



Apologetics: Rock Solid

A reason for the hope we have

Text	'Know why you believe'	Paul Little
Recommended	'Can man live without God'	Ravi Zacharias
	'God's undertaker'	John Lennox
	'Has science buried God?'	John Lennox
	'Reason and Faith'	Marston and Forster
	'Christianity: a Ready Defence'	Josh McDowell

Purpose

1. To define a Biblical base for Christian apologetics.
2. To examine some of the evidences for the Biblical position to enable the student to have confidence in the claims of this position.
3. To observe systems of thought competing for the minds of men and women today, and to develop a method of evaluating these systems.
4. To develop an apologetic adequate for personal assurance and to be able to 'give a reason for the hope that is in us'
5. To be able to defend the faith in the marketplace.

Contents

I. Introduction to apologetics	2
II. It is reasonable to believe that a God exists	4
III. Evidence that Jesus is the Son of God	9
IV. Evidence for the credibility of the Christian experience	18
V. Evidence for the reliability of Biblical manuscripts	21

iii. The Bible meets psychological needs

B. Supernatural facts

i. The Christian approach room for miracles

ii. The preservation in history Israel

C. Experiential facts

i. The results of regeneration

4. Methodology of apologetics

A. Reason There is a place for reason and factual demonstration

The make up of human reason displays itself in three acts of the mind

i. Understanding The intake of information

ii. Reasoning The grappling with information

iii. Judging The decision making from information

These three acts of the mind are expressed in

i. Terms

- Terms are either clear or unclear. A term is clear if it is intelligible and unambiguous.

ii. Propositions

- Propositions are either true or untrue. A proposition is true if it corresponds to reality, if it says what is.

iii. Arguments

- Arguments are either logically valid or invalid. An argument is valid if the conclusion follows necessarily from the premises.
- If all the terms in an argument are clear, and if all the premises are true, and if the argument is free from logical fallacy, then the conclusion must be true.
- These are the essential rules of reason, in apologetics and in any other field of argument. They are not rules of a game that we invented and can change. They are rules of reality.

B. Faith

The leaning edge is on faith over reason

C. Revelation

The basis for reason and faith

5. Starting point of apologetics

The facts then the step of faith

II. It is reasonable to believe that a God exists

1. A creation demands a creator - the observable cause and effect - Cosmology

"No effect can be produced without a cause. We as human beings, and the universe itself, are effects, which must have a cause. We eventually come to the uncaused cause, who is God." - Paul Little

All that exists must have adequate cause.

The universe exists therefore it must have adequate cause - God

e.g. The uncaused cause - God

"Like every cause, the Cause of the universe must be independent of its effect. Thus, the First Cause must be separate from the universe, not part of it. From ancient times, the Bible has clearly presented God as non-physical, a Spirit who cannot be contained, even by the heavens. Unlike other ancient religious writings, the Bible prohibited the making of images of God, making it a point to teach that He is not a physical being." - Fred Heeren, Show Me God

Illustration

A. God went pooh!

B. Big Bang theory and infinite density,

C. Robert Jastrow "For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries."

The conclusive answer is God, the most haphazard chance.

Bible

Psalm 19:1

"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."

2. A design demands a designer - The observable design and order - Teleology

There is observable design in the universe that demands an adequate designer.

Illustrations

A. H₂O; the seasons; formation of crystals, etc.

B. Fibonacci's Series

Daisy 21 clockwise and 34 anti-clockwise

Pine cone 5 spiral one way and 8 the other way

Pineapple 8 spirals one way and 13 the other way

Sunflowers in the middle have 34 and 55; Extra Large = 55 and 89

No one would imagine a watch coming into being without an intelligent designer. How much more incredible to believe a universe, with its infinite complexity, could have happened by chance.

Albert Einstein

"My religion consists of a humble admiration of the illimitable Superior Spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble minds. That deeply emotional conviction of the presence of a Superior Reasoning Power, which is revealed in the incomprehensible universe, forms my idea of God."

JWN Sullivan

At his death, Time called him "One of the world's four or five most brilliant interpreters of physics to the world of common man." He said, "The beginning of the evolutionary process raises a question which is as yet unanswerable. What was the origin of life on this planet? Until fairly recent times there was a pretty general believe in the occurrence of 'spontaneous generation.' It was supposed that lowly forms of life developed spontaneously from, for example, putrefying meat. But careful experiments, notably those of Pasteur, showed that this conclusion was due to improper observation, and it became an accepted doctrine that life never arises except from life. So far as actual evidence goes, this is still the only possible conclusion. But since it is a conclusion that seems to lead back to some supernatural creative act, it is a conclusion that scientific men find very difficult to accept. It carries with it what are felt to be, in the present mental climate, undesirable philosophic implications, and it is opposed to the scientific desire for continuity. It introduces an unaccountable break in the chain of causation, and therefore cannot be admitted as part of science unless it is quite impossible to reject. For that reason most scientific men prefer to believe that life arose, in some way not yet understood, from inorganic matter in accordance with the laws of physics and chemistry."

Stephen Hawking

"If the rate of expansion one second after the big bang had been smaller by even one part in a hundred thousand million, the universe would have re-collapsed before it ever reached its present state." Fred Heeren, Show Me God

Hawking cites the critical ratio between the masses of the protons and the electrons as one of many fundamental numbers in nature. He adds: "The remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life." Fred Heeren, Show Me God

Freeman Dyson, Princeton physicist

"The more I examine the universe and the details of its architecture, the more evidence I find that the universe in some sense must have known we were coming." Fred Heeren, Show Me God

John O'Keefe, NASA astronomer

"It is my view that these circumstances indicate that the universe was created for man to live in." Fred Heeren, Show Me God

Heinz Oberhummer, astrophysicist at University of Vienna, Austria

"I am not a religious person, but I could say this universe is designed very well for the existence of life."

"The basic forces in the universe are tailor-made for the production of...carbon-based life."

"We have no idea why the strengths of the forces are fine-tuned." World/September 2000

Illustrations

A. Jungle and Garden

B. Teenager's bedroom and their mother

C. Rubik Cube order and intelligence

D. The chance of the universe happening by accident is the same as an explosion in a print shop producing the works of Shakespeare.

Bible

Romans 1:19-20

“What may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities - His eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”

Objection

Science disproves God!

Answer

What experiment?

What measurement?

Empirical research

Science can measure a wedding ring but when it has finished all possible measurements there are still areas to the ring it cannot measure. e.g. History and love

Science holds to a creation, a design, and an order.

3. Moral values demand a moral Creator - the observable morality in mankind - Anthropology

Man by observation is a moral, intellectual being;

Therefore he must have a maker who is a moral, intellectual being - God.

e.g. 'I ought.'

Value judgements, absolutes of right and wrong.

There is no absolute law without an absolute lawgiver.

“It is very significant that recent anthropological research has indicated that among the farthest and most remote primitive peoples today there is a universal belief in God.” Paul Little

“It is increasingly clear that the oldest traditions everywhere is of one supreme God.” Samuel Zwener

“It is ironic that many scientists who unashamedly pursue their projects with dedicated purpose should deny that the purpose of life itself is a proper subject for enquiry.” Michael Green

Built into mankind is the desire for a being greater than himself.

Is there a God?

There is no greater question to ask. The answer changes everything.

Illustrations

- A. Atheist - Good news for Hitler, bad news for the Jews.
- B. Jean-Paul Sartre "I am too deeply convinced that morals are both impossible and necessary."
- C. Albert Camus "When man submits God to moral judgement he kills Him in his own heart. And then what is the basis of morality? God is denied in the name of justice, but can the idea of justice be understood without the idea of God?"
- D. Bertrand Russell "That man is the product of causes which has no prevision of the end they were achieving, that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his love and beliefs are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feelings, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that the labour of the ages, all devotions, all the inspirations, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of man's achievements must inevitably be ruined beneath the debris of a universe in ruins. All these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy, which rejects them, can hope to stand. Purposeless...void of meaning is the world which science presents to our belief."
- E. Alexander Solzhenitsyn, when asked the main cause for the Russian Revolution that swallowed up some 60 million people Alexander Solzhenitsyn replied, "Men have forgotten God; that's why this has happened."

Bible

Romans 2:15

"Since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them."

Non-Christian Views

1. Naturalism Leading To Secular Humanism

A worldview which rejects any theistic or supernatural explanation of reality.

All that is in nature needs no supernatural cause - self-existent, self-explanatory, self-operating and self-directing.

Naturalism speaks of a religion and speaks of a god.

God to some and life experience to others. Achieving harmony with nature

The process within nature

When you achieve harmony you achieve the best in life experience.

- A. Problem of evil
- B. Problem of pain and suffering
- C. Problem of war

2. Post Modernity

Following the disintegration of modernity the prevailing view has come to be known as post-modernity. This broad encompassing viewpoint would deny almost all the modernity once believed.

Modernity developed out of a distrust for the power of reason to achieve a universal basis for the truth of the universe and a creator God.

In this climate absolute truth was out and pluralism and relativism were the philosophies of the day. This in turn paved the way for post-modernity, the complete rejection of absolute and objective truth. Truth is purely subjective and all claims to truth are of equal validity.

There is no absolute answer to:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------|
| A. Where Have I come from? | Origin |
| B. What am I doing here? | Meaning |
| C. What is life all about? | Reality |
| D. Where am I going to? | Destiny |

This brings great benefit to the Christian apologist for their beliefs are as valid as anyone else's and must be vigorously debated in the marketplace.

III. Evidence that Jesus is the Son of God

- | | | |
|--|-------------|--|
| 1. The claim of Jesus to be the Son of God | | John 5:18; 19:7 |
| A. John 4:25, 26 | Woman | I know that Messiah (called Christ) is coming. |
| | Jesus | I who speak to you am he. |
| B. John 8:58 | Jesus | I tell you the truth, before Abraham was born, I am. |
| C. John 10:30-33 | Jesus | I and the Father are one. |
| | Jews | But for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God. |
| D. Mark 2:7, 10 | Teachers | Why does this fellow talk like this? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone? |
| | Jesus | That you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. |
| E. Matt. 26:63, 64 | High Priest | I charge you under oath by the living God: tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God |
| | Jesus | Yes, it is as you say. |

Claim useless without evidence

Luke 1:1-4

Acts 1:1-3

Methods of testing a claim

A. Scientific

B. Eyewitness account

C. Personal Experience

2. The evidence of fulfilled Old Testament prophecies

A. 300 Prophecies covering 60 major subjects

B. Statements of the Lord Jesus Christ

Luke 4:16-21 "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." Isaiah 61:1-2

Luke 24:25-27 "And beginning with Moses and all the prophets he explained to them what was said in all the scriptures concerning him."

Luke 24:44 "Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

C. Examples of fulfilled prophecy

Micah 5:2 Birth at Bethlehem Matthew 2

Zechariah 9:9 Entry into Jerusalem Matthew 21:1-9; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:29-38; John 12:12-15

Psalm 22:16 Death by crucifixion Luke 23; Isaiah 53:3-9, 12

Acts 3:18 "But this is how God fulfilled what he foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer."

Acts 9:22 Paul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ

Objection #1: Jesus fulfilled the prophecies by personal manipulation.

Answer: Too many of the prophecies demand a supernatural fulfilment e.g. the place and type of his birth and death, etc.

Objection #2: The fulfilment was pure chance.

Illustration: Roll a dice 6 first time = 1 in 6
6 sixes in a row = 1 in 46,656

Answer: The chance of 8 major subjects by chance = 1 in 10^{17}
 The chance of 48 major subjects by chance = 1 in 10^{157}

Illustration: Cover England to depth of about four feet with 50 pence pieces. Paint a coin and through it into the middle of England and stir it all up. Blind fold a person and tell them they have one chance to pick up the painted coin!

3. The evidence that Jesus performed miracles

“True miracles are above nature not against nature. They are the manifestation of a higher law which the lower laws must obey.” P Schaff

A. The Claim of Jesus

“The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me.” John 10:22-42

B. The Claim of the Apostle John

“Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you many believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” John 20:30-31

C. The Claim of the Apostle Peter

“Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.” Acts 2:22

D. The Reason for Miracles

Jesus performed miracles to help the need of the person.

Jesus performed miracles to authenticate his claim of being:

The Messiah, the Christ, the promised one.

The Emanuel, the Son of God, the God with us.

Objection by David Hume

“The Christian Religion not only was first attended with miracles but even at this day cannot be believed by any reasonable person without one.”

David Hume's Test: “If we take in our hands any volume: of divinity or school of metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No.

Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the flames, for it contains nothing but sophistry and illusion.”

Answer: Hume's test does not pass his own test!

Objection to Miracles: Miracles were added by the early church to fit into their theology.

Answer: The early church suffered to the point of death for what they had seen, heard, said, and written down.

To reject the miracles is not a historical presupposition but a philosophical one.

Illustrations

School Chaplain Jesus never performed miracles to prove he was the Son of God.
 John the Baptist, Luke 7:22

Head RE Teacher “Jesus did not perform tricks.”

“Science cannot forbid miracles because natural laws do not cause anything and therefore cannot forbid anything.” Paul Little

4. The evidence of the empty tomb Acts 4:30

With great power the Apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and great grace was upon them all.

A. Jesus Foretold His Rejection. Matthew 16:21, "From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life." cf. Mark 9:9-10; Luke 9:21-22; John 2:18-22.

B. The Tomb Was Empty. Acts 1:1-3, "In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he has chosen. After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God." cf. Matthew 28:1-15; Mark 16:1-14; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-9; 1 Corinthians 15:3-7.

Craig L. Blomberg, Professor of New Testament, Denver Seminary. "We find that Paul incorporates some creeds, confessions of faith, or hymns from the earliest church. These go way back to the dawning of the church soon after the Resurrection... Those are certainly significant in explaining what the earliest Christians were convinced about Jesus. But perhaps the most important creed in terms of the historical Jesus is 1 Corinthians 15, where Paul uses technical language to indicate he was passing along this oral tradition in relatively fixed form... Now, here we have the key facts about Jesus' death for our sins, plus a detailed list of those to whom he appeared in resurrected form – all dating back to within two to five years of the events themselves." (The case For Christ by Lee Strobel)

No one denied the tomb was empty. That was never an issue.

C. Objection: The disciples stole the body

Matthew 28:11-15; Luke 24:1-3

This was the reaction of the Chief Priest.

The guards were told to say this.

Answer: Roman soldiers were assigned to guard the body in the tomb.

Failure to do so they would have been execution.

Very likely there were many soldiers guarding the tomb.

Jesus was a very popular and well-known person.

There would have been many Jews in Jerusalem for the Passover.

The Jewish leaders who wanted the tomb guarded realised that Jesus had many followers in addition to His twelve disciples.

In the light of the available evidence it does not stand up.

It is untenable legally as the witnesses were asleep.

It is untenable psychologically and ethically as it caused their own suffering and their own martyrdom.

D. Objection: The authorities stole the body

Answer: Why then guard the tomb?

The reason for the guards was to stop the disciples stealing the body. Matthew 27:62-67

What would be their motive?

Why not produce the body when they were trying to silence the disciples in Acts 4?

They could have crushed Christianity in one fell swoop if they had done this.

E. Objection: The vision theory

The body actually stayed in the tomb.

The disciples received a spiritual vision of the resurrected body.

Only a spirit resurrection; not a bodily resurrection.

Answer: It does not explain the empty tomb.

It does not do justice to the appearances.

It proposes a miracle to get rid of a miracle!

F. Objection: The lettuce theory

The gardener around the tomb removed the body because people were stepping on his lettuces. Recorded by Tertullian in the first Century.

G. Objection: The swoon theory, 18th Century

Jesus did not die he swooned (went into a coma) and revived in the cool of the tomb.

It was not uncommon for people to have been buried alive and later resuscitated.

Answer: This theory flatly contradicts the testimony of the writers who were present.

It also evades the custom and the truth of the time.

The Roman guards were professionals who performed crucifixions and were commissioned to stay with the body until dead.

When they thrust the spear in his side, it was no prick but hand size and blood and water came out which was not a supernatural recorded phenomena.

How could a man who was beaten twice, crucified, and prepared for burial with mummy like wrappings have the ability to remove the two ton stone that was on an incline and then get by the Roman guards who were there?

Then walk many miles on spike feet

Appear to his disciples as victorious over death?

H. Conclusion: The tomb was empty because he rose from the dead!

"The evidence for our Lord's life and death and resurrection may be, and often has been, shown to be satisfactory; it is good according to the common rules for distinguishing good evidence from bad.

Thousands and tens of thousands of persons have gone through it piece by piece, as carefully as every judge summing up a most important case.

I have myself done it many times over, not to persuade others but to satisfy myself.

I have been used for many years to study the histories of others times, and to examine and weigh the evidence of those who have written about them, and I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, to the understanding of a fair inquirer, than the great sign which God has given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead."

Thomas Arnold, for 14 years the headmaster of Rugby, author of the History of Rome and the professor of the chair of Modern History at Oxford.

5. The evidence of the appearances

Acts 1:3, "After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke to them about the kingdom of God."

Acts 4:20, "We cannot help speak about what we have seen and heard."

Eleven separate appearances are recorded in the New Testament.

They happened over a period of 40 days.

They happened to crowds of over 500 at one time

- A. John 20:11-17 Mary Magdalene
Mark 16:9-11 Mary Magdalene
- B. Matthew 28:9-10 The other Women
- C. Luke 24:34 Peter in the afternoon
- D. Mark 16:12-13 Unnamed disciples on the road to Emmaus
Luke 24:13-35
- E. Mark 16:14 Disciples in the upper room
Luke 24:36-43
John 20:19-23
- F. John 20:26-29 Disciples including Thomas
- G. John 21:1-23 7 disciples by the Sea of Galilee
- H. 1 Corinthians 15:6 500 brethren at one time
- I. 1 Corinthians 15:7 James the Lord's brother
- J. Matthew 28:19-20 11 disciples on a mountain top
Mark 16:15-18 'Great Commission' in Galilee
- K. Luke 24:41-53 The ascension at a mountain top
Acts 1:3-9 in Jerusalem

Objection: The hallucination theory

Jesus did not rise from the dead physically.

The disciple hallucinated.

Answer: Thanks to modern psychology we now know how a hallucination happens.

A hallucination happens to one person, at one time, in one place with one desire.

The appearances of Jesus are contrary to the pattern of a hallucination?

Unbelieving Peter and Doubting Thomas

Question: How Trustworthy Are These Testimonies?

Requirements For A Trustworthy Testimony

- A. There must be eyewitnesses
- B. There must be sufficient number of witnesses
- C. The witnesses must be people of good reputation

How Do The New Testament Writers Stand Up?

1. They write as witnesses
2. The uniqueness of the appearances of Christ.
 - A. The number of appearances without contradictory evidence.
 - B. The diversity of appearances as to local.
 - C. Some of the appearances persisted for sometime.
 - D. Appeared not only to individuals but to groups.
 - E. Incidental to the appearances such as:

- i. He could be touched
- ii. He could eat food
- iii. He could prepare food

3. Some Immediate Results Of The Resurrection

- A. The change in the disciples from fear to boldness
- B. The coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost
- C. The multitude of early believers.

On the Day of Pentecost the sermon was based on the resurrection in Jerusalem.

4. Long Range Results Of The Resurrection

- A. The original growth and continuance of the church
- B. The change in the day of worship to the first day of the week.
- C. The New Testament itself
- D. The Deity of Christ demands the resurrection. He predicted his own resurrection: Matthew 16:21; 20:19; 26:32. Mark 9:9; 14:28. John 2:19.

Answer: The New Testament writers pass the test with flying colours!

Question: Was it a physical resurrection?

Answer: The eyewitness accounts!

1. The Gospel of Matthew

Matthew 28:9, "Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings", he said. They came to him clasped his feet and worshipped him. Then Jesus said, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.""

Matthew 28:16, "Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him they worshipped him but some doubted."

2. Luke 24:13-35; 36-53

Luke 24:15, "As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognising him... He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?"... When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognised him, and he disappeared from their sight."

Luke 24:36, "While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence. He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms. Then he opened their minds to they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.""

3. John 20:10-18; 19-23; & 21:1-14; 15-25.

John 20:13-18, "They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "And I don't know here they have put him." At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realise that it was Jesus. "Woman," he said, "Why are crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (Which means teacher). Jesus said "Do not hold on to me for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

John 20:19-23, "On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

John 20:24-31, "...Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" The he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

John 21:1-14, "Afterwards Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Tiberias... Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realise that it was Jesus. He called out to them, "Friends haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered. He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some"... Jesus said to them "Bring some of the fish you have caught." Simon Peter climbed aboard and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. Jesus said to them "Come and have breakfast." one of the disciples dared asked him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came, took bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead."

John 21:15-25, "...This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. Jesus did many other things as well..."

Acts 1:1-11, "In my other book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up into heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the Kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them... After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "Why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven!"

Question: Does It Matter If It Is Not A Physical Resurrection?

Answer: Yes!

1. It matters for the integrity of Jesus who foretold His resurrection

Matthew 16:21, "From that time on Jesus began to explain his disciples that he... must be killed and on the third day be raised to life." (cf Luke 9:21-22)

Mark 9:9-10, "Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead."

John 2:18-22, "Jesus answered them; "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."

2. It matters for the integrity of the New Testament writers

Luke 1:1-4, "Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, Just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught."

John 21:15-25, "...This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. Jesus did many other things as well.

Paul, 1 Corinthians 15:14-15, "And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that He raised Christ from the dead."

1 John 1:1-3, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched – this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. This life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ."

3. It Matters For The Historical And The Theological Truthfulness

A. If Jesus did not rise from the dead there is no adequate explanation for the Christian Faith.

B. If the Bible is not true historically then how can we be sure it is true theologically?

C. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the objective basis for the subjective experience of being reconciled to God and being restored to life.

1.

**Right relationship
Right behaviour**

God

Image of Holiness providing the freedom for fellowship





Image of personality providing the ability for fellowship



Genesis 1:26-27, "Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness..."
"So God created making in his image..."

2.

**Wrong relationship
Wrong behaviour**

God

Image of Holiness marred by sin

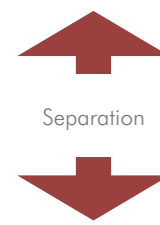
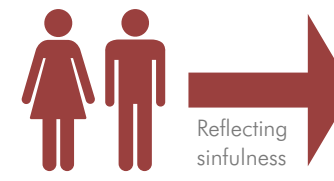


Image of personality warped by sin




Romans 6:33, "The wages of sin is death..."
Romans 3:23, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..."

3.


**The cross
The resurrection**

God

Jesus came to seek and save the lost



Jesus came to give life to the full




Luke 19:10, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost. John 10:10, "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full."

4.


**Restored relationship
Restored behaviour**

God

Restored relationship



Restored behaviour



Romans 5:10, "When we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!"

IV. Evidence for the credibility of the Christian experience

What is personal Christian Experience?

“Christian experience is the state or condition produced in the mental, moral and spiritual nature of man through the power of the Holy Spirit as the result of the establishment of a personal relationship with the risen Christ.” Josh McDowell

Why is it needed?

“Whatever passes as true must have direct tangency with life and experience... It is to be questioned if Christianity would have had the hold it has had, and does have on hundreds of thousands of people if it lacked direct tangency with life and experience even though it created such an imposing theological and philosophical edifice. Because Christianity is true, it must have relevancy to, every significant aspect of the universe and human experience. It must not only provide us with the material of a great philosophy – Christian Trinitarian Theism – and a great theology; but it must have relevancy or tangency to human experience.” Bernard Ramm

What evidence is there for personal Christian experience?

There are two necessary tests for personal experience

1. Is there an objective basis for this experience?
2. Have others had the same experience from the same basis?

Illustration: Man with fried egg on ear bringing love, joy and peace!

1. Is there an objective basis for this Christian experience?

A. The creator God

A creation demands a creator

A design demands a designer

Order demands intelligence

B. The person of Jesus Christ

His life

His death

His resurrection

C. The requirement of faith Involving the total personality

I personally believe in God

I personally believe Jesus is the Son of God

I personally believe Jesus is the saviour of the world

i. Intellect involving knowledge with understanding

- Sin against God and the need of a saviour
- Salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus
- Faith as the only way to appropriate salvation

ii. Emotion involving understanding with conviction by the Holy Spirit

- I am a sinner
- I believe Jesus died for my sins
- I must put my trust in Jesus

iii. Will involving conviction with trust in the Lord Jesus Christ

- Turning to Christ from sin
- Trusting by faith alone

- D. The experience of reality – feeling
 - He is living in my life by the Holy Spirit
 - Being conformed to his image
 - Reflecting His likeness

Objection 1: This is a figment of the imagination

Answer: A figment of the imagination has no objective basis to it. It is all in the mind, like the person who thinks he is a poached egg on toast. Christian faith is based on historical, objective fact, Jesus died on the cross, he was buried and on the third day he was raised from the dead, without which there can be no subjective Christian experience. A Christian's faith, and therefore their personal experience, is based on the objective, historical evidence in space and time of Jesus Christ.

Objection 2: Christians experience is the result of blind faith.

Answer: Christians do not deny faith they deny jumping in the dark.

Objection 3: Christian experience is the result of wishful thinking.

Answer: Christians do not deny desire but their faith is not in their desire.

Objection 4: Christianity is for the emotional cripples who can't make it through life without a crutch.

Answer: Christians do not deny need they honestly admit it.

Objection 5: Christian experience is the result of brainwashing.

Answer: Christians do not deny a changed mind but based on truth.

Objection 6: Christian experience can be explained on the basis of conditioned reflexes, e.g Pavlov's dogs

Answer: Christians admit the participation of the psychological and the reflexes but these do not explain why Christian experience takes place, only how it takes place. The why is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Conclusion: There is basis for my Christian experience!

2. Have others had the same experience from the same basis?

- A. The common denominator fallacy

- Drunk on tonic

- B. The figment of the imagination accusation

Illustration: A mental patient who thought he was President John F. Kennedy. The experience was real to him but was not a valid experience. There was no objective basis to substantiate the experience

When we speak of Christian experience we are going beyond conversion to the experiences that meet the deepest longings of the human heart.

Carl C.G. Jung, 'Modern Man In Search Of A Soul'

"What will he do when he sees only too clearly why his patient is ill; when he sees that it arises from having no love but only sexuality; no faith, because he is afraid to grope in the dark; no hope, because he is disillusioned by the world and by life; and no understanding, because he has failed to read the meaning of his own existence?"

In Jung's opinion for optimum psychological health a person needs four things.

Need	Meaning
1. They must have faith	That the universe has meaning
2. They must have hope	That I can be part of that meaning
3. They must have love	That I am the object of love greater than my own
4. They must have insight	That I can see myself as I really am

Jung confesses, "Human thought cannot conceive any system or final truth that can give a patient what he needs in order to live: that is, faith, hope, love and insight."

The Christian's personal experience meets these needs!

1. Involves faith, Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"
Faith that the universe has meaning
There is a creator behind the creation.
There is a designer behind the design.
There is intelligence behind the order.
2. Involves hope, Romans 8:17, "Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ..."
Hope that I can be part of that meaning
Humankind created in the image of God
Humankind created for a relationship with God
Sin separated humankind from God
Salvation restores humankind to God
By faith we become children of God
3. Involves love, 1 John 4:19, "We love because he first loved us."
To respond to a love greater than your own
Love gives of itself for the benefit of others
For God so loved the world...
4. Involves insight, Romans 3:20, "Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather through the law we become conscious of sin."
To see yourself as you really are
Absolutes of right and wrong
All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

No other religion or philosophy has given humankind:

1. A restored relationship with God.
2. A restored behaviour reflecting the likeness of God
3. The assurance of eternal life

Conclusion: Truth never forces you to obey it. e.g. dead men don't bleed!

Romans 10:9-10, "If you will confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved."

For it is with your heart you believe
and are justified,
and it is with your mouth that you confess
and are saved.

Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

V. Evidence for the reliability of Biblical manuscripts

1. The Claim of the Bible
2. The Evidence of Unity
3. The Evidence of Miracles
4. The Evidence of Fulfilled Prophecy
5. The Evidence of Archaeology
6. The Evidence of Preservation
7. The Evidence of Christian Experience

1. The claim of the Bible

A. The claim concerning its source, 2 Timothy 3:16

- i. It is all Scripture "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness"
- ii. It is God breathed

B. The claim concerning its purpose, 2 Timothy 3:17

- i. To thoroughly equip "so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."
- ii. It is for every good work

C. The claim concerning its writers, 2 Peter 1:21

- i. They are not the source "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation."
- ii. They all spoke from God "For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

e.g. 3,800 times

"The Lord spoke saying"; "God said"; "The Lord commanded"; "The Word of the Lord said".

The New Testament has more than 280 quotations from 30 of the 39 Old Testament books spread over 18 of its 27 books

Paul	"Commandments of the Lord"	1 Corinthians 14:37
	"Not the words of men but God"	1 Thessalonians 2:13
Peter	Calls Paul writings, "other Scripture"	2 Peter 3:16

Always keep in mind that the so-called errors and contradictions in the Bible are simply that – so called. Almost without question careful checking of parallel accounts, the author's viewpoint, etc. clears up the so-called error.

2. The evidence of its unity

Introduction

It is essential that we can defend our faith. We believe the Bible is the Word of God; therefore, we must be able to give good reasons for our belief. 1 Peter 3:15, "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have."

From an incredible variety of material comes the wonderful unity of the Bible.

The unity of the Bible becomes more unique when we consider that:

- A. The Bible is made up of 66 separate books
- B. The Bible was written by over forty different authors
- C. The Bible was written over a period of almost 1500 years
- D. The Bible was written in three languages, Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic
- E. The Bible was written in 13 countries and on 3 continents
- F. The Bible writers were from various occupations, including shepherds, fishermen, prophets, kings, soldiers, scholars, professional men, and labourers.

The Bible writers wrote about hundreds of different subjects:

Moses wrote down the law

The authors of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings and Chronicles wrote history.

David wrote poetry

The Prophets wrote concerning National sin and God's message

The Gospels were written as a record of the life of Christ

The Apostles wrote letters to the churches to correct and teach

John wrote the vision he saw while on the Island of Patmos

These men were not aware what they were ultimately accomplishing.

These men received God's message in different ways.

And yet there is perfect unity because Jesus Christ is the central focus from Genesis to Revelation.

The Old Testament predicts Jesus and The New Testament presents Jesus.

The Old Testament don't lie etc. and the New Testament love your neighbour.

A. The unity of the Bible by the plan of redemption – relationships

i. The announcement in Genesis

The seed of the woman

The animal skins for clothing

Genesis 3:15 "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

ii. The visual aid in the sacrificial system

Without the shedding of blood
there is no forgiveness of sins

Leviticus 17:11, "For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life."

iii. The predicted sacrifice of the Messiah, Isaiah 53

iv. The perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ, John 1:29-34, Hebrews 10:1-18

Look the Lamb of God

One sacrifice

B. The unity of the Bible by the truth of man – behaviour

i. Created In God's Image, Genesis 1:26,27

- An image of holiness
- An image of personality

"Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness,"...so God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."

ii. The Image Marred, Genesis 5:1-3

- Adam separated from God
- Adam dead in sin

"When God created mankind he made them in the likeness of God. He created them male and female; at the time they were created, he blessed them and called them 'mankind'... When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image..."

C. The Image Restored, Colossians 1:27, "...Christ in you the hope of glory."

i. Reflected likeness

ii. The fruit of the Spirit, Galatians 5:16-26

3. The evidence of miracles

Introduction

Miracles are God's signature authenticating the message and messenger. Miracles are evidence of the truthfulness of the messenger. Hebrews 2:2–4 It is not the miracles alone that gives the evidence we are looking for, but as they are rooted in Biblical history.

A. The miracles occur sparingly in the Bible

i. The miracles in Genesis

The flood

The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah

God in direct action

ii. The Miracles In Exodus and after

Moses representing God before Pharaoh

Moses taking the Israelites from Egypt to the promised land.

Joshua and the sundial

iii. The Miracles By The Prophet Elijah

Israel threatened by false prophets

Israel threatened by pagan religions

During the period of the prophets from Isaiah on there are only a few miracles.

Jonah and the whale

Jonah 1:12 - 2:10

Daniel in the lions' den and in the fiery furnace

Daniel 6:1-28

iv. The Miracles In Christ's Ministry

A major occurrence of miracles culminating in the resurrection.

They were to help people in their need and to authenticate His claim as the Messiah

v. The Miracles In The Apostles Ministry

Ministry to people

Acts 3:1-10

Evidence of Apostleship

Acts 5:12; 2 Corinthians 12:12

Eventually tapering off

B. The miracles are used purposefully in the Bible

i. Old Testament use

Miracles are not haphazard in the Bible. They are at important intervals of redemptive history: the Exodus, conflict with paganism, the Messiah, and the early church. They all evidence the necessity for God.

The Lord Jesus

- Miracles Authenticate Jesus' Words, John 10:37–38

“Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles that you may learn and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.”

- Miracles Authenticate Jesus' Works, Matthew 9:6, 7

“But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. Then he said to the paralytic, get up, take your mat and go home. And the man got up and went home.”

- Miracles Authenticate Jesus' Claim, Luke 7:18–22

“Are you the one who was to come or should we expect someone else? ...Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.”

- Miracles Authenticate Jesus' Person, John 20:30, 31
"Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 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."

ii. The Apostles, Hebrews 2:4

"God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to His will."

Evidence Of True Ministry.

Acts 2:43, "Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles."

Acts 5:12, "The Apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people."

2 Corinthians 12:12, "I persevered in demonstrating among you the marks of a true apostle, including signs, wonders and miracles."

C. The miracles are interconnected with the event

This is one of the most important aspects of concerning the miracles in the Bible. The miracles are always connected with the historical event and to remove the miracle is to remove the event as well.

i. Lazarus Raised From The Dead, John 11

The Jewish authorities wanted to put Jesus to death on the basis of Lazarus being raised from the dead. If Lazarus was never raised then the record of the inciting of the Jews will also have to be removed because they are inter-related.

ii. Jesus Accused Of Satanic Power, Matthew 12

Jesus is accused of doing miracles in power of Satan. The charge is meaningless if the miracles did not happen.

iii. Jesus' Resurrection From The Dead, Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20

The four Gospels record the resurrection of Jesus. The change in the disciples is meaningless if Jesus did not rise from the dead. No resurrection, no change.

Conclusion

The miracles in the Bible are used at specific times in redemptive history to authenticate both the messenger and his message.

To doubt the miracles is to doubt the truthfulness of the writers most of whom died for their accounts. If the miracles are rejected the narrative will also have to be rejected because you can't have one without the other.

4. The evidence of fulfilled prophecy

The argument is that Biblical prophecy could only be fulfilled by an omniscient God who knew the future.

A. The principles for prophecy to show the activity of God

- i. The prophecy must be specific
 - enough so that it could not 'just happen'
 - e.g. Miniature golf a funnelled hole.
- ii. The prophecy must be impossible of human fulfilment
 - e.g. next Sunday I will wear a kilt
- iii. The prophecy must be fulfilled

Deuteronomy 18:21, 22, "You may say to yourselves, 'How can I know when a message has not been spoken by the Lord?' If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message the Lord has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him"

B. Examples of fulfilled prophecy

i. Individual Nations Are Prophesied

- Abraham and the Jews, Genesis 12:1-3

God said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and you father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you..."

- Daniel

The statue image representing four empire, Daniel 2

Gold	- Babylon
Silver	- Medo-Persia
Bronze	- Greece
Iron	- Rome

The wild beasts representing four empires, Daniel 7

Lion	- Babylon
Bear	- Medo-Persia
Leopard	- Greece
Terrifying	- Rome

Alexander The Great, Daniel 11

This is one of the most remarkable prophecies in the Bible. It foretells four kings rising in Persia, the last angering the Greeks. A Greek ruler would then arise and conquer the world, and his empire soon being divided in four. Alexander the Great fulfilled this prophecy. The prophecy is so detailed that those who oppose the Bible as God's word have to explain it away as history.

Israel's History Prophesied, Daniel 9

70 heptads	= 70x7 = 490 years
69 x 7	= 483 years were completed on Palm Sunday
1 x 7	= 7 yet to run

- Tyre's Destruction Prophesied, Ezekiel 26:3-21

1. Nebuchadnezzar to destroy the city of Tyre, v8
2. Other nations to participate, v3
3. To be made bare like the top of a rock, v4
4. Fishermen to spread nets on the site, v5
5. The debris to be thrown into the sea, v12
6. The City of Tyre is never be rebuilt, v14
7. It is never be found again, v15

- Messianic Prophecies, Matthew 24:1, 2
300 prophecies covering 60 major subjects
- Birth at Bethlehem Micah 5:2
- Ride into Jerusalem Zechariah 9:9
- Crucifixion Psalm 22, Isaiah 53
- Other events Destruction of Jerusalem 70 AD

5. The evidence of archaeology

The Bible mentions many historic events and geographic places. These would have to be true for the Bible to be God's Word. If the Bible is not true historically and geographically it would be hard to believe what it says theologically. History, geography and archaeology can help us confirm the accuracy of the Bible. The theological implications are believed by faith on the basis of the historical and geographical truthfulness. The line is drawn between history/geography and doctrine. here there has to be a moral choice.

"Archaeology has made some important contribution but it certainly can't prove whether the New Testament is the Word of God. If we dig in Israel and find ancient sites that are consistent with where the Bible said we'd find them, which shows that is history and geography are accurate. However, it doesn't confirm that what Jesus Christ said is right. Spiritual truths cannot be proved or disproved by archaeological discoveries." John McRay quoted in Lee Strobel, The Case for Christ

A. Archaeological evidence about people

i. Moses

The Bible says Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible.

Objection: Moses couldn't have written the Pentateuch because writing was unknown in Moses time.

Answer: Wrong! Writing existed hundreds of years before Moses

ii. Belshazzar

The Bible says Belshazzar was King of Babylon.

Objection: The Bible says Belshazzar was the last King of Babylon and secular history said Nabonidus was the last King of Babylon, therefore the Bible was wrong.

Answer: A cylinder was discovered in 1853 indicating there were two kings of Babylon – a Father and Son, co-regency. Nabonidus was at his oasis retreat and Belshazzar was in Babylon and was killed. Hence Daniel was called the 3rd ruler in the Kingdom (Daniel 5:7).

iii. The Hittites

The Bible mentions the Hittites over 40 times, e.g. Joshua 1:4; Kings 2:6

Objection: Secular history did not mention the Hittites, therefore, the Bible was wrong.

Answer: 1871, the Euphrates River; 1906, Hittite capital excavated in modern Turkey

B. Archaeological evidence about places

A huge number of Biblical sites have been discovered

25,000 that show some connection with the OT period have been located

Albright

The father of modern archaeology said, "There can be no doubt that archaeology has confirmed the substantial historicity of the Old Testament record."

Millar Burrows of Yale

"On the whole, archaeological work has unquestionably strengthened confidence in the reliability of the Scriptural record."

Nelson Gleuck

"There has been no archaeological discovery to repudiate a single Biblical reference."

Welhausen

Welhausen listed 1,500 historical and geographical errors in the Bible. Thanks to archaeology this number has been reduced to about 50.

What about these 50? Keep digging!

Jericho

Matthew 20:29, "As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho..."

Mark 10:46, "Then they came to Jericho..."

Luke 18:35, "As Jesus approached Jericho..."

"Jericho was in least four different locations as much as a quarter of a mile apart in ancient times. The city was destroyed and resettled near another water supply or a new road or nearer a mountain or whatever. The point is, you can be coming out of one site where Jericho existed and be going into another one, like moving from one part of suburban Chicago to another of suburban Chicago." John McRay quoted in Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ*

6. The evidence of preservation

The New Testament was completed almost 2,000 years ago

The New Testament is the most documented ancient writing of History

The New Testament has over 5,500 MSS in the original Greek language

The New Testament, including versions and lectionaries, has over 16,500 MSS

The New Testament has the shortest gap from writing to extant MSS of any ancient work

The John Rylands fragment is dated about 40 years after John wrote his Gospel

A. Diocletian in AD303

Diocletian commanded that all Bibles be destroyed by fire. To celebrate his apparent success he ordered medals made with the inscription, "The Christian religion is destroyed and the worship of the gods restored." A short 10 years later Constantine came to the throne and declared Christianity the state religion. He offered a reward to any person bringing him a Bible. Within 24 hours he had fifty Bibles!

B. Voltaire 18th century French philosopher died 1778

Voltaire said, "The Bible will be a forgotten book found only in museums in the 19th century. Within 25 years of his death, his home and his printing presses were being used by the Geneva Bible Society to print and publish Bibles!

C. Martin Luther

Luther wrote, "Mighty Potentates have raged against this book and sought to destroy and uproot it. Alexander the Great, the Princes of Egypt and Babylon, the Monarchs of Persia, of Greece, and Rome, the Emperor Julius and Augustus... but they prevailed nothing. They are gone while the book remains, and will remain for ever and ever perfect and entire as it was declared at first. Who has thus helped it... who has thus protected it against such mighty forces? No one surely but God Himself who is master of all things.

7. The evidence of Christian experience

The Christian experience is said to be purely subjective, with no objective basis. It is said, it is the result of wishful thinking; Christianity is for the emotional cripples who can't make it through life without a crutch; It is the result of brainwashing; and an evangelist is a psychological manipulator. When we speak of Christian experience we are going beyond conversion to the experiences that meet the deepest longings of the human heart.

A. The experience of faith, Genesis 1:1

Faith that the universe has meaning.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

B. The experience of hope, Romans 8:17

Hope that I can be part of that meaning.

“Now if we are children, then we are heirs-heirs of God and join heirs with Christ...”

C. The experience of love, 1 John 4:19

To respond to a love greater than your own.

“We love because he first loved us.”

D. The experience of insight, Romans 3:20

To see yourself as you really are.

“Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather through the law we become conscious of sin.”

No other ministry has given humankind

i. The assurance of eternal life

ii. A new nature by the indwelling of God

iii. A revolution in society

iv. More to life than just this life