. What possible motive could he have had, other than the reason that he gave: he sincerely believed that he had really seen Jesus alive.

As we proceed we will learn about men who never accepted the gospel, yet their words or deeds fulfilled clear Bible prophecies. We will also read about Jesus' enemies who admitted His miracles and who gave testimony that helps confirm His resurrection. Surely such men did not have ulterior motives for giving such testimony. All their motives would have led them to do the opposite.

Whether friends or enemies of the gospel, had the witnesses followed natural inclinations, they would have testified against the

gospel. When, instead, they testify for the gospel, there can be no possible grounds for rejecting them as unreliable witnesses.

Tone of the testimony

Some witnesses are unconvincing because they become angry, upset, aggressive, antagonistic, etc. They may exaggerate, embellish the account, or otherwise demonstrate that they are not giving a calm, thoughtful statement of the facts of what they observed. Such conduct makes us wonder if maybe they are hiding something, they are prejudiced, or their objectivity has been overwhelmed by emotion or personal desires.

Some subjects naturally are so emotional or amazing that we expect a degree of excitement to enter the account. But testimony is more convincing when the witnesses present their case with a sense of factual conviction, simply recounting the facts of the case.

Some witnesses are unconvincing because their language implies they themselves may not be certain what they saw or how well they saw it. They say “maybe,” “I think,” “it seems,” “it could be,” etc. But other witnesses are convincing because they speak definitely, with confidence, plainly affirming that they really did see and know that they are speaking the truth.

We will see that Bible writers describe events of amazing importance, awe-inspiring miracles, and events of heart-wrenching emotional impact (such as the crucifixion of Jesus) all with calm, reasoned care, without embellishment or exaggeration. Their tone is always factual, with no evidence of any doubt. They absolutely affirm what they saw as definite fact.

Consider a few examples:

John 21:24 – The disciple (John) wrote and testified these things, “and we know that his testimony is true.”

Acts 1:3 – Many infallible proofs

Luke 1:1-4 – Luke wrote what he had received from the eyewitnesses, having “perfect knowledge of all things from the very beginning,” so we “may know the certainty of those things” which were taught us.

2 Peter 1:16-19 – Peter affirmed that he did not follow cunningly devised fables but was an eyewitness of what he saw and heard. So we have a prophetic word made more sure.

1 John 1:1-4 – John bore witness of what he (and others) had seen, handled with his hands, and heard, so we may have fellowship with God and Christ.

We cited many other examples previously when discussing the witnesses' opportunity to observe what they testified about. We will also observe other evidence of the factual tone of Bible writers as we consider specific evidence.

Preservation of the records

The testimony of the Bible writers is valid only if we are assured that our present records of their testimony have been accurately preserved. Could the text of their testimony have become lost or corrupted over the years since it was written? This is a separate complete study of itself, but consider the following summary of evidence.

Bible writers themselves claimed that God promised to preserve their writings for people of all future generations.

See Psalm 119:152,160; Isaiah 40:8; 30:8; John 12:48; 2 John 2; 1 Peter 1:23-25; 2 Peter 1:12-15; 2 Timothy 3:16,17.

The Old Testament as evidence of God's preservation of the Bible

The books of the Old Testament were written, copied, circulated, preserved, protected, and translated in exactly the same way as the books of the New Testament. They claimed to be inspired, and all were viewed as inspired Scripture by people in their day and afterward. As shown above, books of both testaments claimed that God had promised to preserve them.

The preservation of the Old Testament through the years till the first century demonstrates the accuracy of the preservation of the whole Bible down through subsequent centuries till today. Jews of the first century accepted the Old Testament books they had as being accurate and authoritative. These books were so viewed by Jesus and His apostles and disciples as well as by all other Jews, including Jesus' opponents. Jesus rebuked His opponents on every point in which they were in error. Had there been any dispute about the preservation or accuracy of the Jews' Scriptures, this would surely have been discussed. Instead, the Scriptures were quoted and respected without controversy as an accurate record of the writers of Old Testament writers.

But the New Testament was written, copied, circulated, collected, translated, and preserved in exactly the same way as the Old Testament had been. The accurate preservation of the Old Testament through the years till the first century gives us

confidence that the whole Bible has been similarly preserved through the centuries till today.

Modern evidence for the original text of Scripture

We today do not have any of the “autographs” — the original manuscripts of the Bible in the very handwriting of the authors. But men carefully preserved the Bible through the years. As a result, we today have volumes of evidence to establish what the original texts said.

* We have more than 4500 handwritten copies of the Bible in the original languages.

These manuscripts were copied by men such as the “Scribes” of Jesus’ day, who were fanatically precise in their work. They checked their work by counting number of letters and words per line, per page, etc. No errors were tolerated.

Some of the manuscripts that we have preserved till today are complete, others are partial or fragments. Some of them are dated to within a few centuries of the time of the New Testament writers, and a few are dated to within a few decades of their time. Records of the life of Jesus are included among the oldest manuscripts we have.

* We have many ancient translations of the Bible into other languages.

* We have thousands of Scripture quotations found in ancient non-inspired writings. In fact, all but a few New Testament verses could be reproduced just from these uninspired quotations.

The volume of evidence for the original text of the Bible is overwhelming. While there are variations between the manuscripts, few of these variations in any way affect the meaning of the text. “Significant variations,” which would affect the meaning of the New Testament, make up less than 1/1000 of the total text. If all of them were put together, they would take up less than half a page. And none of them affect our understanding of the text, because the same teaching is presented elsewhere in other passages whose authenticity is unquestioned. So, the text of the Bible writers has been preserved so accurately that there is essentially no doubt today about what the text originally said.

Some statements regarding the preservation of Scripture

Compared to the writings of other ancient authors, our evidence for the Bible’s content is overwhelming. For other

writings, “convincing evidence” may consist of just a few manuscripts dated within 1000 years of when the men lived. But with the Bible we have thousands of manuscripts dated less than 1000 years of when the authors lived, many manuscripts dated within just a few centuries, and even fragments dated to within 25-50 years.

Sir Frederic Kenyon, who served 21 years as Director and Principal Librarian of the British Museum (which houses many significant ancient manuscripts of the Bible) said: “The Christian can take the whole Bible in his hand and say without fear or hesitation that he holds in it the true word of God, handed down without essential loss from generation to generation throughout the centuries.”

He also said: “In no other case is the interval of time between the composition of the book and the date of the earliest extant manuscripts so short as in that of the New Testament.” (Quoted by Chumbley, p. 25)

“The evidence for our New Testament writings is ever so much greater than the evidence for many writings of classical authors, the authenticity of which no one dreams of questioning. And if the New Testament were a collection of secular writings, their authenticity would generally be regarded as beyond all doubt.” (F.F. Bruce quoted by Chumbley, p. 26)

“...no documents of the ancient period are as well attested bibliographically as is the New Testament.” (J.W. Montgomery quoted by Chumbley, p. 26)

Many similar statements can be quoted from other such men.

For a detailed study, visit our Bible Instruction web site at www.gospelway.com/instruct/ and study the article about the preservation of the Bible.

Independent corroborating testimony

We would not expect everything in the Bible to be confirmed by sources outside the Bible. However, other sources do sometimes confirm statements of Bible writers regarding historical events. If the Bible writers were reliable, we would expect these other sources to agree with their record. Consider a few sources that effectively confirm the accuracy of the Bible writers.

Confirmation by archaeologists

Note a few examples in which archaeologists and modern historians have confirmed the accuracy of Bible records, especially in cases where “scholars” once disagreed with the Bible.

* The Hittite nation

The Bible frequently mentions this ancient nation (2 Sam. 11:3ff; Gen. 15:19-21; Num. 13:29; Josh. 3:10). But for years skeptics said the Bible was wrong because they found no other confirmation. Then in 1906, Hugo Winckler excavated Hattusa, the capital city of the Hittites. We know now that, at its height, the Hittite civilization rivaled Egypt and Assyria in glory! Whole museums are now devoted to the Hittite civilization. (See *Biblical World*, pp 29off.)

* Pithom and Raamses

The Bible says the Israelites built these cities while they were slaves in Egypt (Ex. 1:11). They used bricks made of clay mixed with straw, then clay mixed with stubble, then clay alone (Ex. 5:10-21). In 1883, Naville examined the ruins of Pithom and found all three types of brick. (See *Biblical World*, pp. 458,459.)

* The Book of Acts

Sir William Ramsay was a skeptic who sought to disprove Acts by studying the record of Paul’s journeys. The result of his examination made him a firm believer in the accuracy of the book! The turning point came when he proved that, contrary to accepted scholarship, the Bible was right when it implied Iconium was in a different region from Lystra and Derbe (Acts 14:6). (See *Archaeology and Bible History*, Free, p. 317.)

* Consider these quotations from prominent archeologists:

“...it may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference. Scores of archaeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or in exact detail historical statements in the Bible. And, by the same token, proper evaluation of Biblical descriptions has often led to amazing discoveries.” — Dr. Nelson Glueck (*Rivers in the Desert*, p. 31)

“...archaeology has confirmed countless passages which have been rejected by critics as unhistorical or contradictory to known facts ... Yet archaeological discoveries have shown that these critical charges ... are wrong and that the Bible is trustworthy in the very statements which have been set aside as untrustworthy ... We do not know of any cases where the

Bible has been proved wrong.” — Dr. Joseph P. Free
(*Archaeology and Bible History*, pp. 1,2,134)

Confirmation by ancient historians

We would not expect unbelievers to defend Jesus’ claims as being valid. Why should they defend what they did not believe? Nevertheless, many of them at least mention as historic fact the existence, teachings, and claims of Jesus and His followers.

Chumbley (p. 32) cites evidence accumulated by F.F. Bruce regarding pagan and Jewish sources, from the first or second century AD, that refer to Jesus, to Christians, or to other characters mentioned in the New Testament, such as John the Baptist. The Jewish sources include Josephus and the Talmud. The non-Jewish sources include Seutonius, Tacitus, Gaius Pliny Secundus (Pliny the Younger), Thallus, and Mara bar Serapion.

He also quotes Gary Hberman as follows:

Within 100 to 150 years after the birth of Christ, approximately eighteen non-Christian, extrabiblical sources from secular history ... mention more than one hundred facts, beliefs, and teachings from the life of Christ ... [including] almost every detail of Jesus’ life, including miracles, the Resurrection, and his claims to be deity. (via Chumbley, p. 32)

Interestingly, many people accept the records of these ancient historians as persuasive historic fact. Yet the evidence in the Bible itself is far more extensive and is based on far better textual evidence than any of these other ancient sources. [Cf. Jenkins, pp 119,120.]

Confirmation by appeal to witnesses who could be consulted at the time

Acts 2:22,36 — Peter and the other apostles gave their testimony as eyewitnesses beginning just fifty days after Jesus’ death and resurrection (Pentecost was fifty days after the Passover). He claimed that the people themselves had witnessed Jesus’ signs, wonders, and miracles. If the people did not know these things, why did they not speak out against Peter’s message? Instead, many were cut to the heart and asked what to do about their guilt, and 3000 obeyed the gospel.

Acts 26:26– Paul expressed confidence that King Agrippa knew about Jesus, because he said, “these things were not done in a corner.” So even many years after Jesus’ death, Paul could speak with confidence that events involving Jesus were well known.

1 Corinthians 15:6 – Paul said that, on one occasion, Jesus appeared to over 500 people, most of whom were still alive when Paul wrote. The clear implication is that people could go to these people and question them about these events.

2 Corinthians 12:11,12 – Paul claimed that he did signs, wonders, and miracles in the presence of the people to whom he wrote; so they would have known whether or not his testimony was accurate.

Quotations such as these demonstrate that the apostles gave their testimony even while other people were alive who could verify their testimony. They were not citing legends that had developed gradually over many generations since the events. Other people could personally speak to other witnesses to substantiate the apostles' claims. Why would they make such statements, unless they knew people could really verify their accounts? If instead, people were alive who could falsify the apostles' claims, why did those people not speak up?

Confirmation by our own observations today

Some points of evidence we will consider involve things we today have observed or can observe for ourselves. In these matters, we need not consider what others testify but can base conclusions on our own personal observations.

The testimony of the Bible writers themselves will be our main source of evidence. But there is additional evidence to confirm that they were honest, truthful witnesses. Where is any evidence that convincingly demonstrates them to be dishonest witnesses?

Harmony of the testimonies

Mark 14:55,56 – One proof that the witnesses who testified against Jesus were false witnesses is the fact that their testimony was inconsistent – they did not agree among themselves. If the testimony of some witnesses clearly contradicts that of other witnesses, then the testimony of them all becomes doubtful. We don't know whom to believe, so we doubt them all.

As with any eyewitness records, Bible accounts may vary from one another in their details. It is characteristic of eyewitness testimony that different witnesses will observe and remember different details. But these variations can be harmonized by taking all the accounts and putting them together. When such variations occur, there is no proof of contradiction unless there is no explanation that can reasonably harmonize the accounts.

So long as no real contradiction exists, variation in the details of accounts actually serves to strengthen the testimony. The various details cause the accounts of the witnesses to strengthen and support one another, thereby providing the plural witnesses that valid history requires.

“Nothing is more commonly known in the department of civil jurisprudence than that testimony, given by different witnesses, whose statements too closely resemble each other, is invalidated thereby. It looks like collusion; it casts suspicion of fraud...” (Moses E. Lard, via Chumbley, p. 30)

As we examine the various lines of evidence, we will observe how the testimony of the witnesses harmonize to support and strengthen one another without contradicting one another.

Compare Bible witnesses to other witnesses

Consider, for example, the “witnesses” to the Book of Mormon.

In an attempt to validate the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith obtained testimony from two sets of witnesses.

A group of eight witnesses testified that they had seen, handled, and “hefted” the plates from which Smith claimed to have translated the book of Mormon. They claimed that the plates appeared to be gold with engravings that appeared to be ancient work and curious workmanship.

Another group of three witnesses testified that an angel brought the plates before them so they saw the plates and the engravings on them, and a voice told them that Smith was translating the plates by the gift and power of God.

To help us understand the power of the testimony of witnesses let us examine this evidence.

* The group of eight witnesses actually proves nothing except perhaps that Smith had some plates that looked like gold and had curious workmanship on them. How does this prove they were from God or that they were properly translated? Faking such plates is surely possible. And if Smith really had them, why allow only eight men to see them? Why not hundreds more (like the hundreds who saw Jesus after His resurrection)? And if Smith personally possessed them, why did it take an angel to convince the other three men that he possessed them?

* Nine of the eleven witnesses were closely related to one another or to Joseph Smith himself. Five of them were Whitmer

men and a sixth (Hiram Page) was married to a Whitmer girl. Three others were Joseph's father and brothers (cf. *No Man Knows My History*, Fawn Brodie, p79). If Smith really had these plates, why could he not produce more independent witnesses?

* The book *Articles of Faith*, by Mormon author James Talmage, published and distributed by the Mormon Church, acknowledges on page 504 that four of the eleven witnesses eventually left the Mormon Church, two by excommunication and two by withdrawing from the church. He could only claim four witnesses who remained faithful in the church (that leaves three others for which he made no claim that they continued in the church). So of the eleven witnesses, Talmage could cite only four who remained in the church, and at least that many left the church altogether! What kind of witnesses are these for the Book of Mormon?

Specifically, of the three witnesses who claimed to hear the testimony of the angel, Brodie documents that all three later followed a young seeress who, like Joseph Smith, claimed to use a stone to receive revelations, but Smith opposed her revelations! Furthermore, all three left the church at one time or another (p. 78, 205,217; it is unclear whether one or two may have eventually returned and stayed in the church - see also the next point below). By way of contrast, of the thirteen apostles (counting Paul) who testified to Jesus' resurrection, not one ever left Jesus' church or in any way remained untrue to his testimony.

* Brigham Young later acknowledged that some of the witnesses (included some who allegedly saw the angel) came "to doubt and to disbelieve that they had ever seen an angel." Furthermore, there is much evidence that Joseph Smith and numerous Mormon leaders repeatedly accused various ones of the witnesses (including the three who "saw" the angel) of lying, cheating, swindling, stealing, and even making counterfeit money (*Mormonism – Shadow or Reality*, Jerald & Sandra Tanner, pp 50-54). If the Mormons themselves viewed these men as being so dishonest, why should we believe their testimony regarding the golden plates? When were Jesus' apostles ever accused of such things, especially by other Christians?

* And this is the strongest eyewitness testimony Mormonism offers. Why don't the Mormons have eyewitness testimony of hundreds of miracles and dozens of examples of fulfilled prophecies to confirm the Book of Mormon, like we have for the

Bible? Why is it that so many Mormon witnesses were not independent at all but closely related, yet as often as not they left the faith they bore witness to?

Compare this to the kind of evidence we will offer to substantiate the Bible's claims. As we consider the evidence for the Bible, ask yourself why there is no such evidence for the claims of the Book of Mormon or the Koran or other books that claim to be revelations from God.

The fact is that, in any other area, the men who wrote the Bible would be considered ideal witnesses. Had they written about other historical topics, they would be accepted as models of historical evidence. Only one thing prevents people from accepting their testimony: People don't like what the witnesses say! They are not willing to believe that miracles and the resurrection really occurred. They don't want to obey the commands of Scripture or meet the demands of discipleship to Jesus. So, they reject the testimony of the Bible witnesses, not because there is any fault in the witnesses or any weakness in their testimony, but because the hearers don't want to accept the consequences of the evidence.

Your Responsibility to the Evidence

We are now ready to call God's "witnesses" to testify. We will present hundreds of specific examples of evidence grouped under six major headings. One of our goals will be to heap up and multiply the evidence. This will involve considering numerous Scriptures and details regarding each of the main arguments we consider. We hope the result will impress honest hearts with the great volume of evidence that exists.

As you consider each specific example (each specific prophecy, each specific miracle, etc.), you may find some examples more convincing than others. But remember that most of these specific examples are independent of the others. It would not be fair or honest to reject the whole weight of the evidence simply because you find some specific example(s) to be unconvincing. As in reaching a verdict in a courtroom, your decision should be based on the preponderance of the evidence. Do you find the evidence convincing when taken as a whole?

You may compare it to a trapeze artist swinging from a bar. If that bar was held by just one rope and that rope broke, he would be in trouble. But we will demonstrate literally hundreds of examples of evidence supporting our faith. If you find one or a few

of them to be weak, please remember that our “bar” still has hundreds of other ropes holding it up!

As we study, notice how often Bible writers refer to such terms as “witness,” “testimony,” “sign,” “confirm,” “proof” and “prove” (Acts 1:3; 9:22), “demonstrate” (Acts 17:2,3), etc. God knew we would need evidence on which to base our faith. He does not expect us to believe simply because our parents, a preacher, or some other believer tells us to believe. Nor is faith a blind leap. God expects us to develop an honest conviction that Bible claims are true on the basis of abundant evidence in Scripture sufficient to convince anyone who will seriously examine the evidence with an honest heart.

And remember that faith in these basic Bible claims is essential to salvation. The verdict you reach will determine your eternal destiny!

Testimony #1: Creation

The Bible repeatedly claims that God created all things in nature: earth, heavenly bodies, plants, animals, and people.

Genesis 1:1 – In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. He simply spoke what should be created, and it was so (vv 3,6,9,11,14,20,24,26).

Psalm 33:6-9 – The heavens were made by the word of God, by the breath of His mouth. The same is true regarding the earth and its inhabitants: He spoke and commanded, and it was done.

Psalm 148:3-5 – God commanded and heavenly hosts were created.

Hebrews 11:3 – By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God.

Let us examine what the doctrine of creation proves about the claims of the Bible.

Facts Established by Creation

Before examining the evidence for creation, please consider what conclusions the Bible says this would prove. If the only reasonable explanation for the existence of the universe is that God created it, what would that tell us about God?

Creation Proves God Exists and Is the True God.

Obviously, if God created the universe, then God must exist. But note also that no god can be the true God unless He is the Creator.

Old Testament passages

Nehemiah 9:6 — You alone are the Lord; You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and everything on it.

Psalms 86:8-10 — He alone is God. There is none like Him among the gods. All nations should worship Him, because He made them.

Psalms 95:1-7 — The Lord is the great God and King above all gods. He made the sea and His hands formed the dry land. Worship the Lord our Maker, for He is God.

Psalms 100:3 — Know that the Lord, He is God. It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves.

Isaiah 45:18 — For thus says the Lord, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it: “I am the Lord, and there is no other.”

Jeremiah 10:11,12 — “Gods” that did not make heaven and earth will perish! Any “god” that did not make the Universe, must be a false God! He will perish.

1 Chronicles 16:25-36 (also Psalm 96:1-10) — How do we know we should fear God, worship Him, recognize that He reigns, call on Him to save us, and believe that He will judge us? Why not trust ourselves, or something in nature, or some idol? Because God made the heavens and established the earth: That’s why!

The Old Testament teaches that God is clearly proved to exist and to be God because He made heaven and earth. No one can be God, if he did not make heaven and earth.

[2 Kings 19:15; Psalm 8:3-9; Isaiah 37:16; 17:7; 40:25,26; 42:5-9; Jer. 32:17; 14:22; 51:15-19]

New Testament passages

Acts 4:24 — Disciples raised their voices to God and said: “Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them.”

Acts 14:15 — People who worship idols should be taught to turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them.

Acts 17:24-29 — Again idol worshippers were taught they should not worship idols of gold or silver. The true God, who rules heaven and earth, is the one who made the world and gives us life.

Romans 1:20 — The things that have been made by God clearly reveal, not just His power, but also His Godhead. They prove that He is God, and those who fail to recognize Him as God are without

excuse. Those who reject these truths will fall deeper and deeper into error and will absolutely be rejected by God (see vv 18-32).

In the New Testament, as in the Old, creation is proof of who is the true God. The true God is the one who created heaven and earth. No one can be God, if he did not make heaven and earth.

We will see that the Bible claims that we can confirm the truth of creation simply by observing the Universe. If we conclude that creation is true, then it follows that God must exist. But it also follows that no “god” can be the true God unless it claims to be the Creator of the universe and is sufficiently wise and powerful to accomplish creation. Furthermore, no system can be the true religion unless it claims to worship an adequate Creator.

By nature, the Creator must be God and no one can be God who is not the Creator. This would eliminate all forms of idolatry, because, even if they claim some god is the creator, they also worship other gods that they acknowledge are not the creator. If creation is true, it disproves all forms of idolatry as being false.

Creation Proves God’s Eternal Existence.

If God created the universe, then He must be older than the universe. Furthermore, since every effect must have an adequate cause, it follows that something/someone must be eternal and everything else came from it/him. If God created the universe, then He must be eternal.

John 1:1-3 – The Word (Jesus – v14) was in the beginning with God and was God. All things were made through Him.

Colossians 1:16,17 – All things were made by Him (Jesus), and He is **before** all things. Obviously if God made all things, He must have existed before the things He made.

Isaiah 40:28 – The **everlasting** God is the Creator of the ends of the earth.

Psalms 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.**

Revelation 10:6 – He who lives forever and ever, is the One who created heaven and earth and sea and everything in them.

The fact God created everything else would imply that He is Himself eternal. Otherwise, it would be reasonable to ask who made Him.

Again, no god can be the true God unless it is eternal. And no religious system can be true if it worships any god that is not eternal.

[Jer. 10:11,12]

Creation Proves God Is the Living Source of All Life.

If God is the creator, then God must have created life. But life comes only from life, therefore the Creator God must be alive from eternity.

Genesis 1:11,12,20,21,24-27; 2:7,21-23 – God made all forms of life at the beginning: plants, birds, fish, land animals, and people. All life came from God.

Job 33:4 – The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

Isaiah 42:5 – God created the heavens and spread forth the earth. He gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk on it.

Acts 14:15 – Paul taught idol worshipers to turn from these useless things (idols) to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them. If God made life, then God must have life. He is the living God. Idols cannot qualify.

Acts 17:24-29 – Again idol worshipers were taught that God made the world, and He gives to all life, breath, and all things. In Him we live and move and have being. We are His offspring, so we should not think of God as something dead like gold, silver, or stone.

1 Timothy 6:13 – God gives life to all things.

Revelation 10:6 – The God who lives forever and ever created heaven and earth and the sea and the things that are in them.

How could life come from a non-living source? The sun, ocean, mountains, etc., cannot be God. Neither can statues made of metal or stone or wood. They are not alive.

Creation proves God must be alive. If we are the offspring of God, who gave us life, then He must have life. This is why so many passages refer to God as “the living God.”

[Job 12:7-12; Psalm 100:3; 139:13-16; Prov. 22:2; Isaiah 64:8; Jer. 27:5; Heb. 12:9; 1 Cor. 8:6; Job 33:4; Matt. 16:16 1 Thess. 1:9; 2 Cor. 6:16]

Creation Proves God’s Unlimited Power.

If God created the universe, then God must be infinitely powerful. No human power or other physical power is capable of creating the universe. Creation proves that God not only exists but also is infinitely powerful.

Psalm 89:11-13 – God founded the world. He has a mighty arm and a strong hand.

Psalms 65:6 – God established the mountains by His strength, being clothed with power.

Jeremiah 10:12 – He has made the earth by His power. [51:15]

Jeremiah 27:5 – I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are on the ground, by My great power and by My outstretched arm.

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.

Jeremiah 32:17 – Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You.

Job 9:8-10 – God made heaven and the constellations. He does great things past finding out, wonders without number.

Job 26:7-14 – Describing various works God has done in the universe, Job said, “the thunder of His power, who can understand?”

Not only was great power required to make the universe, but it had to be power much greater than any that people have. We could never make such a universe.

Again, no god can be the true God unless it is infinitely powerful. And no religious system can be true if it worships any god that is not infinitely powerful.

[Psalm 33:6-9]

Creation Proves God’s Unlimited Wisdom.

If God created the universe, then God must be infinitely wise. No human wisdom or other material wisdom is capable of creating the universe. Creation proves that God not only exists but also is infinitely wise.

Psalm 136:5-9 – By wisdom God made the heavens and the heavenly bodies.

Jeremiah 51:15 – He has established the world by His wisdom, and stretched out the heaven by His understanding. [10:12]

Proverbs 3:19-26 – The Lord by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding He established the heavens.

Ecclesiastes 11:5 — As you do not know the way of the wind, or how the bones grow in the womb of her who is with child, so you do not know the works of God who makes everything.

Isaiah 40:28 — The Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable.

Romans 11:33-36 — All things are of Him and through Him (i.e., created by Him) and unto Him. His ways and judgments are unsearchable and past finding out. Who can know His mind or give Him counsel?

By observing the universe we can know that its Maker had to be very wise. In fact, His wisdom must be infinitely beyond our own. As men study the creation, there are still many things about it that we cannot even understand how they function, let alone could we have planned it and created it to begin with!

Again, no god can be the true God unless it is infinitely wise. And no religious system can be true if it worships any god that is not infinitely wise.

[Psalm 104:24; Job 37:14-16; chap. 38]

Creation Proves God's Right to Control the Universe.

Since God made the universe, He has the right and power to control it and do what He chooses with it.

The universe belongs to God, because He made it.

Psalm 24:1,2 — Earth and all who dwell on it belong to God, because He founded and established it.

Psalms 89:11,12 — The heavens and earth and all its fullness are Yours, because You founded and created them.

[Psalm 95:5; 74:16,17; 100:3]

Since He made it, He rules as Lord over it.

Since God made the universe and it belongs to Him, it follows that He should control it.

Isaiah 29:16 — The clay has no right to criticize how the potter made it. So we have no right to deny or criticize our Maker. He has the right to make us to be whatever He wants us to be. We must submit to the will of the maker. [45:9,10; 64:8; Rom. 9:20-24]

Acts 17:24 — God, who made the world and everything in it, is Lord (Ruler) of heaven and earth. He rules because He created.

Colossians 1:15-17 — Just as Jesus made the church and is preeminent over it (v18), so He is preeminent over His creation. It was made by Him (by His power) and for Him (to serve His purposes). [Heb. 2:10]

1 Peter 4:19 – We commit our souls to Him in doing good, because He is the Creator.

Romans 1:25 – It is a fundamental error to “serve” the creature rather than the Creator. Serve here means to obey Him as God (see vv 20-25 and the context).

Why should we fear God and keep His commands (Ecc. 12:13)? Because He made us for that purpose. As our Maker, He has every right to expect our service. As His creatures, we are obligated to give whatever service He requires.

Again, no god can be the true God unless it is adequate to create the whole universe. And no religious system can be true if it worships any god that is not the Creator.

[Romans 11:36; 1 Chron. 16:26,36; Psalm 96:2-10; 100:2,3; Jer. 27:5; 5:22; Ex. 4:11; 20:9-11; 31:16,17; Num. 16:22; Isaiah 51:12,13]

Creation Proves God’s Right to Be Worshipped.

God deserves man’s worship because He made us.

The fact that He created us demonstrates power and wisdom so great that we ought to worship Him, not anyone else (such as idols, etc.).

Deuteronomy 32:15-18 – People are rebuked because they forsook the God who made them. They served other gods and forgot the God who fathered them.

Psalm 86:8-10 – All nations should worship and glorify God, because He made them. He alone is God. No other gods are great like Him, because they cannot do works like His works (including creation).

Psalm 139:13,14 – God formed our inward parts. We are fearfully and wonderfully made, so we should praise God.

Psalm 149:1,2 – People should praise the Lord and rejoice in their Maker.

That which has been made ought to give glory to its maker. God’s power to create proves that He deserves our worship. No one deserves our worship unless he created us.

[Psalm 8:3-9]

God deserves our worship because of the greatness of all He has made.

Nehemiah 9:6 – God alone is the Lord, for He made heaven, earth and everything on it, seas and all that is in them. The host of heaven worships Him.

Psalm 33:6-9 – All the earth should fear the Lord and stand in awe of Him, because He commanded and it stood fast. The heavens were made by His word.

Psalm 95:1-7 – Worship before our Maker, for He is God. His hands formed the dry land.

Psalm 148:1-6 – Heavenly hosts should praise the name of the Lord, because He commanded and they were created.

Romans 11:36 – For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Why does glory belong to God? Because all things are of Him and through Him – i.e., He is the Creator. That is reason enough for us to give Him glory forever!

Revelation 4:11 – God should receive glory and honor and power. Why? Because He created all things. By His will they exist and were created.

Revelation 14:6,7 – The everlasting gospel says that people of every nation, tribe, and tongue should worship Him who made heaven and earth.

Romans 1:25 – Since God’s power and Deity are clear from the things he made, people are without excuse (v20) when they worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator.

Note carefully the following absolute truth: ***Only the Creator should be worshipped, for only He has ultimate power. No one or no thing can be God unless it claims to be the Creator and is adequate to be the Creator. And no religious system can be true if it worships any god who is not the Creator.***

The Bible openly and repeatedly argues that creation supports belief in the existence of God. It claims that, if we will examine the Universe around us, we can see for ourselves that God exists. And while this would not directly confirm the Bible to be the true revelation of God, yet it would confirm that the Bible is correct on this major point. And it would eliminate any religious system that does not teach the doctrine of creation and any religious system that worships any “god” who did not create the Universe.

[1 Chron. 16:25-29; Psalm 96:2-9; 19:1; 103:22; Ecc. 12:1; Isaiah 43:7,21; 1 Cor. 8:5,6]

Evidence for Creation

Basically there are three common views of origins:

1. **Creation** — the belief that living things were created by God in a short period of time in the relatively recent past.

2. **Organic evolution** — the belief that man evolved from lower animals, which had themselves developed from simpler animals, over millions of years, entirely by natural processes (without God).

3. **Theistic evolution** — the belief that man evolved from lower animals gradually over millions of years, but God guided the process.

Most people realize that creation is a basic tenet of faith to those who believe in God (Rom. 1:20; Psalm 19:1). But evolution is just as important as a basic tenet of unbelievers (atheists, agnostics, humanists). Evolution is the unbeliever's explanation for the origin of the universe and life without God.

Our goal now is to examine the evidence for evolution and compare it to the evidence for creation.

We will examine evolution by quoting the actual content of texts that have been used in public high school Biology courses. Then we will examine the facts we can know about the world around us and determine whether evolution or creation fits the facts better.

Specific Teachings of Evolution and Creation

What specific ideas are taught about evolution in texts?

Not all texts teach all the following ideas, but some texts do teach all of them, and most texts teach most of them.

1. Earth and life originated billions of years ago.

“Many scientists estimate that the earth is more than 4.5 billion years old ... It is believed that life in the form of living cells first appeared on earth more than three billion years ago”
— *Modern Biology*, Holt, p. 158.

2. Evolution tries to explain the origin of the earth, sun, and heavenly bodies.

“Biologists are studying even the evolution of the earth itself, and of the other planets, and the sun” — *Biological Science*, Heath, p. 73 (cf. Scott, Foresman, p. 188).

This generally involves the “Big Bang” theory.

3. Evolution explains the origin of life as one or a few cells.

“Evolution is therefore being studied as the process by which life not only diversified, but first arose” — *Biological Science*, Heath, p. 74.

“A recent hypothesis about the origin of life suggests that life began on Earth billions of years ago when simple gases started to combine with each other” — *Biology*, Scott, Foresman, p. 12.

4. All present kinds of life developed gradually over millions of years from the original simple life forms. Man and animals have a common animal ancestor.

“New species of living plants and animals have come about as the result of changes in the old species ... The theory of evolution attempts to answer the question: How did so many different kinds of plants and animals come about?” — *Biological Science*, Heath, p. 47.

“The development of a species is called *speciation*. Since life began, species have been disappearing and developing. This process is still going on today” — *Modern Biology*, Holt, p. 171.

“We know that we are closely related to other animals, and recent ... studies demonstrate that we are much closer to our nearest relatives, chimpanzees and gorillas, than was imagined even a decade ago” — *Anthropology*, Random House, p. 10.

“The species placed in the same genus, for example, are the diversified descendants of one former species; the same applies to the genera, included within the same family, and the families included in the same superfamily ... Thus *Homo Sapiens* ... is assigned, along with the great apes (chimpanzees, gorillas, and orangutans), to the same superfamily” — *Anthropology*, Random House, pp. 73,74.

5. Evolution conflicts with creation and the Bible.

Some texts try to explain away the contradictions between evolution and the Bible; but others, especially in advanced courses, openly admit that evolution contradicts the Bible.

“Previous to [the 15th and 16th centuries] many educated people rejected the idea of evolution in favor of the view that species were fixed and unchanging” — *Biological Science*, Heath, p. 53.

[In earlier centuries, the] “commonly accepted explanation for the origin of species was the one outlined in Genesis, that God created the species during the original six days of Creation ... However, in contrast, contemporary scholars see an evolutionary basis for taxonomy” — *Anthropology*, Random House, pp. 25,26.

“The Biblical doctrine of *creationism* was placed in some doubt as important fossil discoveries were made ... The alternative to creationism ... was *transformism*, also called evolution ... In contrast to proponents of divine creation, Darwin argued that the number of species was not immutable...” — *Anthropology*, Random House, p. 26.

6. Evolution is one of the most important theories in science.

“In 1859, the English scientist Charles Darwin published his theory of *natural selection*. This theory of how different species develop in evolution is one of the most important in the history of science” — *Modern Biology*, Holt, pp. 166,167.

“Of all the theories you may study in biology, the theory of evolution occupies a unique place ... It is so much a part of the foundation of biology that science can hardly be understood without it” — *Biological Science*, Heath, p. 64 (cf. Scott, Foresman, pp. 187,214).

“An evolutionary approach ... orients this book” — *Anthropology*, Random House, p. 12.

7. Much evidence supports evolution and little evidence contradicts it.

Later in our study we will cite specific examples of the evidence cited.

Note carefully that, contrary to what some would tell us, high schools do **not** just teach that animals adapt to their environment. They are teaching **general** evolution: that evolution explains the

ultimate origin of the universe, life, and all the kinds of living things.

What specific ideas are taught about creation in the Bible?

Despite the emphasis on evolution, only a few texts even mention creation! If they do mention it, they then attempt to disprove it or they simply refuse to discuss it, claiming that it is not a scientific issue but a religious issue!

So, the books make much effort to prove evolution, but virtually no effort to defend creation! The effect is to lead students to think there is much scientific evidence for evolution but little or none for creation. We will see, however, that the evidence for creation is at least as strong as that for evolution.

Since the textbooks do not fairly define creation, let us explain it here. Creation teaches the following:

1. The earth, sun, moon, and stars were all created by direct acts of the eternal, living God - Gen. 1:1,14-19.

2. In a short period of time (six days), God brought into existence all the different kinds of living things on earth – plants, animals, and man – Acts 17:24-29; Gen. 1; Ex. 20:11.

This contradicts the evolutionary view that living things developed over millions of years.

3. Each kind of living thing reproduces after its own kind, though each is able to adapt to its environment - Gen. 1:11,21,24,25.

Natural variation allows dogs to vary and adapt to their environment, but the offspring of dogs are always other dogs, not snakes or birds! The same is true for each kind of living thing.

Galatians 6:7,8 says this same principle applies to man's eternal destiny. Like produces like. Good conduct leads to a good destiny and evil conduct to an evil destiny. If we deny this, then we will be confused, not only about our **origins**, but also about our **destiny!**

Evolution conflicts with creation because it claims that, given enough time, kinds of living things develop into different kinds, so all the present kinds came from one original kind.

4. Man is unique from and superior to the animals. Man and animals do not have a common animal ancestor - Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7,21,22.

Man was not formed from “lower animals,” but was created directly by God in the image of God. So, man possesses many qualities in common with God that could not have evolved from lower animals. Specifically, man was created directly from the ground, and woman was formed from man.

5. Man’s original condition and environment were more advantageous than they are now – Genesis 1:31; 3:1-6,16-19.

After creation man was placed into ideal circumstances, but these conditions were ruined as a consequence of man’s wrongdoing. In contrast to evolution, which concludes that man is continually progressing, creation says that man’s conditions are worse than they originally were. This is why man needs a Savior.

6. Creation conflicts with evolution, and the consequences are profound.

Obviously, major consequences will follow, depending on which theory of origins one accepts. If God created us, it follows that He has a purpose for our existence and would communicate to us what His will is. So, man is expected to live according to a standard of right and wrong, revealed to us by God. God will hold us accountable and ultimately reward us according to how well we live according to that standard – Proverbs 3:5,6. In short, creation confirms all the facts that we earlier listed as being established by creation.

On the other hand, the consequences of evolution are just as profound, leading to logical conclusions that many evolutionists accept. These include that we are here by accident, so there is no purpose to life. There is no higher intelligence than man, so we must decide for ourselves what we think to be good or bad (situation ethics and individual autonomy). Man is entirely physical, like the animals from which we evolved, so there is no existence after death. There is no God to whom we are accountable and no eternal rewards for our lives. This philosophy, known as Secular Humanism, includes atheism, agnosticism, and skepticism of all kinds.

This conflict of fundamental beliefs is the exact reason why the issue of origins is such a controversial and important issue.

The Biblical Approach to the Evidence

Having stated repeatedly what creation demonstrates about God, the Bible also tells us how we ought to approach the evidence. This approach is based on observing nature, but does not require scientific technicalities.

Romans 1:20-25

God's invisible attributes (Deity and power) can be seen and understood by the things He made. So we need not be scientists, capable of arguing scientific technicalities, to settle the issue of God's existence. The evidence is "clearly seen" by observing the universe. There is no excuse for those who do not recognize this; so this is something any of us can see for ourselves.

Note that, when people worship some other "god" or claim that God does not exist, they may profess to be wise: they claim that their view is based on superior evidence (it is "scientific"). But in reality they have become fools, for they have rejected the obvious truth.

Psalms 19:1-4

The heavens declare God's glory and the firmament shows that it is the work of His hands. We can learn this as we observe the heavenly bodies, such as the cycle of day and night. The message is not spoken in human language, yet it has gone to the whole world. Again, our own observation can convince us that the universe was made by the hands of God.

Job 12:7-10

The beasts of the earth, the birds of the air, the fish of the sea, and the earth itself likewise explain and instruct us. Who among them does not know that God's hand did all this? The point, as with the heavens, is that their nature and existence proclaim this message to us. Observing them should convincingly demonstrate the truth, so these are lessons we can learn from them.

Acts 17:24-29

Paul taught heathen idol worshipers that there is a true and living God who made the world and rules over it. He gives to all life, breath, and all things. In Him we live and move and have our being. Even heathen poets recognize that we are the offspring of God. This should teach us that God cannot be simply gold or stone or something that man has made.

Again, Paul did not need to offer technical arguments. Simply observing the universe should convince people of God's existence and that He is a powerful, living God.

Psalms 139:13,14

We should praise God, because we are fearfully and wonderfully made. God formed us, His works are marvelous, and we should know that very well. So the human body also serves to convince us that God is creator.

All these passages show that, even without technical knowledge, we can observe for ourselves the universe around us and conclude that there must be a God who made it. This conclusion should be obvious when we observe the heavenly bodies, the animals, the earth, and our own bodies.

This is not to say that science contradicts the Bible view of creation. On the contrary, the better we understand true science, the more evidence we find to confirm creation. Such evidence is useful and worth studying. But the point is that we do not **need** to be scientists to observe the world around us and reach a valid conclusion regarding the evidence for creation vs. evolution. And we surely do not need to take scientists' word for which view is correct. We should not be intimidated by those who claim that evolution is scientific but creation is not. As with all issues that affect our salvation, God has given us the ability to observe the evidence for ourselves and reach a proper conclusion regarding what is and is not true.

So let us use the approach discussed in these Scriptures. Let us consider what we can observe for ourselves regarding the universe, and let us see whether or not we can reach conclusions that can convince the honest person regarding the evidence.

[Jeremiah 2:27]

Evidence Presented for Evolution

Public high school science texts sometimes admit that evolution has not been conclusively proved. However, when they present the evidence, they make it sound as convincing as they can.

“Today we have evidence that life evolved when the earth was still young” — *Biological Science*, Heath, p. 69.

Let us consider the most commonly used lines of evidence offered for evolution.

Natural selection

An explanation of natural selection

Texts thoroughly explain how natural processes destroy weaker organisms. Those that survive are “fittest.” They have advantages, such as strength, height, or quickness, that help them survive longer than others. Allegedly they will have more offspring, and the offspring will likely have these same qualities.

As time passes, more and more offspring have these qualities. Given enough time, this process is supposed to produce such great changes that new kinds of living things result. (Typical presentations are found in Heath, pp. 63,64 and Scott, Foresman, p. 219.)

Evidence for natural selection

Remember that the texts describe evolution as the process by which all present kinds of living things developed from one original kind. But the evidence they offer gives only examples of **variation within kinds** — absolutely no examples of **new** kinds. Here are some typical examples. (See Scott, Foresman, pp. 208ff; Heath, pp. 62,63. Note that Scott, Foresman, on p. 15, distinguishes kinds from variation within kinds.)

1. **Peppered moths** — Years ago in England, Peppered Moths were light in color, but when pollution blackened the trees, they were easily found and eaten by enemies. Soon a darker variety of Peppered Moth began to predominate. Anti-pollution methods will allegedly lighten the trees and then light-colored Peppered Moths will again predominate. (See Scott, Foresman, pp. 210,211.) But the result was still a moth, and a Peppered Moth at that! No new kind of living thing developed. What evolution needs is evidence that natural selection can produce new kinds of organisms.

2. **Bacteria become resistant to penicillin.** But they are still the same kind of bacteria that they were before, not a new kind.

3. **Insects become resistant to DDT.** But they are still the same kind of insects. They have simply adapted to their environment.

4. **Breeding improves strains of cattle** (or other organisms). But they are still the same kind of living thing. The cattle did not become dogs, birds, or people.

All students can witness for themselves that living things reproduce after their own kind. It happens every day. Yet after years of research, the best evidence that the evolutionists can find simply demonstrates **variations within kind**. This agrees with the Bible and argues for creation, not evolution (Gen. 1:11,21,24,25).

Fossils

An Explanation of the Fossil Argument

Fossils are remains of ancient plants and animals. The “geologic column” supposedly demonstrates that fossils found deeper in the earth are older than those found closer to the surface. These deeper fossils are often simpler than those not so deep. It is argued that this proves that complex animals gradually evolved from the simpler ones.

“Fossils Give Evidence for Evolution ...

“Fossils form a record in the rocks that supports the idea that life has evolved over very long periods of time from simple to more complex varieties ... The fossil evidence suggests that life has been changing slowly from one form to another over millions of years” (*Biological Science*, Heath, pp. 48,51; cf. Scott, Foresman, pp. 188ff).

Weaknesses of the fossil argument

The “geologic column” is not found in any one place on earth. It is a conglomeration of layers found in various places and then pieced together. In many places major sections are missing, and sections even overlap or are found in different orders. The age of various layers is determined largely by circular reasoning based on the assumption that evolution is true: the assumed age of the rocks is used to date the fossils, but the age of the fossils is used to date the rocks!

The greatest problem with the fossil argument is the **“missing links.”** If evolution is true, we should find thousands of fossils of ancient animals in intermediate stages of development between the present kinds, such as half fish and half reptile. Yet the distinctions between the fossils of living things are generally as clearly defined as the distinctions between present kinds of living organisms. Old kinds become extinct (which no creationist denies), but nothing demonstrates organisms halfway between the present kinds.

Compare the quote in the **student** text above to the following quote, which is found in a **teacher's edition** but withheld from the students:

“Lack of a complete fossil record is one of the main weaknesses of the theory of evolution” — Scott, Foresman Teacher's Edition, p. 192.

When viewed in a different way, the evidence that has been offered for evolution becomes evidence for creation. Not only does current experience show that living things reproduce after their own kind, but the fossil evidence confirms this. Again, this agrees with the Bible (Gen. 1:11,21,24,25).

Similarity of organs and embryos

The evidence in the textbooks

“Homologous organs” are organs that are similar in structure but are found in different kinds of organisms. Consider this quote:

“The bones of a bird's wing, a horse's front leg, a whale's paddle, and a human arm are homologous organs. These bones are so similar that, for the most part, they have the same names ... Their *likenesses* indicate a genetic relationship through a common ancestor ... Likenesses between *embryos*, the developing organisms, also seem to indicate a common ancestor” — *Modern Biology*, Holt, p. 165 (cf. Scott, Foresman, pp. 199,202f).

So, it is assumed that living things have similar structures because they inherited them from a common ancestor.

Weaknesses in this evidence

Similarity does not necessarily prove common ancestry. All of us have met people who were more similar to people from other families than to anyone in their own family.

Similarity of structure is actually a good argument for creation by a common Creator. Intelligent inventors use similar structures (wheels, gears, levers, etc.) to accomplish similar functions in completely different inventions (cars, clocks, and sewing machines). This does not prove these machines evolved from one another by natural processes, but that they were all invented by intelligent beings. So God, having “invented” a structure that is useful in accomplishing some function, used it to accomplish similar functions in different organisms.

These are the main evidences cited in the texts. All other evidence can likewise be explained as well by creation as by

evolution, but the creationist explanation is never given in the texts!

Evidence for Creation

Despite giving much evidence for evolution, the texts almost universally give no evidence whatever for creation. Some flatly claim that there is no evidence against evolution:

“...no major pattern of scientific evidence that conflicts with [Darwin’s] theory has turned up” – *Biology*, Scott, Foresman, p. 222.

Some claim that creation, if it occurred, would be a matter of history, so no scientific experiment could prove it (Scott, Foresman, p. 10). However, exactly the same point can be made for evolution! If all living things evolved from a single organism, that is a matter of history, and no experiment could ever prove it.

Actually, both evolution and creation are matters of **faith**, not **personal observation**. Faith involves believing a thing on the basis of evidence, though we never personally saw it. In the case of origins, the evidence consists of inferences drawn from scientific evidence. But in addition, creation also has the eyewitness testimony of the Creator who inspired many Bible writers to record what He did.

High school texts to the contrary notwithstanding, there is so much evidence for creation, that we will take the space only to briefly summarize a small portion.

Life comes from life.

The scientific evidence

Everyone can see, and science has repeatedly confirmed, that living things come from other living things. This is called the “Law of Biogenesis.” Textbooks explain at great length how this law was thoroughly proved by Redi and Pasteur, who conclusively disproved “spontaneous generation.” (See, for example, Heath, pp. 69ff and Scott, Foresman, pp. 10,11). There is simply no scientific evidence that life can suddenly appear where there was no life before. This completely harmonizes with creation, which says that all life was created by an eternally living God (Acts 14:15; 17:24,25,28,29). It is shameful to say man is the offspring of a stone (Jeremiah 2:26,27).

The problem for evolution

Evolution conflicts the scientific evidence since it claims that sometime life must have come from non-life. Having shown at length that spontaneous generation was disproved, the books then try to explain how, nevertheless, scientists believe it did happen once!

Heath (pp. 74ff) and Scott, Foresman (pp. 12ff) explain what would be needed for life to form in nature from non-life. (1) Certain chemicals, given an electric charge, would form **amino acids**. (2) Amino acids then form **complex molecules** in the presence of heat. These first two steps have occurred under carefully controlled laboratory experiments, but there is no proof they have ever happened in nature.

(3) Complex molecules must then form **protein**, the basic substance of life. This has never been accomplished in laboratories or in nature! (4) Proteins must then combine to form **complex proteins**. This too has never been duplicated. (5) Complex proteins must form a **cell**. This has never been duplicated. (6) Finally, the cell must somehow come to **life**, and this has never been duplicated. All this is made clear in the texts.

So the score for evolution is two “maybe’s” followed by four “no’s,” and we are supposed to believe that equals a “yes”! And that is scientific, but to believe in creation is “unscientific”!

Living things reproduce after their own kind.

This is also a recognized principle of life that can easily be proved by observation and scientific experimentation. The offspring of dogs is another dog and the offspring of trees is another tree, etc. Neither in fossils nor in current experience is there convincing evidence that nature can produce a substantially different kind of living thing, such that all life could have evolved from an original form.

The reason for this, discovered relatively recently, is that inheritance is controlled by genes in the cells. Each kind of living organism has its own unique genes, which are passed on to the offspring in reproduction. There is some variation in the genes so there is room for organisms to adapt to their environment. But there is a limit to how much change can occur, because the genes of any kind of living thing differ from those of other kinds.

Some claim that mutations can introduce new forms of life, but mutations are almost universally harmful to the survival of the

organism. And there is no proof that mutations have ever formed even a new organ let alone an entirely new kind of living thing.

All this completely agrees with creation, which says all things reproduce after their own kind (Gen. 1:11, etc.). It disagrees with evolution, which says that all the kinds came from an original kind. Laws of heredity agree with creation, not evolution. See Gen. 1:11,21,24,25; Jer. 2:26,27.

Man is unique.

Evolution cannot explain the great difference between man and animals.

(1) Consider man's intelligence. Only man accumulates knowledge and passes it on to future generations. Only man communicates by reading, writing, and mathematical calculations using abstract symbols. Only man deliberately makes constructive use of fire. Only man invents team sports with organized rules. Only man invents new tools and machines to do his work. For every kind of animal there exists other kinds with nearly the same degree of intelligence. Why is there such a gap in intelligence between man and animals?

(2) Consider man's ability to appreciate music, art, poetry, humor, and the beauty of nature. What animals create new jokes for the sake of humor or new works of art for the sake of beauty? How can these qualities be explained by survival of the fittest?

(3) Consider man's conscience and sense of right and wrong. Only man wears clothes, has a sense of shame, seeks an object of worship, and has hope for immortality. Why are there no animals with all levels of these qualities, just slightly different from men?

Creation can explain these qualities.

Man was made "in the image of God" (Gen. 1:26-28; James 3:9,10; Psalms 8:4-8). God possess intelligence, appreciation for beauty, and a sense of moral right and wrong. He placed these in humans because we are in His image. Animals do not possess these because they are not in His image. Again, creation, not evolution, agrees with what we observe. Note Jeremiah 2:27.

The universe shows evidence of design.

Intelligent beings can recognize evidence of intelligence in work done by other intelligent beings.

This is a universal truth. Anyone who observed a car, house, radio, etc., would immediately know it was made by an intelligent

being, even if he had no knowledge of who that being was. We can recognize, not just the existence of intelligence, but also the degree of intelligence.

The earth and living things bear innumerable signs of being the work of an intelligent being.

The **cell** is the basic building block of life. It can only be seen with a microscope, yet it is far more complex than any IBM computer. If computers are made only by intelligent beings, why not also the cell?

Inside the cell are the **genes** that determine heredity. The information in the genes of one cell, if written out in English, would require a 1000-volume encyclopedia. Encyclopedias are written by intelligent beings. Who made the genes?

The **eye** cannot be matched by any man-made camera for its combination of accuracy, mobility, detail, self-adjustment, and self-repair and cleaning. Cameras are made by intelligent beings. Who can believe the eye came from any other source? The same applies to other organs in the human body - Psalms 139:14.

Creation agrees with the common sense conclusion that the amazing features of plants, animals, and people were all made by a supremely intelligent Being (Rom. 1:20; Psalm 19:1; 139:14). Evolution requires that all this happened by chance — life began by chance and evolves by random mutations. This has been proved to be mathematically impossible.

Living things are inter-dependent.

Many organisms in nature cannot exist without one another.

For example the **Yucca plant** cannot produce seed till it is pollinated by the Yucca moth. But the moth larva cannot live unless it eats the Yucca plant seeds. The plant cannot reproduce without the moth and the moth cannot reproduce without the plant.

Another example is **sexual reproduction**, in which neither the male nor the female alone can reproduce without the other.

Photosynthesis in **plants** takes in carbon dioxide and gives off oxygen so the plant can grow. Animals eat the plant, take in oxygen, and give off carbon dioxide. Without the plants, the animals would soon have neither food nor oxygen. Without the animals, the plants would not have carbon dioxide and other necessary raw materials.

Evolution cannot explain this inter-dependence, but creation can.

In each of these cases and many others, if one form of life developed gradually over millions of years, it would have died out because it could not reproduce or live without the other kind. Out of all the millions of years of history, both kinds would have to develop at the same time and then discover one another before they died. Otherwise they could never live or reproduce!

Creation simply explains that God made the different living things within a few days of one another and created them to help one another.

Laws of thermodynamics say the universe is “running down.”

The Second Law of Thermodynamics says that, although energy cannot ultimately be destroyed, yet it is continually being converted into unusable forms that escape and are permanently lost. This is one of the most conclusively proven laws in science. It illustrates the universal principle that nature tends to go from a state of order to disorder: metal rusts, tools wear out, living things grow old and die.

All this implies that the universe began sometime in the past and is now “running down.” This agrees with creation but disagrees with evolution, which says the universe is building up, improving, and becoming more complex and orderly.

This is just a sample of the scientific evidence that can be presented for creation.

Conclusion

The seven Biology texts that we reviewed spent, on the average **46 pages** defining, explaining, and defending evolution. On the average they devoted **zero** pages to creation (though a few books contain a few sentences about it). Clearly textbooks are teaching evolution to the exclusion of creation.

Humanists and liberal-minded people are continually crusading against “censorship” in the schools. Yet no subject has been more “censored” (in the sense they use the word) than creation. And it is being censored by the very humanists and liberals that claim to hate censorship!

Note Romans 1:20,22 – Trusting human wisdom without God makes men fools.

List of Textbooks Reviewed

Anthropology: the Exploration of Human Diversity, Second Ed., Random House, 1978.

Biological Science – A Molecular Approach, Fourth Ed., D. C. Heath, 1980.

Biological Science – An Inquiry into Life, Fourth Ed., Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1980.

Biology, Macmillan, 1981.

Biology, Scott, Foresman, 1980.

Biology, Silver, Burdett, 1981.

Biology – Living Systems, Merrill, 1979.

Modern Biology, Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1981.

Testimony #2: John the Baptist

Several passages expressly state that John the Baptist was a witness for Christ:

John 5:31-33 – Jesus listed John as one of His witnesses.

John 1:6-9,15 – John came for the purpose of being a witness to the Light (Christ). He bore witness regarding Jesus (cf. v19) so that all might believe.

We will see that John was sent expressly to prepare the way for the Christ, to help people recognize and accept Christ. It follows that John's testimony should be important and useful in our study.

John's Qualifications as a Witness

Why should John's message be given serious consideration as the testimony of a well-qualified witness?

John's work was a fulfillment of prophecy.

Isaiah 40:3; Luke 3:2-6; John 1:22,23; Matthew 11:10 – Isaiah prophesied about one who would be a voice in the wilderness, preparing the way of the Lord. Both John and Jesus repeatedly stated that John's work was a fulfillment of this prophecy. (See also Malachi 4:5,6; Matthew 3:1-3; 11:14; 17:10-13; Mark 1:2-4; Luke 1:17.)

Luke 1:5-22 (especially vv 15-17) – Before John was conceived, the angel Gabriel appeared to his father Zacharias and predicted that John would be great in the sight of the Lord, would

turn many to the Lord, and would go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah.

Luke 1:59-80 (especially vv 76-79) – At the time of John's birth, Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied (v67) that John would be a prophet of God to prepare the way of the Lord and give people a knowledge of salvation by remission of sins.

These prophecies, fulfilled by John, demonstrate that he was approved of God. Therefore, we should accept his testimony.

John was recognized as a prophet.

Many people then and now acknowledge that John received direct guidance from the Holy Spirit.

John 1:6 – John was sent from God to bear witness to the Light.

Luke 1:15-17 – The angel Gabriel predicted that John would be filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb. When Zacharias doubted this would happen, the angel gave a miraculous sign to confirm the message: he struck Zacharias speechless till John was born (vv 18-22,59-66). Note that many people witnessed this sign when it happened. They knew that John's father was struck dumb from the time he received the vision of the angel till the time that he named John, and this led them to wonder what kind of man John would be (vv 21,22,63-66).

Luke 1:67,76-79 – Guided by the Holy Spirit, John's father prophesied that John would be a prophet of God to prepare the Lord's way and give knowledge of salvation to the people.

Matthew 11:7-10 – Jesus directly acknowledged that John was a prophet whose work fulfilled Old Testament prophecy (Luke 7:26-28).

Matthew 14:5; 21:25,26 – The people overwhelmingly viewed John as a prophet, so much so that the leaders feared to harm him or deny that he was a prophet (Mark 11:29-32; Luke 20:3-6).

Matthew 16:13,14 – John was repeatedly classed with the great Old Testament prophets. (See also Matthew 17:10-13; Mark 8:28; 9:11-13; Luke 9:19.)

Some people, of course, rejected John's message, even as people rejected all the prophets. But none ever successfully refuted his teaching. And even those who rejected his message never attempted to prove he was dishonest or a liar. (See also Matthew 11:16-19; 21:32; Luke 7:30-35.)

If John was a prophet, then we must accept his teaching. In addition, the general respect with which he was held should lead us to respect his honesty as a witness.

John was a just and holy man.

Mark 6:19,20 – King Herod was no friend of John's. He imprisoned John for rebuking Herod's sins, and Herodias wanted John killed. Nevertheless, Herod feared and protected John, because he recognized that John was a just and holy man. Even this corrupt, immoral ruler respected John's morality and decency.

Matthew 21:32 – Jesus said John came in the way of righteousness.

John's friends and his opponents both recognized his uprightness. This also testifies to John's honesty as a witness.

John was free from desire for wealth, self-exaltation, or personal power.

He chose to live an austere life with little material gain. He repeatedly refused to exalt himself, but instead exalted the one whose way he came to prepare.

Matthew 3:3,4 – He lived in the wilderness, clothed in camel's hair and a leather belt, eating locusts and wild honey. Clearly, he was not motivated by desire for material possessions.

Matthew 3:3,11; Luke 3:15,16; John 1: 20,29,30; 3:26-30 – John openly denied that he was the Christ. Rather, he repeatedly urged people to follow the Christ whose way John had come to prepare. He said he was unworthy to even loosen the sandal of the One who would come, and that a greater baptism than John's would come. John said he himself would decrease, but the One to come would increase (in influence, following, etc.). (See also Matthew 3:14; Mark 1:6-8; John 1:15,19-28; Acts 13:24,25.)

John knew he himself would not have the more dominant position. He was here simply to prepare for the coming of someone else. No one could ever properly claim that John's testimony was given from false motives.

John was a bold, outspoken opponent of sin and hypocrisy of all kinds.

Matthew 3:2-10 – His primary message demanded that people repent of their sins. He boldly rebuked the powerful religious leaders (Pharisees and Sadducees) as a brood of vipers who needed to repent, flee from wrath, and bring forth fruits of

repentance. Otherwise, they would be cut down and burned like a tree that does not bear good fruit. (Luke 3:2-14)

Matthew 14:1-4; Luke 3:19,20 – He rebuked King Herod for all his evils. He was imprisoned and eventually killed, because he rebuked King Herod for having his brother's wife. (See also Matthew 17:10-13; 21:32; Mark 6:14-18.)

Even the most powerful religious or political leaders did not intimidate John. He opposed sin and hypocrisy wherever he found it. Surely such a courageous defender of truth and opponent of sin would never be guilty of false testimony. Specifically, he would never claim that someone was a true prophet, let alone the Christ, unless he was convinced that claim was true.

John gave his life for his message of moral uprightness.

Matthew 14:1-12; Mark 6:17-29; Luke 9:7-9 – His bold opposition to wickedness eventually led Herodias to find an opportunity to have Herod put John to death.

No one can set aside John's testimony on grounds that he was a coward or was intimidated to speak what he did not believe regarding Jesus. Why would a man give his life for his message unless he believed it to be true?

John was sent by God specifically to prepare the way for Christ and His kingdom.

Luke 1:16,17 – The angel Gabriel told Zacharias that John would make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Matthew 3:1-3 – The prophecies that John fulfilled said he would come to prepare the way for the Lord. In fulfillment of this, he preached that the kingdom was at hand. (See also Matthew 11:10; Mark 1:2-4; Luke 3:2-6; 7:27,28; Acts 13:24,25.)

Matthew 3:11 – He said the One to come after him would baptize people in the Holy Spirit.

John 1:6-9 – John was sent from God expressly to bear witness to the Light (referring, in context, to the only begotten of God who would come in the flesh – vv 1-18).

John 1:15 – He bore witness to the One who would come after Him.

John 1:20-27 – John plainly said that he was not the Christ but was sent before Him (i.e., before the Christ). So, the One for Whom John prepared the way would be the Christ.

If John's primary task was to prepare people for the Christ, then surely of all people he ought to recognize the Christ and his testimony regarding the Christ ought to be taken seriously.

John personally baptized Jesus and witnessed the events that then occurred.

Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21,22; John 1:30-34 – Jesus' mother and John's mother were cousins (see Luke 1). When Jesus came to John to be baptized, John recognized Jesus to be a great teacher, even to the point that he thought he should be baptized by Jesus. But John was not yet sure that Jesus was the one for Whom he was preparing the way. But note the events that John personally witnessed at that time:

* When John baptized Jesus, the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus in a bodily form as a dove.

* The Father then spoke from heaven and said Jesus was His beloved Son.

* The Father furthermore said that Jesus was well pleasing to Him.

We will see that, as a prophet, John realized the significance of all this. But our point here is that John was able to speak, not just of what he knew as a prophet, but also of what he had seen as a personal eyewitness when Jesus was baptized.

Whatever John spoke regarding Jesus must be taken as John's honest testimony to the truth, based on revelation from God and on adequate firsthand witness. On what possible grounds could John's testimony regarding Jesus be set aside as false or mistaken? John was surely qualified to speak as a witness regarding who Jesus was.

So, what testimony did he give?

John's Testimony Regarding Jesus

We have already seen many passages where John clearly stated that his work was to prepare the way for Someone who would follow him. Surely we should expect him to know who that One was and identify Him clearly when He came. What is John's testimony regarding this?

John 1:14,15 – When John spoke of one who would come after Him, he was speaking about **the only begotten of the Father**

who became flesh and dwelt among us (the context shows this is Jesus – note v29). The One who came after him was before him. That is, He was before John in preeminence, but more specifically, he was pre-existent having existed since before the world began (vv 1-3).

John 1:29,30,35,36 – John expressly stated that Jesus was **the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world**.

John 1:30-33 – At first John was not certain who the One was for whom he was preparing the way. But he began his work knowing that he would recognize that One when the Holy Spirit descended and remained upon Him. John bore witness to the fact that this happened when Jesus was baptized: the Spirit descended and remained on Jesus. This proved to John **that Jesus was the One for Whom John had been preparing the way**.

John 1:34 - So John testified that he saw and knew that Jesus **is the Son of God**.

John 3:22-30 – When Jesus began making converts, John's disciples said that the One regarding whom John had testified was baptizing people. So, they too recognized that Jesus was the One regarding whom John testified. John then plainly identified that the One before Whom he was sent was **the Christ**. But he said that he had been sent to prepare the way for Jesus, therefore he recognized that Jesus was the Christ. (Cf. vv 31-36.)

John 10:40,41 – The people recognized that Jesus was the One about whom John had been speaking. They acknowledged that the things John said about Jesus were true.

Acts 19:4,5 – Paul summarized John's testimony saying that John taught people to believe on One who would come after John and that one was **Christ Jesus**.

So John was sent as a man of God expressly to prepare the way for and to testify regarding the Christ, so the people would believe in Him. He plainly said that Jesus was the One for Whom He was preparing the way. He said Jesus would have preeminence, that Jesus was the Christ, that He was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and that He was the Son of God. This testimony was given by one whose qualifications as a witness are unimpeachable.

[Note: It is true that, after John had been imprisoned, he sought reassurance that Jesus was really the Christ – Luke 7:18-23; Matt. 11:1-6. Perhaps this was because, like the apostles and other Jews, John was bothered when Jesus did not act according

to Jewish preconceptions. This demonstrates that prophets revealed inspired, infallible messages from God, but they too were human and did not always understand all the applications of their own messages. They had to study their own messages in order to apply them properly, just like we have to study the Bible. Compare this to Peter's difficulty in understanding the message he revealed regarding conversion of the Gentiles – cf. Acts 2:39 to Acts 10,11,15 and Gal. 2. However, by appealing to the many miracles that John's own disciples saw Jesus do, Jesus was able to give the reassurance that John sought. So, if we take John's testimony and add it to the miracles and the fulfilled prophecies, we too can have confidence regarding Who Jesus is.]

Testimony #3: The Father and the Son

The Testimony of Jesus

The significance of Jesus' testimony

John 5:31-40; 8:13-18 – Jesus acknowledged that His own testimony was not conclusive by itself, since He was only one witness. So He listed other witnesses: John the Baptist, His miracles, the Father, and the Old Testament Scriptures (prophecy).

Jesus is only one witness; nevertheless, He is one witness! A defendant is allowed to testify on his own behalf. If Jesus made supernatural claims, additional witnesses would be needed to confirm His claims; nevertheless, He Himself would be one witness to begin with.

If Jesus is Who the Bible writers claim Him to be, surely we would expect Him to personally make and accept those claims. If He denied such claims, that would settle the issue. If He neither affirmed nor denied them, we would have doubts. But if He Himself testified in favor of the Bible claims regarding Him, then He would constitute one more witness to add to our evidence.

The only way to learn what claims Jesus made is from the Bible.

Only Bible writers give us eyewitness testimony of Jesus' life and teachings. If we do not accept the Bible record as valid history, then we cannot possibly know what to believe about Jesus. But we have already cited evidence that Bible writers are honest and

accurate eyewitnesses. See again John 15:27; Acts 1:8,21,22; 2:32; 10:39-41; John 21:24; 20:30,31; 1 John 1:1-3; 2 Peter 1:16-18; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8,14,15.

So consider the eyewitness testimony regarding what Jesus claimed.

Jesus' Testimony

Jesus made, or allowed others to make, for Himself the following claims.

The Christ, the Son of God

“Christ” is the New Testament word for the Messiah, the anointed ruler predicted in the Old Testament. “Son of God” refers to Jesus’ special relationship to the Father – a unique position no one else has – the only begotten Son (John 3:16). Did Jesus claim such positions?

Matthew 16:13-18 – Jesus rejected as inadequate the claims that He was just a prophet. But when Peter confessed Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of the Living God, Jesus said that the Father Himself had revealed this to Peter. [John 6:69]

John 4:25,26 – Jesus acknowledged to the Samaritan woman that He was the Messiah (Christ).

John 9:35-37 – He told a blind man whom He had healed that He was the Son of God.

Matthew 26:63-66 – During His trial in the presence of His enemies, Jesus acknowledged that He was the Christ, the Son of God.

In addition, He allowed various other disciples to make such claims for Him (John 11:27; Matt. 14:33; John 1:29,34,49).

Did any other true prophet ever make such claims? Did God ever give approval to any other man to make such claims? John the Baptist expressly denied such claims for himself (John 1:19-22; 3:28).

What kind of man would Jesus be to make and allow such claims, if He knew they were not true? Yet He not only allowed others to make such claims for Him, He praised them for making them, and He made them Himself.

[Cf. Matt. 8:29; 12:41,42; 22:41-46; John 12:13.]

God in the flesh

John 1:1-3 – Bible writers repeatedly claimed that Jesus is God along with the Father from Creation [cf. Colossians 2:9; Philippians 2:5-8]. Remember that mere men were rebuked or

even killed for allowing such terms to be used for themselves. Did Jesus allow people to use names of God in referring to Him?

“My Lord and my God” - John 20:28,29

After he saw proof of Jesus’ resurrection, Thomas addressed Jesus as “my Lord and my God.” If Jesus did not possess Deity, Thomas’ statement would have been blasphemy, and Jesus should have rebuked Him. Instead, Jesus praised Thomas and pronounced a blessing on everyone who believes the same (v29)! Then John proceeded to claim that His record of Jesus’ miracles gives us all reason to believe in Him (vv 30,31).

“The First and the Last, Alpha and Omega”

These are terms for Deity emphasizing God’s eternal self-existence (Rev. 1:8; 21:6,7; Isaiah 44:6; 43:10; 41:4; 48:12). But note Jesus’ use of these expressions:

Revelation 1:17 — “I am the First and the Last.” Vv 10-20 show that Jesus is speaking.

Revelation 2:8 — “These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life.”

Revelation 22:13 — “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.” Jesus is speaking, as shown by vv 12,16,20.

So, “First and Last,” “Alpha and Omega,” “Beginning and End” are terms for Deity, yet Jesus used them to refer to Himself.

“I Am”

Exodus 3:13-15 — When God called Moses to lead Israel from captivity, He said, “I AM WHO I AM.” He told Moses to say that “I AM” had sent him. This expression also describes the eternal, self-existing nature of God. (See also Deut. 32:39; Isa. 41:4; 43:10,13; 46:4; 48:12.)

John 8:58 — When asked how He could be old enough to have seen Abraham (vv 56,57), Jesus said, “...before Abraham was, I AM.” His statement claims eternal existence, just like God used “I am” in Ex. 3:14. The Jews recognized this significance and tried to stone Jesus (v59).

So here is another unique name of God that Jesus used to refer to Himself. Again, what mere human would dare speak of himself in this way? Did Moses or Elijah or Paul? Such would have been blasphemy. [Cf. John 5:18; 10:30]

The Savior of the world, the Way to eternal life

Many other people claimed these things on Jesus' behalf, but we will consider cases where it was claimed by Him or in His presence. (See John 4:42; Luke 2:11; Eph. 1:7; 5:23; Acts 5:31; Titus 1:3,4; 2:13,14; 2 Peter 1:1,11; 2:20; 3:18; Col. 1:13,14; Acts 4:12.)

Jesus claimed that He came to save mankind from sin.

Mark 2:3-12; Luke 7:48,49 — Jesus claimed to have power to directly forgive sins. This is a work only God can do.

Matthew 20:28 — He came to give His life a ransom for many.

Matthew 26:28 — He shed His blood for many for remission of sins.

John 8:24 — People who do not believe in Him will die in their sins.

[Luke 24:47; John 1:29,36; 12:47]

He claimed that men can have fellowship with God and eternal life only through Him.

John 14:6 — I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father except through me.

John 3:13-15 — Jesus claimed He came down from heaven so that whoever believes in Him can have eternal life. [6:40]

John 10:27-29 — My sheep hear my voice and I give them eternal life; they shall never perish.

Jesus does not class Himself with sinful creatures in need of salvation. He is the Savior! He claimed He could forgive sins and would die to give people remission of sins and eternal life. What true prophet or angel ever claimed such power?

[John 6:35,40,51; 8:51; 9:5; 11:25; 15:5]

Supreme authority and Judge

Jesus possesses supreme authority.

Again, His disciples repeatedly claimed this for Him, but we will note cases where He was personally involved in the claims. (See Phil. 3:20,21; 2:9-11; Col. 1:16; John 3:31; Rom. 9:5; 10:12; Acts 10:36; Eph. 1:21; Isa. 9:6.)

Matthew 28:18,20 — Jesus claimed to possess all authority in heaven and on earth; therefore, men should obey all His commands.

John 14:15 – He expects men to love Him, and this requires them to keep His commands. Compare this to the claim of God in 1 John 5:3.

Matthew 10:34-37 – We must love Him more than we love our closest family members, else we are not worthy of Him.

Revelation 19:16 – Jesus wears the name “King of kings and Lord of lords.” He has authority above the highest of kings and rulers. [17:14]

Imagine what kind of person would make such claims, if He were merely a man!

[John 16:15; 17:10; Matt. 7:24-27; 5:21-48]

Jesus will judge all men and determine their eternal destinies.

Again, this is a work only God could do (see Isa. 33:22; Psalm 50:6; 96:10,13; Rom. 2:3,5,16). Yet the gospel often claims that Jesus will do it. We will focus on passages where Jesus was present when the claim was made. (See 2 Cor. 5:10; Acts 17:31.)

John 5:22 – He said that the Father has given all judgment to Him.

Matthew 16:27 – He will come in glory and reward all men according to their works.

Matthew 25:31-46 – All nations will be gathered before Him, and He will send them into eternal punishment or eternal life.

Again, if the claims are not true, what kind of man would Jesus be to make them?

[John 12:48]

Worthy of worship and glory like God

As studied earlier, Jesus and other Bible teachers taught that only God deserves to receive worship. Men should not receive religious honor such as is reserved for God. (See Matt. 4:9,10; Acts 10:25,26; Rev. 22:8,9; 19:10; Rom. 1:25; Ex. 34:14; Isa. 42:8; 48:11; Rev. 9:20; 14:9-11; Ex. 20:3-6; Deut. 6:13-15 Matt. 23:8-12.)

Yet Jesus often allowed people to worship and honor Him religiously in ways such as should be done only to God.

Worship

Matthew 14:33 – After Jesus had calmed the storm, the disciples worshipped Him saying He is the Son of God.

John 9:38 – The man, whom Jesus had healed of blindness, worshipped Jesus.

Matthew 28:9,17 — After His resurrection, His disciples worshiped Him.

Luke 24:52 — After He had ascended back to heaven, they continued to worship Him.

So Jesus accepted worship as an act of religious honor. If He was just a man, even if He was a great prophet, Jesus' own teachings would absolutely forbid this.

[Matt. 8:2; 9:18; 15:25; Mark 5:6; Heb. 1:6; John 20:28,29]

Glory and Honor

John 5:23 — All men should honor the Son “just as” they honor the Father. To fail to so honor the Son is to fail to properly honor the Father.

John 17:5 — Jesus asked that, after He died, the Father would glorify Jesus with the glory He had with the Father before the world was. Jesus was glorified with the Father in eternity.

What prophet or faithful religious leader ever made such statements or received such glory with God's approval? Either Jesus is far greater than just a man or just a prophet, or else He is a fraud, a cheat, and a liar.

[John 16:15; 17:10]

Eternal existence

Once again, numerous Bible passages state that Jesus existed eternally in the past. He is not a created being - as are mere humans - but is eternal because He is Deity. But we will note passages where He was personally involved in those claims. (See John 1:1-3; Micah 5:2; Isa. 9:6; Psalm 102:24-27 cf. Heb. 1:8,10-12; Col. 1:16).

“The First and the Last, Alpha and Omega, the I Am” - We already listed passages where Jesus used these terms for Himself. But all these names of God imply eternal self-existence.

John 17:5,24 — Jesus had glory with the Father Who loved Him before the world began.

John 3:13; 6:38; 16:28 — He said He came down from the Father in Heaven and came into the world. [John 8:23]

Jesus did not acknowledge that He was a created being. Rather, He claimed to be eternal. What mere man could rightly make such a claim?

Explanations for the Testimony

How do we explain the fact that Jesus made these claims and allowed others to make them with His knowledge and in His

presence? Surely He knew whether or not He was God in the flesh, the Son of God, and a prophet sent from God. If He spoke what He believed to be true, then His statements must be accepted as serious testimony on His own behalf.

The alternatives would be that He is a liar or a lunatic. We cannot be neutral or ignore Him. We must accept His statements as serious testimony, or else we must reject him as a liar or a lunatic or both.

Was Jesus a liar?

He and His disciples warned against false teachers.

Matthew 7:15-20 – Beware of false teachers. Just as bad fruit proves that a tree is bad and should be cast out, so false teaching demonstrates the basic nature of the teacher. If Jesus' was a false teacher, there should be fruit of it in His life and teaching.

Matthew 15:13,14 – If the blind leads the blind, both fall into the ditch. God will root up all such leaders.

Would Jesus have so opposed false religious teaching knowing His whole ministry was based on false claims? Does the character of Jesus imply He would tell such lies?

[2 Cor. 11:13-15; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; Acts 20:28-30; 1 John 4:1; 2 Tim. 4:2-4; Titus 1:9-14; 2 John 9-11; Romans 16:17,18; Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Peter chap. 2]

He repeatedly rebuked lying and hypocrisy.

Matthew 23 (especially vv 3,4,25-28); 6:1-18; Luke 18:9-14 - Many of His firmest rebukes were addressed against the hypocrisy of religious leaders.

If Jesus made false religious claims and sought to exalt Himself improperly, then He would stand condemned by His own teaching. He would be an incredible hypocrite as well as a liar! Does the pattern of His life fit that of a religious hypocrite?

He revealed the greatest moral standard known to man.

Matthew 5:21-37 – He repeatedly taught that men must be right, not just in outward conduct, but also in inner attitude.

His moral teaching is universally recognized as of the highest level. Could a man who was nothing but the basest liar and hypocrite be the source of such an incredibly high moral standard? Note Matthew 7:17,18; 12:33-35.

People who knew Him repeatedly confessed that He was sinless.

John 8:46 – He challenged the Jews to convict Him of sin.

Mark 1:24; Luke 1:35 – Both an angel and a demon confessed Him to be holy.

Hebrews 7:26; Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:20-23; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 3:5 – His disciples repeatedly declared Him to be sinless. They claimed He was guilty of no guile (deceit).

Matthew 16:13,14 – The people in general, even those who did not recognize Him as the Son of God, yet viewed Him as a great prophet.

People who agreed with His teachings and people who disagreed both held Him to be holy and godly. None ever accused Him of being a liar or a hypocrite.

Those most deeply involved in condemning Him to death could not produce evidence of sin in Him.

Note the evidence during Jesus' trials that He was innocent.

* Jews - Mark 14:55-64. The witnesses produced by Jewish leaders could not convict Jesus of any crime (their testimony did not agree), yet the Jews condemned Him for claiming to be the Son of God. But that assumed He is **not** the Son of God – it assumed the point to be proved! If He **is** the Son of God, how can He be condemned for acknowledging His position? (Cf. Matt. 26:59-66; Luke 22:66-71; John 18:19-24.)

* Judas - Matthew 27:3-5. The one who betrayed Jesus acknowledged Him to be innocent.

* Pilate - Luke 23:4,14,22. Jesus faced several trials before Pilate, the Roman governor, who had the ultimate authority to judge His guilt or innocence. Pilate repeatedly declared Jesus to be innocent, yet he condemned Him to death to satisfy the Jews. He knew the rulers wanted Jesus killed because they were jealous of Him (Matt. 27:18). (Cf. Matt. 27:18-26; Mark 15:1-15; Luke 23:1-5,13-25; John 18:28-40; 19:4-16).

* Herod - Luke 23:15. Pilate sent Jesus to Herod, a King among the Jews. He also found no guilt in Jesus (cf. vv 6-12).

* One of the thieves - Luke 23:39-43. Two thieves were crucified with Him. Even one of these acknowledged Him to be innocent.

* The Centurion - Luke 23:47 (Matt. 27:54). The man in charge of Jesus' crucifixion concluded that He was a righteous man.

There were those who claimed He was guilty of sin, but they could not prove it. No one in His day could produce evidence of guilt in Him, and no one even claimed He was a liar or a hypocrite.

[Acts 3:14; 4:27,30; 13:35]

If He knew His claims were false, why did He die for them?

As extreme as His claims were, He would surely know if they were not true. If so, why not recant, admit the deceit, and hope to save His life? Yet even as He stood trial, knowing the danger He faced, He made some of His boldest declarations – Luke 22:70.

Where is the evidence that Jesus knew His claims were false? Did His life demonstrate the character of one who was, at His very core, a liar and a hypocrite?

Was Jesus a lunatic?

Even on trial for His life, He calmly refused to answer those who falsely accused Him.

His enemies repeatedly made extreme, radical charges against Him, yet He calmly refused to answer. See Matthew 26:62,63; 27:12-14.

We would expect someone who is mentally deranged to react to such treatment with anger, vengeance, or loss of self-control. Yet even when facing His worst opposition and mistreatment, Jesus was in complete mastery of Himself and of the situation. Would we expect this of one who was beside Himself?

As He died on the cross, He expressed calm concern for others.

Luke 23:27,28 – He told women who watched to grieve for themselves, not for Him.

Luke 23:34 – He prayed for the forgiveness of those who crucified Him.

Luke 23:39-43 – He promised one of the thieves that he would be in Paradise that day.

John 19:25-27 – He made provision for the care of His mother.

Would a lunatic show such concern for others even as He Himself was dying a totally unjust, vicious death at the hands of His enemies?

Compare the life and death of Jesus to other men who made false or fanatical claims. Joseph Smith was killed for his claims, but he died with his guns blazing trying to slay his attackers so he

could escape. After murdering millions of innocent people, Hitler committed suicide when he saw his plans would fail.

Where do we see in Jesus the kind of conduct that we would expect from a liar or a lunatic? Who dares to produce serious, convincing evidence to convict Him? Yet, if He was neither a liar nor a lunatic, then His claims must be accepted as His sincere conviction. He surely believed His claims to be true, and surely He would know whether or not the claims were true. How could He have been mistaken about such claims?

The Testimony of the Father

On at least two occasions, the Father directly endorsed Jesus as the Son of God in a way that people could personally witness.

Jesus' baptism - Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22

At Jesus' baptism, the Father spoke from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

The Father here audibly testified to Jesus' identity. The speaker must be God the Father, since He spoke from heaven and identified Jesus as His Son.

Three separate historians record this event.

The transfiguration - Matthew 17:1-6; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36; 2 Peter 1:16-18

At the Transfiguration the Father again spoke from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." He said this is why we should listen to Jesus.

Note that three apostles were present to witness this event: Peter, James, and John. And Matthew's account clearly states that they heard the voice that spoke (as well as seeing Jesus' face shine).

Finally, note that Peter was a personal eyewitness of the event. He expressly confirmed the event. He stated that they were eyewitnesses of it, quoted what the voice said, and affirmed that they actually heard the voice. He argued that this demonstrates that the apostles were not following cunningly devised fables.

Three other writers, acting as historians, record the event, which they no doubt heard repeated from those who were eyewitnesses.

So, the testimony of the Father becomes an additional witness to confirm that of Jesus. This gives, not just one, but two witnesses regarding who Jesus is. This meets the criteria for historical evidence (John 8:13-18).

If Jesus' claims are false, how do we explain God's confirmation of Him on these occasions?

Testimony #4: Fulfilled Prophecy

Bible writers also repeatedly claimed that God predicted future events through inspired prophets and that these predictions had been (or would be) fulfilled. They claimed that this ability to predict the future gave evidence for the claims we are studying.

What Fulfilled Prophecy Proves

Proverbs 27:1 — Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth.

James 4:14 — You do not know what will happen tomorrow. Man does not even know he will be alive tomorrow, let alone know what he will do tomorrow.

If the prophets of the Bible did predict the future successfully, and if those predictions invariably came true, consider the significance regarding evidence for the claims of the Bible.

The Bible Claims that Prophecy Proves God Exists and Is the True God.

Isaiah 41:21-23 — Jehovah challenged the idols to prove they are gods. God can show us what will happen, declaring things to come hereafter. Man cannot, but God can. If idols cannot, then they are not gods.

Isaiah 42:8,9 — God declares new things before they spring forth. This proves He deserves to be honored as God. That honor should go to no one else. [Isaiah 44:6-8,24-28]

Isaiah 46:8-11 – God is the true God and there is no other, for He can declare the end from the beginning, even from ancient times things that are not yet done. [48:3]

It must take a Supreme Being to consistently foretell the future accurately. If the God of the Bible can do this, then He must exist and must be the true God.

The Bible Claims that Prophecy Proves Which Men Served as God’s Approved Spokesmen.

Deuteronomy 18:21,22 - If a man attempts to predict the future and fails, we can know that the Lord did not speak through Him.

Jeremiah 28:9 – When a prophet predicts the future and the prediction comes true, this is evidence that the Lord sent him.

Since mere men cannot infallibly predict the future, if the Bible writers could repeatedly and accurately predict the future in detail, surely this would confirm their claims that God was working through them.

[See also John 16:13; Numbers 16:28-30; 1 Kings 16:27,28; Isaiah 44:24-45:1.]

The Bible Claims that Prophecy Proves that Jesus was God’s Son.

Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecy.

Luke 24:25-27,44-46 - Jesus said that Old Testament prophets spoke about Him and He fulfilled their predictions.

John 5:46 – He claimed that Moses wrote about Him, therefore we should believe in Him.

Acts 2:23-36; 3:18-24; 17:2,3 - After Jesus ascended to heaven, the apostles often preached that many details of His life, death, and resurrection had been predicted in the Old Testament. This should lead us to conclude that Jesus is both Lord and Christ.

We will see that the prophecies of the Christ included that He would be a prophet (an inspired spokesman for God) and that He would be the Christ, the anointed ruler of God’s people. Jesus Himself made such claims and allowed His disciples to make them on His behalf. If He fulfilled these Old Testament prophecies, this would be God’s stamp of approval on Him. Surely God would not have allowed Him to fulfill the prophecies if His claims were false.

[1 Cor. 15:1-8; John 5:39; Acts 10:43; 13:27-39; 26:22,23; 2 Peter 1:19].

Jesus Himself was a prophet who predicted the future.

John 13:19 – Jesus predicted future events (in this case His betrayal by Judas) so that, when the predictions were fulfilled, people would believe in Him.

John 14:29 – He said things before they happened so that, when they came to pass, people would believe. [John 16:4]

Note that Jesus expressly understood and stated why He was predicting the future: so that when His predictions came true, we could know He was from God. But the same would be true of other prophets and Bible writers. If they could predict the future infallibly in detail, this is also proof they were guided by God to speak, just as they claimed.

Examples of Failed Prophecies of False Prophets

When men attempt to predict the future but their predictions fail, that constitutes proof that the person is a false prophet, not a true spokesman for God (Deut. 18:21,22). In order to appreciate the predictions of Bible writers, let us first consider some examples of failed prophecies so we can compare them to Bible prophecies.

Jean Dixon

She became famous by predicting the death of President Kennedy. But one rarely hears about her predictions that failed. These include:

* World War III would begin in 1958. (Did it?)

* Russia would put the first man on the moon. (A good guess since they led the space race at the time. But America was first; Russia still has not done it.)

* Lyndon Johnson would be democratic candidate for president in 1968. (Since he was already president, he would have been the logical choice. But he refused to run.)

* President Ford would resign and Rockefeller would replace him. (Ford never resigned; Rockefeller was never president.)

* Reagan would be the Republican candidate for president in 1976. (Ford won the nomination instead).

[Others: Red China would enter the UN in 1958 – it didn't happen till much later. Vietnam war would end within 90 days of

May 7, 1966 — it did not happen till much later. All quotes via: Halbrook, 1974 Florida College lectures; O’Neal, *Searching the Scriptures*, 6/78]

Joseph Smith, Jr.

- * Jesus would come within 56 years of 1835
- * The temple would be rebuilt within a generation of 1832
- * Several Mormon apostles (alive in his day) would live to see Jesus return
- * The Civil War would be a "full end of all nations"

Faith healer Robert Tilton

Beverly Crowley sued Tilton because he kept sending requests for donations to Mrs. Crowley’s husband and promising to heal him. One such letter said, “God spoke to me this morning specifically about you, Tom, and He’s going to heal you.” When the letter was written, Mrs. Crowley’s husband had been dead for five months! – via Greg Gwin, West Knoxville bulletin.

National Enquirer psychics

- * 22 false predictions in 1975 (R. Harris, *Contender*, 1/76)
- * 14 misses in second half of 1977 (O’Neal, *Searching the Scriptures* 6/78).
- * Of 58 predictions, only two were right, and these were easy guesses (Bob Craig, *Gospel Anchor*, 5/79).

Mohammed

Mohammed once predicted there would be 73 sects of Islam, of which only one would survive. But Moslems admit there have been far more than 73. And today many sects, not just one, still survive. [*Encyclopedia Britannica*, XII-711]

These examples illustrate how false prophets fail when they attempt to predict the future. By comparison, note the repeated accuracy of Bible predictions.

Examples of Fulfilled Prophecy in the Bible

The Bible contains hundreds of prophecies that have been fulfilled. Notice just a few examples and consider how these

predictions were made in detail, often many years or even hundreds of years before their fulfillment.

Prophecies Concerning the Nation of Israel

The promises to Abraham

God made three great promises to Abraham regarding his descendants. Their fulfillment became the basis of much of Bible history.

Genesis 26:3,4; 28:13,14 – These verses state the promises most concisely as God repeated them to Isaac and Jacob. The promises and their fulfillment are as follows:

1) Abraham's descendants would become a great nation, numerous as the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore

* The promise: Genesis 22:17; (26:4; 28:14; 12:2; 15:5; 18:18; 32:12; Ex. 32:13). This was promised when Abram and Sarah had no children and were too old to have children (Acts 7:5).

* The fulfillment: Exodus 1:7 - Israel increased in Egypt and became so numerous they filled the land. (Numbers 1:45,46)

2) His descendants would receive the land of Canaan

* The promise: Genesis 12:7 (13:15,17; 15:7,18; 24:7; 26:4; 28:4,13). This was promised at a time when Abram owned none of the land (Acts 7:5).

* The fulfillment: Joshua 21:43-45 - God gave Israel all the land He promised to their fathers. They took possession and dwelt in the land. None of God's promises failed; all came to pass. (Joshua 23:14; 1 Kings 8:56)

3) Someone who would be a blessing on all nations would come through Abraham's descendants.

* The promise: Genesis 12:3 (18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14). The meaning of this promise is the least obvious of the promises. But contrary to what Jews later expected, it involved a blessing on all nations, not just the nation of Israel.

* The fulfillment: Galatians 3:8; Acts 3:25,26 - Jesus was born as an Israelite who brought the blessing of salvation from sin for people of all nations.

Predictions of punishment for sin

Deuteronomy 28:15-64; 30:1-5 (spoken about 1400 BC) – After Israel had become a nation and was about to enter Canaan,

Moses warned that, if they disobeyed God, He would bring curses and punishment on them (v15). This included the following:

*** They would be defeated and their land overrun by enemies (28:25,47-51)**

In the siege people would eat their own children for hunger (vv 52-57; Jeremiah 19:9; Ezekiel 5:10). Fulfillment: 2 Kings 6:24-29; Lamentations 4:10.

(See verses below for other fulfillment.)

*** They would be taken captive to foreign lands and scattered among the nations (Deut. 28:36,37,41,64).**

Note further specifics prophesied elsewhere:

1 Kings 14:15,16 – When the northern tribes formed a separate nation (chap. 12), a prophet said they would be scattered beyond the River (Euphrates). This was fulfilled when they were taken captive by Assyria hundreds of years and many kings later in 722 BC: 2 Kings 17:1-18,23.

Isaiah 39:3-7 – After Israel had been taken captive (chap. 37), Isaiah predicted that the possessions and descendants of Hezekiah (king of Judah) would be taken to Babylon. This was fulfilled many years and kings later when Judah was besieged by Babylon in 606 BC, 597 BC, and Jerusalem was destroyed in 586 BC: 2 Chronicles 36:11-21; 2 Kings 25:8-21 (24:10-15; 25:1-7).

Jews are still scattered all over the earth. You can see this fulfillment for yourself.

*** They would become a reproach and byword (Deut. 28:37; cf. Jer. 19:8; 29:18)**

Even today Jews are ridiculed and persecuted (as in the holocaust). This does not justify people who mistreat them, but the Bible accurately predicts the opposition they would face.

*** They would not be completely consumed but would return from captivity (Deut. 30:1-5)**

Jeremiah 4:27; 5:18; 30:10,11; 46:28; Isaiah 10:20-22 – When Judah went into captivity, Jeremiah said God would not make a complete end of them (in contrast to their enemies).

Jeremiah 25:11,12; 29:10-14 - They would return to Judah after 70 years. Note that the exact length of the captivity was clearly prophesied.

Isaiah 44:24-45:7 (spoken about 710 BC) – When Israel went into captivity, Isaiah said a king named Cyrus would allow God's

people to return and rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. Note that Cyrus is here identified by name many years before he was born!

Fulfillment: Cyrus, king of Persia, authorized the rebuilding of the temple - 2 Chronicles 36:22,23; Ezra 1:1-3. Three groups of captives returned: 536 BC, 458 BC, and 444 BC. These returns began 70 years after the captivity began – 2 Chronicles 36:21. [Ezra 9:6-9]

*** No descendant of Coniah would reign in Judah (Jeremiah 22:28-30).**

Coniah was the direct descendant of David and heir to the throne, so no heir of David would reign again in Judah. None has from that time till today, but Jesus reigns in heaven over His spiritual kingdom (John 18:36; Colossians 1:12,13).

Other specific predictions

*** Rebuilding of Jericho – Joshua 6:26**

After Joshua led Israel to destroy Jericho, he prophesied that the city would be rebuilt. But the man who did it would lose his firstborn son when the foundation was laid, and would lose his youngest son when the gates were set up. Fulfillment: 1 Kings 16:34.

*** Prediction of the destruction of Jeroboam's altar - 1 Kings 12:26-30; 13:1-3.**

Jeroboam built altars and led the northern tribes of Israel to worship golden calves. A prophet predicted a descendant of David named Josiah would burn men's bones on that altar, and the altar would split and the ashes be poured out. The king who would do this was named generations before he was born! The fulfillment: 2 Kings 23:15,16.

*** Prediction of the death of Ahab and Jezebel – 1 Kings 21:19-24**

Because of the wickedness of Ahab and Jezebel, Elijah predicted that dogs would lick Ahab's blood in the very place where Jezebel had caused Naboth to be slain, and dogs would eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. Fulfillment: 1 Kings 22:38; 2 Kings 9:30-36.

*** Prediction of relief from famine in a siege of Samaria – 2 Kings 7:1,2**

A siege of Samaria caused severe famine. Elisha predicted the famine would be completely lifted within one day. A skeptical officer would see it but not eat of it. Fulfillment: vv 14-20.

*** Prediction of relief from the siege of Assyria – 2 Kings 19:3-7**

The king of Assyria besieged Jerusalem, boasting that no one could successfully oppose him (18:17-37). Hezekiah prayed and God said the Assyrian king would give up the siege, return home, and be slain. Fulfillment: vv 35-37. [Cf. Isaiah 36,37.]

*** Death of Hananiah – Jeremiah 28:10-17**

Hananiah falsely prophesied that the Babylonian captivity would end within two years. In contrast, Jeremiah predicted Hananiah would die within one year. He did (v17).

Prophecies Concerning Other Nations/Cities

Tyre – Ezekiel 26:3-14

The prophecy (spoken approximately 590 BC)

* Many nations would come against Tyre one after another like waves of the sea (v3).

* Nebuchadnezzar would attack and breach the city (vv 7-11). Note that one attacker is specifically named. [Note that Nebuchadnezzar is referred to as “he,” in contrast to the many nations who are referred to as “they” – cf. vv 3-6 to v12. So v12 refers to the nations, not specifically to Nebuchadnezzar.]

* Her stones, timbers, and dust would be laid in the midst of the sea (v12).

* She would be built no more (v14).

Note v6 – “Then they shall know that I am the Lord.” This would prove who is God!

The fulfillment

In Ezekiel’s day, Tyre was a thriving, famous seaport on the mainland of Phoenicia. Predicting its destruction would be like predicting the destruction of modern Boston. However, so far as I can determine, the following is what happened:

* Many nations did attack the city, including Nebuchadnezzar who did defeat the city.

* However, the inhabitants would survive such attacks by fleeing to an island offshore, where the invading armies could not defeat them. When Alexander the Great attacked the city, he took the stones, timber, and dirt from the city and threw it into the sea to make a causeway to the island, thereby capturing it. This fact is well known in history (see encyclopedias). Thereby the stones, timbers, etc., were thrown into the sea as Ezekiel prophesied.

* The city on the mainland still lies in ruins – it has never been rebuilt, as God says. Ezekiel did not say who would finally destroy that city (it may or may not have been Alexander), but it is evident that it would not happen for a long time, since he said “many nations” would attack it. But someone eventually destroyed it till it was not rebuilt, for the ruins of the city are visible.

The site of ancient Tyre can be visited. Pictures show the fulfillment of the prophecy.

[A city now exists on the causeway, which was enlarged till it became a peninsula; but this could not have been the location of the city in Ezekiel’s day before Alexander’s attack.]

See Jenkins, pp. 99,10; *The Posture of Faith*, Gordon Wilson, pp. 33-35; cf. *World Book Encyclopedia* on Tyre.

Sidon - Ezekiel 28:22,23

The prophecy (spoken approximately 590 BC)

Regarding this sister city of Tyre, God said simply that He was against her, so He would send pestilence, blood would flow in her streets, and the sword would come on her from every side. In contrast to Tyre, note that the prophecy nowhere states that the city would be destroyed and especially it never claims the city would never be built again.

In Ezekiel’s day Sidon was smaller and less significant than Tyre. If either city would cease to exist, one would have expected it to be Sidon, not Tyre. Yet God predicted the opposite.

Note the significance: Vv 22,23 – “Then they shall know that I am the Lord.” It proves God!

The fulfillment

Although the city was attacked and defeated, as God predicted, even by many of the same armies that attacked Tyre, the city was never completely destroyed. It stands today on the same spot it has always stood.

Note the contrast: God said Tyre would eventually be destroyed till it was not built again. The site of the ancient city is a

ruins even today. Yet God prophesied no such destruction for Sidon, and it exists even today.

Again, the city of Sidon can be visited, and pictures demonstrate the fulfillment of prophecy.

Nineveh – Zephaniah 2:13-15 (cf. book of Nahum)

The prophecy (spoken approximately 625 BC)

* Assyria would be destroyed and her capital city Nineveh would be made desolate.

* Nineveh would be dry as a wilderness

* Herds would lie down and beasts would lodge there.

* Those who pass by would mock and shake their fist.

The fulfillment

* Nineveh fell to Babylon in 612 BC.

* The eventual destruction of the city was so complete that 200 years later a great army passed by without even realizing a city had stood on that spot.

* Jenkins visited the site of ancient Nineveh and observed shepherds grazing their sheep on the ruins of the city (Jenkins, p. 102).

Again, these ruins can be visited, and pictures demonstrate the fulfillment of prophecy.

Babylon – Isaiah 13:17-21 (cf. Jeremiah 50,51)

The prophecy (Isaiah spoke in approximately 710 BC)

* The Medes would come against them.

* Their glory would become like Sodom and Gomorrah (complete destruction – not that the fall would occur in the same manner). (Cf. Jeremiah 50:39,40)

* It would never be inhabited or settled from generation to generation. (Cf. Jeremiah 50:13,39,40; 51:26,29,37,43,62.)

* Arabs would not camp there, shepherds would not make sheepfolds there (cf. the prediction regarding Nineveh), but only wild animals would live there.

* The city would be left as a heap (Jeremiah 51:37).

The fulfillment

* The Medes did capture the city in 539 BC (cf. Daniel 5). The city continued to be inhabited for some time, but was completely ruined soon after the time of Christ.

* Jenkins says it is today one of the most desolate ruins he ever saw. He quotes travelers and archaeologists who describe the complete desolation of the city.

* Unlike Nineveh, where he observed flocks of sheep, Jenkins observed that Arabs and shepherds do not dwell at the site of Babylon. Only wild animals are found. (Jenkins, p. 104)

* The city is completely uninhabited as God predicted. The government has built a few buildings in the area as a tourist attraction and archaeologists have done some excavating, but the city itself is a heap.

Again, these ruins can be visited, and pictures demonstrate the fulfillment of prophecy.

Note Jeremiah 30:10,11; 46:28

God would make a full end of the nations where the Jews were driven (specifically, Assyria and Babylon), but would not make a full end of the Jews. Today, descendants of the Jews are scattered across the world, but who today claims to be an Assyrian or Babylonian? People today dwell in Jerusalem, in Athens the capital of the Greek empire, and in Rome the capital of the Roman Empire. But who dwells in the capital cities of the Assyrian or Babylonian empires?

How did the prophets know all these details so far ahead of time?

Prophecies Concerning Jesus

The life, work, death, and resurrection of Jesus are the central theme of Scripture. We would expect Biblical prophecy to focus on these events more than any other in Scripture. Here are a few of the more obvious examples of the multitude of prophecies regarding Jesus.

Note that some prophecies are more symbolic than others, and some we might not even understand were it not for the New Testament fulfillment. Furthermore, by themselves not all examples are conclusive evidence regarding Jesus' claims. But taken together, the weight of the evidence is impossible to explain except on the grounds of God's supernatural foreknowledge.

His lineage or ancestry

The prophecy

Jeremiah 23:5,6 – Jeremiah prophesied in the days during and after the fall of Judah to Babylon. He predicted a King who

would be called the Lord of Righteousness and would reign and prosper as a descendant of David. Judah and Israel would be saved and dwell safely in His reign. [1 Chronicles 17:11; 2 Samuel 7:12; Psalms 132:11]

The fulfillment

Acts 13:22,23 – Jesus was born of the seed of David to be a Savior. [Matthew 1:1; Luke 3:31; Acts 2:29-36; Romans 1:3]

His birthplace

The prophecy

Micah 5:2 – Out of Bethlehem Ephrathah would come the ruler of Israel, whose goings forth have been from everlasting. This prophesies a ruler who actually existed from eternity but would come out of Bethlehem.

The fulfillment

Matthew 2:1-6 – The Jews of Jesus’ day correctly understood this to be a prophecy of the birthplace of the Messiah/Christ. They even used it to direct the wise men to that place. Despite the fact that Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth (across the length of Palestine from Bethlehem), yet Jesus was born in Bethlehem exactly as predicted.

Birth to a virgin

The prophecy

Isaiah 7:14 – The Lord gives a sign that a virgin would conceive and give birth to a Son who would be called Immanuel (“God with us”). The fact this was a “sign” implies it refers to a miracle: a woman would conceive and give birth, although she was a virgin having never had a sexual union with a man. Nothing about this would constitute a sign if a “maiden” simply gave birth as a consequence of a natural relationship with a man.

Further, the name Immanuel implies that the child to be born would cause God’s presence to dwell among men.

The fulfillment

Matthew 1:18-25 – Joseph was upset to learn that Mary had conceived before they had the physical union of marriage, but the angel explained that she had conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. He then cited this as a fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14. The fulfillment proves beyond doubt that the prophecy predicted conception by a woman who had no physical union with a man (cf.

Luke 1:26-38). It also shows that the One to be born would save people from sin (v21).

Note that we have here a prediction of a miracle. The miracle itself was evidence that Jesus was from God. But for such an impossible event to be prophesied ahead of time makes the prediction especially convincing.

Fore-runner: John Baptist

The prophecy

Isaiah 40:3,4 – Someone would come crying in the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord, smoothing the rough places, straightening the crooked places, etc. [Malachi 3:1; 4:5,6]

The fulfillment

Luke 3:2-5 – This was fulfilled by John the Baptist, who came preaching in the wilderness to prepare the people for Jesus' coming. [Mark 1:2,3; Luke 1:16,17; 7:27; John 1:23; Matt. 17:9-13]

A prophet like Moses

The prophecy

Deuteronomy 18:18,19 – Moses predicted one who would be a prophet like he had been, who would speak all that God commanded him. Many men were prophets, but Moses was unique in several ways, specifically in that he was a lawgiver who revealed a covenant system as a basis for man's relationship with God. He did not just add information to a previously existing covenant.

The fulfillment

Acts 3:20-23 (7:37) – Peter claimed Jesus fulfilled Moses' prediction of a prophet like himself. Like Moses, Jesus did not just add new information to a covenantal system that someone else had first revealed, but rather He was the giver of an entirely new covenant (see prophecies listed below regarding the New Testament).

Matthew 17:1-6; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36; 2 Peter 1:16-18 – The appearance of Moses and Elijah at Jesus' transfiguration demonstrates their approval of Him and His work. God sent them back from the dead as miraculous proof that Jesus had their approval and God's approval. God said that Jesus is His Son whom we should hear – He is a prophet.

Note that, if Jesus fulfilled these prophecies, then this would constitute evidence that He was an inspired spokesman from God.

Therefore, we ought to accept all He taught as being God's will, including His covenant and His claims to be the Son of God, the Christ, and the Savior. This is one of the purposes of fulfilled prophecy.

Both priest and king

The prophecy

Psalms 110:1-4; Zechariah 6:12,13 – The Lord promised that David's Lord would rule at His right hand and be a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. The unique thing about the priesthood of Melchizedek is that he was also a king (Genesis 14:18; Hebrews 7:1). Zechariah said Christ would be a priest on His throne and build the temple of the Lord.

This is recognized as a prophecy of the Christ (see below), but under the Old Testament its fulfillment was an impossibility! Priests came only from the tribe of Levi, but the kings were of the tribe of Judah as the descendants of David. So, David here predicted an impossibility under the Law!

The fulfillment

Matthew 22:41-45 – Jesus showed that this passage referred to the Christ, who was not only David's descendant but also His Lord (because He was God in the flesh).

Acts 2:32-36 – After His resurrection, Jesus ascended to heaven, where He now reigns at God's right hand. He is Lord and Christ.

Hebrews 7:17; 8:1 – The writer argues that the law would not allow one man to be both priest and king, so the fulfillment required the removal of the Old Testament and its replacement by the New Testament (7:11-19). Jesus is now a priest after the order of Melchizedek (7:17,21), seated at God's right hand (8:1).

So, what was impossible under the Law nevertheless was fulfilled by the removal of that Law. Jesus is now priest and King, which means He rules spiritually over all men. Once again, this shows God's approval of Him and His reign.

Triumphal entry

The prophecy

Zechariah 9:9 – Zion's king would come bringing salvation, yet would be humble riding on a donkey. The people would shout and greatly rejoice.

The fulfillment

Matthew 21:1-9 – Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey as the people greatly rejoiced.

Rejection by the Jews resulting in death

The prophecies

Despite the fact the king would enter Jerusalem with great rejoicing, the people would yet reject Him and He would die.

Psalms 2:1-6 – The nations, people, and rulers oppose God and His anointed (Christ), but God laughs at them (v4) and still sets His king in Zion (v6). Note that, despite being rejected, He would still become king.

Psalms 118:22,23 – The stone which the builders rejected became the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing. [Isaiah 28:16]

Isaiah 53:1-12 – Isaiah prophesies one whom men would disbelieve (v1), despise, and reject (v3). He was wounded and bruised for the transgressions of others (v5). He was oppressed and afflicted but did not open His mouth (v7). He was cut off out of the land of the living (v8), his soul was made an offering for sin (v10), he was numbered with the transgressors, and he poured out his soul unto death (v12).

Zechariah 13:7 – The shepherd would be smitten and the sheep scattered.

These passages say just the opposite of what the Jews expected. They believed they would accept their Messiah and follow Him to great victory over their enemies. Yet their own Scriptures said all along that they would reject and kill Him! Then He would become King despite their rejection of Him!

The fulfillment

All these prophecies were fulfilled when the Jews rejected Jesus and crucified Him.

Acts 4:24-28 – Psalms 2:1-6 was fulfilled when the Gentiles, the people of Israel, and the rulers opposed Jesus.

Acts 4:10,11 – Psalms 118:22,23 was fulfilled when the Jews rejected Jesus, but God made Him the foundation of the church. [Cf. Matt. 21:33-46; 1 Peter 2:3-10]

Luke 22:37; Acts 8:32-35 – Isaiah 53 was fulfilled when the Jews rejected Jesus and killed Him. [Mark 15:28]

Matthew 26:31 - Zechariah 13:7 was fulfilled when disciples were scattered at Jesus' death.

[Cf. Psalm 22:6-8 to Matt. 27:41-43; cf. Isa. 6:1-3,9f to Matt. 13:10-15; Acts 28:23-27; John 1:11; 12:37-41.]

Details of Jesus' crucifixion

The prophecy

Psalms 22:16-18 – His hands and feet would be pierced; men would divide His garments among them and cast lots for His clothing.

Psalms 34:20 – None of His bones would be broken (despite the fact He would die the terrible death described already).

Zechariah 12:10 – Jerusalem would mourn for the one whom they had **pierced**.

The fulfillment

John 19:18,23,24 – Jesus was crucified, His hands and feet pierced. The soldiers then divided His garments but cast lots for His tunic. [Matthew 27:35; John 20:25,27]

John 19:31-37 – The bones of the criminals were broken to hasten their deaths, but Jesus had already died. So instead of breaking His bones, they pierced His side with a spear. Note v35 – John's testimony to this truth.

John 19:37 quotes Zechariah 12:10 as being fulfilled when Jesus was pierced on the cross.

Death for the guilt of others

The prophecy

Isaiah 53:4-12 – Though He would suffer and die, He was not being punished for His own sins. He was wounded and bruised for our transgressions and iniquities, we are healed by his stripes (v5). The Lord laid our iniquity on Him (v6). He was stricken for the transgressions of the people (v8). Yet He Himself had done no violence or deceit (v9). His soul was an offering for sin (v10). Though He Himself was righteous, He would bear the iniquities of many and thereby justify them (v11). So He bore the sins of many and made intercession for transgressors (v12).

Surely this means the one who died was not dying because He was guilty, but He was dying as a sacrifice on behalf of others who were guilty.

The fulfillment

Throughout his trials Jesus was declared to be innocent by all who ought to know:

* Pilate, the Roman governor who condemned Him - Luke 23:4,14,22; Matthew 27:24

* King Herod – Luke 23:15

* The centurion who crucified Him – Luke 23:47

* Judas, who betrayed Him – Matt. 27:4

* The thief crucified with Him – Luke 23:41

Jesus died, not because He was guilty, but because He was sacrificed for the sins of others – 1 Peter 2:21-25; Matthew 20:28; 26:28; 2 Corinthians 5:21.

Buried in a rich man's tomb

The prophecy

Isaiah 53:9 – Despite the fact He would be rejected by the people and die as a wicked transgressor (vv 9,12), yet He would be with the rich at His death.

The fulfillment

Matthew 27:57-60 – Despite His violent death as though He were a criminal, and despite the fact He had lived in poverty, Jesus was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man.

Resurrection from the dead

The prophecy

Psalms 16:10 - David prophesied that his flesh would rest in hope, because his soul would not stay in Sheol (abode of departed spirits) nor would he see corruption.

The fulfillment

Acts 2:24-32; 13:34-37 – Peter explained that this prophecy could not refer to David himself, since he did die and see corruption. But speaking as a prophet, David predicted the resurrection of His descendant the Christ from the dead. Jesus fulfilled this by being raised the third day, as the apostles and others witnessed. We will study later in detail the evidence that Jesus was raised from the dead.

Despite being rejected and slain to please the people, Jesus would come back to life and would still reign as Christ at God's right hand (vv 33,36).

Jesus' own predictions regarding His rejection, death, and resurrection

From the beginning to the end of His ministry, Jesus Himself repeatedly predicted, not just His death, but also His resurrection.

John 2:19-22 — At the very beginning of His public ministry, shortly after His first miracle (v11), Jesus predicted His rejection and death.

Matthew 16:21,22 – After Peter confessed Him to be the Christ (v16), Jesus said He would be rejected by the Jewish leaders, be killed, and then rise again the third day.

Note that Peter immediately disagreed with Jesus' prediction. This shows how Jesus' prediction completely contradicted the Jews' expectation of the Messiah. They believed their great leader would defeat His enemies and reign over a glorious earthly kingdom. Yet Jesus and the Old Testament prophets had predicted the opposite all along.

Matthew 20:18,19 – Note the details: Jesus said He would be **betrayed** to the **Jewish** leaders but would be killed by the **Gentiles** (Romans). They would **scourge** Him and **crucify** Him (a uniquely Roman execution), but He would **rise** again the **third day**. Note that the Jews would reject Him, but the Romans would kill Him. A general prediction of ones own death and resurrection would be surprising, but such detail is amazing.

Mark 14:27-31 – Just before His betrayal, Jesus predicted that it would happen that very night! He also predicted that Peter would deny Him, the number of times he would deny him, and how soon it would happen (before the rooster crowed twice). All this was fulfilled – Mark 14:66-72. [Matthew 26:31-35]

John 13:21-30 - He also predicted that Judas would betray Him. This also was fulfilled – Matthew 26:14-16, 47-50.

No pretender would make such predictions, for he would know that three days after His death, everyone would know he was a fraud. If he made such predictions and then kept His following after His death, that would be substantial evidence that His claims are true.

Note: The amazing fact that the resurrection was prophesied ahead of time would make it a **double** miracle. It requires miraculous power just to accurately predict future events. But to **prophesy** a specific **miraculous event**, such as the resurrection, would be miraculous on both ends — both the **act of prophesying** and the **event predicted** would be miraculous.

[Matt. 17:9,22,23; 27:63; Mk. 8:31; 9:9,10,31; 10:33,34; Luke 9:22; 18:31-33; 24:4-7,44f.]

Though a man might fulfill one or two of these predictions by coincidence, to fulfill all of them would be impossible except by

plan of God. And for Jesus Himself to make such predictions and then fulfill them constitutes proof that He Himself possessed supernatural wisdom. Therefore, He stands approved of God as a prophet and inspired spokesman for God, both by His fulfillment of prophecy and by His ability to predict the future.

Prophecies Concerning the Gospel and the Kingdom

Not only did the Old Testament predict the life and death of Jesus, it also predicted many aspects of the new covenant that He would begin.

Predictions of the Gospel, the New Testament

Psalm 110:4; Zechariah 6:12,13

As discussed earlier, these verses predict that the Christ would be both king and priest. Since the law did not allow this, the prediction necessarily implied the law would be changed.

Hebrews 7:11-14 – This was fulfilled by the removal of the Old Testament and its replacement by the New Testament. So, the old covenant clearly implied that a new covenant would take effect when the Old Testament was removed and Jesus began to reign as priest.

[Zechariah 6:12,13 - The “Branch” (Messiah) would rule on His throne as priest in the “temple of the Lord,” which He would build. 1 Corinthians 3:16 – Speaking to the church (1:2) Paul said, “You are the temple of God.” So, the temple has been built and is the church. Cf. 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:19-22.]

Jeremiah 31:31-34

God promised a new covenant not like the covenant made at Mt. Sinai. The new would come when the old was removed, and under the new covenant sins would be remembered no more.

Hebrews 8:6-12 quotes Jeremiah 31:31-34 showing we now have a new covenant that fulfills the prophecy of Jer. 31.

Hebrews 9:15-17 – Jesus is now the Mediator of the covenant. To be Mediator he had to die to redeem men from sin. [Col. 2:14; Eph. 2:11-16]

Hebrews 10:1-4,9,10,14-18 – Under the old covenant the sacrifices could not take away sins. But Jesus removed the first will and established the second, by which we are sanctified through His own sacrifice. This fulfills the prophecy of Jer. 31 that our sins are remembered no more!

Isaiah 2:2-4; 11:1,6-10 [Micah 4:1,2]

Isaiah 2:2-4 — When the Lord's house would be established on the top of the mountains, the law (the word of the Lord) would go forth from Jerusalem (Zion), and all nations would flow in.

Luke 24:47; Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:14-47 — This was fulfilled when the gospel was preached to all nations beginning at Jerusalem. “The Lord's House,” which is the church, was established so people could enter it — Acts 2:47; 1 Timothy 3:15; 1 Peter 2:5; (cf. 2 Samuel 7:12-14).

This was in “the latter days” (“last days” — KJV) - Acts 2:16,17; Hebrews 1:1,2. Jews were present from “every nation under heaven,” and all who received the teaching were added to the church (Acts 2:5,14-40,41,47; cf. Ephesians 2:11-19; Acts 11:18; Galatians 3:27,28). So “all nations” were “flowing into” God's house.

[“The mountain” refers to authority or government in the house — see Hebrews 12:22,23; Daniel 2:35,44; Psalm 2:6 (cf. v1-9). The “plowshares to pruning hooks” refer to spiritual peace. The spiritual law caused people to enter a spiritual house, resulting in spiritual peace. Cf. Isaiah 11:1,6-10 to Rom. 15:12-16; John 14:27; Eph. 2:14-16; Rom. 5:1 Col. 1:20-22; 3:15; Micah 5:2-5.]

Predictions of the Kingdom of Christ

We will list first several prophecies, then we will prove they were fulfilled in the beginning of the church at Pentecost.

Old Testament predictions

Daniel 2:31-45 - By inspiration Daniel interpreted a dream for Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. The king saw an image that represented four kingdoms:

* The head of gold = Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom, Babylon (v37).

* The breast and arms of silver = a later inferior kingdom (v39). This is Persia.

* The belly and thighs of brass = a **third** kingdom ruling all the earth (v39). This is Greece.

* The legs and feet of iron mixed with clay = a **fourth** kingdom, strong as iron, but divided (vv 40,41). This is Rome.

A stone cut without hands smote the image on the feet and destroyed it, then it became a mountain and filled the whole earth. This meant that, in the days of **those kings** (Rome), God would

set up a kingdom that would consume the others but would never be destroyed (v44).

Daniel 7 - Here is another vision of the same four kingdoms represented as four beasts (vv 3-7): a lion (Babylon), a bear (Persia), a leopard (Greece), and a fourth beast different from the others (Rome). Again, people agree about the meaning of these beasts (vv 15-23).

Vv 13,14 — One like a son of man **came with clouds to the Ancient of Days** and was given glory, dominion, and a **kingdom**, everlasting dominion, a kingdom never to be destroyed. This is very similar to the vision in Daniel 2.

Predictions during Jesus' Lifetime

Matthew 3:2 — John the Baptist preached the Kingdom of Heaven was “**at hand**.” Note that John preached during the reign of Tiberius Caesar — the Roman Empire (Luke 3:1). [“At hand” means “to draw near or come near, to approach” — Thayer.]

Mark 1:14,15 — Jesus preached: “The time is **fulfilled**, and the Kingdom of God is **at hand**.” This shows that “at hand,” as used here, means the time was fulfilled.

Matthew 10:7 — Jesus sent the twelve to preach the “kingdom is **at hand**.”

Luke 10:9,11 — He sent seventy others to preach the “kingdom has **come near to you**.” [Matthew 12:25-28; Luke 11:17-20]

Mark 9:1 — The kingdom would come **with power**. Some standing before Jesus **would not die** till they saw it come. [Matthew 16:28; Luke 9:27]

Luke 22:18,29,30 — Jesus would not drink of the fruit of the vine till the kingdom comes. The disciples would eat and drink at His **table** in His kingdom.

Acts 1:3-8 — After His resurrection but before His ascension (vv 9-11) Jesus was still speaking about the kingdom (cf. v3). The kingdom had not yet come, but the **power** (and the kingdom, cf. Mark 9:1) would come when the **Holy Spirit** would come and the apostles would be **witnesses**. This would happen **in Jerusalem, not many days** from then (vv 8,4,5).

[See on Luke 1:32,33; Matthew 16:19; Mark 11:10; Luke 19:11-27; Matthew 20:20,21 cf. Mark 10:37 and Zech. 6:12,13; Matthew 23:13; 4:17,23; Luke 16:16; 12:31,32; 21:29-33; Mark 15:43; 1 Thessalonians 2:12]

Fulfillment of the Kingdom on the Day of Pentecost

Note how the events on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 fulfill all these prophecies regarding the kingdom.

* Jesus had **ascended** to the right hand of the Father - Acts 1:9-11; 2:33-35.

* Events in Acts 2 occurred in **Jerusalem** (vv 5,14) on Pentecost (v1).

* This was during the **Roman Empire** (Matthew 22:17,21; Acts 25:11). [John 11:48]

* It was about three years after Jesus said the kingdom was “**at hand.**”

* It was “**not many days**” after Jesus’ promise (Pentecost was 50 days after Jesus’ died at the Passover).

* The apostles were gathered together (v1). So, some to whom Jesus had spoken were **still living.**

* The **Holy Spirit** came with **power** on the apostles (vv 2-4,17,33). The **Holy Spirit** gave the twelve **power** to speak in tongues (vv 4-13). The apostles acted as **witnesses** of Jesus’ resurrection (v32). The coming of the Holy Spirit proved Jesus was at the right hand of God (v33).

The kingdom would come when the power came, and the power would come when the Holy Spirit enabled the apostles to be witnesses. This began on Pentecost, so the kingdom was then in existence.

* Those who were baptized continued steadfastly in the breaking of bread (v42), which is called the Lord’s **Table** (1 Corinthians 10:16,21). 1 Corinthians 11:26 — We will not have the Lord’s Supper (table) after Jesus returns. So, the kingdom that Jesus prophesied must be in existence now; it cannot come after He returns.

* The **conclusion** is stated in vv 30-36. Jesus is now reigning as Lord and Christ on the throne of David at God’s right hand. So, He is King. All prophecies regarding the beginning of Jesus’ kingdom were fulfilled at Pentecost. Therefore, His kingdom must exist and people began to enter it at Pentecost.

[Jesus was then in His **glory.** Cf. Matthew 20:20,21 and Mark 10:37 and Zech. 6:12,13 to Acts 2:33-35; Luke 24:26; 1 Peter 1:21; John 17:5.]

The Kingdom after Pentecost

After Pentecost several passages confirm that the kingdom did exist.

* Colossians 1:13,14 - Paul and the Colossian Christians were **in the kingdom**. That could not be unless the kingdom was in existence.

* Revelation 1:9 - John and the Christians he addressed were companions (partakers — ASV) **in the kingdom** of Jesus Christ.

* 1 Corinthians 15:22-28 - Vv 22,23 — The righteous dead will be raised at Jesus' return. Vv 25,26 — Jesus is **now reigning** (all things are being made subject to Him — v28). He will continue to **reign** until he defeats the last enemy, which is death (cf. Psalm 110:1,2). Death will be defeated by the resurrection when Jesus returns.

[Cf. Hebrews 12:25-29 to Haggai 2:6.]

All this evidence shows that the predictions of Jesus' kingdom have been fulfilled.

Conclusion regarding prophecy

Summary

We have now examined more than 60 quotations (passages) containing predictions regarding more than 45 events (or specific aspects of events). These predictions were made by at least 15 different prophets and were recorded in more than 15 different books of the Bible. Fulfillments of these prophecies are recorded by at least 12 different historians (writers) in more than 15 different books of the Bible. In addition, people today can observe for themselves the fact that at least 6 of the predictions remain fulfilled till this day. And we have considered just a few of the many Bible passages that predict future events (albeit some of the more obvious ones).

Many prophecies predicted things that were completely opposite of what people expected, many were highly unlikely or improbable, some were contrary to the law in existence at the time, and some were downright impossible by natural law. Many prophecies provided great detail about specific events, sometimes even naming specific individuals, nations, cities, or countries, yet the predictions were often made hundreds of years before the events and sometimes hundreds of years before the people who fulfilled the prophecies were even born.

Compare Bible prophecies to attempted predictions by other “prophets” who falsely claim to speak for God or to be able to predict the future.

Such false prophets usually make vague, general statements that anyone could guess or that would almost surely come true with someone somewhere. Yet when they attempt specific prophecies (even approaching the degree of detail in Bible prophecies), they fail again and again and are in fact usually wrong.

If Bible writers were not from God, we should be able to prove their predictions wrong the vast majority of the time. Why is there no evidence of obvious repeated errors in the majority of their prophecies, like the errors repeatedly made by false prophets?

Why were Bible writers able to predict the distant future in such detail and get it right time and time again? Why weren't they repeatedly and obviously wrong like false teachers are wrong? Mere men, writing by their own human wisdom, could never have predicted the future like this. But the Bible writers did so time and again. No other religious system in the world even comes close to having the evidence of fulfilled prophecy such as we see in the Bible.

This witness testifies that God exists and that He spoke through these men. Since Jesus fulfilled these prophecies and since He Himself repeatedly predicted the future accurately, He must be the Messiah, the King, the Prophet, and Savior God sent into the world.

Testimony #5: Miracles

A miracle, according to the Bible, is not just any unusual event, nor would an event be called a miracle just because God caused it. A miracle is an event that would be **impossible** by natural law, but is brought to pass by the supernatural power of God.

What Do Miracles Prove?

Miracles accomplished the following purposes:

The Bible Claims that Miracles Prove God Exists and Is the True God.

Consider what is stated about the following examples. (We will study many of these examples more closely later. For now, simply note what is stated about why they occurred.)

The plagues on Egypt

Exodus 9:13-16; 10:1,2 — The plagues occurred so people throughout the world and even in future generations would know Jehovah is the true God. Those future generations would include us today. And sure enough, people throughout history have heard of the plagues God brought on Egypt through Moses.

Exodus 12:12 — The plagues were also a judgment on the **gods** of Egypt. Some plagues were direct attacks on certain gods (the Nile River, the sun, etc.). But the main point is that Egyptian gods could not do such great works as these, nor could they resist the power of God. So God proved He is the true God in contrast to heathen idols.

[Exodus 5:1,2; 7:3-5,17; 8:18,19,23; 13:3,8,9; Deut. 6:20-25; Num. 33:4]

Crossing the Red Sea

Exodus 14:18,31 — The ultimate goal of the parting of the sea was that God might gain honor, so the people would fear the Lord and believe in Him.

Joshua 24:5-7,14 — As a result of these miracles, God would be honored and people would forsake other gods and serve only the true God.

[Ex. 14:4; 15:2,11-18,26; Deut. 7:19; 1 Sam. 4:8; Neh. 9:9-11; Psalm 78:4-7, 10-13, 42-53; 105:26-38,45; 106:6-13; 135:8,9; 136:10-15; Isaiah. 51:10]

Manna in the wilderness

Exodus 16:12-15,31-35 — God provided Manna as food for Israel for forty years as they traveled to Canaan. It fell like dew on the ground, so each morning they had simply to gather it for food. This confirmed to the people the existence of God (v12).

Giving the law at Mt. Sinai

Deuteronomy 4:32-40 — Moses said that God led Israel out of Egypt by signs and wonders and then spoke to them out of great fire “that you might know that the ***Lord Himself is God; there is none other*** besides Him” (vv 34,35,39). As a result, they should keep His statutes and commandments (v40).

Crossing the Jordan on dry ground

Joshua 4:22-24 — God caused the Jordan to stop flowing, so Israel could pass on dry ground. This gave people reason to fear the Lord as God forever.

Elijah on Mt. Carmel

1 Kings 18:36-39 — God sent fire from heaven (which Baal could not do) so people would know to believe in the true God and that Elijah was acting by God’s authority.

Daniel’s three friends in the fiery furnace

Daniel 3 — Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, commanded men to bow to his image or be thrown into a fiery furnace. Daniel’s three friends refused and were thrown in, but were not harmed. Nebuchadnezzar decreed that no other god could deliver like that (vv 24-30).

These claims are mainly found in the Old Testament. By the time the New Testament was written, Old Testament miracles had

abundantly proved the existence of God and the fact that the Bible God is the true God.

Nevertheless, New Testament miracles confirm the existence of God just as surely as did Old Testament miracles. Such events are impossible by natural means. The fact that they occurred proves there must be a God. And the fact these miracles were done by the God who guided the Bible writers proves that He is the true God, since no other “gods” can duplicate these acts.

The Bible Claims that Miracles Prove Jesus Is God’s Son as He Claimed.

Mark 2:3-12 – Jesus claimed that His power to heal proved He also had power to forgive sins, which only God could do (v7).

John 3:2 – Nicodemus said people knew Jesus was a teacher come from God, since no one could do the works Jesus did unless God was with him.

John 5:36 - Jesus said His works proved that the Father sent Him.

John 10:37,38; 14:10,11 – He claimed people should believe His works, so they would know the Father is in Him and He in the Father.

John 20:30,31 – Jesus’ signs give people reason to believe that He is God’s Son, so we can have life in His name.

Acts 2:22-24 – God testified about Jesus by doing wonders, signs, and miracles through Him. Note again that God gives us testimony on which to base our faith.

The point is that Jesus did works that were impossible by natural law. If He had been an imposter, God would not have allowed Him to do such works. The fact God allowed Him to do them would confirm the validity of His claims.

[John 1:47-51; 2:11,23; 4:48; 6:14; 9:16,25-33; 11:4,15,40-48; 12:9-11; Luke 7:16; 2 Peter 1:16-21]

The Bible Claims that Miracles Prove God Inspired the Bible Writers (and Other Prophets).

Bible writers and prophets said that miracles done through them confirmed that their message was from God.

Old Testament prophets

Exodus 4:1-9 – Moses feared that the people would not believe God had sent him (v1). So, God gave him signs expressly to convince the people to believe.

Exodus 14:30,31 — After the crossing of the Red Sea, the people believed the Lord and His servant Moses.

Joshua 3:7-17 — When Joshua led Israel across the Jordan on dry ground, God said this showed the people that He was with Joshua as He had been with Moses (v7).

1 Kings 18:36-39 — Elijah called down fire from heaven (which the prophets of Baal could not do) so people would know that Elijah was acting by God's authority.

[Num. 16:28-35; chap. 17; 1 Kings 17:24; 2 Kings 1]

New Testament prophets

Mark 16:20 — Jesus sent apostles to preach (vv 14,15), and as they did so, He worked with them, **confirming the word** by the signs He gave them (vv 17,18).

Acts 14:3 — God spoke through Paul and Barnabas. He bore witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

2 Corinthians 12:11,12 — Signs, wonders, and miracles would confirm one was an apostle.

Hebrews 2:3,4 — God bore **witness** to the message of salvation by signs, wonders, etc.

People needed a way to distinguish true prophets from false ones. This was the purpose of miracles. If men could do works that could be performed only by the power of God, people would know God was working in those men so they would believe the message preached.

Note again the many references to “witness,” “signs,” “testimony,” etc. God expects people to believe that He spoke through Bible writers, not on the basis of speculation or blind faith, but on the basis of evidence. Miracles were a deliberate demonstration by God to prove that He exists, that Jesus is His Son, and that the Bible writers and prophets were His spokesmen.

[Acts 9:33-42]

The Characteristics of True Miracles

The power of miracles as evidence rests in the nature of the acts themselves. Considering the specific details of Bible miracles will help us see the convincing nature of the evidence. This

evidence is further strengthened when we contrast Bible miracles to the so-called miracles fraudulently claimed by those who are not really from God.

The Bible contains several examples of false miracle workers: people who falsely claimed to be able to do miraculous works — Acts 8:9-13; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12; Matthew 7:21-23; Ex. 7:8-12,20-22; 8:6,7,17-19; Matthew 24:24. Today we continue to have people who claim to do miracles, but the works they do fail to measure up to the characteristics of true miracles.

Note that Bible miracles in general possessed the following characteristics. (As with all eyewitness testimony, certain details are not mentioned in some cases; but when the details are mentioned, they always harmonize with these characteristics.)

There Was Conclusive Evidence that the Miraculous Event Occurred.

The occurrence of the event was unmistakably evident to observers.

Fake miracle workers often claim miracles in cases of invisible or undetectable diseases. Or the problem may be psychosomatic, caused by the person's mental or emotional state, such that an improvement in their mental or emotional state would remove the problem. Often there is no obvious evidence that the supposed event occurred at all. In some cases, in fact, the whole thing could have been staged or faked in harmony with natural law.

Contrast this to the following examples of Bible miracles. We will see no sleight of hand or trickery. In miraculous healings, there was clear evidence that the people had organic disorders, and there was conclusive proof that the problem was removed.

* **Lazarus** — John 11:17,38,39,43-45. It was clear to all witnesses that Lazarus had been dead four days yet came alive again.

* **Blind man** — John 9:1,7,18-20,21,25. It was unquestionably proved that the man could not see from birth, but then he was so healed he could see.

* **Woman bowed together** — Luke 13:11,13,16. All could see she was hunch-backed, but then she was straightened.

* **Lame man** — Acts 3:2,7,8,10; 4:22. Many people knew the man could not walk, but it was obvious that he was enabled to do so. [Cf. 14:8-11]

* **Son of the widow of Nain** — Luke 7:11-17. The man had died and a great multitude gathered for his funeral procession. Yet Jesus raised him in the presence of the crowd.

* **Elymas** — Acts 13:6-12. Elymas was a sorcerer who opposed Paul's effort to convert a proconsul. Paul struck him blind temporarily, resulting in the proconsul's conversion.

Note how Bible miracles are so obviously different from fake so-called miracles.

[See also Mark 1:44; 2:1-12; 4:35-41; 7:32-37; Matt. 12:9,14; 14:22-33; John 6:5-14; 2:1-11; Acts 9:33-42]

Local people were personally involved in the miracles.

Fake miracle workers often claim miracles that supposedly happened to someone somewhere whom no one knows locally, so no one can visit them to verify the event. In contrast, local people received the effect of Bible miracles, and local people could observe for themselves and check the matter out. They could question the people involved, check out whether they had really been ill, observe if there was a complete healing or whether there were relapses, etc. So, they could determine for themselves whether there had been a real miracle.

* **Lazarus** — John 11:1,17-19,31,45. Lazarus was healed in his own hometown, where he was known to be dead and could then be observed alive.

* **Blind man** — John 9:1,7-9,18-20. To determine the validity of the healing, people could contact witnesses. Jesus was not afraid to have people check out the validity of His miracles.

* **Son of the widow of Nain** — Luke 7:11-17. This young man was raised from the dead in the presence of his own funeral party — the very people who knew him best, knew of his death, and could see for themselves that he had come back to life.

* **Lame man** — Acts 3:2,9,10; 4:22,16. This man was known by the people of the city to be lame. Multitudes of these people saw him both before and after he was healed.

Again, why are Bible miracles so obviously different from fake so-called miracles?

[Acts 9:33-42; 13:6-12; Mark 2:1-4,10-12]

Miracles were often done in the presence of unbelievers, false teachers, and even false miracle-workers.

Fake faith healers often refuse to do miracles if doubters or opponents are present, or they excuse their failure on the grounds

that the observers lack faith. But when men of God had true power to do miracles, they were not afraid to do them in the presence of people who had questions or doubts, or even people who openly opposed their teaching. At times they would deliberately do miracles in the presence of those who did false miracles, so that people could see the difference. Observers could investigate for themselves the validity of the miracles.

* **Ten plagues & Red Sea** — Exodus 8:17-19; 14:26-31. Pharaoh's magicians tried to duplicate Moses' miracles, but eventually admitted Moses did miracles by the power of God. Pharaoh and his army witnessed the crossing of the Red Sea, and they drowned when the water collapsed.

* **Elijah on Mt. Carmel** — 1 Kings 18:20-40. The people of Israel doubted who was the true God. Yet in their presence Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal to a showdown to see who had real power of miracles.

* **Daniel's three friends** — Daniel 3. Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon compelled people to worship an idol. He threw Daniel's three friends into a fiery furnace, then he and his advisors witnessed that they were not hurt in any way (vv 24-30).

* **Malchus** — Luke 22:50,51. When Jesus was being arrested, Peter cut off the ear of the high priest's servant. In the presence of the very men who were arresting Him, Jesus restored the man's ear!

* **Simon the Sorcerer** — Acts 8:5-13. Simon did works claimed to be from God, but Philip did true miracles in his presence. Simon was so amazed by the contrast that he was converted.

* **Elymas** — Acts 13:6-12. When Elymas opposed the truth, Paul struck him blind. Elymas, powerless to prevent or overcome the blindness, admitted the miracle by seeking a guide.

* **Lazarus** — John 11:47,48. After Jesus raised Lazarus, His enemies admitted He did many miracles.

* **Lame man** — Acts 4:10,14-16. After Peter & John healed the lame man (3:1-10), the Jewish opponents admitted it was a great miracle.

* **Saul of Tarsus** — Acts 9:1-18. After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to the persecutor Saul to convince Him of the resurrection.

* **Crippled man in Lystra** - Acts 14:8-18. Paul and Barnabas healed a crippled man who had never walked. The result

was that the idol-worshippers of the city wanted to make sacrifices and worship them as gods.

Note the contrast between men who had true miraculous power from God and false teachers who attempted to do miracles but failed. Fake miracles, both today and in Bible times, obviously fail to measure up to the characteristics of true miracles. True Bible miracles, by their very nature, demonstrated to everyone present that a real and obvious change occurred.

[John 9; Num. 16:28-35 & chap. 17; Matt. 12:9-14,22-24; Luke 5:17-26; 6:6-11; 13:10-17; 1 Kings 13:1-6; chap. 22; 2 Kings 1 & 6; Dan. 2,3,&5; Jer. 28; Acts 19:11-17; 2:22]

True Miracles Occurred at a Specific Point in Time.

False so-called miraculous healings gradually develop over a period of days, weeks, or months, yet people still claim they are miracles. In Bible miracles the transformation or change caused by the miracle almost always occurred at a specific time when the inspired man attempted to do it or said it would occur. Specifically, Bible healings did not gradually develop over a period of days, weeks, or months but occurred instantaneously.

* Acts 3:7 — The lame man immediately leaped and walked.

* Luke 13:11-13 — The hunch-backed woman was immediately made straight.

* Mark 2:10-12 — The paralyzed man got up immediately.

* Mark 5:25-29 — The woman with an issue of blood for 12 years was healed immediately.

* Mark 5:35-42 — Jairus' daughter had been dead but arose immediately.

[Acts 9:33-42; 13:11; 14:8-11; John 9:1,6,7; Mark 1:42; Luke 7:14,15; 1 Kings 18:25-30,35-39]

True Miracles Were Always Successful.

False so-called miracle workers often attempt miracles but fail, especially when attempting to heal obvious physical deformities. Neither Jesus nor His apostles (after they received Holy Spirit baptism) ever attempted to do a miracle and failed. There was no kind of disease they were unable to heal.

Matthew 4:23,24 — Jesus healed **all manner** of diseases.

Matthew 14:34-36 — **All** were healed.

Acts 5:12,15,16 — They were healed **every one**.

Jesus and His apostles healed people born blind (John 9:1), born lame (Acts 3:2; 4:22), lepers (Mark 1:40-45), raised the dead

(John 11; Luke 7:11-17; Acts 9:36-42), replaced missing or withered body parts (Luke 22:49-51; Mark 3:1-5), turned water to wine (John 2:1ff), walked on water (Matt. 14:25-33), calmed storms (Mark 4:35-41), and fed thousands with a few loaves & fishes and had more left over than they started with (Matthew 14:13-21; 15:32-38). (See also Matthew 8:16,17; 10:1; 9:35; 12:15; Mark 7:32-37; 16:17,18.)

[In two cases, the apostles failed — Matt. 17:14-20; 14:25-33. But this was before they received Holy Spirit baptism.]

True Miracles Were Complete & Perfect

False so-called miracles often involve partial improvements or relapses or require further medical care and treatment, yet the results are claimed to be miracles. Biblical miracles always completely accomplished what the inspired man said they would and always completely satisfied the need. In healings, people returned immediately to complete and normal health. Every symptom of the disease was removed.

* Matthew 12:10,13 — A man's withered hand was restored whole as the other hand.

* Mark 1:40-45 — The leper showed himself to the priest as evidence of a complete healing.

* Acts 3:8 — The lame man leaped and walked.

* Mark 2:10-12 — The paralyzed man could walk and carry his bed.

[Cf. Matt. 14:36; 1 Kings 18; John 9:7,11; Acts 13:11; Luke 13:11-13; 7:14,15; Mk. 7:32-37]

Remember, true miracles almost universally possessed the above characteristics. The point is that the event clearly demonstrated to the observers that something impossible by natural law had occurred, therefore it had to be evidence of God's power. This was necessary in order for miracles to accomplish their purpose of confirming the word preached.

Evidence that Bible Miracles Occurred

Since we cannot personally see Jesus and the Bible writers, how can we reach a verdict whether or not miracles really occurred? Again, we must examine the testimony of witnesses. As

we do so, we should evaluate the testimony using the tests we listed in the introduction (number of witnesses, number of events, the integrity and motives of the witnesses, etc.).

Writers Who Recorded Bible Miracles

Here are a few of the writers who described Biblical miracles.

Moses

Exodus 7-12 — Moses described in detail how God brought the plagues on Egypt to give evidence that He is God. The last plague involved the death of the firstborn son of every family of the Egyptians.

Exodus 14:15-18,21-23,26-29 — Moses recorded the parting of the Red Sea, so Israel passed through on dry ground. Pharaoh's army, attempting to pursue them, was drowned in the sea.

Exodus 16:13-15,31-35 — God provided Manna as food for Israel for forty years as they traveled to Canaan. It fell like dew on the ground, so each morning they had simply to gather it for food. To confirm the manna, God had Moses put a pot of it in the ark, so Israel could carry it with them into Canaan.

Note that Moses was a first-hand eyewitness of the miracles he records.

Joshua

Joshua 24:5-7 — Joshua confirmed the crossing of the Red Sea, Remember, he would have been an eyewitness, so his testimony confirms that of Moses. [2:10; 4:23]

Joshua 3:7-17; chap. 4 — He also wrote as an eyewitness that God stopped the flow of the Jordan so that Israel crossed it on dry ground.

Joshua 5:12 — As an eyewitness, Joshua confirmed Moses' record regarding the manna. He confirmed that the manna continued till the day Israel ate food in Canaan.

Joshua 6:1-20 — Joshua recorded the fall of the walls of Jericho by miraculous means. Israel simply marched the way God commanded, and God caused the walls to fall.

Matthew

Matthew 9:9; 10:1-8 — Like the other original apostles, Matthew personally accompanied Jesus for three years; so his record constitutes eyewitness testimony of Jesus' miracles. Furthermore, he himself did miracles by the power Jesus gave the apostles.

Matthew 14:33 - Every time the account says the apostles (or twelve disciples) were present, Matthew would have been included. In this case, he joined the other apostles in confessing Jesus to be the Son of God, because they witnessed his walking on the water.

Like Moses and Joshua, etc., Matthew was an inspired man who wrote part of the Bible, who was a personal eyewitness to miracles done by other inspired men, and whose work as a prophet was confirmed by miracles he himself was empowered by God to do.

Luke

Luke 1:1-4 — Luke wrote a history of the life of Christ and a history of the early church in the book of Acts (Acts 1:1-3). Regarding Jesus' life, Luke himself was not an eyewitness, but he served as an historian to record the eyewitness testimony given him by others regarding the miracles of Jesus. He himself was an eyewitness of many of Paul's miracles (note his use of "we" and see Acts 13:6-12; 14:8-20; 16:16-19; 19:11-17; 20:9-12; 28:2-10). As an historian, his reputation is well established.

John

John 20:30,31 — John recorded the signs Jesus did so we can believe Jesus is the Son of God and we can have life in His name. Like Matthew, John was one of the original apostles. Having accompanied Jesus for three years, he testified regarding miracles he personally saw. And like the other apostles, he himself did miracles to confirm his own record (cf. Acts 3:1-10).

John 21:24 — John wrote his testimony of these events and testified that it was true.

1 John 1:1-3 — He bore witness about what he and others heard, saw with their eyes, and handled with their hands.

Peter

2 Peter 1:16-21 — Peter claimed he (and others) were eyewitnesses of the majesty of Jesus, having heard the voice of God who spoke at the Transfiguration.

Like Matthew and John, Peter was also one of the original apostles. His record of Jesus' miracles constitutes eyewitness testimony. And he himself did miracles to confirm that God guided him in his writing (cf. Acts 3:1-10; 9:32-43; 10:1-11:18.)

Paul

2 Corinthians 12:11,12 – Paul claimed that the signs, wonders, and miracles he did confirmed his apostleship. Note that he claimed these miracles were done in the presence of the people to whom he wrote, so they would have known whether or not he did these miracles.

1 Corinthians 15:1-8 – Paul specifically listed himself as an eyewitness of Jesus' resurrection.

Note that Paul's claim to do miracles and be an eyewitness was confirmed by Luke, who recorded many of Paul's miracles (Acts 13:6-12; 14:8-20; 16:16-19; 19:11-17; 20:9-12; 28:2-10).

All these men recorded in writing their eyewitness testimony of miracles that confirm Jesus' claims and the claims of Bible writers. As discussed earlier, these men fully meet the qualifications of valid eyewitnesses. Specifically, all of them suffered greatly for the faith they upheld, and many died at the hands of persecutors. Yet they never denied or compromised their testimony.

[Others to consider: Mark.]

Testimony from Other People Who Personally Witnessed Miracles

The following witnesses did not write their own testimony in the Bible; however, they did personally witness miracles done by Jesus or by Bible writers, and other Bible writers as historians recorded their testimony.

* **Jesus' mother Mary** – Luke 1:26-38. Mary testified that she had no relationship with a man, but the angel Gabriel spoke to her and explained that Jesus would be conceived miraculously by the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Jesus would be the Son of the Highest, God would give Him the throne of David, and His kingdom would never end. The testimony of Mary and the angel confirm the reality of the Virgin Birth, which in turn validates Jesus' claims.

* **Joseph** – Matthew 1:18-25. Likewise, Joseph knew that he had not caused Mary to conceive, but an angel also spoke to him and explained that Mary had conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. So the One to be born would save the people from sin and would be called "God with us." So Joseph's testimony and that of the angel again confirm the Virgin Birth.

* **The shepherds** – Luke 2:8-20. A host of angels appeared to shepherds at the time of Jesus' birth and directed them to Jesus.

They said that He was the Christ who would be a Savior (v11). So, the testimony of the shepherds and of the angels confirms that Jesus was the Christ sent by God. Note that, at the time of these events, the shepherds widely broadcast their testimony about what the angels had told them – v17.

* **John the Baptist** – John 1:29-34. John bore witness that Jesus is the Son of God, because he saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove and remain on Him. This is John’s testimony, not just as a prophet, but as an eyewitness to the miraculous events at Jesus’ baptism.

* **Nicodemus** - John 3:2. He said people knew Jesus was a teacher come from God, since no one could do the works Jesus did unless God was with him. So he testified that he knew Jesus had done miracles.

* **Man healed of blindness** - John 9:25-33. He testified that Jesus had healed him, and one who could do this had to be from God.

* **Lepers who were healed** – Matthew 8:2-4; Luke 17:11-14. After healing lepers, Jesus told them to go show themselves to the priest. This was a legal requirement under the law: the priest would perform an elaborate examination to confirm that leprosy was gone (Lev. 14). Note that this was done as a “testimony” – i.e., evidence to confirm the healing.

* **Moses and Elijah** - Matthew 17:1-6; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36; 2 Peter 1:16-18. God sent Moses and Elijah back from the dead as miraculous proof that Jesus had their approval and God’s approval. Jesus’ appearance was altered, and God spoke His approval from heaven. All these miracles serve as testimony to Jesus. Peter said they were eyewitnesses and heard God, so we can be sure this is not a cunningly devised fable.

* **All Jesus’ apostles** - Acts 10:38-42. They witnessed His miracles, how He healed people because God was with Him. As a result, they often made statements that confirmed the validity of the miracles they had witnessed (Matthew 14:33; Mark 4:41; John 2:11; Luke 24:48; John 15:27; Acts 1:8).

* **Multitudes who observed miracles** - Jesus and other prophets did their miracles publicly where many people – often great multitudes – could openly observe them. Often the response of the multitudes constitutes acknowledgment of the validity of the miracle. Note 1 Kings 18:39; John 6:14; Luke 7:16,17; Mark 2:12; 7:37. [Exodus 20:18; Deuteronomy 6:22; John 7:31;

11:4,15,40-48; 12:9-11; Matthew 11:1-6; Acts 9:33-42; Luke 7:11-16; 13:17]

* **The converts on Pentecost** - Acts 2:22-24. Peter openly proclaimed that this huge crowd knew that Jesus had done wonders, signs, and miracles among them. He said this was God's way of attesting to Him. Note that this testimony of Jesus' miracles was preached publicly just fifty days after His resurrection. The fact that 3000 accepted the message (v41) proves they knew they had seen Jesus' miracles. If there was no evidence for these events, the people could easily have said so and would surely not have been convinced by the message. [Cf. vv25-36.]

All of the above people personally witnessed the events listed; they had no reason to lie. The events were recorded (many of them in more than one Bible account) calmly in a way that is evidently intended to constitute historic evidence. Remember that the Bible writers are historically trustworthy. We have earlier established their credibility as historians.

[John 1:47-51; 11:45]

The Testimony of Divinely Ordained Memorials

In many cases, God deliberately commanded His people to institute various memorials to His miraculous acts. The memorials served as continuing testimony to remind people that the events were historic fact. In all cases people who were eyewitnesses to the event were given instructions about the memorials immediately following (or even before!) the event. They did not begin years later as a result of legends and myths.

Note that God knew people would need testimony regarding these events to convince them to believe, so He arranged continuing memorials as testimony.

* **The Rainbow** - Genesis 9:8-17. The flood was a miraculous event that demonstrated God's great power. After the flood, God set the rainbow in the sky as a sign that He would never again destroy the whole world by a flood. But it follows that the rainbow also reminds us that the flood really occurred. Every time we see a rainbow, we see a memorial to the flood miracle.

* **The Passover** - Exodus 12:1-14. The Passover was a memorial to God's act of slaying the firstborn in each family of the Egyptians, while sparing the sons of all the Israelites. The memorial actually was instituted before the event occurred (vv 12-

14). Jews even today still celebrate this memorial. The event it memorializes is known universally.

* **Pot of manna** - Exodus 16:12-15,31-35. God provided Manna as food for Israel for forty years as they traveled to Canaan. It fell like dew on the ground, so each morning they had simply to gather it for food. To confirm this miracle, God had Moses put a pot of it in the ark, so Israel could carry it with them into Canaan. (Heb. 9:4).

* **Aaron's rod** – Numbers 17. God caused Aaron's rod to bud to prove that only his descendants could be priests. God commanded Moses to put the rod in the Ark of the Covenant as a sign (v10). (Heb. 9:4)

* **Twelve stones taken from the Jordan** - Joshua 4:2-24. God caused the Jordan to cease flowing so Israel could cross into Canaan on dry ground. God commanded Joshua to have the people take twelve stones from the midst of the river and set them up as a sign to remind following generations of this miracle (vv 6,7).

* **The Lord's Supper** – 1 Corinthians 11:23-29; Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-21. Even before He died Jesus instituted this memorial. But the memorial is meaningless unless He has been raised from the dead. He said He would do it with us in the kingdom, and we do it till He comes again – both of which require that He arose (Matthew 26:28,29; 1 Corinthians 11:26).

After Jesus died, His disciples were discouraged and defeated. Had He not been raised, they would never have kept this memorial. So, the Lord's Supper serves as a testimony to His resurrection, and is kept even today.

* **Baptism** – Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12,13. We are buried with Christ in baptism and raised with Him to a new life. Those who do this must believe that Jesus arose from the dead (Romans 10:9,10). We are born again in baptism just as surely as He was raised (Romans 6:4). So, baptism serves to remind us of the miracle of Jesus' resurrection.

But baptism for remission of sins in Jesus' name was first practiced on Pentecost in response to the apostles' preaching that Jesus had been raised from the dead (Acts 2:38-41). Had He not been raised, baptism would never have become an institution. As such it constitutes a memorial to His resurrection, which has been practiced from the first century till today.

All these memorials began among those who were **eyewitnesses** of the miracle that they memorialize. They were begun at the express command of God with the intent of reminding people of future generations that various miracles were historical fact. So, the existence of the memorial constitutes evidence that the event historically occurred.

Enemies Who Testified or Witnessed Miracles Done by Prophets of God

Men, who had true power to do miracles, were not afraid to do them in the presence of people who doubted or even openly opposed their teaching. At times they would deliberately do miracles in the presence of those who did false miracles, so that people could see the differences. We would not expect unbelievers to make a deliberate effort to spread the knowledge of Bible miracles. Nevertheless, opponents to the truth often, either directly or tacitly, admitted that the miracles really occurred or at least failed completely in efforts to disprove the miracles.

Indirect (tacit) admissions

* **The Egyptian Army** - Exodus 14:15-18,21-23,26-29. Moses recorded that Pharaoh's army pursued the Israelites as they left Egypt and caught up to them at the Red Sea. God caused the Sea to part, so Israel passed through on dry ground. Pharaoh's army, attempting to pursue them, was drowned in the sea. The fact that the Egyptian army entered the sea demonstrates that they recognized it had really been parted and that Israel had passed through it. The fact the entire army drowned when the sea returned demonstrates the power of the miracle.

* **Prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel** — 1 Kings 18:20-40. Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal to a showdown to see who had real power of miracles. The false prophets attempted but failed to perform a miracle, which Elijah then obviously accomplished. The fact they could not do such a miracle and then were powerless to prevent their own deaths is a tacit admission that Elijah really did the miracle recorded.

* **Pharisees** - John 9:13-41. Pharisees attempted to deny that Jesus had miraculously healed the blind man, but were completely unable to disprove it. Their efforts to disprove the miracle simply confirm its validity.

* **Elymas** — Acts 13:6-12. When Elymas opposed the truth, Paul struck him blind. Elymas was powerless to prevent or

overcome the blindness. By seeking someone to guide him, he admitted he really had been struck blind.

* **Masters of a demon-possessed girl** - Acts 16:16-19. As an eyewitness (“we”), Luke records that Paul cast a demon out of a girl who had brought gain to her masters by her power of fortune telling. After the demon was cast out, the masters could no longer make money off her, so they persecuted Paul. By dragging Paul before the magistrates, the masters admitted the demon was gone (why would they be upset if the girl had not lost her power?).

[Num. 16:28-35 & chap. 17; 1 Kings 13:1-6; 2 Kings 6:8-23; Daniel 2&5; Acts 19:11-17]

Direct admissions

* **Pharaoh’s magicians** — Exodus 8:17-19. Pharaoh’s magicians opposed Moses and tried to duplicate his miracles, but eventually they admitted Moses did miracles by the power of God. [Cf. Ex. 14:26-31.]

* **Nebuchadnezzar and his advisors** – Daniel 3. Nebuchadnezzar and his advisors were idolaters. They witnessed the miracle when Daniel’s three friends were protected by God in the fiery furnace. Nebuchadnezzar decreed that no other god could deliver like this (vv 24-30).

* **People of Nazareth** – Mark 6:2,3. The people of Jesus’ own hometown rejected Him, because they knew Him and could not believe such a great man could come from their own midst. Nevertheless, they admitted that “mighty works” were performed by His hands.

* **Pharisees** - Matthew 12:22-24. The Pharisees said Jesus cast out demons by the power of Satan. But in so doing, they admitted that Jesus really had cast out the demon. (Jesus then refuted their claim that the power was from Satan.)

* **Council of chief priests and Pharisees** — John 11:47,48. After Jesus raised Lazarus, even His enemies admitted He did many miracles.

* **The Jewish Sanhedrin council** — Acts 4:10,14-16. After Peter & John healed the lame man (3:1-10), the Jewish opponents admitted it was a great miracle.

* **Simon the sorcerer** — Acts 8:5-13. As a sorcerer, Simon did works people claimed to be from God. But Philip did true miracles in his presence. Simon then acknowledged the validity of Philip’s miracles by being himself converted.

* **Idol worshipers in Lystra** – Acts 14:8-13. Paul and Barnabas healed a crippled man who had never walked. The result was so convincing that the idol-worshipers of the city wanted to make sacrifices and worship them as gods.

* **Saul of Tarsus** – Acts 9:1-9,18. Saul was an opponent of truth who persecuted Christians, casting them into prison. Jesus appeared to Saul to convince him He had been raised from the dead. This enemy of the gospel then admitted the truth of Jesus' resurrection by being converted and then going everywhere preaching Jesus' gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-9).

[2 Kings 1; Dan. 2,3,&5]

Surely none of these witnesses had any inclination to testify in favor of Bible miracles. None were friends of God's message or messengers – at least not till after they observed the evidence of the miracles. All of them would have denied and disproved the miracles, if they could have successfully done so. But in the end, none of them could successfully deny Bible miracles, and most of them directly or indirectly acknowledged the miracles. If the enemies of the Bible could not disprove these miracles at the time they occurred, how could anyone thousands of years later expect to disprove them? This testimony demonstrates the overwhelming power of the evidence that miracles really occurred.

Conclusion

We have now studied more than 35 miracles described in the Bible, and many more could be discussed. God did these at the hands of at least ten different prophets. They were recorded by at least ten Bible writers in at least 15 books of the Bible. In addition, the accounts cite more than 15 individuals or groups who were opponents of God's people but who directly or indirectly acknowledged that Bible miracles really did occur. In addition another 15 individuals or groups (who were not necessarily opposed to the message) are also cited as having acknowledged Bible miracles. That makes a total of more than forty individuals or groups who admitted Jesus or Bible prophets really did miracles. Furthermore, we know of at least six memorials that were established to memorialize Bible miracles at the time they occurred.

Compare this to other religious groups who claim to be from God. Many of them make few claims of miracles. If they make some claims, they have no eyewitnesses, and the accounts are often legends recorded years after the event allegedly occurred. Or

the events fail to measure up to the characteristics of Bible miracles, so those of us who disagree with their teaching can easily deny the validity of their “miracles” and point out where they fail to measure up.

For example, compare Moses and Jesus to men like Mohammed and Joseph Smith. Everyone knows about the miracles of Moses and Jesus. People immediately associate the plagues and the crossing of the Red Sea with Moses. And they immediately associate Jesus with the virgin birth and the resurrection. When people think of Moses and Jesus, they think of miracles. Mohammed and Smith also claimed to be prophets like Bible prophets, and they delivered writings and religious systems that they claim are equal to those of the Bible. But what miracles are associated with Mohammed or Smith? What miracles do you immediately think of when you think of those men, like the miracles people associate with Moses and Jesus?

Moslems and Mormons rarely make serious claims that Mohammed and Smith did miracles to confirm their messages. If you press for examples of miracles, they may make a few claims based, not on eyewitness testimony, but on tradition or fables written years after the alleged events. Some claim that, one night, Mohammed allegedly was carried to Jerusalem and from there ascended into heaven to see wonderful visions. However, no one saw it happen. His wife says he never left the bed. There is absolutely no eyewitness testimony to confirm any miracles done by Mohammed. (For details, see www.gospelway.com/instruct/ for our article on Islam.)

Whether friend or foe, the people who really saw the works of Jesus and His apostles, could not successfully deny that miracles were done. Their testimony becomes evidence on which we can base our faith. No religious group, which is not based on the Bible, can even approach the Bible evidence of miracles.

The miracles of Jesus and of the Bible writers are God’s stamp of approval on their teaching. This witness testifies that there is a God who possesses supernatural power. And since the Bible writers did miracles, they must have been guided by God’s power. Likewise, the fact that Jesus did miracles confirms the truthfulness of His claims that He was the Son of God.

Testimony #6: The Resurrection of Jesus

The gospel claims that, after Jesus died, He came back to life again on the third day. The apostles and New Testament Christians repeatedly preached this claim.

What the Resurrection Proves

The Gospel Claims that Jesus' Resurrection Gives Evidence that He Is Who It Claims Him To Be.

We already learned that the primary purpose of miracles was to confirm the existence of God and/or to confirm a message or messenger to be from God. The resurrection is in many ways the most basic and most substantiated of all Bible miracles. As such it demonstrates the power and existence of God – 1 Peter 1:21; Romans 4:17.

Note 1 Corinthians 15:14-19 – The resurrection especially confirms the validity of the claims of Jesus. It is absolutely fundamental to the gospel claims regarding Jesus and salvation through Him. If He is not raised, our faith is vain and we are yet in sin.

The resurrection proves Jesus is:

The Christ, the Son of God

John 20:24-31 – After personally observing the evidence that Jesus was alive, Thomas addressed Him as “my Lord and my God.” This evidence and His miracles are written so we might believe He is the Christ, the Son of God.

Romans 1:4 – He was declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead.

Lord and Christ

Acts 2:32-36 – Peter concluded his sermon on Pentecost by citing the eyewitness testimony of Jesus' resurrection. He then said that this showed Jesus to be Lord and Christ.

Acts 17:3 – Paul preached that Jesus had been raised from the dead and He is the Christ.

Romans 14:9 – Jesus rose and lived again that He might be the Lord of the living and dead.

Ephesians 1:20-23 – God raised Jesus and put all things under His feet, making Him above all power and dominion.

One who forgives sins

Acts 13:30-39 – Since God raised Jesus, it should be known that by Him the forgiveness of sins is preached and by Him everyone who believes is justified.

Luke 24:46,47 – It was necessary for Christ to suffer and rise and that repentance and remission of sins be preached to all nations.

[1 Thessalonians 1:10; Romans 4:25]

Judge of all mankind

Acts 17:30,31 – God has appointed a day when He will judge the world by the One whom He appointed. He gave assurance of this by raising Him from the dead.

Jesus and His followers taught that His resurrection proves these claims. If these claims are not true, why would God raise Him from the dead?

The fact that the apostles and first-century Christians preached the resurrection to everyone who lacked faith or had doubts - Jews or idol worshipers – demonstrates their confidence in the power of the resurrection as evidence.

If the resurrection is true, then it establishes all the claims of Jesus to be valid. Further, if the resurrection proves Jesus to be the Son of God, then Jesus Himself testified that the Bible is from God. And, since the resurrection is a miracle, like other miracles it would prove the existence of God.

Yet Many Different Theories Exist Regarding the Events Following Jesus' Death.

In order to avoid accepting the resurrection, skeptics have offered several explanations.

1. The theory that the disciples stole the body – this is what the soldiers who guarded His tomb were paid to say (Matt. 28:11-15).

2. The theory that Jesus did not really die but only “swooned” on the cross and then later recovered in the tomb

3. The theory that the disciples had “hallucinations” and only imagined they saw Jesus alive after the crucifixion

Let us now consider the events surrounding Jesus' death to see whether the resurrection fits the evidence or whether some other explanation fits the facts better.

The Evidence Regarding Jesus' Resurrection

We have earlier discussed the force of the testimony of witnesses as evidence for historic events. Consider the evidence given by the witnesses regarding Jesus' resurrection.

Events Prior to Jesus' Death

Old Testament predictions of the resurrection

Luke 24:46 – Jesus and His apostles repeatedly claimed that Old Testament prophets had predicted His resurrection (see also Luke 18:31-34; Acts 17:3; 26:22,23; 1 Cor. 15:4). What prophecies would this refer to?

Isaiah 53:7-10 - This passage is acknowledged to be a prediction of Christ (cf. Acts 8:29-35). He would be led as a lamb to the slaughter (v7), cut off from the living (v8), made an offering for sin (v10), die, and be buried (v9). But then He would prolong His days and see His seed (v10). How could this be unless He came back to life?

Psalms 16:9,10 is quoted and explained in Acts 13:29-39 (cf. 2:23-32). It predicts One who would not see corruption nor His soul remain in Hades (the realm of spirits of dead men). It cannot apply to David who spoke it, because he did see corruption. Rather, he spoke as a prophet referring to the resurrection of

Christ (2:30,31). He did not experience corruption, because His body came back to life.

Jesus' predictions of His resurrection

Jesus Himself repeatedly predicted, not just His death, but also His resurrection. He began early in His ministry to make such predictions and continued right up to the end. See John 2:18-22; Matt. 12:39,40; 16:21,22; 17:9,22,23; 26:31,32; Mark 9:9,10 (and parallel accounts). Consider one example.

Matthew 20:18,19 – Note the details: He would be **betrayed** to the **Jewish** leaders but would be killed by the **Gentiles** (Romans). They would **scourge** Him and **crucify** Him (a uniquely Roman execution), but He would **rise** again the **third day**. A general prediction of ones own resurrection would be surprising, but such detail is amazing.

Matthew 27:62-66 – Note that Jesus' predictions of His resurrection were widely known in the first century. Even the enemies responsible for His death were aware that He had made such predictions.

No pretender would make such predictions for himself, for he would know that three days after his death, everyone would know he was a fraud. Yet, if Jesus made the claims and then kept His followers after His death, this is substantial evidence that His claims may be true.

And note that, at the time He made these predictions, the disciples repeatedly did not understand or believe them (Matt. 16:22; Mark 9:10; Luke 18:34; John 20:9). Why would they later hallucinate or make up false claims of resurrection, when they themselves had repeatedly opposed predictions of it?

If convincing evidence exists for Jesus' resurrection, this is doubly amazing. Not only would it be a natural impossibility for one to arise from the dead, but it would be even more impossible that he and others could predict it years before it happened. This multiplies the force of the evidence, proving that such an event could only occur by the power and approval of God.

The Crucifixion

Jesus suffered the following physical abuse:

He was scourged.

John 19:1-3 – Scourging was a beating with a whip of many leather thongs, often with embedded bits of metal or glass. People often died just from such beatings. (Matt. 27:26; Mark 15:15)

He was nailed to the cross.

Matthew 27:35-54 – In the crucifixion, spikes were driven through His hands and feet, nailing Him to the cross. Then the cross was lifted up, suspending Him where He remained for at least three hours. (Mark 15:24-39; Luke 23:33-47; John 19:16-30; cf. John 20:20,24-29; Luke 24:40; Psalms 22:16)

He died.

Mark 15:37,39 - All the accounts specifically state that He died (i.e., His spirit departed, etc.) (Cf. Matt. 27:50; Luke 23:46; John 19:30,33).

Mark 15:44,45 – In order to confirm that Jesus was dead, Pilate made inquiry of the centurion who had been in charge of the crucifixion.

His side was pierced with a spear.

John 19:31-34 – Soldiers came to break His legs to hasten death; but they did not have to do so, since He was already dead. So they pierced His side with a spear. This also confirms that He died on the cross.

All this was personally witnessed by multitudes of people, both friends and enemies. Note Luke 23:48,49; John 19:35; 1 Peter 5:1.

The claim that Jesus did not die but merely swooned contradicts the clear testimony of the witnesses that He did die. The centurion and soldiers were professionals at such executions, and they all testified that He was dead.

But even if He did not die, consider His condition. He had been scourged, nailed to the cross for at least three hours, and then his side pierced with a spear. If He then spent three days in the tomb without food and water, how would He awaken and appear healthy enough to convince the skeptical disciples that He was raised from the dead? And would such a deception harmonize with His upright character?

Events Surrounding Jesus' Burial

The body was prepared for burial.

John 19:38-42 – The body was prepared with 100 pounds of spices then wrapped in strips of linen. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus did this, as witnessed by various women from Galilee, including Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (Luke 23:50-56; cf. Matt. 27:57-61; Mark 15:42-47).

If Jesus had not died but only swooned, surely during all this preparation people would have realized He was not dead. The fact they buried Him proves they too were convinced He was dead, not just swooned.

The body was laid in the tomb.

John 19:41 – This was a new tomb, in which no one else had been buried. (Luke 23:53)

Matthew 27:60,61; Mark 15:46 – It was hewn from rock and had a large stone over the door. Again, other people witnessed this. (Luke 23:53)

Note that Jesus' body could not have been confused with that of someone else – there were no other bodies. And when the tomb was found empty, there could be no doubt that His body was gone, since it had been the only body there.

The tomb was sealed and secured by guards.

Matthew 27:62-66 – The Jews feared that, if the body left the tomb, the disciples would claim Jesus was raised. So, they sealed the stone over the opening and placed a guard outside the tomb for the express purpose of making sure the body did not leave the tomb. (Mark 16:4)

How could the disciples steal the body, as the Jews later claimed, when a guard was expressly placed there to stop them? Rolling away the huge stone and removing the body would surely awaken the guards. The penalty for sleeping on guard duty was death (Acts 12:19; 16:27); so if this really had happened, why would the guards admit it?

Or suppose Jesus had swooned, not died, then awoke three days later suffering from all His injuries and lack of food and water. How could He remove the grave clothes and leave the tomb? He could not dig out, since the tomb was stone. How could He roll away the rock (so large the women could not move it – Mark 16:3), evade or overpower the guards, and still appear strong and healthy to convince the skeptical disciples that He had been resurrected?

Events on the Third Day and Afterward

The testimony of the angels

Matthew 28:1-8; Mark 16:5-7; Luke 24:4-7 - Three Bible writers describe appearances of angels who announced the resurrection to various people. The angels said: “Why do you seek

the living among the dead? He is not here, for He is risen.” Then they reminded the disciples that Jesus had predicted he would rise again on the third day (Luke 24:4-7).

These appearances themselves were miraculous, yet they accompanied Jesus’ resurrection and announced it. The angels appeared to several women, all of whom saw them at the same time and place.

How can such appearances be explained on any grounds other than that Jesus really did arise from the dead?

The empty tomb

One of the greatest facts to be explained is the empty tomb. What happened to the body?

Mark 16:5-7 – The women entered the tomb and saw where the body had been laid. (Luke 24:3; John 20:11-13)

John 20:1-9 – Peter and John went into the tomb and saw it was empty (Luke 24:12). They saw the grave clothes and the head cloth, which had been folded. If Jesus had swooned and then awoke severely wounded, seeking to evade the guards, why would He take time to fold the cloth before leaving? If the disciples had stolen the body, why would they remove the grave clothes?

Matthew 28:11-15 – The enemies explained the disappearance of the body by saying the disciples stole it while the guards slept. If the guards were really asleep, how would they know what happened to the body? How did they know Jesus did not arise and walk out past them? Why should anyone believe men who testified about what happened while they slept?

But note that, by fabricating an explanation for the missing body, the enemies themselves admitted that the body was gone! Never did the first-century enemies of the gospel attempt to deny the tomb was empty. If the body was still in the tomb or if the enemies of Jesus had the body, they would have produced it as soon as the apostles began to preach the resurrection. That would have been the immediate end of the gospel; no one would have believed from that time on. The failure of the enemies to deny the empty tomb or to produce the body, combined with their effort to explain the disappearance of the body, conclusively confirms the claims of the disciples that the tomb was empty.

Any explanation for the events surrounding Jesus’ death must account for the fact the tomb was empty and the body was missing!

Other confirming miracles

The resurrection itself is not the only miracle to be considered in this study.

Consider other miracles that accompanied Jesus' death and resurrection.

* Darkness covered the whole land from noon till 3:00 PM – Matthew 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44.

* The temple veil was torn from top to bottom, the earth quaked, and rocks split – Matthew 27:51.

* Other people were raised and appeared to people when Jesus arose – Matthew 27:52,53.

* Appearances of angels who confirmed the resurrection – Matthew 28:1-8; Acts 1:9-11

Miracles accompanying the preaching of the resurrection

We earlier studied many miracles done by the apostles. Often these miracles accompanied the preaching of the resurrection. Remember, the purpose of miracles was to confirm the validity of the message being preached. Examples include:

* The Day of Pentecost – Acts 2:1-8,24,30-33 – The first time the apostles preached the resurrection, their message was confirmed when the Holy Spirit miraculously empowered them to speak many languages (tongues) they had never learned. They claimed that their ability to do this miracle proved Jesus had been raised (vv 32,33).

* The healing of the lame man – Acts 3:1-10,15; 4:10,14,16 – Peter and John instantaneously healed a man who had never walked in his forty years of life (4:22). Even their enemies had to admit the validity of this miracle. But the apostles used this miracle to confirm their testimony as witnesses of the resurrection.

* Appearances to Saul – When Jesus appeared, the light Saul saw was brighter than the noonday sun (Acts 26:13). Others saw the light and heard the voice but did not understand it (9:7: 22:9). Saul was struck blind till Ananias came and restored his sight (9:8,9,18; 22:11-13). These additional miracles confirmed to Saul and to others the reality of Jesus' appearance.

* Preaching to Cornelius' household – Peter preached the resurrection (Acts 10:39-42). This preaching was confirmed by an angel who appeared to Cornelius and told him to send for Peter

(10:3-6), a vision Peter himself received (10:9-16), and the gift of tongues that came on Cornelius' household by the power of the Holy Spirit (10:44-46). Compare Acts 11:1-18.

The above miracles specifically confirmed the resurrection to be a miracle from God. Jesus and His apostles did many other miracles to confirm that their message was from God. So, miracles confirmed other miracles!

The appearances of Jesus

Acts 1:3 – Jesus presented Himself alive by many infallible proofs for a period of forty days. His appearances are the most important evidence to consider. Here is a list of the appearances:

Mary Magdalene

John 20:11-18; Mark 16:9-11 – She saw Jesus and spoke to Him. (Note the other disciples did not believe her.)

Other women

Matthew 28:9,10; Mark 16:1ff. They saw, touched, and heard Him.

Two disciples on the road to Emmaus

Luke 24:13-35; Mark 16:12,13. They saw Him, talked with him, and listened to Him for a prolonged period. Again, others did not believe them.

Peter

Luke 24:34 (1 Cor. 15:5) – The other apostles claimed that Jesus had appeared to Simon. Paul confirms this in his list of appearances.

All the apostles

He appeared to them on several occasions - Mark 16:14-16; Matt. 28:16,17; Luke 24:44-51; John 20:19-23; 21:1-25; Acts 1:3-8 (note Jesus' prophecy); 10:39,41; 13:31; 1 Cor. 15:5,7.

Especially note Luke 24:36-43 – They saw, heard, touched, and spoke with Him for prolonged periods; He ate in their presence. This continued for a period of forty days. Again, they were skeptical and demanded proof. Jesus willingly proved He was not a spirit.

Thomas with the apostles

John 20:24-29 – Thomas was skeptical till He saw, heard, and touched Jesus, including the wounds. Note that the wounds made

it impossible there could be any mistake in identifying the living man to be Jesus.

James; over 500 brethren at once

1 Corinthians 15:3-8 - Paul gave a summary list of Jesus' appearances. This list adds James and an appearance to over 500 at one time, most of whom were still alive when Paul wrote. If the people were still alive, the point is that other people could speak to them and confirm Paul's claim. (Note that this list does not include all the appearances the Bible records.)

Jesus' ascension

As the apostles watched, Jesus then ascended to heaven – Acts 1:9-11; Luke 24:50-53; Mark 16:19,20. This appearance confirmed the resurrection, since Jesus appeared alive. But the ascension itself was a miracle as Jesus ascended up into the clouds, and angels explained the significance to the apostles.

Finally, note that, after the ascension, the appearances of Jesus suddenly stopped. If the claims of appearances were hallucinations or fabrications, why did the great number of witnesses suddenly stop claiming other appearances?

Saul of Tarsus

Acts 9:1-9; 22:4-15; 26:9-18; 1 Corinthians 9:1; 15:8,9.

Note the following facts that make the appearances to Saul of special significance:

* Saul was an enemy of the gospel and a persecutor of the church. He had no possible motives to accept the gospel and every possible motive to continue to reject it. (See 1 Timothy 1:12-15; Acts 8:1-3; 9:1,2; 22:4,5; 26:9-11; 1 Corinthians 15:9; Galatians 1:13; Philippians 3:6.)

* At noon on an open highway in the presence of other men, a light brighter than the noon sun appeared (9:3; 22:6; 26:13). Such a light at noon would itself be miraculous.

* Jesus spoke and identified Himself to be Jesus (9:3-6; 22:7,8).

* Saul saw and heard Jesus. This was essential in order to qualify him as an apostle (Acts 1:21,22). Note the following specifics:

Acts 9:4-6; 22:7,8,10; 26:14-18 – He **heard** and spoke to Jesus.

Acts 26:16 – Jesus told Saul that He had “**appeared**” to him, and that the purpose of this appearance was to make Saul a

witness of what he had **seen**. Note that Saul was a “witness” in the same sense as the other apostles: he was able to tell people that he had personally seen Jesus alive after His death.

Acts 9:17; 22:14,15 – Ananias said Jesus had “**appeared**” to Saul and God had chosen Saul to **see** Jesus and **hear** his voice, so he could be a witness of all that he had **seen** and **heard**.

1 Corinthians 9:1 – By rhetorical question, Paul claimed that he was an apostle and (as must be the case for all apostles) that he had **seen** Jesus.

1 Corinthians 15:3-9 – After stating that Jesus had died, been buried, and arose again, Paul lists various people who saw Him after His resurrection. In each case, he says that Jesus was “seen” by these people – Peter, the apostles, etc. At the end of the list he claims that Jesus was “**seen**” last of all by Paul himself. “Seen” must mean the same in all these cases. So, Paul physically saw Jesus alive after His resurrection as surely as these other witnesses did. The purpose was to qualify Paul to be a witness of Jesus’ resurrection, just as all apostles must be.

* The men with Saul witnessed the event and heard the voice, but did not see Jesus (since they were not to be eyewitnesses – apostles) – 9:7; 22:9,11; 26:13,14. But their testimony would confirm that the event occurred.

* Saul was struck blind till Ananias came and restored his sight (9:8,9,18; 22:11-13). This too was a miracle to confirm to Saul and others that he had really seen the vision and that Ananias was the one who would tell Saul what he needed to do to be saved.

* The Lord confirmed this event and the purpose of it to Ananias, who gave Paul back his sight – 9:10-18; 22:12-16.

* Saul (as he later became known as the Apostle Paul) repeatedly preached afterward that he had been chosen by the Lord to be an apostle and a witness of the resurrection (22:14,15; 26:16).

The preaching of the apostles and early Christians

The apostles immediately and repeatedly preached that they were eyewitnesses of these events – Acts 1:22; 2:32; 3:15; 4:33; 10:39-41; 13:30-32; 22:14,15; 26:16; 1 Cor. 15:3-8,15. All were persecuted and most gave their lives for this testimony, but none ever withdrew it, denied it, or retracted it.

Note Acts 26:23,26 – Paul preached the resurrection to King Agrippa, then said the king knew about these things, because they were not done in a corner. Events surrounding Jesus’ death and

resurrection were widely known. If the testimony of the apostles could be disproved, it would have been disproved in the first century among the people who knew the facts.

The Strength of the Evidence

Consider now how convincing the evidence for the resurrection is.

A Summary of the Nature of the Evidence

Note 1 Corinthians 15:14,15 – Paul plainly admitted that, if Jesus is not raised, then the apostles were false witnesses. But if they are true witnesses, then Jesus was raised.

To evaluate the strength of the evidence, consider:

- * The number of appearances – more than ten appearances over a period of forty days

- * The number of witnesses – more than 500 people saw Him

- * The opportunity of the witnesses to observe Jesus: They saw, heard, and touched Him. They ate with Him. They spent long periods with Him. Some saw Him repeatedly. All this continued for a period of forty days.

- * The consistency of the accounts – While some give details that others do not (as would be expected of honest witnesses), the accounts harmonize and support one another, instead of contradicting one another.

- * The tone of the testimony – The witnesses were calm, rational, confident, and definite in their statements. They were not excitable, irrational, doubtful, confused, or uncertain.

- * The honesty of the witnesses – They were not gullible. They demanded evidence. They had not expected Jesus to die, let alone be raised. When he died, they gave up and had no hope for His resurrection. All of this contradicted their preconceived ideas. Further, note how they admitted their own weaknesses and errors: their desertion of Jesus, Peter's denials, their unbelief of the initial reports, etc. Would dishonest men paint themselves so unfavorably?

- * The nature of the witnesses – Most knew Him so well as to identify Him without mistake. Yet they were not expecting to see Him alive again. They demanded much evidence before believing.

Paul was an enemy who would never have claimed such an appearance without overwhelming proof.

* The motives of the witnesses – All suffered persecution and most died for their testimony without retracting or compromising. Yet they continued to testify repeatedly, even after they knew they would suffer for doing so. Why do so, if they knew it was a lie?

* The records that have come to us were written by people who had personally witnessed these appearances (Matthew, John, Paul) or who had personally interviewed eyewitnesses (Luke, Mark). They were written while the witnesses were still alive and could be questioned (1 Cor. 15:6).

How can the alternative theories fit this evidence?

Did the disciples steal the body?

The guards were paid to testify this is what happened, but why should we believe the testimony of men who claimed to sleep through the event?

How did the disciples overpower the guards who had been placed there to prevent this very act?

How could they make the body appear alive to convince all these people they saw Jesus again?

Why would they invent a story that was so completely contradictory to their expectations? They themselves did not believe the reports when they first heard of them.

And why were they all willing to die for their testimony, if they knew all along that the whole thing was a lie? Why did none of them ever in any way deny or retract their testimony?

Were the appearances just hallucinations?

Why would so many people see similar hallucinations, many of them at the same time?

Would physical evidence such as touching someone and eating meals together characterize a hallucination?

Why did the appearances so suddenly stop?

Does the tone of the testimony fit a hallucination? Do they sound gullible?

Why would the skeptic Saul have such a hallucination?

And if the disciples just saw hallucinations, the body would still be in the tomb. So why didn't the enemies produce the body and disprove the claims of a resurrection?

Did Jesus merely swoon and then later awaken?

Why did so many testify that He was dead?

After all He had been through, how could He appear healthy enough to convince all these people He had been miraculously raised?

And would such a deception fit with His honest and upright character?

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle once had his hero Sherlock Holmes state: "...when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth." We have demonstrated the impossibility of all attempts to explain the events following Jesus' death apart from the resurrection. Having eliminated the impossible, the only conclusion that fits the evidence, despite the fact that we have never personally experienced any such thing, is that Jesus really did arise from the dead. Therefore, He must be the Christ, the Son of God, as He claimed. And He in turn has confirmed by His teaching and example that God exists and that the Bible is the inspired word of God.

Conclusion

The witnesses have now testified, and you must reach your verdict. *Your eternal destiny depends on your decision.*

In order to conclude honestly that God does not exist, the Bible is not God's word, and Jesus is not God's Son, here is what you must do:

1. Explain the existence of the universe without God to create it. What reasonable explanation is there?
2. Disprove the eyewitness testimony that God spoke to confirm Jesus to be His Son.
3. Explain the fulfilled prophecies and the testimony of John the Baptist. What explanation can there be, other than the inspiration of God?
4. Disprove the miracles. But even Jesus' enemies in the first century could not do this!
5. Disprove the resurrection. What explanation can you give that harmonizes with the eyewitness testimony?

Compare the evidence in the Bible to the evidence offered for any other religion.

Ask defenders of Islam, Mormonism, Buddhism, Hinduism, etc., what reasons they can give why you should accept their

religious system as the truth. They may suggest that you try their religion and see if you find it satisfactory. They may express how pleasant, enjoyable, or satisfying you will find their religion. They may appeal to emotions, but not to objective evidence, and especially not to eyewitness testimony. They may suggest that you pray for God to send you a testimony that their religion is true, but there is no objective proof that such a “testimony” is anything more than just a feeling.

But none of them offer evidence such as we have considered for the Bible claims.

* Some worship gods that do not even claim to have created the universe.

* Generally, they do not even suggest as evidence that their prophets gave prophecies that were fulfilled. If you press them for examples, their examples are not verified by eyewitness testimony. Or when their prophets did try to predict the future, they were often wrong (see examples of false prophecy in our study of fulfilled prophecy).

* Generally, they do not suggest as evidence that miracles were done through their prophets. If you press them for examples, anything they come up with will fail to possess the verifiable characteristics of true miracles as in Bible examples.

* And not one of them claims that the founder of their faith arose from the dead. And if they made the claim, they could never substantiate it by eyewitness testimony.

The Bible message is unique among the religions of the world in that it offers objective, verifiable evidence that its message is true: that the God it proclaims is the true God, that Jesus is the Son of God, and that the Bible is the message of that God. No other religious system comes close to offering the kind of evidence offered in the Bible, and most don't even seriously try.

Note that, after concluding that God exists, Jesus is His Son, and the Bible is His word, we simply accept everything else the Bible says as being truth.

A child accepts who his parents are on the basis of faith, based on eyewitness testimony. After accepting this fact, he obeys what his parents tell him because they are his parents. He does not need to re-examine every day who his parents are. He has settled that question. After that, he simply needs to know what he should do to have a good relationship with his parents.

Suppose the parents have died and are no longer present, but they have left a written will that states what they want done after they die. The child needs to investigate the will to determine if it is genuine. Did his parents really prepare and leave this statement as a revelation of their will? This is also determined on the basis of evidence, especially the testimony of witnesses. When the child has investigated the evidence and is convinced the will is genuine, he will not question each individual statement in the will. He will not seek loopholes nor continually express doubt about the validity of each statement. If he is convinced these people were his parents and he is convinced this is a genuine statement of their wishes, then he accepts everything in the will as being from his parents. The only question that remains is to examine what the will says to see what the parents revealed there.

In the same way, the Bible gives us evidence that God exists, the Bible is the word of God, and Jesus is the Son of God. When an honest person adequately examines that evidence, he will become convinced that the God of the Bible is the true God and Jesus is His true Son. When He is convinced the Bible is truly a revelation from His Father, he does not question every statement in the Bible to determine whether or not it is true. Rather, by accepting the Bible as being from God, he accepts the whole message and each specific statement in it as being from God (see the passages about inspiration in our introduction). And since he now believes that God is all-wise and perfect, he accepts every statement as being true, simply because it is the will of the perfect God.

From that point on, the only concern of a true believer is to determine what the Bible really says. What message did God intend to convey in His word? The believer will study to find the true meaning that God revealed in the word. When he understands what the message says, he will seek to believe and obey it, because it is the will of God.

What verdict will you reach? *Do you believe God exists, the Bible is God's word, and Jesus Christ is the divine Son of God? If so, are you obeying it?*

Resources

Besides the sources already cited, the following books were especially helpful in preparing this study, and will be helpful to you in further study:

Gospel Argument for God (The), by Kenneth Chumbley

Indestructible Foundations, by Peter Wilson.
Internal Evidences of Christianity, by Homer Hailey.
Introduction to Christian Evidences, by Ferrell Jenkins.
Twilight of Evolution, by Henry M. Morris.

Printed books, booklets, and tracts available at
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