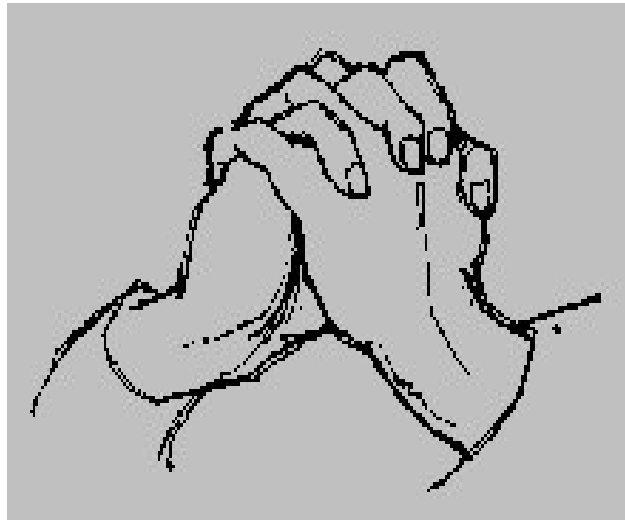


# **EVIDENCES FOR FAITH**



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# EVIDENCES - (1)

## THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

Because many of the people we try to teach today lack any belief in God, it is nearly impossible to get them to accept the Bible as authoritative. Thus, we need to find a method that will help the unbeliever accept the fact that God is and that the Bible is His revealed will for mankind.

Many call lessons like this studies in **evidences**. While I do not care for the use of the term "Christian" in connection with this, we find several authors who define such studies as "Christian Evidence...the scientific proof of the divine authority of the Christian religion." {Keyser} or "Christian evidences, as we conceive of it, is especially concerned with the demonstration of the factuality of the Christian religion" {Ramm}. Extracting the sectarian terminology from these definitions, we find that EVIDENCES are the studies which prove to the honest mind that God IS and that the Bible IS HIS WORD.

One author on the subject of evidences made the observation that "Human reason cannot prove {the religion of Christ} to be true. It can only show it to be more reasonable than unbelief" {Keyser}. So for those who want HARD EVIDENCE, it may still be difficult to convince them that God exists. But when accepted methods of reasoning are followed, the honest heart can only conclude that GOD IS! The order is: **Fact -> Evidence -> Reason weighs evidence -> Deduction or judgment = Belief or Unbelief**. Acceptance of the evidence will depend on *five things*: 1) The weight of the evidence; 2) The clarity with which the evidence is presented; 3) The honesty of the one who hears it; 4) the logical ability of the hearer to evaluate the evidence; 5) The background prejudices of the hearer.

It is our job to present the evidence as clearly as possible, and then it becomes the duty of the hearer to be HONEST in their evaluation of the facts.

## REASONABLENESS OF FAITH

Before we begin considering the existence of God, I would like to make an observation about the **reasonableness of faith**. Many reject the doctrines of the Bible as being BLIND ACCEPTANCE, and thus unreasonable. But this is NOT the case at all! The faith we have in God and Christ rests on testimony that has never been successfully discredited! Furthermore, the concept of FAITH is something that even ATHEISTS deal with every day of their lives. Faith is based on probability. When you open a can of tuna and eat it, how do you know that the food is wholesome, and that it will not *poison you*? We have "faith" that it is good because of the many times we have eaten it safely, and so we eat believing that the EVIDENCE indicates probable safety. So also, we examine the EVIDENCE concerning the veracity of the Bible and the existence of God, evaluate its validity, and determine the probability of it being TRUE.

## **DOES GOD EXIST?**

No greater question could be asked than this. The consequences of BELIEF or UNBELIEF are so great, that this question MUST be fairly considered and seriously answered. The problem of skepticism with regard to the existence of God is nothing new. It is NOT simply of problem of man advancing in scientific knowledge. Since the beginning of time, men have either in word or action denied that God is. Paul explains the reason for this somewhat in Romans 7:23-25 "(23) But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. (24) O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? (25) I thank God -- through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin." We must notice, however, that our age is characterized by such popular concepts as secular humanism and of course evolution - not to forget the primarily materialistic thinking that goes along with such concepts. But what the **world needs** cannot be provided by ATHEISTIC teachers. Man needs something upon which he can base his aspirations, ideals and hopes. A rock that cannot be moved. The most needed thing in the world is not more wealth, health, or knowledge, but PERFECT FAITH IN GOD. As the inspired writer said in Hebrews 11:6 "But without faith {it is} impossible to please {Him}, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and {that} He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

In proving the existence of God, there are TWO SOURCES of information available to us: 1) God's works, or nature; 2) His revelation, the Bible. Paul alludes to this fact in Romans 1:20 "For since the creation of the world His invisible {attributes} are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, {even} His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse," In order to be fair in our approach to this study, and avoid circular reasoning, we will look ONLY at that which exists, or as Paul said, "the things that are made," as evidence of the reality of God.

### **CAUSATION**

Our first argument is on the basis of **causation**. The fact that SOMETHING now exists is evidence that SOMETHING has ALWAYS EXISTED. The reasoning is that SOMETHING did not come from NOTHING. Now, we do NOT mean that there is NO FORCE which can cause things to come into existence from NOTHING - but that either the FORCE or the MATTER is ETERNAL. The question is, WHAT or WHO is the ETERNAL REALITY? All things that exist can be summed up by TWO WORDS: MIND and MATTER {which includes energy in its various forms}. So there are only TWO possible explanations for the existence of the material universe: 1) Mind {God} is the eternal force who created all else; or 2) Matter is the eternal reality which created everything else, including life. NOW - which of these is the most REASONABLE?

The very existence of the world implies a BEGINNING and a FIRST CAUSE which existed BEFORE the world. Skeptics are forced to conclude that the laws of nature operated on matter in some way and brought the universe into existence. In a sense, they make a "god" out of the senseless and blind laws of NATURE. But WHERE did this pre-existing

matter come from? WHERE did the "laws of nature" come from? Surely they did not create themselves. It is scientifically sound to say that a thing not in existence could not have brought ITSELF into existence. Since reason says there is no such thing as an UN-CAUSED beginning, the Christian concludes that the causative force is the eternal, infinite, self-existent mind - or GOD! Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Philosophers call this argument for the existence of God the cosmological argument, or "cause and effect" reasoning.

### DESIGN

The next evidence for the existence of God has to do with the **design** of everything about us. This is labeled by philosophers as the teleological argument. In this we emphasize the fact that from the smallest to the greatest thing we can observe, there is purpose, order and design. Thus there **MUST** be a great designer, or intelligence. The Bible states it this way in Hebrews 3:4 "For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things {is} God." Whenever we look at a house, we **KNOW** that there **HAD** to be a designer and builder. A house simply does **NOT** build itself. So also, when the honest, rational mind considers the universe, we see numerous signs which indicate **PRECISE ARRANGEMENT!** David declared in Psalm 19:1 "The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork." We observe that the earth rotates on its polar axis once each 24 hours, which produces day and night. It is tilted at 23 degrees. If it were **NOT** so tilted, the water vapor from the oceans would collect at the north and south poles, condense and pile up mountains of ice that would cause such pressure on the equator that it would bulge and possibly erupt. If the earth rotated any slower than it does now, half of the world would be **ROASTED**, and half would be frozen. If the moon was one-fifth of its present distance from the earth, tides would cover the highest mountains. Truly we can see the significance of the words of the prophet in Isaiah 45:18 where he writes: "For thus says the Lord, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: "I {am} the Lord, and {there is} no other." It is not reasonable to conclude that all of this harmony and order is the result of blind chance or an accident. But it is **REASONABLE** to conclude that divine intelligence is behind it all. Even given great aeons of time, materials do not **ACCIDENTALLY** arrange themselves into a camera, or a watch, or a computer. Consider the Human Body. All of the parts, working together in systematic harmony. The universe and **ALL** that is in it, loudly proclaim that they have a **COMMON CREATOR!** Design points to a **DESIGNER** - a designer points to **INTELLIGENCE** - intelligence points to **PERSONALITY** - and this personality we call **GOD!**

### MORAL ARGUMENT

Then there is the **moral** argument for the existence of God. Have you ever thought about the fact that **ALL** men are concerned with **RIGHT** and **WRONG**? Even one who does some evil thing to another, is concerned about achieving something for himself that **HE** deems **RIGHT**. The fact is, we are **ALL** preoccupied with **RIGHT** and **WRONG** when it comes to the way others treat us. And to a lesser degree, we are concerned about the way **WE** treat

others. Although people in various situations will draw the line between good and evil in different places, ALL must agree that a LINE is drawn somewhere. But WHERE does this passion for morality come from? Surely moral consciousness could not be the result of "resident forces" in a purely "amoral" universe. How then is it that MAN ALONE possesses a MORAL CONSCIENCE? From the most primitive savage to the most sophisticated gentleman, morality is IMPORTANT! Is it reasonable to assume that this just HAPPENED? Or is it more reasonable to conclude that the One in whose image man is created is the One behind such a moral consciousness? {Genesis 1:27} The righteousness of God interests man, because it appeals to one of man's basic characteristics. Man's undeniable "sense of OUGHT" is strong evidence for an all-righteous Creator!

### **MAN'S DESIRE TO WORSHIP**

Also in evidence for the existence of God is **man's desire to worship**. Historically, it seems that man has always been religious. Archeology has shown that man has apparently worshipped something or someone in every age. From the totem pole to the modern religious statue, man demonstrates a thirst for worship. Is it reasonable to assume that man concocted this idea on his own? Or is it more reasonable to conclude that man's universal religious nature is part of the way in which his God created him?

It should be apparent, as we stated before, that the existence of God cannot be proven in the final absolute sense. That is, we can not use our five senses to PROVE that He exists! But there are MANY things we accept as REAL in this life that cannot be proven by the five senses. For instance, such things as LOVE, DUTY, MORALITY, and BEAUTY are all a part of this realm, but WHICH of the five senses can we use to PROVE that DUTY exists? Has any atheist ever SEEN, FELT, TOUCHED, TASTED or SMELLED an IDEA? Or which of the five senses PROVES that LOVE exists? You cannot SEE it, or TOUCH it, or SMELL it, or HEAR IT, and the FEELING of it is something INTANGIBLE, unlike HOT or COLD which we feel. YET, who would DENY that LOVE EXISTS? Likewise, we CAN accept the existence of GOD on the basis of REASON and a realization of the effects of His love on our lives, and the lives of all who will come to Him in humble obedience. As Jesus said in John 4:24 "God {is} Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." It is far more REASONABLE to believe that GOD IS, than to believe THERE IS NO GOD! In fact, for a man to say with CONFIDENCE that THERE IS NO GOD - he must have explored ALL of the realms of TIME, SPACE and ETERNITY or else his statement could not be CERTAIN! Furthermore, he would have to know EVERYTHING that there is to know; otherwise, the ONE THING that he DID NOT KNOW might be that GOD EXISTS! The ATHEIST would have to be a GOD himself in order to declare confidently that the God of the Bible does NOT EXIST! Surely we can see the truth of what David said in Psalm 14:1 "The fool has said in his heart, "{There is} no God."...". Modern man in his ATHEISTIC contentions is no better than those whom Paul described in Romans 1:22, "Professing to be wise, they became fools,"

God created us as FREE BEINGS - with the ability to choose BELIEF or UNBELIEF! When we choose to consider the evidence of that which we see around us, and evaluate it HONESTLY - we must conclude that a supreme intelligence MUST be the FIRST CAUSE of the universe. And that supreme intelligence is GOD! We believe in GOD, and rejoice in that faith. And we pity the person who does NOT believe in and know the will of God. One author aptly said: "The passing of time, the decay of the body and frailty of mind will cause atheists to cease their railing against God; but God remains and His work among men will endure forever. "Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You {are} God." {Psalm 90:2}.

We will continue with this study of EVIDENCES and consider the BIBLE as the REVEALED WILL OF GOD in our next lesson.

## **EVIDENCES (2)**

### **THE BIBLE IS GOD'S REVELATION TO MAN**

In our first lesson, we considered the proposition that GOD IS, and used both the Cosmological and Teleological arguments. But, while NATURE tells us there MUST be a GOD, it does not tell us some very important things! For instance, it does NOT tell us WHERE we came from? or WHERE we are going? or Why are we Here? or What is our relationship to our Maker? or the Character of our Maker? Does He LOVE - or is He without emotion? Is He JUST or MERCIFUL - or BOTH? Can we have fellowship with our Maker? What is Absolute RIGHT or Absolute WRONG? Is there any STANDARD by which ALL men govern their lives?

Belief in GOD or DEITY implies the very real possibility of a REVELATION FROM GOD! Paul said in Romans 1:18-19 "(18) For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, (19) because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown {it} to them." It is REASONABLE to conclude that IF THERE IS A GOD, He would want to COMMUNICATE HIS WILL to His creatures. And we contend that this communication is what we call the BIBLE! In NATURE, two striking attributes of God are manifest: 1) His POWER; 2) His DIVINITY. But this does NOT address His nature as being SPIRIT, nor the fact that He is LOVE, LIGHT and an INTELLIGENT BEING! {John 14:7-10; Hebrews 1:1} These important facts were made known to us by the Holy Spirit. {2 Corinthians 2:6-13; Ephesians 3:1-6}.

#### **CHAIN OF EVIDENCE**

The **chain of evidence** for the inspiration of the Bible can be broken into FIVE LINKS- Prophecy Fulfilled, Historical Accuracy, Unity and consistency of its teaching, Scientific Accuracy, and its Dynamic Power to change the lives of men. We will cover the FIRST TWO - Prophecy Fulfilled and Historical Accuracy - in this lesson.

Miracles have long been regarded as the weightiest evidence in favor of the doctrine of Christ. Many an unbeliever has been heard to say: "If I could just SEE one of those miracles with my OWN EYES, maybe I would believe what the Bible says about Christ and salvation!" But PREDICTIVE BIBLE PROPHECY is as convincing a piece of evidence as ANY man needs to establish FULL CONFIDENCE in the Bible as the INSPIRED WILL OF GOD! The one who rejects the evidence of FULFILLED PROPHECY as PROOF of the Bible's inspiration, would ALSO reject a miracle if one were to be performed right under their nose!

The PRIMARY meaning of the word PROPHECY is not "prediction" but the speaking forth of the mind of God". It is the actually the "declaration of that which could not have been known by natural means." But in the course of PROPHECY, God took it upon Himself to foretell events which were yet in the distant future. One scholar observes that



"The criteria of TRUE prophecy are the following: (1) The event must be beyond the power of man to foresee... (2) It must be demonstrated that the prediction was written before the event. (3) The prediction must be applicable to the event. (4) The prediction must be unambiguous and unmistakable. {It must contain a sufficient number of details to exclude accident or guesswork.} (5) The prediction must have a clear and demonstrable fulfillment." {H.E. Everest, *The Divine Demonstration*, p.260}.

God through the prophets recognized that IF one claims to be a god, they MUST prove themselves. In Isaiah 41:23 He challenges: "Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that you {are} gods;" And then down in 46:9-11 "(9) Remember the former things of old, for I {am} God, and {there is} no other; {I am} God, and {there is} none like Me, (10) Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times {things} that are not {yet} done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure,' (11) calling a bird of prey from the east, the man who executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken {it;} I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed {it;} I will also do it." In keeping with this BOLD declaration, God has also told US how to KNOW whether or not a PROPHET is speaking on His behalf! In Deuteronomy 18:20-22 we hear Him saying: "(20) 'But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.' (21) 'And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?' -- (22) 'when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that {is} the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.'"

But many are the prophecies which God has delivered through the prophets which have come to pass, down to the minutest detail! For instance, there is the Prophecy of **Balaam concerning Israel**- Numbers 23, 24. In 23:9 Israel was to dwell ALONE, separate from other nations. 23:10 they were to become a NUMEROUS people. 23:24;24:8,9 they were to become a powerful, "LION". 24:17 a POWERFUL KING would appear. This ruler would appear and conquer Moab, Edom and Amalek {24:17-20} And DAVID did do just that {2 Samuel 8:13-17; 1 Kings 11:15,16.

**The scattering of the Jews**- Ezekiel prophesied that the Jews would be scattered among the nations {Ezekiel 22:15}. Jeremiah likewise said that they would be among people whom neither they nor their fathers have known {Jeremiah 9:16}. And they would become "a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places where they would be driven". This prophecy WAS and IS still being fulfilled today! No HONEST HEART can deny this! The JEWS are a living monument to the total reliability of every Bible prophecy! And included in this is Jeremiah 19:10,11 which says they will NEVER again be a kingdom under God. Always a people, but never a kingdom!

**Destruction of Babylon**- Isaiah prophesied during the GLORY of Babylon that they would be totally destroyed from the face of the earth! Surely people must have thought him to be

MAD! But for the past 2,000 years, history confirms that what Isaiah prophesied was TRUE! {Isaiah 13:17-22}.

**Prophecies concerning Egypt-** likewise were fulfilled. Ezekiel 29:13-15 found Ezekiel prophesying that Egypt would not be totally destroyed, but would become weaker and degraded in comparison to new powers that would arise. And, in fact, Egypt has been under the dominion of the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Arabs, the Turks, the French, and the English! ALL, according to the prophecy, were STRANGERS and have spoiled the land!

**Prophecy concerning Tyre-** in Isaiah 23; Ezekiel 26:1-28 & Zechariah 9:3,4 says that the city was to be destroyed! Alexander the Great, in 322 B.C. was the SECOND destroyer! Finally, the city became a place where fishermen dry their nets!

God also delivered prophecies of **individuals** and what would happen to them! For instance, there is the case of the prophecy given through Joshua after taking the city of Jericho. He said in Joshua 6:26 "Cursed {be} the man before the Lord who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates." Five hundred years later, Hiel took it upon himself to rebuild Jericho. When he laid the foundation, his firstborn son, Abiram, DIED! When he set up the gates, his YOUNGEST SON, Segub, DIED! {1 Kings 16:34}. The length of TIME and the DETAILS make this a PROPHECY that is impossible to explain apart from INSPIRATION!!

Just ONE GENUINE CASE of fulfilled prophecy would be sufficient to establish the INSPIRATION of the BIBLE! But there are DOZENS, even HUNDREDS found and verified by history and personal testimony. ONLY INSPIRATION OF GOD could account for this!

In our next lesson, we will consider the next link in the chain of evidence for the inspiration of the Bible.

## EVIDENCES (3)

### THE BIBLE IS GOD'S INSPIRED WORD

#### FIVE LINKS IN THE CHAIN OF EVIDENCE FOR THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

In our last lesson we began a look at the **five links in the chain of evidence for the inspiration of the Bible**. Because of time limitations, we only looked at the subject of **FULFILLED PROPHECY**. As we noted, this alone is sufficient for the honest heart to convince them that the Bible is from God, and NOT man! But we want to look at the other links in the chain.

#### HISTORICAL ACCURACY

The NEXT link in our chain is **historical accuracy**. One scholar writes on this subject: "A book may be historically accurate and not be inspired, but no book can be accepted as inspired which is found to be historically inaccurate. If the Bible is the word of God, it must be historically accurate." And this same scholar again said: "We claim that if we can show that the Bible documents are historically accurate in those places where we can test them by external evidence, we have a right to assume their accuracy in those places where external evidence is lacking one way or the other, until further evidence proving their inaccuracy is discovered" {Basis of Christian Faith, Hamilton, pp.165,166} So we are concerned about the way the Bible measures up against the facts of history.

#### ARCHEOLOGY

**Archeology** has done a great deal to prove the Biblical record to be TRUE! One famous archeologist stated: "no archeological discovery has ever been made that contradicts or controverts historical statements in Scripture." {Dr. Nelson Glueck, N.Y. Times, Oct. 28, 1956}. The critics of the Bible said that **Moses** could NOT have written the first five books of the Bible {Gen., Exo., Lev., Num., Deut.} because there was no system of writing in existence in his lifetime! UNTIL they discovered a large stone in December of 1901, with nearly 4,000 lines of inscription. This was the law called the Code of Hammurabi which dates from about 2250 B.C.! This is even OLDER than the books written by Moses! Again, PROOF that the skeptics were WRONG! Many agnostics doubted the existence of such a place as Ur of the Chaldees, which is said to be the birthplace of Abraham {Genesis 11:31}, but the RUINS of such a city HAVE been discovered!

Skeptics once claimed that the **Hittites** never existed, and were just a FIGMENT of the JEWS imagination! {Genesis 15:20} Now archeology has not only established that they DID exist, but we even know about their culture, art and geological location! Again, the skeptics proven WRONG and the BIBLE RIGHT!

In Genesis chapter 14, there is the record of the alliance between **Elam and Shinar**. Archeology has shown that "all the evidence on the subject that has come to light has

supported the narrative, and not one bit of evidence tending to discredit the story has been discovered."

The record in Exodus about the oppression of the **Jews** by Egypt has been confirmed by discoveries at Pithom where brick buildings were found with the lower levels of straw and mud, the next with stubble and mud and the upper levels without straw or stubble! {Exodus 5:5-19}.

The city of **Nineveh** which Jonah was to cry out against {Jonah 1:2}, and which Nahum said would be LAID WASTE {Nahum 3:7} was thought by many to be another Jewish FANTASY! But its RUINS have indeed been unearthed!

Some have questioned the actuality of **Belshazzar** mentioned in Daniel. {Daniel 5:1ff} But discovered tablets speak of Belshazzar, son of Nabonidus, grandson of Nebuchadnezzar by a daughter. Nabonidus was king, but away on a campaign and Belshazzar was co-regent with his father. This is why he offered David the THIRD place in the government!

In the New Testament, some skeptics have questioned the names of cities mentioned by **Luke** in Luke and Acts. But discoveries made by Sir William Ramsay confirm ALL of Luke's statements of places, rulers, titles, and etc. NOT ONE CONFLICT! As one author expressed it: "A book may be historically accurate and not be inspired, but no book can be accepted as inspired which is found to be historically inaccurate. If the Bible is the Word of God, it must be historically accurate." And indeed IT IS! No honest person can deny that fact!

### **THE UNITY AND CONSISTENCY OF ITS TEACHING**

The next LINK in our chain of evidence for the inspiration of the Bible is **the unity and consistency of its teaching**. The Bible is not one book, written by one man or a group of men in one time period. Instead, it is a collection of **66 books**, penned by about **40 different men**, many of whom lived in different ages and environments, and many of whom never met each other! Their writing spanned a period of about **16 centuries**! Despite their differing educational, geographical and cultural differences, their writings form a single volume marked by UNITY of both theme and purpose. The great theme of the Bible is **God and human redemption**! From the account found in Genesis {Genesis 3:15}, to the end of the book of Revelation {Revelation 22:14}, we find the same, consistent doctrine of God, man, morality, sin, salvation and immortality! Not ONCE is there anything that is not in harmony with this theme! In each age, whether it be the Patriarchal, Mosaic or the Gospel age, THREE THINGS have been seen: PRIEST, SACRIFICE and ALTAR. And of course, these are seen even today in CHRIST as our HIGH PRIEST {Hebrews 4,5}, giving HIMSELF as the sacrifice for our sins upon the ALTAR of the cross!

NOW- if you were to bring together forty historians, all living during the time of the Second World War, and ask them to write individual papers on "The Principle Causes Of

World War II", you would expect disagreement. One might emphasize economic issues, and friction between governments. Another might give primary emphasis to sociological factors. Still another might concentrate entirely on political leaders and their decisions which led to the breach of peace. Or it might be that five of the historians would write on the political figures who were most directly involved in the war. Another five might interpret each man's role differently from the others. It is practically impossible to get forty men to write on any subject with unanimous agreement!

But the forty men who penned the Bible wrote in complete agreement with each other! And there is no subject in the world which is much more controversial than RELIGION! One writer made this observation: "If a forty-piece orchestra should suddenly begin to play - in perfect timing, melody, and harmony - it would be evidence of direction by a single mind." ... "If forty men - widely separated in geography, with varied backgrounds, and living over a period of 16 centuries - should each write down a few lines, and these lines when brought together constituted a beautiful poem, it would be evidence of direction by a SINGLE MIND!..... Because of its marvelous and otherwise inexplicable unity, we believe that the Bible came from God - that it is miraculously inspired and is divine authority."

### **MANNER OF TEACHING**

Also, we note that the **manner of teaching** in the Bible is different from that which characterizes HUMAN teaching. It is marked by teaching that is "calm, simple, dignified, and simple." It is not COLD or INTELLECTUAL - nor is it fanatical or sensational! It presents simple statements of TRUTH with a bold confidence that the things taught are TRUE!

Also, the BALANCE of the teaching is a mark of something OTHER than HUMAN ORIGIN. The writings of MEN tend to OVER STRESS some things, and UNDER STRESS others. But NOT THE BIBLE! It clearly shows such things as the relationship between NATURE and SPIRIT, God and the world, the nature of man, daily living and fellowship with God, and present life verses future life.

For the rational mind, there is NO OTHER explanation! The men who wrote it must have been guided by a single, intelligent mind in order to write as they did!

IF the Bible is simply a human production, we cannot rely on it for guidance! If, as the critics claim, it is merely the efforts of different men in different periods of history to reach out to God, we need not try to imitate their ways! For they MAY BE WRONG! BUT- IF the Bible is a DIVINE PRODUCT, we can depend on its every statement as being TRUE and AUTHORITATIVE! IF it is of HEAVENLY origin, we can take hope in its promises and be cheered on our way while among men! IF the Bible is what it CLAIMS to be - it is **worthy of our complete confidence!**

Our next lesson will consider the final two links in our **CHAIN OF EVIDENCE FOR THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE**. Certainly these are sufficient for US today! And believing that the Bible IS the inspired, inerrant Word of God, we want to conform to the will which He has delivered to us today.

## **EVIDENCES (4)**

### **CHAIN OF EVIDENCE FOR THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE**

Thus far in our look at the **chain of evidence for the inspiration of the Bible**, we have considered Fulfilled Prophecy, Historical Accuracy, and the Unity and Consistency of the Bible. Now we want to look at the **scientific accuracy** of the Bible.

### **SCIENTIFIC ACCURACY**

Probably one of the greatest objections to the Bible in this age of technological advances, is that it is NOT scientific. At a lecture on Creation versus Evolution presented at the CSU Northridge campus on the 16th of March, 1988, brother John Clark was presenting the Biblical perspective of creation. The biology department handed out a sheet entitled "Evolution or Special Creation?" In it they stated what most of our young people are being told in the school systems: "Every culture has produced its own explanation of the origin of the heavens, the earth and everything in it, and on it. These accounts are frequently referred to as creation myths. Mainstream Jewish and Christian biblical scholars view the creation account found in Genesis as one of these myths." WHAT is their point? The BIBLE contradicts scientific TRUTH! Thus it is to be rejected as just another book of myths! THIS we EMPHATICALLY DENY! A conflict between SCIENTIFIC FACTS and the teaching of the SCRIPTURES has NEVER BEEN FOUND! Now, the Bible and Scientific THEORIES may be in conflict, but the TRUTH of the BIBLE and the FACTS of SCIENCE DO NOT CONFLICT! The ONLY conflict is between the Bible and HUMAN SPECULATION! As one scholar truly put it: "Science shows the method of the world, but not its cause; the Bible shows its cause but not its method." {Shepfer, The Bible and Science, p.176} Now the Bible DOES sanction the work of TRUE SCIENCE. In Genesis 1:28, we find that "Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." Here is God's authorization to study, experiment with and subdue his physical surroundings. Or to pursue SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION! And it came from GOD, not SATAN! True, Satan has used it as an OCCASION, as he does so often, to lead men astray from the TRUTH, but this does not change the fact that God sanctions TRUE SCIENCE!

### **PERFECT HARMONY EXISTS BETWEEN THE BIBLE AND TRUE SCIENCE**

It is our affirmation that **perfect harmony exists between the Bible and true science**. The content of this affirmation can be summed up in four points: **1. THE BIBLE DOES CONTAIN SCIENTIFIC TRUTH**, although the facts may be stated in non-scientific language. **2. THE BIBLE DOES NOT CONTAIN ERRORS AND FALLACIES OF SCIENCE** which are common to the time in which it was produced. {We will discuss this point at more length.} **3. THE BIBLE IS IN COMPLETE HARMONY WITH MODERN SCIENCE**, while at the same time being in total disagreement with modern ERROR! {vis. Evolution}. **4. THE BIBLE HAS ANTICIPATED THE RELATIVELY MODERN**

**DISCOVERIES OF MAN**, many centuries before MAN discovered them. {We will discuss this at length also.}

### **THE BIBLE CONTAINS SCIENTIFIC TRUTH**

Let's look these points in more detail. First, **the Bible contains scientific truth** although they are stated in non-scientific language. For instance, in Genesis 1:9,10 we find: "(9) Then God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry {land} appear"; and it was so. (10) And God called the dry {land} Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that {it was} good." Notice that they are in "one place," as if connected, and yet they are called "SEAS," plural. And in fact the great OCEANS or SEAS are connected. And then in Ecclesiastes 1:7 the wise man wrote: "All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea {is} not full; to the place from which the rivers come, there they return again." 186,000 cubic MILES of water flow into the seas every year, and this has gone on for thousands of years! WHY do they not OVERFLOW? In non-scientific terms, the Bible explains this: "to the place from which the rivers come, there they return again." Science has only in relatively recent years, understood the process of evaporation which keeps the seas from overflowing!

### **THE BIBLE DOES NOT CONTAIN THE ERRORS AND FALLACIES OF SCIENCE**

Then, we affirm that **the Bible does not contain the errors and fallacies of science** which are common to the age of its writers. As an example, Acts 7:22 tells us that "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians", but there is not ONE HINT in any of his writings about the wild theories believed by the Egyptians! They believed that the world began from a FLYING EGG! And that man came from the white worms of the Nile! WHY then did Moses write in Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," and Genesis 2:7 "And the Lord God formed man {of} the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being?" Also, the Babylonians sought Daniel because of HIS WISDOM - but NONE of the crude Babylonian myths found their way into his writings! This is true of ALL of the prophets who wrote throughout history! Many other false concepts could be mentioned such as the teaching that there are only four elements - earth, air, fire and water. The earth is the center of the universe. The stars and planets are fixed in their position. Spontaneous generation of life. Etc. Yet ALL of these have been held by people in the time when the Bible we being written, and have since been proven FALSE! NONE of the errors believed by their peers were found in the books of the Bible!

### **THE BIBLE IS IN HARMONY WITH TRUE MODERN SCIENCE**

Third, **the Bible is in harmony with true modern science** and is also in opposition to the ERRORS of modern science! An example of this is seen in the VALUE OF BLOOD- The heathen, especially the Egyptians, practiced BLOOD LETTING to get diseases out of people. This is one of the things Barbers used to do in even more recent times. Moses, reared in Pharaoh's house in Egypt, wrote in Leviticus 17:11 "For the life of the flesh {is} in the blood,..." and in Leviticus 17:14 "for {it is} the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its



life....., for the life of all flesh is its blood...." The Jews did NOT follow the practices of their oppressors, because God impressed upon them what we NOW know - that LIFE is in the BLOOD, and it is necessary to FIGHT disease! It was THERE in the BIBLE for some 3,000 years - without any error! Along this same line, Scientists battled among themselves until 1931 concerning the nature of light. Until 1911, most men theorized that light is a "weightless wave that passed through all media." Thus it possessed NO MASS and occupied NO SPACE, and had NO VOLUME. But in 1911, Einstein theorized that it MIGHT be a particle! In Job 38:19,20 God was showing the inferiority of Job's knowledge to the knowledge of the creator. So He said to Job: "(19) "Where {is} the way {to} the dwelling of light? And darkness, where {is} its place, (20) that you may take it to its territory, that you may know the paths {to} its home?" This would imply that LIGHT must have some MASS or VOLUME in order to have a DWELLING PLACE or HOME! In 1931 Dr. R.J. Compton won the Nobel Prize for proving that light is a PARTICLE with MASS and VOLUME - and it thus occupies SPACE! So it DOES have in fact a "dwelling place!" JOB could not have known this on his own! For 5,900 years, MAN made GROSS ERRORS concerning the nature of LIGHT! But over 3,000 years ago, God stated a TRUTH that man finally PROVED to himself in 1931! Science books when I was in school, taught the "indestructibility of matter." You will NOT however find this in modern text books! WHY? Science has found out they were WRONG! The BIBLE has been around for some 3,000 years - without a CHANGE! And it REMAINS TRUE! Which can we trust?

### **THE BIBLE HAS ANTICIPATED THE RELATIVELY MODERN DISCOVERIES**

Fourth, **the Bible has anticipated the relatively modern discoveries of man.** As we have already seen, the Bible has presented SCIENTIFIC FACTS long before Science recognized them! Some examples can be seen in such things as BACTERIAL CONTAMINATION. This was a serious problem in hospitals and doctors offices as late as the 18th and 19th centuries. This accounts for the HIGH mortality rate in the hospitals of that time. In 1840, Dr. Ignaz Semmelweis tried to change the established practice, but he was rejected by the majority of his colleagues. They continued to operate without washing their hands or wearing masks! But his LOWER mortality rate, and the advancement of microbiology, convinced doctors to take precautions against infection from bacteria. Strangely, BACTERIAL CONTAMINATION was a consideration among the Jews some 3200 years ago! WHY? Because of what God delivered to them in Numbers 19:5-22, and Leviticus chapters 13-15!! How did MOSES know that these things were so? Why did it take SCIENCE some 3,000+ years to figure out WHY God told them to do these things? Also, for many centuries, mankind had some strange ideas about the shape of the earth. In fact, most believed that it was FLAT and that going too far in any direction would cause you to fall OFF of the world! It is interesting to note here that the paper put out by the Biology Department at USC Northridge accuses Bible believers of teaching that the EARTH was the center of the universe, and thus impeding the progress of science ! But LONG AGO, in Proverbs 8:27, Solomon pictured "WISDOM" as a person, and said that it was there when God "prepared the heavens, I {was} there, when He drew a circle on the face of the deep."

Then in Isaiah 40:22, speaking of God the prophet said: "{It is} He who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants {are} like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in." Now this, taken in conjunction with Job 20:27, pretty well spell out what is meant. For here we read of God: "He stretches out the north over empty space; {he} hangs the earth on nothing." HOW LONG did it take man to figure out that it was CIRCULAR? And how much LONGER did it take him to figure out that it was HANGING ON NOTHING? The Romans taught that it was supported on the shoulders of Atlas! Again, PRE-SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE that is ACCURATE! And even proven to be MORE SO in this age of space travel! And finally, we note that the very FIRST of the LARGE cargo ships to be built had the dimensions of 300 by 50 by 30. This length, width, height ratio has been proven time and again to make ships the most seaworthy. Yet some 3200 years ago, we find that it was written in Genesis 6:15 about a man who built a large vessel which was after these SAME, EXACT DIMENSIONS! HOW did HE know about this? There is no indication that he was in the shipbuilding business, and in fact there is no proof that he had ever SEEN the ocean! Yet he BUILT and FLOATED this huge ship! WHY did it WORK? Because GOD told him to do it that way! AGAIN - accurate, pre-scientific knowledge! It is interesting to note at this point, that the Bible has even sparked men to make discoveries in various fields. One in particular is in the charting of the ocean currents. History tells us that Matthew Fontaine Maury was sick one day and had his son to read to him from the Bible. He read from Psalm 8:6-8 "(6) You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all {things} under his feet, (7) All sheep and oxen -- Even the beasts of the field, (8) The birds of the air, And the fish of the sea That pass through the paths of the seas." And whenever he came to the eighth verse, Maury stopped his son and asked him to read it again! When he heard it the second time, he said: "If the word of God says there are paths in the sea, they must be there. I will find them." Within a few years, he made the first chart of the primary paths or currents of the oceans which are still followed by oceangoing vessels to this day! How did the AUTHOR of the Psalms know about the "paths of the sea" before science knew of them? Finally, Job wrote in Job 26:7 "He stretches out the north over empty space;" The astronomers of relatively recent times have discovered that there is a vast empty space in the north! By turning their telescopes in any other direction, they can observe millions of stars which are not even visible to the naked eye! But when the same telescopes are turned to the north, there are NO planets or stars! AND this fact can NOT be established by using the naked eye! JOB had no telescope when he wrote this verse! HOW did he know that it was so? Inspired men did NOT write from their own limited knowledge, but from the wisdom of the God who created all of these things, and told them about it through inspiration!

### **THE BIBLE IS A BOOK DISTANCE FROM ALL OTHER WRITINGS**

With this evidence in hand, we conclude that **the Bible is a book distance from all other writings of its day.** Not one book, claiming to be religious or otherwise, can stand up to the tests of SCIENTIFIC ACCURACY which the BIBLE can stand!

## **EVIDENCES (5)**

### **CHAIN OF EVIDENCE FOR THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE**

In our study on the subject of EVIDENCES, we have been looking at the **chain of evidence for the inspiration of the Bible**, and we have considered Fulfilled Prophecy, Historical Accuracy, Unity and Consistency, and Scientific Accuracy. It is interesting to consider here that the accusation made by some skeptics that the Bible was merely written by GOOD MEN will not stand the test of simple logic. IF the Bible is from MEN, there MUST be some LOGICAL explanation for all of the evidences we have been presenting! And IF it is from MEN, we must look at the KIND of men involved. FIRST, they must have been WICKED MEN! LIARS and CHEATS who were trying to foist off on the world a book they CLAIMED to be from GOD! And they must have been STUPID MEN, because they had NOTHING TO GAIN from making such claims! Furthermore, to assert that such nameless, stupid cheats, could create the character of Christ, write the sermon on the mount, bring to the world a gospel which has molded the lives of the best and purest people the world has seen in the last 2,000 years, shows an ACUTE LACK of SIMPLE REASONING FACULTIES on the part of the one who makes such an assertion!

### **THE DYNAMIC POWER OF THE BIBLE**

This lesson brings us to our FINAL link in the chain - **the dynamic power of the Bible**. No book in the history of the world, has EVER been able to influence the lives of men like the BIBLE. And this is no great wonder, for the Bible says of itself in Hebrews 4:12 "For the word of God {is} living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Notice there are FOUR WORDS used here to describe the dynamic POWER of the Bible It is **LIVING!** Many are the critics of the Bible who have called it a DEAD BOOK! Yet as surely as the GOD who authored it is LIVING, the Bible remains a LIVING BOOK! It is interesting to note that in Acts 7:38 Stephen speaks of Moses and says: "This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and {with} our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us," By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Stephen said that the Law of Moses was LIVING ORACLES! What MAKES the BIBLE a LIVING BOOK? The Bible claims that it is INSPIRED BY GOD {2 Timothy 3:16}, which means that it is "God-breathed." So as surely as GOD LIVES, the BIBLE LIVES! Peter says of the Word of God in 1 Peter 1:24,25 "(24) `All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, (25) but the word of the Lord endures forever.' Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you." Because God's Word ENDURES, it of necessity is adaptable to ALL people in EVERY AGE! And like God, it is of INEXHAUSTIBLE INTEREST! Remember that Jesus is said to be "the same yesterday, today, and forever." {Hebrews 13:8} And the BIBLE will live ON until TIME is no more!

Then, we are told that the Word of God is **POWERFUL** or energetic! Old Testament writers have described God's Word with such terms as "fire" and a "hammer" in Jeremiah 23:29; and a "lamp" in Psalm 119:105. It is like a HAMMER when it CONVICTS MEN OF SIN, and whenever it brings about the CONVERSION OF SINNERS! In Psalm 19:7 David said: "The law of the Lord {is} perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the Lord {is} sure, making wise the simple;" This is the reason why Peter said in 1 Peter 1:23 that we have "been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,". It is also powerful when it comes to CORRECTING THE FAULTS of men. Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:16 "All Scripture {is} given by inspiration of God, and {is} profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." It is also powerful in CONSOLING THOSE THAT MOURN. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 14:3 "But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men {to} edification, and exhortation, and comfort." AND he told the brethren in Thessalonica to "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." {1 Thessalonians 4:18}. And it is POWERFUL in SANCTIFYING THE BELIEVER- Jesus prayed to God in John 17:17 "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth." This corresponds with what Peter said in 1 Peter 1:22 "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart." No wonder then, that Paul said in Romans 1:16 "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek."

Third, we are told that the Word of God is **SHARPER THAN ANY TWO-EDGED SWORD**- or we might say it is HEART DISSECTING! Notice that the inspired writer said: "piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow." This shows the POWER of PENETRATION which God's Word possesses! The WORD OF GOD has the ability to cut along the FINE LINE which is drawn between the LIFE OF MAN which is in common with the ANIMAL, and the ETERNAL PART OF MAN which will live forever, somewhere. Look with me at the Word of God in action in Acts 2:37 "Now when they heard {this}, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, `Men {and} brethren, what shall we do?'" This is not the only time the Word of God is pictured as a SWORD. Paul said in Ephesians 6:17 that "the sword of the Spirit,...is the word of God;". The potential which inheres in the WORD OF GOD is seen the words of the prophet in Isaiah 49:2 "And He {God} has made My mouth like a sharp sword." Whenever we SPEAK the WORD OF GOD, we are WIELDING THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT! Which is DOUBLE-EDGED! It will cut in both directions, whenever we swing it in battle!

And we find that the Word of God is **ALL DISCERNING**- "a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the heart." The Word of God, ANTICIPATES the sins of men, when they are STILL in the THOUGHTS or INTENTS of the HEART!! In fact, God holds men ACCOUNTABLE for their THOUGHTS and INTENTS! Notice with me, Ecclesiastes 12:14 "For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether

{it is} good or whether {it is} evil." Jesus reaffirmed this in His Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5:28, "But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." And in the case of Simon the ex-sorcerer recorded in Acts 8:22, when he sinned was told to "Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you." God sees our TRUE SPIRITUAL CONDITION! Not just the OUTWARD actions seen by our fellowmen! And so whenever we look into the Word of God, we SEE OURSELVES as GOD sees us! And this is ONE reason why SOME people REFUSE to ACCEPT the BIBLE as the WORD OF GOD! They don't WANT to see themselves as GOD sees them!

Man has never been able to LIFT HIMSELF by his own bootstraps. But the BIBLE HAS and will CONTINUE to LIFT MEN UP! Man has never been able to give a satisfactory answer for his purpose in being here. But the Bible HAS SHOWN man the meaning of life! Man has never been able to chart a course through the dense fog of human heartaches and suffering. But the Bible is man's compass to GUIDE HIM safely to heaven's eternal shore!

The Bible DEMANDS our attention, careful study and complete obedience. It declares that man is LOST IN SIN and thus DOOMED! It tells man WHAT TO DO to be SAVED! As Peter replied in Acts 2:38 "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Since the Bible is TRUE and BINDING, there is no alternative! Any who REFUSE to obey, will remain LOST IN SIN! Those who repent and are baptized, KNOW they are SAVED! NOT because of FEELINGS, but because GOD SAID SO IN HIS WORD!

How must the SAVED person live? How shall he serve God? What does God require of him? The Scriptures give ANSWERS to all of these questions! In Galatians 5:19-23, we find a list of things we are to AVOID and a list of things which should be found in our lives! Regular worship with other Christians, prayer and studying the Bible will HELP the child of God to GROW in spirituality. And in GROWTH, he will learn that the WILL OF GOD must come FIRST in ALL THINGS!

To turn your back on the BIBLE is to TURN YOUR BACK ON THE ONE WHO INSPIRED IT! And that is GOD! We must approach it in the way in which Eli taught Samuel to respond to God: "Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears." {1 Samuel 3:9}. And we should study the Bible with the prayer recorded in Psalm 119:33 "Teach me, O Lord, the way of Your statutes, And I shall keep it {to} the end."

Next, we will move on to the next affirmation in our study of Evidences: "JESUS CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD."

## **EVIDENCES (6)**

### **CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD**

In our studies thus far on the subject of EVIDENCES for our Faith, we have proven that it is reasonable to believe in God, and to believe that the Bible is HIS INSPIRED WORD. In our last lesson we discussed the final link in the chain of evidence for the Inspiration of the Bible.

Now we want to begin looking at **Christ as the Son of God**. This is an important point for us to grasp, because IF Jesus is NOT the Divine Son of God as He claims to be, then we are simply playing church and there is NO REAL POWER in being a Christian! On the other hand, IF Jesus is who He CLAIMED to be, both the OLD and the NEW Testaments make SENSE and life takes on REAL MEANING.

The Naturalist looks at Jesus as a GOOD MAN, but nothing more than a MAN! Many will say that Jesus had fine religious insights but believe that they came from a purely HUMAN MIND!

### **HISTORICALLY**

Historically, none can deny that a man named JESUS lived at the TIME, PLACE and under the CIRCUMSTANCES recorded in the Gospels. Jesus was a REAL PERSON - and contemporary writers such as Flavius Josephus {A.D. 37-103} and Tacitus {A.D. 56-103} bear witness from a secular standpoint concerning His life and death.

### **FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY**

One OUTSTANDING proof that Jesus is the SON OF GOD is based on His fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies. They are too numerous to mention them ALL, but we want to consider a few in order to get this point clear in our minds.

First we find in Luke 24:25-27,44 that Jesus CLAIMED to be the fulfillment of O.T. Prophecies: "(25) Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! (26) "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" (27) And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."...(44) Then He said to them, "These {are} the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and {the} Prophets and {the} Psalms concerning Me." It would have been FOOLISH for anyone to make such a claim, unless they had the POWER to KNOW it was so! And only JESUS could do this!

Now, to some of the prophecies. The first is found in Genesis 3:15 where God said to Satan in the Garden "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." This was fulfilled

in Jesus according to Galatians 4:4 where Paul says: "But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law."

Then there is Isaiah 7:14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel." Here we have the prophecy that a VIRGIN would conceive and bear a child - one who would be called Immanuel. This was fulfilled in Matthew 1:22,23 "(22) Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: (23) "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."

Also in Genesis 12:3 we find God making this promise to Abraham: "I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Then the fulfillment of this is found in CHRIST according to Acts 3:25,26, where Peter said: "(25) "You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' (26) "To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one {of you} from your iniquities."

The Christ was also prophesied to come from the family of David in Psalm 132:11 and Jeremiah 23:5 "Behold, {the} days are coming," says the Lord, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth." Matthew 1:1,2 clearly shows us that Jesus was in the lineage of David!

The circumstances of His coming were also a matter of prophecy! In Malachi 3:1 God said: "Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. behold, He is coming," says the Lord of hosts." And this forerunner is specifically mentioned in Luke 3:3,4 in the person of John! "(3) And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, (4) as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.'"

The PLACE of His birth was prophesied in Micah 5:2 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, {though} you are little among the thousands of Judah, {yet} out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth {have been} from of old, from everlasting." And of course we KNOW this is true of Jesus, for we read the record in Matthew 2:5,6.

His TRIUMPHANT ENTRY into Jerusalem is foretold in Zechariah 9:9 "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He {is} just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a

donkey." This was clearly fulfilled in Matthew 21:7-9 "(7) They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set {Him} on them. (8) And a very great multitude spread their garments on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread {them} on the road. (9) Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David! `Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' Hosanna in the highest!'"

The fact that He would be BETRAYED by a FRIEND is also prophesied in Psalm 41:9 "Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up {his} heel against me." And indeed this DID happen, and Jesus said in John 13:18 "I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, `He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.'"

And the PRICE of His betrayal was precisely prophesied in Zechariah 11:12,13 "(12) Then I said to them, "If it is agreeable to you, give {me} my wages; and if not, refrain." So they weighed out for my wages thirty {pieces} of silver. (13) And the Lord said to me, "Throw it to the potter" -- that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty {pieces} of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord for the potter." This was spoken of as FULFILLED in Matthew 27:9,10 "(9) Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced, (10) "and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me."

His death among Thieves is clearly foretold in Isaiah 53:12 "Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." In Matthew 27:38 we find that "Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left."

Also, the MEANS of Christ's death was prophesied. In Zechariah 12:10 and in Psalm 22:16 "For dogs have surrounded Me; The assembly of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet;" Of course, in John 19:34,37 "But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out." "And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced.'"

The fact that NO BONES in His body were broken was a matter of prophecy as well. In Psalms 34:20 David wrote: "He guards all his bones; Not one of them is broken." And the record shows clear fulfillment in John 19:36 "For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, "Not {one} of His bones shall be broken.'"

The casting of LOTS for His clothes was foretold also. In Psalm 22:18 "They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots." And fulfilled in John 19:23,24 "(23) Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four



parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. (24) They said therefore among themselves, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be," that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: "They divided My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots." Therefore the soldiers did these things."

And, His grave being NOT His own, but among the rich is foretold in Isaiah 53:9 "And they made His grave with the wicked -- but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor {was any} deceit in His mouth." And this was fulfilled according to Matthew 27:57-60.

NOW the importance of all of this is NOT that someone could have read the prophecies and lived them out - for while SOME of them COULD have been fulfilled BY DECEPTION, many COULD NOT! For instance, HOW could Jesus have any control over WHERE He was born - if He were ONLY a MAN? And HOW could Jesus have anything to say about His ANCESTORS - IF He were ONLY a MAN? And since it was the CUSTOM to brake the legs of those who were crucified, HOW could He assure that NO BONES were broken when He died - IF He were ONLY a MAN? And how could He have any control over the soldiers who gambled for His clothes - IF He were ONLY a MAN? All in all, I have a list of about 28 prophecies which He CLEARLY FULFILLED- now WHAT are the ODDS of someone being able to do that - IF they were ONLY a MAN?

### **THE DILEMMA**

There are only THREE alternatives with regard to this Jesus of Nazareth: Either He IS the SON GOD as He claimed, born miraculously, fulfilling Old Testament prophecies, performing true miracles and being raised from the dead; OR He was just an ordinary man, an IMPOSTER who was limited in knowledge, filled with all of the prejudices common to the Jews, filled with vain worldly ambition, and a deliberate LIAR and FRAUD!; OR He was NEITHER - but a sincere, great philosopher, a genius in His day - a good man going about doing good. But this is RIDICULOUS! He CLAIMED to be the Son of God, and IF it was NOT TRUE - He was NOT a good man, but a LIAR! One suggests that He was mentally ill, and suffered from delusions of grandeur. But this is foolish whenever we look at the manner of His life - the calm, rational way He handled every situation. NO insane person ever acted the way HE DID!

SO - we are left to decide on the basis of the EVIDENCE whether Jesus was a GOOD MAN - who was in FACT the SON OF GOD, or an EVIL MAN who went around LYING and DECEIVING good, honest hearts!

Next we will consider the evidence for the RESURRECTION OF JESUS, and decide whether we can confidently believe that He WAS raised from the dead or not!

## EVIDENCES (7)

### THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

Jesus did some OUTSTANDING THINGS when He lived here on this earth. So much so that the one who came to Him by night said in John 3:2 "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." Among the things which He did, we find that inspiration records three times when He raised people from the dead: the son of the widow of Nain {Luke 7:11-18}; the daughter of Jairus {Matthew 9:18,19,23-26}; and of course, Lazarus {John 11}.

But He also made some outstanding CLAIMS concerning Himself! For instance, in John 8:58 He claimed: "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." Who would be so BOLD as to claim that they ALWAYS WERE! And then He claimed in Matthew 24:35 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away." Again, who would be so BOLD as to claim that THEIR words would endure beyond time!? BUT the boldest claim of all was that He would raise from the dead!!! In Mark 10:33,34 Jesus told His disciples: "(33) "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and to the scribes, and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; (34) "and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again." Such a claim would be FOOLISH and RECKLESS for a mere mortal!! But since HE did not have to rely on HUMAN POWER alone, it was NOT foolish for HIM.

In our continuing series on the subject of Evidences, we have proven that GOD IS, and that the BIBLE is the INSPIRED WORD OF GOD. Last week, we looked at JESUS as the fulfillment of Prophecy. Now we want to look at the **resurrection of Jesus**. Paul says in Romans 1:4 that Jesus was "declared {to be} the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead,". IF Jesus was NOT raised from the dead, He is NOT the SON OF GOD! So it behooves us to look at the EVIDENCE and be ASSURED one way or the other, before we place our FAITH in Him! Paul stressed the importance of the Resurrection of Jesus in 1 Corinthians 15:12-19 where he said: "(12) Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? (13) But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. (14) And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching {is} vain and your faith {is} also vain. (15) Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up -- if in fact the dead do not rise. (16) For if {the} dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. (17) And if Christ is not risen, your faith {is} futile; you are still in your sins! (18) Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. (19) **If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.**"

Anything that is to be believed **MUST** have sufficient evidence to substantiate that belief - or those who believe it are **FOOLISH!** So **HOW STRONG** is the **EVIDENCE** for the Resurrection of Christ?

### **HISTORICAL EVIDENCE**

The Resurrection is believed on the basis of **historical evidence** which includes the **EMPTY TOMB** and the **APPEARANCES OF JESUS AFTER** His crucifixion, **AND** the **TESTIMONY** of the **APOSTLES** and **OTHER DISCIPLES** to each of these evidences.

### **THE EMPTY TOMB**

All but **FOUR** of the world's major religions are based on mere philosophical propositions. Of the **FOUR** that are based on **PERSONALITIES**, only the religion of Christ claims an **EMPTY TOMB** for its founder! By far, the **STRONGEST** argument for the resurrection of Jesus is **the empty tomb**. There are **THREE FACTS** that are universally admitted: 1) Jesus **LIVED** and was **CRUCIFIED**; 2) He was **BURIED** in a **SEALED TOMB**; and 3) His **BODY DISAPPEARED!** **WHAT HAPPENED** to **HIS BODY?** **THIS** is the question that **MUST** be addressed before we decide whether or **NOT** to believe in Him as the Son of God!

Contemporary historian, Flavius Josephus wrote in Antiquities, 18.3.3 "Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him many Jews, and also many of the Greeks. This man was the Christ. And when Pilate had condemned him to the cross, upon his impeachment by the principle man among us, those who had loved him from the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive on the third day, the divine prophets having spoken these and thousands of other wonderful things about him. And even now, the race of Christians, so named from him, has not died out." Now **HERE** we have a man who lived in the time **IMMEDIATELY** after Christ's death. He could **TALK** to **EYE** witnesses of these things, and **THIS** was **HIS** conclusion!! Keep in **MIND** now that **HE** was a **JEW** - writing as a historian, under the watchful eye of the Roman government! But like **ANY** true historian, he told what he **SAW** and **HEARD**.

Likewise, Ignatius, who lived about 50 to 115 A.D. encouraged people to "be fully convinced of the birth and passion and resurrection" of Jesus.

S. Polycarp, in about 110 A.D., wrote that Jesus Christ "endured to come so far as to death for our sins, whom God raised, having loosed the pains of death."

And, Justin Martyr, who lived between 100 and 165, wrote an entire treatise on the resurrection of Jesus.

But some of the best historical evidence for the fact of the resurrection is found the letters of the time. One noted historian wrote: "For the establishment of an alleged historical fact no documents are esteemed to be more valuable than contemporary letters." And he went on to say that there is "unimpeachable evidence in the contemporary letters of Paul the apostle." His epistles constitute the highest kind of historical evidence! In spite of these evidences, there are SOME who are unwilling to believe!

### **FIVE EXPLANATIONS GIVEN**

There are **five explanations given** for the EMPTY TOMB. **1. The swoon theory-** This theory says: "Medical knowledge was not very great at that time, and the apostles thought he was dead. We are told, are we not, that Pilate was surprised that He was dead already. The explanation is that he was taken down from the cross in a state of swoon, and laid in the sepulcher. And the cool restfulness of the sepulcher so far revived him that he was eventually able to issue forth from the grave. His disciples could not believe that this was a mere resuscitation. They insisted it was a resurrection from the dead. In addition, some contend that the spices with which he was embalmed had a reviving effect on him." This theory does NOT account for the actions of the soldiers in John 19:33. If there were ANY DOUBT about Him being DEAD, they would have broken His legs! And it does NOT explain how those who prepared His body for burial could not perceive that he was anything but DEAD! Furthermore, it does NOT explain who after such torture, plus a SPEAR in His side, with all of the accompanying loss of BLOOD - plus at least TWO DAYS without food, water or medicine, He could have UNWRAPPED HIMSELF {the dead were tightly wrapped with strips about 1 foot wide, from head to toe, with spices wrapped in between the layers to act as both a preservative and a sort of glue to hold the wrappings in place.}, FOLD the wrappings, ROLL AWAY THE STONE, FIGHT the ROMAN GUARD, WALK ALL OVER PALESTINE, and APPEAR TO BE HEALTHY to His disciples! THIS takes TOO MUCH IMAGINATION to be CREDIBLE!

The SECOND theory is that His **enemies stole his body**. This theory lacks any credibility whatsoever! WHY would His ENEMIES DO SUCH A THING? It would be CONTRARY to their purpose expressed in Matthew 27:62-66, to KEEP someone from stealing His body and saying He is RISEN! Besides that, IF His enemies took His body, WHY didn't they produce it on Pentecost! That would have put an END to the GOSPEL on the SPOT! Incidentally, one obscure historian says: "the gardener had taken away {His body}, that his lettuces might not be damaged by the crowds of visitors." INCREDIBLE no doubt?!

Third, there is the theory that **His disciples stole His body**. This theory had its basis in the record we find in Matthew 28:12-15 "(12) When they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, (13) saying, 'Tell them, `His disciples came at night and stole Him {away} while we slept.' (14) "And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure." (15) So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day." NOW- think about this: The disciple had NO MOTIVE for removing His body!

In fact, they were generally disheartened and dispersed after His death! Furthermore, WHY would they perpetrate a LIE, by stealing His body and saying He is RISEN - when it would cost ALL but ONE of them their LIVES? And look at the LIE which the Jewish authorities started. IF the soldier were ASLEEP - HOW did THEY know that the disciples came and took the body? That explanation would NEVER stand up in a court of law! Furthermore, that is INCONSISTENT with the duty of a Roman soldier! According to Roman Law, the penalty for sleeping while on Guard duty was DEATH! This is clearly seen whenever Peter was delivered from prison in Acts 12:19 "But when Herod had searched for him and not found him, he examined the guards and commanded that {they} should be put to death. And he went down from Judea to Caesarea, and stayed {there}." The only alternative is that SOMEHOW the disciple overpowered the soldiers! But history tells us that Roman soldiers were FIGHTING MACHINES! Strong and BRAVE! Fully armed and capable of HAND TO HAND COMBAT to the DEATH! Now HOW did this group of Galileans overpower them? Again, this theory is INCREDIBLE!

Fourth, there is the **hallucination theory**. This states that "All of Christ's post-resurrection appearances were really only supposed appearances. What really happened was this: People had hallucinations." Hallucinations do NOT GENERALLY happen to more than ONE person at a time! Yet we have Jesus spoken of as appearing to as few as TWO, and as many as 500 at one time! Now, TWO might share in a hallucination if they were both REALLY TRYING to see something or someone. But on the road to Emmaus, recorded in Luke 13:24-39, the two disciples were NOT expecting to see Him again! In fact, they figured that with Him dead for three days, there was NO HOPE that He would redeem Israel! And whenever He appeared to the disciple in Luke 24:36-43 He assured them that He was NOT just a vision - and showed them His FLESH and BONES! And He took food and ate it in their presence! And of course we remember that Thomas wanted POSITIVE PROOF that He was risen, and in John 20:24-30 Jesus offer such proof to him! The variety of His appearances, and the number of witnesses (well over 500 according to Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:6-8), precludes the possibility of this being a mere hallucination!

There is only ONE LOGICAL, RATIONAL explanation for the EMPTY TOMB - that is **He is risen from the dead**, {Matthew 28:6} and this is what we proclaim today, with full confidence that it is historically TRUE and verified by reliable witnesses!

Next we want to look at the SUPERNATURAL Aspects of the life of Jesus, especially at His miracles and teaching.

## EVIDENCES (8)

### THE MIRACLES OF JESUS

In our last lesson we considered the reasonableness of believing that Jesus was RAISED FROM THE DEAD. In our further study of Jesus as the Son of God, we want to consider His **miracles** as proof of His deity.

It is at this point that the ENTIRE BIBLE either stands or falls! Either miracles happened just as they are described in the Bible, and the Bible IS the WORD OF GOD - or they did NOT happen, and it is NOT the Word of God! There can BE NO COMPROMISE on this matter!

First, we want to give a fair definition of the word MIRACLE: In the New Testament there are **three words** which are used to denote what we would call a MIRACLE. They are "**WONDERS**", which primarily refers to the astonishment which they cause; Second, there is "**POWERS**." This looks at the divine energy which is evident in these events; "**SIGNS**" or tokens of God's presence, and thus the sanction of GOD upon the teacher and that which is taught.

The word **miracle** itself is defined in many different ways. A concise definition might be: "A miracle is the direct intervention of God in the affairs of men, an event that indicates the presence or sanction of Deity, an event not brought about by the ordinary forces of nature or by ordinary men." {Indestructible Foundations, p.27} In view of this, there is no such thing as an "EXPLAINED MIRACLE". If it can be EXPLAINED, it is NOT a Miracle!

### ARE MIRACLES POSSIBLE?

The first thing we want to consider is: **Are miracles possible?** One writer commented on this point: "When you face this question of miracles, it all depends upon what kind of a God you believe in, and whether or not you spell His name with a capital "G." {C.E. MacCartney, Christian Faith and the Spirit of the Age, p.70,71}. Since we have already established that it is REASONABLE to believe in God, we must admit that it is POSSIBLE for such an OMNIPOTENT ONE to possess the POWER needed to perform MIRACLES! In fact, if we can believe the FIRST VERSE of the Bible, we can accept the concept of MIRACLES without any reservation.

Whenever we admit that GOD exists, Miracles become POSSIBLE. Whenever we acknowledge SIN, the intervention of GOD on man's behalf becomes PROBABLE - and the probability of God's intervention on man's behalf rests on the probability of MIRACLES! Because miracles and redemption through revelation go hand in hand!

### PURPOSE OF MIRACLES

What then is the **purpose of miracles?** Miracles are AIDS TO FAITH. They are used to convince those who are being taught that they are NOT being deceived, but in fact receiving

that of which GOD is the author! This is specifically stated concerning the Miracles of Jesus! In John 5:36 Jesus said: "But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish -- the very works that I do -- bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me." John was not credited with doing ANY miracles! So indeed, the witness of Jesus was much GREATER than that of John! Again in John 10:25 "Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me." God certified that Jesus WAS His SON, by the MIRACLES which He did! This is further verified by what Jesus said to the Father when He called Lazarus from the grave: "And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said {this}, that they may believe that You sent Me." {John 11:42} John said of Him in John 20:30,31 "(30) And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; (31) but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." The New Testament DOES record at LEAST 35 miracles which Jesus performed - how many MORE He performed, we cannot say! These are MORE than sufficient! Once faith in the God we read about in the Bible is reached, MIRACLES cease to appear INCREDIBLE!

### **RECORDED MIRACLES OF JESUS**

Let's consider some of the **recorded miracles of Jesus**. The FIRST recorded miracle of our Lord involved the elements of nature. At a wedding feast in Cana of Galilee, He turned WATER into WINE! {John 2:1-11} He also proved His power over nature whenever He stilled a storm on the Sea of Galilee {Mat 8:23-27}, and walked on the SURFACE of the sea on another occasion and then caused the boat to make its port immediately! {John 6:15-21}. This proved Him to be the Master of MATTER, or CREATION! Jesus also performed miracles of healing such as the curing of Peter's mother-in-law in Matthew 8 ;14-18; the cleansing of a leper in Luke 5:12-14; the restoring of sight to blind men in Matthew 9:27-31; healing of a deaf and dumb man in Mark 7:31-37. Jesus also cured those who were possessed by demons {Mark 1:32,39; Matthew 4:24}. The length of time one had an illness was NOT ever a factor! Jesus had the POWER to heal! On occasion He was known to feed thousands by the multiplication of meager amounts of food {Mark 8:1-9; John 6:1-14}. As we noted in our last lesson, on at least THREE occasions, Jesus raised people from the dead! He brought the son of the widow of Nain back to life {Luke 7:11-18}; raised the daughter of Jairus {Luke 8:40-42,49-56}; and restored life to Lazarus after he had been DEAD for FOUR DAYS! {John 11}.

**BUT-** the QUESTION is: **DID JESUS ACTUALLY PERFORM THESE MIRACLES?** The skeptic might well say that these were just TALES concocted by His followers to convince people that He was MORE than another MORTAL! It is significant that NON of Christ's contemporaries, even His ENEMIES, never doubted that He DID MIRACLES! They accused Him of FALSE TEACHING and FALSE CLAIMS! But they did NOT deny His MIRACLES! Instead, they attributed them to SATAN! {Matthew 12:24; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15-19}. Even the secular historian Flavius Josephus says that He was a "doer

of wonderful works." In fact, it was more than 100 years after the death of Christ before ANYONE ever questioned His miracles!

Furthermore, Jesus performed His miracles in cities, sometimes surrounded by MOBS! That is to say that they were NOT performed in out-of-the-way places, with ONLY His followers present! THIS is good evidence for their validity! Often the charismatic healers of today can ONLY produce members of their persuasion as witnesses to their so-called "miracles!" One charismatic preacher said that the reason why not everybody could SEE the miracles they perform is because they are not BELIEVERS! What a contrast with the TRUE miracles of Jesus! He performed miracles in the face of UNBELIEVING CRITICS, and silenced them with His display of DIVINE POWER!

Likewise, Jesus miracles were varied in their nature. Modern impostors have only a FEW feats of the "miraculous" which they can perform {such as tongues or healing}. And they ONLY do them sporadically! But Jesus performed miracles wherever He went, and performed MANY TYPES of miracles! He raised people from the dead, and altered the course of the WEATHER! And He demonstrated power to KNOW people and their lives before ever meeting them! Such was the case with the Samaritan woman. It would have been IMPOSSIBLE for anyone of ordinary limitations to perpetrate such a gigantic hoax on so many people for so long!

And also, there is NO SOLID EVIDENCE to contradict Christ's claim to supernatural powers! Consider Judas Iscariot, whenever he went to betray Jesus. He had FIRST HAND KNOWLEDGE of the work of Jesus. What BETTER evidence could there be, than what HE could tell about the FAKE MIRACLES OF JESUS! But he did NOT say ONE WORD about such FAKERY! All he could do is tell the Jews where Jesus would be! The fact that Jesus was HATED by many of His fellow countrymen is a matter of record. Yet the inhabitants of Palestine who HATED HIM, and who were THERE to examine His supposed MIRACLES never wrote ONE LINE which denied that what He did was beyond the realm of the ordinary!

For an ordinary Jew to claim such miraculous power, and to set about to establish a religious following of that basis, would have been nothing short of FOLLY! He would have to know that in the multitudes with who He had contact, SOMEONE would blow the whistle on His deceit - sooner or later! To say that He was a master of sleight of hand, is to accuse Him of intentionally deceiving both friends and enemies alike! And thus it would make Him the greatest deceiver the world has ever known! {Not to mention the worlds greatest LIAR!} And even IF you grant the impossible task of fooling EVERYBODY around Him, it would be logical to expect him to CAPITALIZE or CASH IN on His magic! Yet He repeatedly told people NOT to spread around what He had done in the way of HEALING! Look at the two blind men Jesus healed in Matthew 9, and in verse 30 "Jesus sternly warned them, saying, "See {that} no one knows {it}."" And in the case of the man whom Jesus healed on the Sabbath in Matthew 12, along with many others, "He warned



them not to make Him known." And just before the appointment of the 12 in Mark 3, Jesus warned those who had been healed in verse 12 "that they should not make Him known." Fake-healers today make BIG SALARIES and widely publicize what they do - which is TOTALLY CONTRARY to the working of miracles in the first century!

We have NOTHING TO FEAR from the unbelievers who challenge the New Testament on the Miracles of Jesus! All of the evidence is in FAVOR of them as FACT! And the unbeliever has NOTHING in his favor to challenge the record! In all honesty, we must say with Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night, when he said "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

We will conclude this series with a lesson on the PROBLEM OF UNBELIEF.

## **EVIDENCES (9)**

### **THE PROBLEM OF UNBELIEF**

No informed Christian can deny that the forces of Satan are at work today. Some even deny the existence of God, and thus have little or no regard for man who is to them nothing more than an evolved creature of chance!

This attitude is seen in many countries where the Government is strongly influenced by Communism. But it is also seen in our own country, among the liberal theologians of major religious bodies. Many are now denying the actual existence of God, the virgin birth of Christ and the reality of Bible Miracles. Such teaching is responsible for a great deal of unbelief - even some among those who formerly served the Lord.

In this final lesson in our series on EVIDENCES, I want to consider with you the **problem of unbelief** and look at some of the underlying causes of UNBELIEF today.

### **DETERMINED TO DISBELIEVE**

First, we find that **SOME** people disbelieve simply because they are **BOUND** and **DETERMINED TO DO SO**. They will not even **LISTEN** to the other side! Possibly, this might be an attitude which they learned from watching their parents. Or they might have been the victim of some evil influence from an unbelieving professor in college or teacher in High School. It is interesting that many who **REFUSE** to hear the **EVIDENCE** for **FAITH IN GOD** and in **CHRIST**, will gladly hear **ANYTHING** that accuses the Bible of being "unscientific" and full of errors! And then they will accept without investigation that the Bible is unworthy of further consideration! This is **NOT FAIR** by any standard! All we can ask of **ANY** skeptics or unbelievers is for them to **HEAR BOTH SIDES** before making a decision on what to believe.

### **SECULARISM**

A second cause of unbelief is **secularism**. By secularism, we mean a preoccupation with "**THIS WORLD**" to the point that anything **BEYOND** this world is disregarded. Or to put it another way, it is an inordinate emphasis on the **NATURAL** world rather than the **SUPERNATURAL** world! Exalting **FLESH** over the **SPIRIT**! This is the **WORLDLINESS** of which we read in the Bible! One author said that it is the philosophy which supposes "that one world in the hand is worth two in the bush. What does it profit a man if he saves his soul but loses the whole world? It allows religion only if it is practical, i.e. useful in this world. And the true God can be accepted only if He will help in the service of the god which is the world."

No where is secularism doing **MORE** damage than in our educational system today. Many educators are teaching that religion and formal education are simply **INCOMPATIBLE**! And now we are seeing religion scoffed at and denounced as superstition in the majority of colleges and universities in our land! Young minds are being

indoctrinated in atheism, anarchy, and anti-biblical philosophies in the name of "EDUCATION!"

Secularism dehumanizes man and brings him down to the level of an ANIMAL! Animals can eat, drink, sleep and be contented; but MAN CAN NOT! While man cannot live WITHOUT BREAD, he cannot live by bread alone. Man has longings which cannot be satisfied by purely PHYSICAL MEANS! While the secular mind may discredit the notion of a world beyond this, it cannot be escaped! THERE IS a HEAVEN and a HELL! Both are ETERNAL in the same way the spirit of MAN is ETERNAL! The question the secularist must FACE is posed by Jesus in Mark 8:36,37 "(36) "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? (37) "Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

### SCIENTISM

A third source of modern unbelief is **scientism**. This may be defined as the worship of SCIENCE! No intelligent person can deny the contributions science has made to our modern lifestyle. Many would not be alive today, if it were not for certain drugs or medical instruments which science has given to us! None of us could enjoy the modern conveniences which he have if it were not for science! BUT - SCIENCE is NOT the answer to ALL of our PROBLEMS! In fact, science has CREATED SOME PROBLEMS which we DIDN'T HAVE BEFORE! Such things as the dangers of ATOMIC ENERGY, and INDUSTRIAL WASTE!

But as we noted in our lesson on Science and the Bible, God has encouraged man to SUBDUE and have DOMINION over the physical elements of the earth {Gen. 1:28}. But, it is DANGEROUS for us to think that SCIENCE is the ONLY way to gain knowledge! And we dare not think that only PHYSICAL things are REAL! The person who starts thinking that only that which can be tasted, touched, or smelled can be accepted as REAL will CERTAINLY turn away from FAITH IN GOD!

But consider this: IF we say that because we cannot SEE God with our OWN EYES, we cannot believe in Him, what about LOVE? We cannot SEE or TASTE or TOUCH LOVE - but we do NOT deny that it exists! We cannot put JUSTICE in a test tube, but we VALUE justice and believe ALL men should have it! Spiritual persons and spiritual values are not CAPABLE of being analyzed in the PHYSICAL REALM! Yet they are as REAL as ROCKS, TREES and GOLD!

As we have already proven, true science is NOT at odds with FAITH! Only pseudo-science, which deifies science in the place of God, is WRONG!!

### DIVISION AMONG PROFESSED BELIEVERS

A fourth cause of UNBELIEF is **division among professed believers**. Great numbers of people today have chosen to shun ALL FORMS of religion because of the divided state

of the religious world. They hear one preacher say one thing, and another preacher something totally different - and a third preacher says **BOTH OF THE OTHERS are WRONG!** Yet all THREE claim to be worshipping the same Lord and claim their teaching comes from the **SAME BIBLE**. This confuses and disillusion many unbelieving observers! In such a case, WHO is responsible for their UNBELIEF? No doubt those who *foster* and *promote* such division!

Jesus was found praying in the garden just prior to His arrest in John 17:20,21 "(20) I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; (21) "that they all may be one, as You, Father, {are} in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me." Jesus prayed that the WORLD would see UNITY among those who follow Him, and by THIS they would come to believe that God sent Him! But this is *not* what people see today! Those who *profess* to follow Him are fragmented into literally hundreds of different religious groups. Each with their *own doctrines* and their *own religious practices*. So, the world in general does **NOT** believe that Jesus came from God, and that He is the only begotten Son of God - the Saviour of the world!

More and more people are becoming concerned about the divided state of the religious world, and they are looking for a realistic alternative to sectarianism. Perhaps we can be instrumental in turning them away from *sectarianism*, and back to the attitude which says: "*Give me a thus saith the Lord!*"

It is clearly shown in the Bible that Peter and Paul did **not** preach for different denominations. They did **not** oppose each other or contradict each other in what they preached. There is only **one** mention in the Bible of the denominational concept, and that is in 1 Corinthians 1:10-17. Here Paul rebuked them for calling themselves by different names. Peter, Paul, John and James, along with all of the other apostles and disciples, were **ALL** members of the same church - for there were **no such things** as *denominations!* We also understand that the **CHURCH** of which they were members was the Body of Christ. All of the members received their direction from the Head, which is Jesus Christ; they wore the same name - *Christians* - and nothing else. They were united in their **BELIEFS and PRACTICES** because they all recognized the Word of God as their **ONLY** source of authority in religion.

Would *WE* be wrong if *WE* followed that same pattern today? Of course not! Dear ones, if religious people would give up their *human names, creeds and dogmas* - and all give allegiance to the **BIBLE ALONE** as their standard - what would happen? All would be **UNITED IN TRUTH** and put an end to the **UNBELIEF** caused by such sinful division.

### **UNGODLY LIVING OF PROFESSED CHRISTIANS**

One final cause of unbelief is the **ungodly living of professed Christians**. Christians are supposed to deny all "ungodliness and worldly lusts," and to "live soberly, righteously,

and godly in the present age." {Titus 2:12}. And despite the *wickedness* of men, Christians are to be "shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life..." {Philippians 2:15,16}. Since Christians are those who have been *purchased* by the blood of Christ, their lives should be nothing short of **HOLY!**

But what do we see? Sad to say that the divine nature of Christ is **NOT SEEN** in the lives of many who profess to be His followers. Far too often it is difficult if not impossible to distinguish a Christian from those in the world! Some are found using the same foul language, and practicing the same vile habits that characterize those who make no claim to being Christians! Why is this so? It is a lack of **TOTAL SURRENDER** to the Lord. They are unwilling to say unto God: "*Not as I will, but as YOU will.*" This lack of surrender is seen clearly in those who are only present occasionally in the assemblies of the church.

How does this affect those *outside of the church*? They look at it as a confirmation of their suspicion that there is really nothing important about being a Christian. So they disregard all of the claims we make for a life of service to Christ, and go on into eternity in unbelief. This makes a stumblingblock out of anyone who professes to be a Christian and lives an inconsistent life! And hear what Jesus had to say about stumblingblocks in Luke 17:1,2 "(1) Then He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe {to him} through whom they do come! (2) "It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones."

**NOW**- this does not excuse the ones outside of Christ for their unbelief, but it can be a contributing factor to their continued unbelief! We must each be accountable for our own actions or lack thereof in this life.

No doubt, we are living in an age of **UNBELIEF** - where men are challenging our faith on every hand. And it is our duty to God to "sanctify the Lord God in our hearts, and always {be} ready to {give} a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." {1 Peter 3:15}. We must believe **ALL** that God has revealed in His word *without reservation!* And we must tell others of our faith, with deep conviction and authority. We must show the world that being a Christian has made us **BETTER** than what we would be otherwise. And by living a life consistent with our *profession*, we will help to work against the forces of **UNBELIEF** which are so common in our day.