

Useful Apologetics

CONVINCING THE LOST



**See page 77 for link to
introductory videos, pdf,
ppt and instructor notes.**

James Grandinetti

Sharon Baptist Church

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Note to the Readers

This course is intended to help you as a Soul-Winner convince the lost. This course contains both biblical and extra-biblical sources. Every effort has been made to use citations for references used. Please note the disclaimer below. All Scripture references in this material are to the King James Bible.

Our desire is that you would use this material as a reference to help answer some of these questions that people have with biblical answers.

DISCLAIMER: Sharon Baptist Church does not endorse Bible versions other than the King James Version. While we may not support all the details of the extra-biblical books mentioned, we feel that the content of these books is generally helpful for the spiritual reader. Also, please keep in mind we do not endorse all the doctrinal positions of other authors in these extra-biblical books.

Convincing the Lost

The Biblical Foundation

The Examples in the Bible



There are two words that show us the biblical foundation for apologetics. 'reasoned' - διαλέγομαι, dialegomai - To mingle thought with thought.¹ You can see the derived English word "dialogue" in dialegomai. That same word is translated elsewhere as: 'my defence,' 'mine answer,' 'the defence of the gospel,' 'my answer,' 'to give an answer' (**Acts 17: 2,3; Acts 18:4; Acts 18:19; Acts 24:25**)

Then we have apologia, which is where we get the word apologetics. ἀπολογία, apologia - A reasoned statement or argument.² (**Acts 22:1; I Corinthians 9:3; Philippians 1:7, 1:16,17; II Timothy 4:16, I Peter 3:15**)

The Reasons

1. Because we are commanded to.
2. Because the Bible is full of examples where Christians contended for the faith.
3. Because real people have real questions that do have answers.
4. Because God does not expect people to have blind faith.
5. Because we desire to convince the lost.

¹ Thayer, Joseph. Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995

² Ibid.

Apologetics can be broken down into two categories: **academic** and **useful**. We want to focus on what will be **useful**. There is nothing wrong with going beyond the basics, however we are responsible for **what we know** and **how we spend our time**. (Luke 12:48, Ephesians 5: 15-17)

“As biblical illiteracy increases in our churches and as authority of any kind-including biblical authority- is more frequently called into question, we will continue to see relativism, skepticism, and smorgasbord religion appear in various “Christian” settings.”³

The Goal

Our goal is to present **arguments** without being **argumentative**. Present a **defense** without becoming **defensive**.⁴ This will require us to speak the truth in love. (Ephesians 4:15)

Question of Worldviews

(Understand Where People Stand)

The two “main” ideas

God exists or **God does not exist**. Within these two main ideas there are many worldviews. A **worldview** simply put “is how someone views or interprets reality. It is the framework by which one makes sense of the data of life.”⁵ “A worldview answers fundamental questions such as Why are we here? What is the meaning and purpose of life? Is there a difference between right and wrong? Is there a God?”⁶

³ Copan, Paul. That's Just Your Interpretation: Responding to Skeptics Who Challenge Your Faith. Grand Rapids: Baker Books , 2001.

⁴ Pg. 14 Craig, William Lane. On Guard. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010.

⁵ “Worldview” pg. 785 Geisler, Norman. Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999.

⁶ Myers, Jeff, and David Noebel. Understanding the Times: A survey of competing worldviews. Manitou Springs: David C. Cook, 2016.

Example: If I go to the store and run into someone who needs to hear the Gospel. I present the Gospel to them and they get saved, my worldview dictates that God directed my path (**Monotheism, Christianity**). A naturalist (**Atheist, Humanist**) would say 1. It was just by chance that you ran into someone and 2. That you presented a philosophy of life to someone who is scared of life and therefore needs a crutch to cope with life.

God Exists (Belief Structures):

Monotheism – One God.

Polytheism – Many Gods.

Pantheism – Everything is God or We all make up God.

God Does Not Exist (Belief Structures):

Atheism – ‘A’ – without or no, ‘theism’ – God.

Agnosticism – Is a weak form of Atheism. It is the “I don’t know what to believe” position. It is trying to straddle the road between ‘God exists’ and ‘God does not exist.’

The two in six

As one writer describes there are six major worldviews. “Each of these six worldviews claims to present the truth.”⁷

Name the category – **God exists or God does not exist.**

1. **Christianity** – Monotheistic belief in God as revealed in the Bible, in creation, and in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ being, God incarnate and the Savior of the world. “The Christian worldview offers a narrative of all history. Thus, starts with the special creation of human beings by God, delves into the consequences of their fall, and promises redemption through the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross and his subsequent

⁷ Myers, Jeff, and David Noebel. Understanding the Times: A survey of competing worldviews. Manitou Springs: David C. Cook, 2016.

resurrection.”⁸ (For the purpose of these worldviews, Judaism is listed under Christianity though our views are radically different concerning the Bible and the interpretation of the Bible.)

2. **Islam** – Is monotheistic as well, and began September 24, 622 AD, when seventy muhajirun pledged loyalty to an Arabian trader from Mecca who had fled to Medina and began receiving special revelations from Allah. The traders name: Muhammad. His submission to God gave his religion its name; *Islam* means “submission.”⁹
3. **Secularism** – “Secularism comes from the Latin word *saecularis*, roughly meaning “of men,” “of this world,” or “of this time.” Secularists believe humans are the center of reality [Humanism]. They disdain influence of those who believe in ideas of gods, an after-life, or anything beyond what we can sense.”¹⁰ Even though they disavow religion they do have specific beliefs concerning the cause, nature and purpose of the universe. They hold an atheistic and materialistic view.
4. **Marxism** - A worldview that believes “history could be defined as a struggle between the haves (the owners) and have-nots (the workers). If only the workers would rise up to overthrow the owners, they could form a worker’s paradise in which all wrongs are righted, all possessions are shared, and all injustices ended. The utopian state at the end of this long and bloody struggle is called communism.”¹¹ According to Lenin, who was a Marxist “Atheism is a natural and inseparable part of Marxism, of the theory and practice of scientific socialism.”¹²

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Lenin, V.I. Religion. Dutt Press, 2007.

5. **New Spirituality** – “Is a free-flowing combination of Eastern religions, paganism, and pseudo-science that pops up in odd places. Deepak Chopra, Rhonda Byrne, and Marilyn Ferguson, and Shakti Gawain – describe a world spiritual in nature but not governed by a personal all-powerful God.” (Pantheism)
6. **Postmodernism** – Suspicious of anything that includes modernism, and for that matter all other worldviews (Metanarratives). Postmodernism teaches that ultimate reality is inaccessible. Knowledge is socially constructed and truth-claims are political power plays. (Relativism)

Knowing these worldviews only provide us with background information to understand where we need to begin and where we need to go.

For those who believe – **no God exists**. We start with proving the existence of God.

For those who believe – **God exists**. We start by assessing what they believe about God. From there we move on to proving the God of the Bible is the one true God.

In all cases, **idolatry** is the problem. Whether the god created is a false “religious” god or they are the god themselves.

Secondly, there are only two systems whereby someone can be reconciled with ‘God.’ By a system of works (all monotheistic, polytheistic, and pantheistic religions excluding biblical Christianity) or as the Bible teaches through faith by God’s grace.

Example – **Acts 17:22-33** Paul first observes what the Athenians believe. Then Paul reiterates their belief in God using their own literature and altar. Then Paul argues by taking them to the Bible.

Common Questions with Biblical Answers

How can you prove God exists?

This question perhaps is the most basic and fundamental of all questions concerning those that say “**no God exists.**”

There are many arguments or proofs that can be asserted for this.

Argument I (Cosmological)

Cosmos – Universe

Cosmological - Relating to a discourse or treatise of the world, or to **the science of the universe.**

Premise I - Everything that exists has an explanation of its existence, either in the necessity of its nature or in some external cause.¹³

Biblical Basis – **Romans 1:20, Psalm 19**

What can we think of that exists due to the necessity of its nature? How about number sets in mathematics exist? They **are rather discovered** than created and **therefore exist because of their nature.** [Consequently, God says, I AM and just exists.] Whereas people, planets, and personal belongings have a cause.

Example: If you were hiking and came across a translucent ball lying in the midst of a forest, everyone would agree that it got there somehow. If that ball were the size of a car, would you say it just exists? Would it if it were the size of a planet? ¹⁴

Premise II – If the universe has an explanation of its existence, that explanation is God.¹⁵

¹³ Pg. 64 Craig, William Lane. On Guard. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010.

¹⁴ Pg 56. Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Premise II is built out of premise one. Premise one cannot be correct if premise II is not. Because the Universe exists it demands an explanation.

Example: Evolution is an example of an impossibility because it tries to surmise an explanation of existence that has to have a beginning. If we count back from Man we have to come to a stopping point? If we count back from the Universe we have to come to a stopping point?

The following argument was originally developed by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz – the father of differential and integral calculus, contemporary with Sir Isaac Newton. (1646-1716).

Original Argument

1. Whatever begins to exist has a cause.
2. The universe began to exist.
3. Therefore, the universe has a cause.
(What is the best explanation for this?)

Scientific Reasons to believe the Universe began

1. **Expansion of the Universe** – Increasing outward in all directions. The reverse would necessitate a start point.
2. **The Thermodynamics of the Universe** – Energy is tending toward disorder. This presupposes that we are moving away from an orderly state of usable energy. IF there was an infinite past, we would already be in a state of equilibrium.

The creation account in the Bible fits best. *“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”* **Genesis 1:1**

Argument II (Teleological Argument/ Design Argument)

Instead at looking at the **origin** this looks at the **reason behind its function**.

Teleology - Teleology or finality is **a reason or explanation for something in function of its end, purpose, or goal**. It is derived from two Greek words: telos (end, goal, purpose) and logos (reason, explanation).

Premise I – Fine tuning found in the universe is due to either physical necessity, chance, or design.¹⁶

Three options, either what we observe is by necessity, it is by chance, or it is by design.

Bible Basis for Design – John 1:3, Hebrews 1:2,3, Hebrews 3:4, Isaiah 44:24, Isaiah 48:13

Some current scientific facts about the fine tuning of the universe:

Robert Penrose (English mathematical physicist, Oxford University) stated – the current state of the universe existing by chance is on the order of 1 chance out of $10^{10^{123}}$. (Not feasible)

His Awards -

Adams Prize 1966

Heineman Prize (1971)

Fellow of the Royal Society (1972)

Eddington Medal (1975)

Royal Medal (1985)

¹⁶ Pg. 111 Craig, William Lane. On Guard. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010.

Wolf Prize (1988)

Dirac Medal (1989)

Albert Einstein Medal (1990)

Naylor Prize and Lectureship (1991)

James Scott Prize Lectureship (1997-2000)

Karl Schwarzschild Medal (2000)

De Morgan Medal (2004)

Copley Medal (2008)

Fonseca Prize (2011)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3WXTX0IUaOg> – “There is something outside of our computations.”

“The fine-tuning here is beyond comprehension. Having an accuracy of even 1 part out of 10^{60} is like firing a bullet toward the other side of the observable universe, twenty billion light-years away, and nailing a one-inch target!”¹⁷

The force of gravity, the electromagnetic force, subatomic “weak” nuclear force and strong nuclear forces are the four fine tuned forces of nature.

Two possible objections:

What if the universe were to have different constants and values?

What if a different universe is governed by different laws etc...?

The answer:

The first question does not consider the exactness of this fine tuning. Life permitting conditions could only take place with the values the way they are. By life is meant organisms that take in food, extract energy, grow, and adapt to their environment, and reproduce. Any variation from what is present results in non-life permitting. **The second question** evades the premise by theorizing about a different universe. The discussion concerns our universe and our existence.

¹⁷ Pg. 109 Ibid.

Our universe starting by chance is out of the question because it is improbable. **But what about by physical necessity?** In other words, is a life-prohibiting universe impossible because by necessity the universe has to support life?

Evidence abounds where there is no observable life. Therefore, it is far more probable a universe will be life-prohibiting than it would be life-permitting.

Scientists and skeptics talk about “what is yet-to-be-discovered.” (Called the TOE *Theory of Everything*). This sounds good, but has no basis for a real probability. Even the M-Theory (Superstring Theory) which is based on the TOE, supposes 10^{500} different universes, “almost all of these possible universes are life-prohibiting.” Therefore, if there was physical necessity, life-prohibiting universes would not be abounding.

Therefore, premise II stands:

Premise II Fine Tuning Is Not By Chance Nor By Necessity

Premise III Fine Tuning Is Due To Design

Question: But how can you know there is a God? He is not tangible?

Secondary Question

Answer:

Are there things that exist that we cannot observe hearing, seeing, feeling, and touching? Yes. What about Air? Gravity? Mathematics? Love? What about distant planets yet to be discovered? What about history you were taught but were not present for?

What about your testimony? Paul in **Acts 26:12-16** recounts his testimony which shows us the power of our testimony.

Argument III (The Moral Argument)

The question is raised, can we be good without God? Someone who does not believe in the existence of God would espouse relativism.

Relativism - the doctrine that knowledge, truth, and **morality exist in relation to culture, society, or historical context, and are not absolute.**

Premise I – If God does not exist, objective moral values and duties do not exist. (This premise seems agreeable to relativists).

Definitions

Values – Something is good or bad.

Duties – Something is right or wrong. (Moral Obligation)

Example – It would be good for you to become a doctor but you are not morally obligated to be one.

Also note the difference between subjective and objective.

Subjective means **dependent upon people's opinion.**

Objective means **independent of people's opinion.**

I can say **objectively** that if you drink strychnine regardless of your opinion of it you will die.

So, our premise is that if God does not exist then moral values and duties are not objective.

“A Barna poll taken in 1997” says “40 percent of those who call themselves evangelicals assert there are no moral absolutes. There is an increasing disparity between what Christians **say they believe and how they actually live.**”¹⁸

¹⁸ Copan, Paul. That's Just Your Interpretation: Responding to Skeptics Who Challenge Your Faith. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001.

The objective in this premise is to show that **objective moral values require God**.

Naturalism (Atheism) purports that moral values are a byproduct of evolution and social conditioning. Therefore, taken to the 'nth degree there is no such thing as right and wrong and there is no such thing as good and bad.

What the first premise does not state:

It does not try to prove that you cannot recognize objective moral values and duties without believing in God.

It does not try to prove that we cannot form a system of ethics without referring to God.

But rather it does state, objective morality requires God. "Belief in God is not necessary for objective morality; but God is"¹⁹ necessary for objective morality.

Premise 2 Objective moral values and duties exist.

Biblical Basis – Genesis 1: 26,27, Leviticus 19:2, Exodus 20 (The Ten Commandments)

"I've found that although people give lip service to relativism, 95 percent can be very quickly convinced that objective moral values do exist."

Examples to use:

Is it right for me to steal from you?

Is it right for me to murder? (Making it personal often shows the fallacy or relativism.)

¹⁹ Pg. 135 Craig, William Lane. On Guard. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010.

Can I murder all homosexuals? (Why not if morals are relative?)
What is the basis for any accountability?

The truth of a belief (whether it is true or not) is not tied to **how you came to hold that belief**. (The Genetic Fallacy)²⁰

If someone states “We are just products of our environments and genes.”

Answer: The fallacy is that they believe there is good reason and rationale to hold such a view thereby making themselves the acceptance to their own rule.

Here is another statement along the same lines, “What we call morality is nothing more than an attempt to survive and reproduce. In fact, all that we do is nothing more than our struggle to survive and reproduce.”

Answer: Does this mean your own belief is nothing more than an attempt to survive and reproduce? If this is true then both of us can never know what is right and wrong because we both have the same underlying instinct.

The biblical view is that there is Creator-creature distinction. Human beings are not divine but are made in God’s image. We reflect certain characteristics of the Creator. God is relational, self-aware, rational, personal, volitional, and moral. We have been made with these characteristics though in limited measure.

Further Jesus Christ stated there is absolute truth and He is the truth. **John 14:6**

²⁰ Pg. 143. Ibid.

*Question: What about the problem of suffering.
If God exists why would he allow suffering?*

Secondary Question

The problem of suffering is significant and cannot be denied. There is suffering in the world around us that comes from many different sources. Natural disasters, disease, and man's own inhuman acts towards others show suffering exists.

Remember Jesus' question to the disciples:

Luke 13: 1-5 *There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, **Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.***

First, we must note two areas of discussion. Are we talking about the **intellectual problem** with suffering or the **emotional problem** with suffering?

The intellectual problem with suffering deals with whether God and suffering can coexist. The emotional side of the problem really says "I want nothing to do with a God that would allow suffering to exist." The truth is for most suffering **is more of an emotional problem than an intellectual problem.**

Dealing with the intellectual problem.

Does suffering prove God does not exist?

“Too often believers allow unbelievers to shift the burden of proof to the believers’ shoulders. “Give me some good explanation for why God permits suffering,” the unbeliever will demand, and then he sits back and plays skeptic about all the believers’ explanations.”²¹

Step 1 dealing with the **intellectual problem of suffering** is to clarify the argument.

Ask the question, “Are you saying it is **impossible for God and suffering to coexist**, or are you saying it is **improbable that God and suffering both exist?**”

If the first is chosen the argument is as follows²²:

1. An all-loving, all-powerful God exists.
2. Suffering exists.
3. Therefore, an all-loving and all-powerful God does not exist otherwise suffering would not exist.

Two areas defeat this argument.

First, **does man have free will? What is meant by free-will?**

We have the ability to choose. Go back to **Genesis 2: 15-17**. In order for man to have free will, he must have choices. Those choices necessitate right and wrong.

²¹ Pg. 153 Ibid.

²² Pg. 155 Ibid.

How does free will allow for suffering? If we choose wrongly suffering takes place.

Example: If a child is kept in a room that has nothing in it, that child cannot burn their hands. They have no option between touching a stove or not touching a stove. However, if a child is put in a room with a hot stove and explicitly told, do not touch the stove, they have a choice between suffering and non-suffering. Does this mean that the parent does not love the child, if the parent has told the child not to touch the stove?

Genesis 2 clearly shows that man had a choice between right and wrong. This does not disallow for God being all-power and all-loving. But rather shows God has given us free will.

Second, is there a possibility that suffering can bring a greater good?

Romans 5: 3-5 explains to us that tribulations have a place in the life of the Christian and in the end show us the love of God shed abroad in our hearts.

Ephesians 2: 4-7 explains that even though through our choices we have brought great suffering, God loves us, freely offers Salvation, and in the ages to come will show his exceeding riches of His grace by that which we triumph in through Him.

Given these verses what is a worldly example of good coming from suffering?

What about taking a child to the dentist? Does allowing that child to suffer (because no child likes the dentist) provide a greater good? What about require your child to go to school? (they would rather play all day and not learn) Should the child be allowed to stay home and not go to school because it would cause suffering in the child?

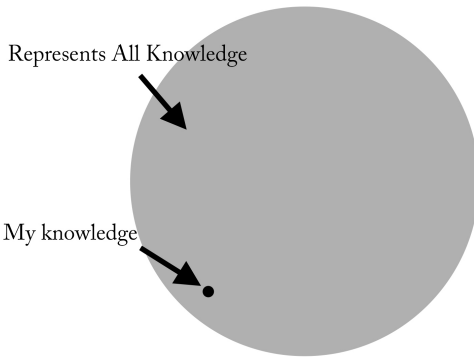
Those arguments deal with the possibility of God and suffering existing. But what about it being **improbable** that God would exist with suffering in the world?

First Response:

We are not in a position to say that it is improbable that God does not have good reasons for allowing suffering in the world.

How do we defend this?

As finite persons, we are limited in space, time, and in intelligence.



“In chaos theory, the butterfly effect is the sensitive dependence on initial conditions in which a small change in one state of a deterministic nonlinear system can result in large differences in a later state.”

“The idea that small causes may have large effects in general and in weather specifically was earlier recognized by French mathematician and engineer Henri Poincaré and American mathematician and philosopher Norbert Wiener. Edward Lorenz's work placed the concept of instability of the earth's atmosphere onto a quantitative base and linked the concept of instability to the properties of large classes of dynamic systems which are undergoing nonlinear dynamics and deterministic chaos.”²³

²³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Butterfly_effect

Example: You leave to go to work 10 seconds later than you normally would. Because of this you have avoided an accident.

Our limited knowledge of cause and effect shows our finite ability to accurately explain all the reasons behind suffering and its meaning.

Second Response

Considering **the full scope of evidence** (not just suffering) God's existence is probable.

Example:

Statistics show that **90% of all college students** drink alcohol.

Joe is a college student.

It is probable that Joe drinks alcohol.

But would if we consider **the full scope of evidence.**

Statistics show that **90% of all college students** drink alcohol.

Statistics also show that **90% of all college students that go to Wheaton college do not drink alcohol.**

Joe is a college student at Wheaton College.

It is probable that Joe does not drink alcohol.

Remember the moral argument:

1. If God do not exist, objective moral values do not exist.
2. Evil exists.
3. Therefore, objective moral values exist. (Otherwise nothing could truly be evil)
4. Therefore, God exists.

The scale of evidence:



Third Response

Within the framework of Biblical Christianity, non-suffering is not the goal, **but rather knowledge of God.**

“One reason that the problem of suffering seems so puzzling is that people naturally assume that if God exists, then His purpose for human life is happiness in this life.”²⁴

Biblically speaking we know that because of the fall of man and the presence of sin, God’s plan is redemptive. Knowledge of Him and reconciliation will result in eventual everlasting fulfillment.

Consider the following verses:

*“Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and **before all the people I will be glorified.** And Aaron held his peace.”* (This was after the death of Aaron’s sons Nadab and Abihu) **Leviticus 10:1-3**

²⁴ Ibid.

*“And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, **in whom I will be glorified**”* Isaiah 49:3

*“Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, **Let the LORD be glorified**: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.”* Isaiah 66:5

*“Now when the centurion saw what was done, **he glorified God**, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.”* Luke 23:47

*“When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, **but for the glory of God**, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.”* John 11:4

*“**I have glorified thee** on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”* John 17:4

Secondly, within the Christian worldview **man is in a state of rebellion against God.**

John 3: 19-21, Romans 1: 18-25, James 4:4, Romans 8:7

The Christian worldview **expects** to see moral depravity, wickedness, and suffering as a result.

Thirdly, according to the Christian worldview **man does not cease to exist upon physical death. Therefore, there is more to this life than right now.**

Romans 8:18, II Corinthians 5: 1-4, Romans 8: 19-23

Lastly, knowledge of God and reconciliation to Him far outweighs the sufferings of this present world.

II Corinthians 4: 16-18

What about the emotional problem of suffering?

Intellectual answers do not necessarily deal with the emotional problem of suffering.

Several items may be noted outside of this apologetics course:

1. Most need a loving friend and a ready listener, not an intellectual answer.
2. Unlike other “worldviews” we have real resources to help us in and through suffering, our Savior Jesus Christ!
3. As noted earlier, our knowledge of God is an immeasurable good. It provides purpose and hope that cannot be found elsewhere.
4. Story of Mabel, bedridden, blind, deaf constantly drooling for 25 years always thinks of others. And when asked what do you think of most as you lie here all day? Her response, “I think about my Jesus.”²⁵

²⁵ Pg. 171, 172 Ibid.

How do you know the Bible is true?

(Not just written by man)

How can we know the Bible is true? There are several evidences that we can look at. We can classify these evidences in two ways:

Internal Evidence: What is found in the Bible itself or in comparison to itself.

External Evidence: What is found outside the Bible from other sources.

What does the internal evidence say?

Facts concerning the Bible

Internal evidences

1. **The Bible is comprised of 66 different books, written by at least 40 different penman and written over a 1500-year period. With such diversity, how can there be a semblance of unity?** (In other words, the individual penman was far removed in language, time, culture, and location from one another. How then, could the message of the Bible be unified throughout all 66 books?) (~1400 BC - ~95 AD)
2. **Concerning just the New Testament alone which is comprised of 27 individual books, there was insufficient time to erase core facts.** I.E. the so-called “legend hypothesis.”

The “legend hypothesis” states that Gospel accounts are really embellished legendary writings about a “good” man named Jesus.

The impossibility in this is **the time frame from the time of Jesus’ death to the writing of the Gospel accounts.**

According to Professor Sherwin-White, whose is not a theologian, but rather a historian of Greco-Roman times the Bible could not be “legendary.” He states two generations is too short a time span to allow legendary tendencies to wipe out the hard-core historical facts.²⁶

“This point becomes more devastating for skepticism when we realize that the gospels themselves use sources that go back even closer to the events of Jesus’ life.”²⁷

The time of writing is approximate and widely discussed but notice the approximate dates:

Matthew ~44-50 AD

Mark ~68 AD

Luke ~60 AD

John ~85 AD

Jesus lived 33 ½ years which puts these accounts within 10 to 15 years. (Jesus’ Death ~AD 30-36)

²⁶ Pg. 190 Craig, William Lane. On Guard. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010.

²⁷ Pg. 190 Craig, William Lane. On Guard. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010.

3. **The subject matter of the Bible includes embarrassing accounts, which is an evidence of authenticity.** This is one criterion of six used to prove authenticity of ancient documents. (The other criteria are Historical Fit, Independent Early Sources, Embarrassment, Dissimilarity, Semitisms, and Coherence.) The Bible fits all these criteria²⁸

Some notable embarrassing accounts²⁹³⁰:

Jesus speaking to the Women at the well

Jesus allowing His feet to be washed by a prostitute

A woman at the empty tomb and the resurrection first

Peter denying Jesus 3 times

The disciples fleeing at the garden of Gethsemane

Jonah running away from God

Moses' angry outburst

God's comment on man in Genesis

This is just a short list. Many more could be listed.

4. **Jesus' own explicit claims.** He claimed to be the Son of God. He claimed to be the Messiah. He claimed deity³¹. You have to do something with Jesus. Ask the question what do you think of the Bible? What do you think of Jesus?

Matthew 11: 2-6 and **Luke 7:19-23** record Jesus' response to John the Baptist's inquiry regarding who He is. "Jesus' response is a blend of prophecies from **Isaiah 35:5,6; 26:19; 61:1**³², the last of which explicitly mentions being God's Anointed One..." or Messiah ("Christ") "Perhaps most remarkably of all, these very signs are listed as signs of the Messiah's coming in one of the Dead Sea Scrolls from the

²⁸ Pg. 194-195 Craig, William Lane. On Guard. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010.

²⁹ This is just a sampling; the Bible contains scores of examples.

³⁰ A longer list is provided in resources section.

³¹ Look at the resource section; The Deity of Jesus Christ.

³² Pg. 199 Ibid.

Jewish sect that lived at Qumran at the time of Jesus (4Q521).”³³

5. **Fulfillment of Prophecy.** Beside the uncanny unity of the Bible, the fulfillment of prophecy is impossible from mere guesswork. (**Deuteronomy 18: 18-22**)

Peter Stoner (June 16, 1888 – March 21, 1980 was the Chairman of the Departments of Mathematics and Astronomy at Pasadena City College until 1953; Chairman of the science division, Westmont College, 1953–57; Professor Emeritus of Science, Westmont College; Professor Emeritus of Mathematics and Astronomy, Pasadena City College.

Stoner is probably best known for his book *Science Speaks* that discusses, among other things, Bible prophecies and their probability estimates and calculations for fulfillment. Stoner calculated the probability of just 8 prophecies concerning Jesus being fulfilled by one person.^{34 35}

“Multiplying all these probabilities together produces a number (rounded off) of 1×10^{28} . Dividing this number by an estimate of the number of people who have lived since the time of these prophecies (88 billion) produces a probability of all 8 prophecies being fulfilled accidentally in the life of one person. **That probability is 1 in 1017 or 1 in 100,000,000,000,000. That’s one in one hundred quadrillion!”**

³³ Pg. 199 Craig, William Lane. *On Guard*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010.

³⁴ Stoner’s calculations are found in the resource section.

³⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Stoner

6. **Fantastic claims that could be verified.**

Lazarus raised from the dead. (**John 12: 9,10**)

Jesus raised from the dead. (**Gospel Records**)

Paul's claim about Jesus' resurrection. (**I Corinthians 15: 4-7**)

The King Agrippa account. (**Acts 26:26,27**)

Example - "The twin towers are still standing today..."

Note – early dates on the writings of the New Testament are crucial and can be verified because of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 which is historically accepted even by skeptics. **Hebrews 5: 1-3** references the Temple in the present tense offerings being made. And yet Jesus prophesied about the destruction of the Temple in **Luke 21:6, Matthew 24:1, and Mark 13:1. Acts, though historically accurate and verifiable speaks nothing of the Temple being destroyed.**

7. **The Disciples and early believers' commitment to the truth.**

(This is noted both internally and verified with external sources. Most gave their lives for what they believed.)

External Evidences

1. **Concerning Historical Accuracy** – just the book of Acts alone contains at least 84 precise facts as found by historian and explorer Sir William Ramsey. (See the **Evidence to Support the truth** for these facts.)
2. **Archeological Evidence** – There is a vast amount of evidence that supports many different details in the Bible.

Elba Cuneiform Tablets – verify the usage of Hebrew words and contain an ancient “dictionary” which has confirmed much of the Old Testament texts.

“The texts included historical information, religious texts, academic texts, agricultural details, laws, treatises and, of most interest to the study of Semitic languages, dictionaries (monolingual and bilingual) and encyclopedias, the oldest dictionaries and encyclopedias in history. Up until the discovery of the Eblaite tablets the only Semitic language known to exist in 3rd Millennium BC was Akkadian. Now with this discovery, another Semitic language was found to be in use in the 3rd Millennium BC and has a very close relationship with the Hebrew language of the Bible.”³⁶

Existence of Assyrian King Sargon - In the early 1800s skeptics use to point out that the Biblical record in **Isaiah 20** was incorrect concerning King Sargon’s existence, but now much evidence has been discovered.

Nabonidus and Belshazzar – Was always claimed as an incorrect biblical record in Daniel. However, Daniel 5:7,16,29 names Belshazzar as ruler and Daniel as being 3rd in the kingdom. How can Nabonidus be ruling at the same time as Belshazzar? With the numerous discoveries naming Belshazzar as the King Nabonidus’ son, it is understood that Belshazzar was Vice-Regent during this time which would make Daniel 3rd in the kingdom.

<https://answersingenesis.org/archaeology/does-archaeology-support-the-bible/>

³⁶ http://www.ancient-hebrew.org/bible_ebla.html

3. Early Writings from Other Sources-

Tacitus (56-120AD)

Mara Bar-Serapion (70AD)

Pliny the Younger (61-113AD)

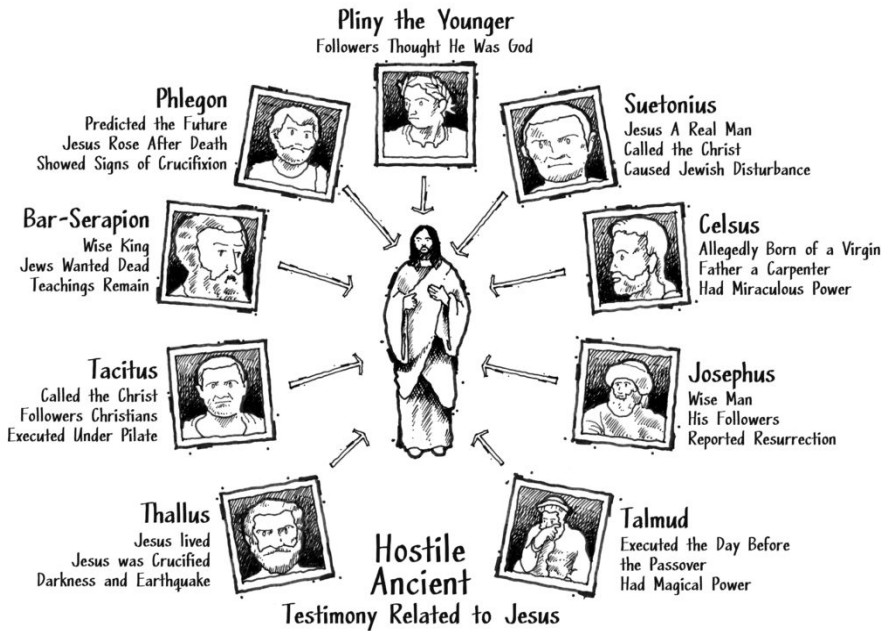
Suetonius (69-140AD)

Lucian of Samosata (115-200 A.D.)

Josephus (37-101AD)

Jewish Talmud (400-700AD)

The Toledot Yeshu (1000AD)



Each of these writers validate the New Testament writings.

Did Jesus really rise from the dead?

What are some evidences we can point to or logical arguments?

The already established historical reliability of the story of Jesus' burial must support the empty tomb.

1. The disciples could not have believed in the resurrection of Jesus if the tomb was not empty.
2. Even if the disciples did believe despite the fact that Jesus was still in the tomb, nobody would have listened. Since the Gospel proliferated from Jerusalem, there would have been ample evidence for no one to believe.
3. The Jewish authorities would have unmasked the false story immediately.
4. Joseph of Arimathea a member of the Sanhedrin is unlikely to be a Christian invention. "Given his status as a Sanhedrist, Joseph is the last person you would expect to care properly for Jesus."³⁷
5. Because of the historicity of the Bible, we have specifically four separate sources that indicate Jesus died, was buried, and rose from the grave. And as we continue below the list of independent sources are not limited to just the Gospel records.

Paul in **I Corinthians 15: 3-5** gives us three keys or proofs to Jesus Christ death, burial and resurrection, that is spoken of by corresponding witnesses. Remember every book in the Bible is considered an independent source document.

³⁷ Pg. 225 Craig, William Lane. On Guard. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010.

I Corinthians 15 “...*Christ died...*”

Acts 13: 28-31

*“And though they found no cause of death in him, **yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.***”

Mark 15:37-16:7

*“And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and **gave up the ghost.**”*

I Corinthians 15 “...*he was buried...*”

Acts 13: 28-31

*“And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and **laid him in a sepulchre.**”*

Mark 15:37-16:7

*“And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and **laid him in a sepulchre** which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre.”*

I Corinthians 15 “***he rose again*** the third day according to the scriptures:”

Acts 13: 28-31

*“But **God raised him from the dead:**”*

Mark 15:37-16:7

*“And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: **he is risen**; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.”*

I Corinthians 15 “...*he appeared...*”

Acts 13: 28-31

*“And **he was seen many days of them** which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.”*

Mark 15:37-16:7

*“But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: **there shall ye see him**, as he said unto you.*

Some “theories” of Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection that hold no water.

The Swoon Theory – He passed out and the cool air of the tomb woke him up. (He faints before he dies, somehow survives is stolen away or is able to walk out of the tomb.)

Problem – Asphyxiation would have taken place with 40 to 70 pounds of swaddling clothe.

Problem – Weakness from loss of blood etc... would have prevented opening of the tomb and also walking off.

The Hallucination Theory – He did not rise from the dead, only people thought they saw him.

Problem – If we were dealing with one or two people this might be plausible. But with the multiplicity of witnesses this is not possible.

Problem – Where is the body?

Problem – Hallucinations would not be identical.

The Impersonation Theory – Someone dressed up to be like Jesus but was not Jesus.

Problem – Jesus appeared to His closest friends and relatives, they would have known if it was an imposter.

Problem – Jesus had scars from the crucifixion.

Problem – How did they fake the ascension to Heaven?

Problem – Why didn’t they just go to the tomb to prove it was not him?

The “Spiritual Resurrection” Theory – This is the theory that just Jesus’ spirit arose not his physical body?

Problem – Where is the body?

The Theft Theory – The disciples came and stole Jesus away.

Problem – Would the disciples be able to overcome the Roman guard?

Problem – Why or how would the grave clothes be left

Problem – The disciples gave their lives for Jesus Christ and the Gospel.

The Unknown Tomb Theory – This simply states they went to wrong tomb and Jesus’ body was not there.

Problem – People would have quickly shown his body.

Why should I believe Heaven and Hell exist?

I don't believe in an afterlife.

This question is obviously difficult to answer. In the past, you could read of folks weighing people right before they died and then right after they died to see if there was a change in their weight. The thought was that because the soul departed the body there would be a small difference. The fact is that the spirit and soul is immaterial versus the physical body so this does not answer the question.

HE 'WEIGHED HUMAN SOUL.'

Dr. Duncan MacDougall, Known for His Experiments, Dies at 54.

HAVERHILL, Mass., Oct. 15.—Dr. Duncan MacDougall, a surgeon known particularly for his experiments in "the weighing of the soul," died at his home here today at the age of 54. Through delicate weighing devices, he calculated the weight of the human soul at between 6 and 8 ounces. In this research which extended through years, he said he took into account the actual weight of the body immediately before and immediately after death. He was a contributor of poetry to various magazines.

How do we defend this belief?

Premise I

There is a universality in **ever era and culture of people** who have this belief in an afterlife.

This does not mean that everyone holds universally a belief in the afterlife, but rather the idea is found throughout all secular history.

Does the Bible tell us that man universally holds this belief?

Ecclesiastes 3:11 suggests so.

*He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set **the world in their heart**, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.*

The word world in **Ecclesiastes 3:11** has the meaning of eternity. Notice this quote from Theologian Albert Barnes.

The word, translated “*world*” in the text, and “eternity” in this note, is used seven times in **Ecclesiastes**.

“The interpretation “eternity,” is conceived in the sense of a long indefinite period of time, in accordance with the use of the word throughout this book, and the rest of the Old Testament. God has placed in the inborn constitution of man the capability of conceiving of eternity, the struggle to apprehend the everlasting, the longing after an eternal life.”³⁸

From Strong’s Lexicon – “From H5956; properly concealed, that is, **the vanishing point; generally time out of mind** (past or future), that is, (practically) **eternity**,”³⁹

³⁸ Barnes, Albert. Commentary on the Old and New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Books , 1983.

³⁹ Strong, James. *The New Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1990.

Premise II

Just like the moral argument, all of mankind has an innate cry within themselves for justice.

Why would this be the case universally across all of humanity?

Really this gets back to the moral argument.

“Sense of justice built into the brain

by Public Library of Science

A new study from the Karolinska Institute and Stockholm School of Economics shows that the brain has built-in mechanisms that trigger an automatic reaction to someone who refuses to share. In the study publishing next week in the online open access journal PLoS Biology, the subjects' sense of justice was challenged in a two-player monetary fairness game, and their brain activity was simultaneously measured using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). When bidders made unfair suggestions as to how to share the money, they were often punished by their partners even if it cost them. This reaction to unfairness could be reduced by targeting one specific brain region, the amygdala.

The study is based on the universal human behavior to react with instant aggression when another person behaves unfairly and in a manner that is not in the best interest of the group. The researchers had 35 subjects play a money-based fairness game, in which one player suggests to another how a fixed sum of money is to be shared between them; the other player can then either accept the suggestion and take the money, or reject it, in which case neither player receives anything.”⁴⁰

⁴⁰ <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-05-justice-built-brain.html>

Premise III

Jesus directly taught concerning Heaven and Hell.

Considering the fact of Jesus, being God incarnate, Creator of all things; He has the best perspective on eternity. (**John 1:1-5, 14; Colossians 1: 15-20, Hebrews 1: 8-12**)⁴¹

Some key passages concerning Heaven and Hell

Matthew 5: 29-30	Luke 10:15
Matthew 10:28	Luke 10:20
Matthew 13: 41-43	Luke 16: 19-31 *
Matthew 22: 29-32	John 3:13
Matthew 23:33	John 6:38
Matthew 25: 31-34, 41,46	John 14: 2,3
Luke 6: 22,23	John 17: 3-5, 24

This list is not all inclusive, but obviously this is a central teaching that our Saviour had.

Would God judge man with the sentence of going to Hell?
Yes.

Some things to note:

- 1. God is perfect and as such MUST be a just judge. Therefore, he must condemn sin and not overlook it.**

Genesis 18:25 *“That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be*

⁴¹ Remember these subjects build upon previous discussions. If someone accepts the Bible as authoritative they must accept what our Lord and Saviour said concerning the subject.

*as the wicked, that be far from thee: **Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?***

I Samuel 2:10 *“The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: **the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth**; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.”*

Romans 2:1,2 *“Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. **But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.**”*

There is not a corner in Scripture where God is not a just judge.

2. **God does not owe anyone a second chance and yet he repeatedly extends his mercy and grace toward us and yet people still stubbornly refuse to repent.**

Romans 1: 18-32

One author wrote “Hell is the logical consequence of a live lived separated from God.”

Romans 6:23 sums up the situation.

3. **We all have sinned; thus, we have earned the “wages” of sin. We are offered a free gift of Salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. Those who face judgement will do so because of rejection of Jesus Christ.**

Oftentimes it is brought up:

What about those who never have been given the Gospel?

Several items should be noted:

1. We are given the commission to take the Gospel to the ends of the world. (**Matthew 28: 18-20**)
2. God is not obligated to save anyone.
3. According to the Bible everyone is culpable because our internal witness (conscience) and our external witness (the heavens and earth.) (**Romans 1:19,20 Psalm 19:1-5**)
4. God declares everyone is responsible for the light they are given. (**Luke 12:48**) (**Matthew 10:15, 11:21-23, 12:41,42**)
Therefore it is not our responsibility to sort this out, but rather God is the Judge.
5. **Ephesians 2:8,9, John 1:9** and **Titus 2:11** make clear that Salvation is offered to all.

If God created everything did he create evil?

This is a very common question and logical, or so it seems on the surface. Specifically, we find this verse in the Bible:

Isaiah 45:7 *“I form the **light**, and create **darkness**: I make **peace**, and create **evil**: I the LORD do all these things.”*

Ah-haa there it is God creates evil so what’s the use?

This verse often touted by people as an argument against God’s existence do not understand the context.

Look at the opposing words:

Light/Darkness

Peace/Evil (punishment, pestilence etc...) – God is the judge of all things, the moral lawgiver.

But in all fairness the problem of evil is real much like the problem of suffering.

The argument normally goes like this:

God created all things and therefore created evil as well.

The first point is to understand what we are talking about. **Evil is not a thing to be created**, but rather should be looked at as an absence of good or a rejection of good.

God in the Bible is described over and over again as good. He is the standard bearer of right. One of the attributes of God is goodness.

Consider the following verses:

*Holy – denotes absolute good and absolute pure in reference to God.

“There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.” **I Samuel 2:2**

“And the men of Bethshemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? and to whom shall he go up from us?” **I Samuel 6:20**

“Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God is holy.” **Psalms 99:9**

“If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”

I Corinthians 3:17

“And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.” **Revelation 4:8**

“God’s allowance of evil is to allow a greater good. What is that greater good? Love. For love to truly exist, it must be free. It must be freely given, freely received, and reciprocal between both parties. God could have created us as robots or automatons. But, that would not provide true love. The ultimate love was given in Jesus, who experienced the horrors

of torture and experienced the just punishment that we deserve.”⁴²

Because of the nature of free will, God has allowed conditions to exist where evil is a possibility. We know from the Bible, that one of the great purposes of God is for His glory. We also know that love necessitates the ability to choose. Therefore, God chose us (**John 3:16**) and displayed His love for us (**Romans 5:8**). We likewise have been given the ability to choose.

Can all roads lead to Heaven?

The argument is that if you believe Jesus is the only way to Heaven, then you are religiously narrowminded. Someone who believes the view that only one religion is a means of salvation is a **particularist**. Someone who views many religions are a means to Heaven is **pluralist**. In addition, the pluralist seem to focus in on biblical Christianity only, even though other “religions” claim the same exclusivity.

One of the main arguments used against someone who believes Jesus Christ is the only way of Salvation is that of **cultural relativity**. The cultural relativity argument supposes that because you were raised in a Christian culture, you naturally hold that Christianity is the only way of Salvation.

⁴² <https://crossexamined.org/did-god-create-evil/>

The problem with this argument is what is called the **genetic fallacy**. “This is trying to invalidate a position by criticizing the way a person came to hold that position.”⁴³

Example: If you were born in Greece and believed therefore that the earth orbits the sun, is there any grounds to dismiss that belief because you were born in Greece?

How you came to a belief does not have any relevance as to the truth of the belief.

How can Christianity claim to be exclusively true?

1. First, there are fundamental differences between biblical Christianity and all other religions.
2. Biblical Christianity only provides **consistent** and **coherent** answers to life’s biggest questions. (Origin, Meaning, Morality, and Destiny.)
3. The historicity of Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection agree with the Bible.
4. Jesus claimed to be the only way of Salvation.

What are some differences between Christianity and other religions?

1. Jesus claimed to be God.

⁴³ Pg. 270 Craig, William Lane. On Guard. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010.

“Although many claim that Jesus does not differ much from other religious leaders such as Buddha, Jesus' claim to be God in the flesh singles Him out of the crowd. The Buddha claimed no such thing, nor did Muhammad or Confucius.”⁴⁴

2. The Bible claims Jesus died for the sins of the world.
3. The Bible claims Jesus rose from the grave.

“No founder or leader of any world religion claimed to die as a sacrifice for human sin in order to set us right with God. Nor is any other world religion based on the resurrection of its divine founder.”⁴⁵

Biblical Basis:

John 14:6 *“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”*

Acts 4:12 *“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”*

I Timothy 2: 5,6 *“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”*

⁴⁴ <https://www.bethinking.org/is-christianity-the-only-way/why-believe-that-jesus-is-the-only-way>

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

John 3:36 *“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”*

John 10: 7-9 *“Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.”*

I Corinthians 3:11 *“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”*

Hebrews 2: 3,4 *“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?”*

Resources

Embarrassing Details in the Bible⁴⁶

1. Abraham lying (on more than one occasion) about Sarah being his sister (**Genesis 12:13, 20:2**).
2. Moses's murder of a man in Egypt (**Exodus 2:11–12**), his outburst of anger in the wilderness, how he misrepresented God and as a result was not allowed to enter into the Promised Land (**Numbers 20:10-12**). Who wrote the books of Exodus and Numbers where these matters are explained? Moses. He tells us about his failures and sins in his own writings. These sound like the words of someone who was committed to communicating the truth.
3. The nation of Israel rejecting God on numerous occasions to worship other false gods (e.g., the Book of Judges). What nation did God use to write down the Scriptures? Israel (the Jews). Is this the kind of thing they would make up about themselves? How unfaithful they were to the very God who saved them from their slavery in Egypt? I don't think so.
4. David's adultery with Bathsheba and subsequent murder of her husband Uriah (**2 Samuel 11**).
5. Peter denying he knew Jesus, after promising he would never do such a thing (**Matthew 26:33ff**).
6. The time Paul had to rebuke Peter for his fear of being seen eating with Gentiles. (**Galatians 2:11-12**).

⁴⁶ <https://alwaysbeready.com/bible-evidence?id=99>

7. The disciples' prideful argument over which one of them was the greatest (**Luke 22:24**).
8. The disciples falling asleep when Jesus asked them to pray (**Mark 14:32-41**).
9. The disciples running away to save their own necks when Jesus was arrested (**Mark 14:50**)...not to mention Peter cutting off the ear of the priest's servant a short time earlier, swiftly drawing a rebuke from Jesus (**John 18:10**).
10. Paul's confession that he was "a wretched man" (**Romans 7:24**) and the "chief" of sinners (**1 Timothy 1:15**).
11. Paul and Barnabas's argument over Mark being allowed to travel with them (**Acts 15:37-39**).

Timeline of False Teachings Adopted by the Roman Catholic Church

- 300 A.D.: Practice of praying for the dead and “signing with the cross” introduced.
- 375 A.D.: Veneration of dead people and use of statues and images as part of worship introduced.
- 500 A.D.: Doctrine of purgatory first preached by the Roman Catholic Church.
- 500 A.D.: Priests adopt a different form of dress than the laity. The costumes were copied from that of Roman government officials.
- 600 A.D.: Pope Gregory I mandates that only Latin is to be used in church worship, a language that practically none of the laity could understand.
- 610 A.D.: Pope Gregory the Great mandates the practice of baptizing infants.
- 750 A.D.: Papacy changes from a church office to a state office. The pope was seen as the head of the “Holy Roman Empire.”
- 754 A.D.: Alarmed by the then common practice of laity kissing and worshipping religious statues and pictures, Pope Leo III bans them from the church.
- 788 A.D.: Worship of statues, images and supposed relics of dead “saints” was reintroduced into the Roman Catholic Church, this time to stay.
- 850 A.D.: “Holy water” was introduced into worship. Its use was believed to scare away demons.
- 965 A.D.: “Baptism” of church bells was introduced as a Roman Catholic Church practice.
- 995 A.D.: Pope John XV decreed that only those that he “canonized” could be called saints.
- 998 A.D.: Fasting on Fridays was imposed. The exception made for fish during this fast is said to be because profits from fishing contributed a great deal to the Pope’s treasury at the time.
- 1050 A.D. (approximate): Mass evolved into a ceremony where Christ was said to be sacrificed again and again at the command of the priest (each time the ceremony was performed).

Attendance at Mass was made mandatory in all Catholic countries.

- 1079 A.D.: Pope Hildebrand, Boniface VIII bans marriage among priests (married priests were common until then).
- 1090 A.D.: Rosary beads were introduced into the church. The church got the idea from their Islamic and pagan neighbors who had used them in their worship.
- 1096 A.D.: Practice of selling “indulgences” to raise money for the church instituted. According to the church, by purchasing an indulgence, one’s time in purgatory was shortened.
- 1215 A.D.: Pope Innocent III made confession of one’s sins to a priest at least once a year mandatory.
- 1215 A.D.: Roman Catholic laity banned from drinking the wine during communion (only priests were granted this privilege).
- 1215 A.D.: “Transubstantiation” made a part of Roman Catholic doctrine. Transubstantiation is the doctrine that the communion bread and wine magically turns into the actual flesh and blood of Jesus Christ during the mass.
- 1220 A.D.: “Adoration of the wafer” instituted by Pope Honorius; literally the worship of the bread used during communion.
- 1229 A.D.: Roman Catholic laity were forbidden to own or read a Bible; reading the Bible was declared to be a mortal sin. Getting caught violating this decree could lead to a death sentence. Bible verses and concepts were only to be passed down to laity through the priests’ sermons and church ceremonies.
- 1245 A.D.: The Roman Catholic Church declared that a sinner can not be pardoned unless he confess his sin to a priest and receive “absolution” from that priest.
- 1287 A.D.: Use of the scapular comes into practice in the Roman Catholic Church. The scapular was an undergarment that acted as a lucky charm, warding off disease, lightning, fire, storms, enchantments and evil spirits.
- 1302 A.D.: Pope Boniface VIII declares that only those in full obedience to the pope can be saved from hell.
- 1439 A.D.: Doctrine of purgatory was made an article of faith (a mandatory belief for any Roman Catholic).

- 1439 A.D.: Roman Catholic doctrine of seven “sacraments” introduced. Sacraments are religious acts that supposedly help one work his way towards forgiveness of sins and eternal life.
- 1545 A.D.: The Council of Trent decreed that all Roman Catholic Church members had to agree that priests “remit sins as God” and that they are “justly called not only angels, but also God, holding as they do among us the power and authority of God.” Failure to agree was a mortal sin and grounds for excommunication.
- 1546 A.D.: In response to the Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church added the Apocryphal books to the Bible. Until this point, these books were considered suspect, of dubious authorship and error-prone by the scholars and theologians of the Roman Catholic Church.
- 1558 A.D.: Ave Maria prayer (“Hail Mary...Mother of God...” etc.) instituted in the Roman Catholic Church.
- 1713 A.D.: Pope Clement XI reaffirms the ban on possession of the Bible by the laity.
- 1824 A.D.: Pope Leo XII condemns translators who were translating the Bible into languages where a translation did not previously exist. This position was reaffirmed by popes in 1844 & 1878.
- 1854 A.D.: Despite the many Biblical references that refuted this assertion, Pope Pius IX decreed that Mary bore no child other than Jesus (so-called doctrine of “immaculate conception”).
- 1870 A.D.: Pope Pius IX declares himself and all popes before and after infallible when officially speaking on matters of church doctrine.
- 1907 A.D.: Pope Pius X condemns all scientific discoveries which are not recognized or officially approved by the Roman Catholic Church.
- 1950 A.D.: Pope Pius XII declares that Mary did not know death, but ascended directly into heaven (so-called “assumption of the Virgin Mary”).
- 1964 A.D.: Roman Catholic Church reverses the use of only Latin in church worship and some restrictions on owning and reading the Bible in one’s own tongue. Just one of thousands of examples of “infallible” popes reversing the doctrines of previous “infallible” popes.

Problems Relating to the Book of Mormon

Though it is claimed to be the “most accurate book on earth”, this “scripture” has suffered over 3,000 changes from its original text. It is also unverified in every other area. In *Handbook of Today's Religions*, Josh McDowell and Don Stewart have compiled the following list of problems for Mormon scholars:

1. No Book of Mormon cities have been located
2. No Book of Mormon names have been found in New World inscriptions.
3. No genuine inscriptions have been found in Hebrew in America.
4. No genuine inscriptions have been found in America in Egyptian or anything similar to Egyptian, which could correspond to Joseph Smith's “reformed Egyptian.”
5. No ancient copies of the Book of Mormon scriptures have been found.
6. No ancient inscriptions of any kind in America, which indicate that the ancient inhabitants had Hebrew or Christian beliefs, have been found.
7. No mention of Book of Mormon persons, nations, or places have ever been found.
8. No artifacts of any kind, which demonstrates the Book of Mormon is true, have been found.
9. Rather than finding supportive evidence, Mormon scholars have been forced to retreat from traditional interpretations of the Book of Mormon.⁴⁷

Another highly respected Mormon Scholar, Thomas Stuart Ferguson, who wrote many books trying to defend the Book of Mormon, finally had to admit, that after “25 years of trying to prove Mormonism, [he] had finally concluded that his work had been in vain. He said that his training in law had taught him how to weight evidence and that the case against Joseph Smith was absolutely devastating and could not be explained away.”⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Josh McDowell and Don Stewart, *Handbook of Today's Religions* (San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life Publishers, Inc., 1982), 73.

⁴⁸ *The God Makers* by Ed Decker and Dave Hunt, page 91.

The story told by Joseph Smith indicates that the golden plates that contained the Book of Morning were too sacred for profane eyes. Because of this, he translated it from behind a curtain, calling out the words to Oliver Cowdery. Interestingly, Mr. Smith himself wasn't even looking at the plates while he was "translating". He would put his "peeping stones" in a hat, burry his face in it, and waited for words to appear on the stone.⁴⁹ Mr. Smith realized that nonbelievers may suggest that these plates never even existed, since no one had seen them, so he had three close friends sign the following statement, "We declare, with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates and the engravings thereon."⁵⁰ Unfortunately for Mormon, these "three witnesses" later renounced Mormonism and declared that this testimony was false.⁵¹ On the next page of the same book, this wholesale abandonment of reason is excused and even lauded. At the 109th Annual Conference, Antione R. Ivins stated, "Faith to me is the greatest thing in life, and God purposely, I believe, covered up in antiquity the history of this people and the story of the Book of Mormon so that...it would have to rest upon faith...that could be given to us only by God Himself."

Another problem for Mormon apologists lies in the pedigree of their leadership. Joseph Smith wrote on January 17, 1844 that "Blessing given to Joseph Smith III by his father, Joseph Smith, Junior...Blessed of the Lord is my son Joseph who is called the third.... For he shall be my successor to the Presidency of the High Priesthood; a Seer, and a Revelator, and a Prophet, unto the Church; which appointment belongeth to him by blessing, and also by right." However, history records for us that it was Brigham Young, and not the young Smith, who obtained leadership over the "church." (Ibid, 84)

⁴⁹ Geisler, N. L. (1976). *Christian apologetics* (374). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

⁵⁰ *Harper's Encyclopedia of United States History* (B. Lossing, Ed.) (4316). Medford, MA: Perseus Digital Library.

⁵¹ *Harper's Encyclopedia of United States History* (B. Lossing, Ed.) (4316). Medford, MA: Perseus Digital Library.

The Deity of Jesus Christ

His deity is shown through His names.

1. He is called God: Isaiah 9:6, Hebrews 1:8, John 20:28, 1 Tim 3:16, Titus 2:13, Romans 9:3-5, 1 John 3:16, 1 John 5:20, Revelation 1:8, Revelation 21: 6,7.
2. He claimed to be the Jehovah of the Old Testament: John 8:58 (Compare Exodus 3:14), John 17:5 (Compare Isaiah 42:8), John 10:11 (Compare Psalm, 23:1), Matthew 25: 31-32 (Compare Joel 3:12), John 8:12(Compare Psalm 27:1), Revelation 1:17(Compare Isaiah 44:6).
3. He is called Lord: Philippians 2:9-11, Joel 2:32/Romans 10:13, Matthew 22:44.

His deity is shown through His works.

1. He creates. John 1:3, Hebrews 1:1-3, John 1:3, Colossians 1:16-17
2. He preserves all things. Hebrews 1:3, Colossians 1:17
3. He forgives sin. Mark 2:5,7-11/Psalm 51:4, Luke 7:48-50
4. He gives eternal life. John 17:2
- 5.

His deity is shown through worship.

1. Matthew 2:2, 8:2, 9:18, 14:33, 15:25, 28:17, John 9:38, Hebrews 1:6

His deity is shown through his attributes.

1. Omnipotence. Mathew 28:18
2. Omniscience. John 4:18, 16:30, Matthew 16:21, 17:22, 26: 1-2
3. Omnipresence. Matthew 28:20, John 3:13
4. Eternality. Hebrews 1:11-12, John 1:1, Micah 5:2
5. Immutability. Hebrews 13:8 (See Malachi 3:6, James 1:17)
6. Holiness. Hebrews 7:26, 1 Peter 2:22, 1 John 3:5

His deity is shown through His equality with the Father.

1. Matthew 5:21-22 spoke with authority.
2. John 13:34 gave a new commandment to follow.
3. Matthew 24:25, John 12:48 he stated his words would be man's final judgement.
4. Matthew 16:18, 1 Timothy 3:15, Acts 20:28 He started the church calls it 'my church.'
5. 1 Corinthians 10:9 the Israelites tempted Christ in the wilderness.
6. Isaiah 6:1-10 context indicates that Isaiah saw Jehovah Sabaoth, yet John 12:37-41 clarifies it was Christ.
7. Zechariah 12:10 say they would see Jehovah who they pierced, Revelation 1:7 clarifies it was Christ who was pierced.
8. Titus 1-3 A quick look at these chapters show Paul used Christ our Savior and God our Savior interchangeably (1:3,4;2:10,13;3:4,6).
9. Additional equality verses John 5:18-21, 8:58ff, 10:32, 1 John 5:7, Philippians 2:5.

Evidence to Support the Truth

Stoner's Prophecy Calculations

1. The Messiah will be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). The average population of Bethlehem from the time of Micah to the present (1958) divided by the average population of the earth during the same period = $7,150/2,000,000,000$ or 2.8×10^5 .
2. A messenger will prepare the way for the Messiah (Malachi 3:1). One man in how many, the world over, has had a forerunner (in this case, John the Baptist) to prepare his way? Estimate: 1 in 1,000 or 1×10^3 .
3. The Messiah will enter Jerusalem as a king riding on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9). One man in how many, who has entered Jerusalem as a ruler, has entered riding on a donkey? Estimate: 1 in 100 or 1×10^2 .
4. The Messiah will be betrayed by a friend and suffer wounds in His hands (Zechariah 13:6). One man in how many, the world over, has been betrayed by a friend, resulting in wounds in his hands? Estimate: 1 in 1,000 or 1×10^3 .
5. The Messiah will be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12). Of the people who have been betrayed, one in how many has been betrayed for exactly 30 pieces of silver? Estimate: 1 in 1,000 or 1×10^3 .
6. The betrayal money will be used to purchase a potter's field (Zechariah 11:13). One man in how many, after receiving a bribe for the betrayal of a friend, has returned the money,

had it refused, and then experienced it being used to buy a potter's field? Estimate: 1 in 100,000 or 1×10^5 .

7. The Messiah will remain silent while He is afflicted (Isaiah 53:7). One man in how many, when he is oppressed and afflicted, though innocent, will make no defense of himself? Estimate: 1 in 1,000 or 1×10^3 .
8. The Messiah will die by having His hands and feet pierced (Psalm 22:16). One man in how many, since the time of David, has been crucified? Estimate: 1 in 10,000 or 1×10^4 .

Multiplying all these probabilities together produces a number (rounded off) of 1×10^{28} . Dividing this number by an estimate of the number of people who have lived since the time of these prophecies (88 billion) produces a probability of all 8 prophecies being fulfilled accidentally in the life of one person. That probability is 1 in 10^{17} or **1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000. That's one in one hundred quadrillion!**

Eighty-four historically precise facts recorded by Luke in Acts

Sir William Ramsay

1. The natural crossing between correctly named ports (Acts 13:4-5)
2. The proper port (Perga) along the direct destination of a ship crossing from Cyprus (13:13)
3. The proper location of Lycaonia (14:6)
4. The unusual but correct declension of the name Lystra (14:6)
5. The correct language spoken in Lystra-Lycaonia (14:11)
6. Two gods known to be so associated: Zeus - Hermes (14:12)
7. The proper port, Attalia, which returning travelers would use (14:25)
8. The correct order of approach to Derbe and then Lystra from the Cilician Gates (16:1; cf. 15:41)
9. The proper form of the name Troas (16:8)
10. The place of a conspicuous sailors' landmark, Samothrace (16:11)
11. The proper description of Philippi as a Roman colony (16:12)
12. The right location for the river (Gangites) near Philippi (16:13)
13. The proper association of Thyatira as a center of dyeing (16:14)
14. Correct designations for the magistrates of the colony (16:22)
15. The proper locations (Amphipolis and Apollonia) where travelers would spend successive nights on this journey (17:1)
16. The presence of a synagogue in Thessalonica (17:1)
17. The proper term ("poliarchs") used of the magistrates there (17:6)
18. The correct implication that sea travel is the most convenient way of reaching Athens, with the favoring east winds of summer sailing (17:14-15)
19. The abundant presence of images in Athens (17:16)

20. The reference to a synagogue in Athens (17:17)
21. The depiction of the Athenian life of philosophical debate in the Agora (17:17)
22. The use of the correct Athenian slang word for Paul (spermologos, 17:18) as well as for the court (Areios pagos, 17:19)
23. The proper characterization of the Athenian character (17:21)
24. An altar to an “unknown god” (17:23)
25. The proper reaction of Greek philosophers, who denied the bodily resurrection (17:32)
26. Areopagites as the correct title for a member of the court (17:34)
27. A Corinthian synagogue (18:4)
28. The correct designation of Gallio as proconsul, resident in Corinth (18:12)
29. The bema (judgment seat), which overlooks Corinth’s forum (18:16ff.)
30. The name Tyrannus as attested from Ephesus in first-century inscriptions (19:9)
31. Well-known shrines and images of Artemis (19:24)
32. The well-attested “great goddess Artemis” (19:27) T
33. That the Ephesian theater was the meeting place of the city (19:29)
34. The correct title *grammateus* for the chief executive magistrate in Ephesus (19:35)
35. The proper title of honor *neokoros*, authorized by the Romans (19:35)
36. The correct name to designate the goddess (19:37)
37. The proper term for those holding court (19:38)
38. Use of plural *anthupatoi*, perhaps a remarkable reference to the fact that two men were conjointly exercising the functions of proconsul at this time (19:38)

39. The “regular” assembly, as the precise phrase is attested elsewhere (19:39)
40. Use of precise ethnic designation, *beroiaios* (20:4)
41. Employment of the ethnic term *Asianos* (20:4)
42. The implied recognition of the strategic importance assigned to this city of Troas (20:7ff.)
43. The danger of the coastal trip in this location (20:13)
44. The correct sequence of places (20:14-15)
45. The correct name of the city as a neuter plural (*Patara*) (21:1)
46. The appropriate route passing across the open sea south of Cyprus favored by persistent northwest winds (21:3)
47. The suitable distance between these cities (21:8)
48. A characteristically Jewish act of piety (21:24)
49. The Jewish law regarding Gentile use of the temple area (21:28) (Archaeological discoveries and quotations from Josephus confirm that Gentiles could be executed for entering the temple area. One inscription reads: “Let no Gentile enter within the balustrade and enclosure surrounding the sanctuary. Whoever is caught will be personally responsible for his consequent death.”)
50. The permanent stationing of a Roman cohort (*chiliarch*) at Antonia to suppress any disturbance at festival times (21:31)
51. The flight of steps used by the guards (21:31, 35)
52. The common way to obtain Roman citizenship at this time (22:28)
53. The tribune being impressed with Roman rather than Tarsian citizenship (22:29)
54. Ananias being high priest at this time (23:2)
55. Felix being governor at this time (23:34)
56. The natural stopping point on the way to Caesarea (23:31)
57. Whose jurisdiction Cilicia was in at the time (23:34)
58. The provincial penal procedure of the time (24:1-9)

59. The name Porcius Festus, which agrees precisely with that given by Josephus (24:27)
60. The right of appeal for Roman citizens (25:11)
61. The correct legal formula (25:18)
62. The characteristic form of reference to the emperor at the time (25:26)
63. The best shipping lanes at the time (27:5)
64. The common bonding of Cilicia and Pamphylia (27:4)
65. The principal port to find a ship sailing to Italy (27:5-6)
66. The slow passage to Cnidus, in the face of the typical northwest wind (27:7)
67. The right route to sail, in view of the winds (27:7)
68. the locations of Fair Havens and the neighboring site of Lasea (27:8)
68. Fair Havens as a poorly sheltered roadstead (27:12)
69. A noted tendency of a south wind in these climes to back suddenly to a violent northeaster, the well-known *gregale* (27:13)
70. The nature of a square-rigged ancient ship, having no option but to be driven before a gale (27:15)
71. The precise place and name of this island (27:16)
72. The appropriate maneuvers for the safety of the ship in its particular plight (27:16)
73. The fourteenth night—a remarkable calculation, based inevitably on a compounding of estimates and probabilities, confirmed in the judgment of experienced Mediterranean navigators (27:27)
74. The proper term of the time for the Adriatic (27:27)
75. The precise term (*Bolisantes*) for taking soundings, and the correct depth of the water near Malta (27:28)
76. A position that suits the probable line of approach of a ship released to run before an easterly wind (27:39)

- 77. The severe liability on guards who permitted a prisoner to escape (27:42)
- 78. The local people and superstitions of the day (28:4-6)
- 79. The proper title *protos t's nsou* (28:7)
- 80. Rhegium as a refuge to await a southerly wind to carry them through the strait (28:13)
- 81. Appii Forum and Tres Tabernae as correctly placed stopping places on the Appian Way (28:15)
- 82. Appropriate means of custody with Roman soldiers (28:16)
- 83. The conditions of imprisonment, living "at his own expense" (28:30-31)

(Taken from Norman Geilser's book, Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics published in 1998)

Early Writings Quotes

Tacitus (56-120AD) – “Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular.”

Mara Bar-Serapion (70AD) - “What benefit did the Athenians obtain by putting Socrates to death? Famine and plague came upon them as judgment for their crime. Or, the people of Samos for burning Pythagoras? In one moment their country was covered with sand. Or the Jews by murdering their wise king?...After that their kingdom was abolished. God rightly avenged these men...The wise king...Lived on in the teachings he enacted.”

Pliny the Younger (61-113AD) – “They (the Christians) were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god, and bound themselves by a solemn oath, not to any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble to partake of food—but food of an ordinary and innocent kind.”

Suetonius (69-140AD) – “Because the Jews at Rome caused constant disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus (Christ), he (Claudius) expelled them from the city (Rome).” “Nero inflicted punishment on the Christians, a sect given to a new and mischievous religious belief.” (Lives of the Caesars, 26.2)

Lucian of Samosata (115-200 A.D.) – “The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day—the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account....You see, these misguided creatures start with the general conviction that they are immortal for all time, which explains the contempt of death and voluntary self-devotion which are so common among them; and then it was impressed on them by their original lawgiver that they are all brothers, from the moment that they are converted, and deny the gods of Greece, and worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws. All this they take quite on faith, with the result that they despise all worldly goods alike, regarding them merely as common property.” (Lucian, *The Death of Peregrine*. 11-13)”

World Religions and Definitions

Pseudo- Christian Religions

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons) – is a religious group started by Joseph Smith, who reported receiving a book written on golden tablets in 1823 (Palmyra, NY). The reception and translation of this tablet is what is the book of Mormon. **Beliefs:** “1. We are all literally God’s children, 2. We lived with God before we were born., 3. We are sent to earth to gain experience. 4. We are judged **according to our works**. (Baptism, Adherence to the Bible and the book of Mormon etc...) “and **depending on our obedience**, there are different kingdoms of glory.” “...all humankind may be saved **by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel**”⁵²

Works-based salvation

Jesus is not God, but rather a created being.

Jehovah’s Witness – “Jehovah's Witnesses is a millenarian restorationist Christian denomination with **nontrinitarian beliefs** distinct”⁵³ from biblical Christianity. “The group emerged from the Bible Student movement founded in the late 1870s by Charles Taze Russell, who also co-founded Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society in 1881 to organize and print the movement's publications.”⁵⁴ **Beliefs:** “To gain salvation, you must **exercise faith** in Jesus and **demonstrate that faith by obeying his commands**.” “Can you lose out on salvation? **Yes**. Just as a person saved from drowning could fall or jump back into the water, a person who has been saved from sin but fails to keep exercising faith could lose out on salvation.” “**Who is the Savior—God or Jesus?**”

⁵² <https://www.mormon.org/resources/plan-of-salvation>

⁵³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jehovah%27s_Witnesses

⁵⁴ Ibid.

(Note: This is code-word for Jesus not being God.)⁵⁵ “Unlike any other human, **Jesus lived in heaven as a spirit person** before he was born on earth.” **Works-based salvation. Jesus is not God, but rather a created being.**

Church of Christ

“Churches of Christ are autonomous Christian congregations associated with one another through distinct beliefs and practices. Represented chiefly in the United States and one of several branches to develop out of the American Restoration Movement, they claim biblical precedent for their doctrine and practice and trace their heritage back to the early Christian church as described in the New Testament. More broadly, the Restoration Movement was an evangelistic and Bible-based effort launched in various places as several people sought a return to the original teachings and practices of the New Testament. Christian leaders including Robert Sandeman, James O'Kelly, Abner Jones, Elias Smith, Rice Haggard, Thomas Campbell, Alexander Campbell, Walter Scott, and Barton W. Stone were trailblazers of similar movements that impacted the eventual phenomenon known as the American Restoration Movement.”⁵⁶ **Beliefs: Works-based Salvation, only Members of the “church of Christ” will go to Heaven, and baptismal regeneration.**

International Church of Christ

In the spring of 1972, 17-year-old Kip McKean was a freshman at the University of Florida. Though mildly religious, it was not until he was baptized that year into Gainesville's dynamic Crossroads Church of Christ that McKean says his life truly changed. After three years of intense discipleship by Crossroads ministers and his graduation from college in 1975, McKean went to serve as a Churches of Christ campus minister at Northeastern Christian College in Philadelphia, Pa. Disturbed by the lack of commitment of the school's students, he left the next year to begin a ministry at Eastern Illinois University. That campus ministry grew under

⁵⁵ [https://www.jw.org/en/bible-teachings/questions/what-is-salvation/#?insight\[search_id\]=cb588a5d-01c2-4249-b82b-e2ac80464910&insight\[search_result_index\]=0](https://www.jw.org/en/bible-teachings/questions/what-is-salvation/#?insight[search_id]=cb588a5d-01c2-4249-b82b-e2ac80464910&insight[search_result_index]=0)

⁵⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Churches_of_Christ

McKean's charismatic leadership. Nonetheless, he felt a growing disenchantment with what he saw as the shallow spiritual condition of most mainline Churches of Christ. In 1979, the Lexington (Massachusetts) Church of Christ invited McKean to serve as pulpit and campus minister of their shrinking congregation. In June of that year, McKean and 29 others in Lexington committed themselves to restoring true biblical Christianity, as they saw it, to the world. ICOC leaders point to that event as the foundation of their "restoration" movement.

Beliefs: "The ICOC argues in its literature that salvation is only available to those who are deemed "disciples." Kip McKean stated in his "First Principles" Bible studies that Jesus demands His followers be "disciples" and that the term "Christian" is only applicable to those who are true disciples. True disciples are those who have consciously abandoned all other allegiances to that of commitment to Christ alone, as McKean understood it.

Key elements of true discipleship, according to ICOC, are **total denial of self, baptism for the remission of sins, acceptance of persecution (even from family or friends), the practice of biblical stewardship (tithing), and above all, unquestioning submission to the ICOC church authority.**"⁵⁷ Works-based salvation, baptismal regeneration, hierarchal church authority.

World Mission Society Church of God (God the Mother Cult)

"World Mission Society Church of God. World Mission Society Church of God, is a new religious movement that began in South Korea in 1964. After founder Ahn Sahng-hong died in 1985, the Church expanded its activities to other parts of the world and began to use the name World Mission Society Church of God."

Beliefs: AhnSahng-hong is Christ in His second Coming. God the Father and God the Mother. Worship on Saturday's. Baptismal Regeneration. Transubstantiation. And the list could go on....⁵⁸

⁵⁷ <https://www.namb.net/apologetics-blog/international-churches-of-christ/>

⁵⁸ <https://www.wmscog.com>

“Christian” main stream religions

Catholicism- Beliefs - Roman Catholic Church is the one true church., purgatory, transubstantiation, Mary’s perpetual virginity and deification., confessions of sins and work for absolution through priest, works-based salvation (Seven sacraments: Baptism, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Confirmation, Marriage, Holy Orders, Anointing of the Sick), baptismal regeneration, infant baptism, extensive church clergy hierarchy, deification of the pope.

Greek Orthodox – Beliefs – Almost identical with Catholicism.

Lutheran – Beliefs – Baptismal regeneration, infant baptism, partial transubstantiation, confessions of sins and work for absolution through priest.

Presbyterian – Beliefs – Works-based salvation (two sacraments, baptism and the Lord’s supper.), baptismal regeneration, infant baptism.

Methodist – Beliefs - Infant baptism, loss of salvation, (works to keep salvation), baptismal regeneration, “Through the waters of baptism, we are cleansed of our sin and born into a new way of living. Whether an infant or adult, this is just the beginning.”⁵⁹ The Lord’s supper as a sacrament. ““The term Holy Communion invites us to focus on the self-giving of the Holy God which makes **the sacrament an occasion of grace**, and on the holiness of our communion with God and one another,”⁶⁰ Methodists hold a sacramental theology mixed in with salvation and eternal security.

⁵⁹ <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/renewing-waters-how-united-methodists-understand-baptism>

⁶⁰ <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/an-open-table-how-united-methodists-understand-communion>

Pentecostal (“Assemblies of God, “Open Bible Churches,” Apostolic Churches (somewhat differ in doctrine)) – “It’s largely believed that the Azusa Street revival in 1906 marked the birth of modern Pentecostalism. At the revival, evangelist William J. Seymour preached about baptism of the Holy Spirit and the gift of speaking in tongues. However, others have said that speaking in tongues may have started as early as 1896 and 1901, when the Apostolic Faith movement began. Widely considered the first person to speak in tongues, in 1901, Bible school student Agnes Ozman spoke in tongues in Kansas. Evangelist Charles Parham called it “Bible evidence” for baptism in the Holy Spirit.”

Beliefs: “baptism of the Holy Spirit” resulting in sign gifts: speaking in tongues, prophecy and divine healings etc., women ordained, losing of one’s salvation.

7th Day Adventist- The Seventh Day Adventist church was born in New Hampshire, in 1844. The Seventh Day Adventists have their headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland. The Seventh Day Adventists decided on their name in 1860. The name – Seventh Day Adventist – emphasizes the wrong day for worship to God. This is the most distinctive doctrine of the Seventh Day Adventists – they believe in worshiping on the seventh day, Saturday, instead of on the first day of the week, Sunday.

Beliefs: Saturday is the proper day of worship. Conditional immortality (Annihilationalism), Soul-Sleep, Borderline- works to keep salvation doctrine. Ellen Smith was a “prophet” and her writings are treated on par with the Bible. Seventh Day Adventists are “preparing the world” for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Unusual eschatology teachings.

Other Religions

Islam - monotheistic as well, and began September 24, 622 AD, when seventy muhajirun pledged loyalty to an Arabian trader from Mecca who had fled to Medina and began receiving special revelations from Allah. The traders name: Muhammad. His submission to God gave his religion its name; Islam means “submission.”

Their beliefs are bound up in the five pillars: **Shahada: Testimony of faith, Salat: Prayer, Zakat: Alms, Sawm: Fast, and Hajj: Pilgrimage.**

As the name suggests, adherence to the Koran and pillars is required. This is a works-based religion.

Zoroastrianism - Zoroastrianism originated in ancient Persia, currently the country of Iran, and is also known as Mazdaism. The founder of this faith was Zoroaster, who was born in 660 BC to a virgin, it is supposed, after a shaft of light visited her.⁶¹ Zoroaster received a good education but felt an inward gnawing from the deepest questions of life. He left home at 20 seeking enlightenment, and received a vision at thirty years of age on the banks of the Daitya River.⁶² The archangel Vohu Mana (Good Thought) ushered him into the presence of God, Ahura-Mazda, and the true faith was revealed to him. In this revelation he was given four key commands:

- Worship Ahura Mazda
- Magnify the archangels
- Damn the demons, and
- Marry the nearest relative⁶³



⁶¹ Edward Verstraete, *The Popular Encyclopedia of Apologetics*, ed. Ed Hindson and Ergun Caner (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2008) 501.

⁶² McDowell and Stewart, 357.

⁶³ Verstraete, 501.

“This religion is very works based, and teaches salvation through good works, good thoughts, and good actions.”⁶⁴

Shinto - Shinto

The religion of Shinto is thought by many to represent a way a life more than it does a set of doctrines. The word literally means “The Way of the gods”. It is only a Japanese religion, and begins with a creation myth where the islands of Japan are the first to be formed. The god multiplied in different ways until there was finally enough to fill nature. Even the leading families of the country are thought to have descended from some of the lesser deities. Shinto was very closely aligned with the government. Much power was derived from the thought that the emperor was actually a living deity. It was only in the 20th century that Japanese government could truly be said to be secular. This influential religion had a large part in the participation of Japan and her soldiers in World War II. A missionary outlined what he believed to be the eight foundational principles of Shinto:⁶⁵

Loyalty, Gratitude, Courage, Justice, Truthfulness, Politeness, Reserve, Honor

Taoism - The now well-known *yin-yang*, however, was merely an observation, not an operation. The reality of harmony did not explain the reason for harmony. The source of this unity was attributed to Tao. Literally, Tao means a “way” or “road”.⁶⁶ According to their thinking, the way in which the universe runs must have existed before the universe itself did. This all-powerful cosmic guidance for order became the “way”, or tao. The Tao is good, and overcomes evil in the long run like water overcomes the hardness of rock. The sacredness of objects quickly led to earth-worship. Every village in China would have a mound of dirt thought to be sacred. It was from this mound that the *she*, or fertility strength of the region was drawn. Every state and province had a large mound, on which different ceremonies and earth-worship took place. As this ancient religion developed, the earth became less significant, yielding the spotlight

⁶⁴ West Coast Baptist College, Comparative Religions

⁶⁵ Christopher Noss, *Tahoku, The Scotland of Japan* (Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church in the United States: Philadelphia, 1918) 87-88

⁶⁶ Noss, 298.

to the heavens. While the earth contained spirits, the heavens contained great Spirits. While the earth was *yin*, the heavens were *yang*. The heavens favor because so significant that the emperors took the name T'ien Tzu, or “son of Heaven”. He was responsible for offering annual sacrifices for the wrongs of the people at the Alter of Heaven. Of course, this only increased their influence and power over the people.

Confucianism - Confucianism is a major system of thought in China. It developed from the teachings of Confucius (551-479 BC). Though not one of the “big five” world religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism), and with probably less than 500 million



adherents, Confucianism, had a large influence on Chinese thought and life. The central concept of Confucianism can be summed up with the word “jen”. *Jen* basically means social virtue. Their rule of thumb closely resembles the golden rule “What you do not want done to yourself, do not do unto others.” As with all false religions, it is based on works, not grace. Their most noted Symbol means total harmony and righteousness. Confucius aspired “To be able under all circumstances to practice five things constitutes perfect virtue; these five things are gravity, generosity of soul, sincerity, earnestness and kindness” This would constitute the Virtuous Man.

This Virtuous Man has three awes:

- An awe for Heaven’s decree
- An awe for great men
- An awe for saint’s words

Hinduism - Hinduism, the third largest religion in the world, is looked at by many scholars as the oldest religion in the world. In the second millennia BC several large tribes of Aryans from the European area began migrating into northern India, imposing their Vedic religion as they came. As these new demographic groups began learning from and mingling with the people of the land, new ideas about the spiritual world and life itself began to develop. By far, the most famous and oldest group of

manuscripts from this era are called the Rig-Veda.⁶⁷ These Indo-Aryan hymns form an early glimpse into the development of Hinduism. Some of the gods in the Rig Veda (sometimes “Rigveda”) can be recognized from other religions, including the Old Testament Hittites. Another example would be the mother god for earth of the Greeks (Gaia Mater). Hinduism teaches three venues for salvation. They are neither complimentary nor exclusive, and which path one pursues is often decided by his caste and station in life. The Way of Works prescribes to the devotee many rituals and religious duties that contribute good karma to aid in a better reincarnation. The Way of Knowledge was another way of obtaining salvation. The way of devotion- bhakti, is chronologically the last of the three ways of salvation.⁶⁸ **Consequently, all of these equate to a works-based salvation.**

Buddhism - One of the simplest encapsulations of Buddhist doctrine is found on page 172 of John Noss’ book *Man’s Religions*: “Where life becomes miserable, the suffering is always found to spring from indulgence of some form of desire; hence, such desire is to be abandoned, done away with...” This desire can be seen in the Ten Precepts ascribed to by Buddhist monks:

Refrain from destroying life; Do not take what is not given.; Abstain from unchastity.; Do not lie or deceive.; Abstain from intoxicants.; Eat moderately and not after noon.; Do not look on at dancing, singing, or dramatic spectacles.; Do not affect the use of garlands, scents, unguents, or ornaments.; Do not use high or broad beds.; Do not accept gold or silver. Moral permissiveness is easily incorporated into such a creed. Buddha himself advised, “Let therefore no man love anything; loss of the beloved is evil. Those who love nothing and hate nothing have to fetters.” To achieve this state of “non-desire”, an Eightfold Path was outlined.

⁶⁷ Josh McDowell and Don Stewart, *Handbook of Today’s Religions* (San Bernardino, CA: There’s Life Publishers, Inc., 1992) 284.

⁶⁸ West Coast Baptist College, Comparative Religion

1. Right belief
2. Belief in the fourfold path:
 - a. Life means suffering
 - b. The origin of suffering is attachment
 - c. The cessation of suffering is attainable
 - d. The path to cessation of suffering-the eightfold path.
3. Right aspiration
4. Right speech
5. Right conduct
6. Right means of livelihood
7. Right effort
8. Right mindfulness
9. Right meditation

New Spirituality:

The New Age Movement is in a class by itself. Unlike most formal religions, it has no holy text, central organization, formal membership, ordained clergy, geographic center, dogma, creed, etc. They often use mutually exclusive definitions for some of their terms. The New Age is in fact a free-flowing, decentralized, spiritual movement -- a network of believers and practitioners who share somewhat similar beliefs and practices, which many add on to whichever formal religion that they follow. Their book publishers take the place of a central organization. Seminars, conventions, books and informal groups replace of sermons and religious services.

Beliefs:

Monism: All that exists is derived from a single source of divine energy.

Pantheism: All that exists is God; God is all that exists. **Panentheism:** God is all that exists. God is at once the entire universe, and transcends the universe as well. **Reincarnation:** After death, we are literally reborn and live another life as a human. This cycle repeats itself many times. This belief is similar to the concept of transmigration of the soul in Hinduism.

Karma: The good and bad deeds that we do adds and subtracts from our accumulated record, our karma. At the end of our life, we are rewarded or punished according to our karma by being reincarnated into either a painful or good new life. This belief is linked to that of reincarnation and

is also derived from Hinduism. **An Aura** is believed to be an energy field radiated by the body. Invisible to most people, it can be detected by some as a shimmering, multi-colored field surrounding the body. Those skilled in detecting and interpreting auras believe that they can diagnose

an individual's state of mind, and their spiritual and physical health.

Personal Transformation A profoundly intense mystical experience will lead to the acceptance and use of New Age beliefs and practices. Guided imagery, hypnosis, meditation, and (sometimes) the use of hallucinogenic drugs are useful to bring about and enhance this transformation.

Believers hope to develop new potentials within themselves: the ability to heal oneself and others, psychic powers, a new understanding of the workings of the universe, etc. Later, when sufficient numbers of people have achieved these powers, they expect that a major spiritual, physical, psychological and cultural planet-wide transformation will happen.

Ecological Responsibility: A belief in the importance of uniting to preserve the health of the earth, which is often looked upon as Gaia, (Mother Earth) a living entity. **Universal Religion:** Since all is God, then only one reality exists, and all religions are simply different paths to that ultimate reality. The universal religion can be visualized as a mountain, with many sadhanas (spiritual paths) to the summit. Some are hard; others easy. There is no one correct path. All paths eventually reach the top. They anticipate that a new universal religion which contains elements of all current faiths will evolve and become generally accepted worldwide. **New World Order As the Age of Aquarius unfolds,** a New Age will increase in membership and influence. This will be a utopia in which there is world government, and end to wars, disease, hunger, pollution, and poverty. Gender, racial, religious and other forms of discrimination will cease. People's allegiance to their tribe or nation will be replaced by a concern for the entire world and its people.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ <http://www.religioustolerance.org/newage.htm>

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All audio, introductory videos, PDFs as well as PPT Slide shows can be found at:

<https://www.sharonbaptisthamptonva.com/convincing-the-lost.html>

