



OKLAHOMA CITY SCHOOL

of Biblical Studies

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Lectureship

**17th Annual Oklahoma City School
of Biblical Studies Lectures**

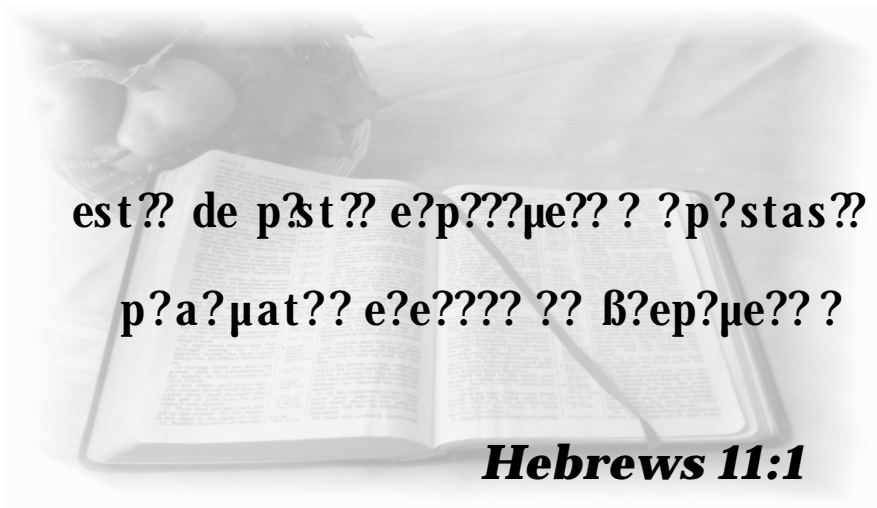
Increasing Our Faith by Means of the Word of God

April 6-9, 2006

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Hebrews 11:1



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Increasing Our Faith by Means of the Word of God



Frank R. Williams (editor)

3307 N. Highway 3E

Seminole, OK 74868



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Foreword

The 17th Annual Oklahoma City Lectureship deals with the theme, **“Increasing our faith by means of the Word of God.”** In a time of doubt this is a great theme and one that is much needed. The church of the living God must always make sure that our faith is based on “the word of God” which is “quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword” (Heb. 4:12).

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews sets before us the faithful of the Old Testament. This great chapter starts with what the writer means by use of the word “faith,” “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1); then, in a most forceful manner reveals that “faith” is required in order to be pleasing to God, “But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb. 11:6). Thus, it is impossible to gain salvation without faith in the existence of God and trust in God that he will save those who “diligently seek him” by means of his word. A “faith” that brings us into the salvation offered by God is only attainable by obeying “the gospel of Christ” which is God’s power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). The “faith” that brings us into Christ is gained by means of the Word of God; as “faith cometh by hearing (the report of the gospel of Christ, Rom. 10:16), and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Our “faith” as it relates to our salvation begins and ends with the word of God.

However, in this age of doubt we must know the evidence that God has given that proves that “he is” (Heb. 11:6). We have not crossed the Red Sea on dry ground as did the Hebrews of old and we have not seen the blind healed and the dead raised as did they of the first century. Yet, God is not without evidence; his witnesses declare his glory day and night, year after year; “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard” (Psa. 19:1-2-3). Thus, the apostle wrote, “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Rom. 1:20).

Thus, the 17th Annual Oklahoma City Lectureship is designed to allow our minds to hear and our eyes to see that God “IS” and that through a faith gained and increased by means of the Word of God, our salvation is sure. But we must never forget, “faith without works is dead” (James 2:26). Thus, with faith and practice, let us “give diligence to” “make our calling and election sure” (2 Pet. 1:10-11).

Frank R. Williams, lectureship director

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THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD

Scott Elliott

Introduction: In Hebrews 11:1, faith is defined for us as, “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” When one is working on building their faith, they must examine the evidence. This evening, we shall examine the evidence for the Bible being the Word of God.

I. **The Bible Claims to be the Word of God**

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” (2 Tim. 3:16)

A. In this passage we have the claim that ALL Scripture is inspired.

B. Inspiration – (*theopneustos*) God-breathed

Our English word “inspiration” comes from two Latin words “in” and “spiro.” These two words mean to “breathe in” or “to breathe into.”

C. The meaning of 2 Timothy 3:16 is all Scripture comes from God.

What we possess today is the word of God and not the word of man.

II. **Unity of the Scriptures.**

The unity of the Scriptures is evidence the Bible is the Word of God. Forty writers from different cultures and backgrounds, who spoke different languages, over a period of 1,600 years, gave us a book with one central theme. These men revealed to us the scheme of redemption as God revealed it to them. “For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:21) Because the Bible is from God, it contains no contradictions and is understandable so man may know what to do to be saved.

III. **Prophecy**

Rex Turner Sr. commenting on prophecy said, “Predictive prophecy is the highest evidence of divine revelation. The one thing that a mortal man cannot do is to know and report future events in the absence of a train of circumstances that naturally

suggest certain possibilities...” (1989, p. 12). W.E. Vine defines prophecy as, “the speaking forth of the mind and counsel of God” (1996, p. 492). Although prophecy is much more than predicting future events, we will limit our study to this one aspect of it. Predictive prophecy must be specific, and it must have happened years prior to the prophesied event when there was no evidence that such an event would occur. There are many of these types of prophecies found in the Bible, but time and space limit me to only discuss a few of them.

- A. The Fall of Babylon (Isaiah 13-14)
- B. Prophecies relating to the Jews.
 - 1. King (Deut. 17:14-15, 28:36)
 - 2. Captivity (28:41)
 - 3. Dispersion (Ezek. 22:15)
- C. Messianic Prophecies
 - 1. Birthplace (Micah 5:2)
 - 2. Born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14)
 - 3. Crucified among thieves (Isa. 53:12)
 - 4. Pierced hands and feet (Psalm 22:16)
 - 5. Cast lots for His garments (Psalm 22:18)
 - 6. Resurrection (Psalm 16:10)

IV. Scientific Foreknowledge

The Bible contains information which could not have possibly been known by its human writers. Some of the scientific information found within the pages of the Bible has only recently been discovered or proven by scientists.

- A. The earth is round. (Isa. 40:22)
- B. Trenches in the ocean were only recently discovered (1873), but the Bible mentioned them long before underwater diving and submarines. (Job 38:16)
- C. The earth is wearing out. (Heb. 1:11; Isa. 51:6)
- D. “For the life of the flesh is in the blood...” (Lev. 17:11)
- E. The Israelites were told to bury their waste products. (Deut. 23:12-13)

F. We are told in Gen.1 that things reproduce after their own kind.

V. Archeology

Archeology is the study of ancient peoples and civilizations. Although we should not rely solely on archeology and science to prove the Bible, they can be of help. We can expect the Bible to be scientifically and historically accurate. If we find something in archeology or science which contradicts the Bible, we can always rely on the Bible as the accurate source. Sometimes scientists and archeologists will criticize the Bible only to later find out they were wrong.

- A. At one point the Bible was criticized because of its claim that Moses wrote the Pentateuch. People claimed that writing was not around at the time Moses lived, but archeologists later discovered that writing predated Moses.
- B. It has been discovered that the walls of Jericho fell outward and not inward. (Josh. 6:20)
- C. The account of David and his men entering into Jerusalem through a tunnel to capture the city has been proven historically accurate by archeologists. (2 Sam. 5:6-8)

VI. Manuscript Evidence

One can be assured that we possess the Word of God today. There are more manuscripts of the Bible than any other ancient document. There are over 5,000 Greek manuscripts that have been discovered and over 19,000 manuscripts written in other languages. If one rejects the validity of the manuscript evidence for the Bible, then they would have to reject every other ancient document.

Conclusion: What we possess today is the Word of God. It is historically and scientifically accurate. Prophecy found within the pages of the Bible proves it is from God. The Bible having only one central theme even though it was written by many different men proves these men were inspired and not writing their thoughts, but what God wanted them to write.

Because the Bible is the word of God, we need to treat it with respect, spend time studying its contents, and apply what we learn to our lives.

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THE WORD OF GOD AND PROPHECY FULFILLED

Frank R. Williams

2 Peter 1:12-21

INTRODUCTION:

- A. The prophecy of which we are to address, “**prophecy of the scripture,**” came not by will of men, “**but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.**”
1. Our theme in this lesson is that prophecy fulfilled proves the inspiration of the word of God.
 - a. In our text the apostle states in verse 16, “**for we have not followed cunningly devised fables.**”
 - 1) These “**cunningly devised fables**” of which the apostle speaks are stories of fiction; cunningly devised stories of fiction.
 - 2) These stories of fiction are cleverly devised to deceive even the wise.
 - b. Peter says, “**we,**” the apostles, have not followed these cleverly devised stories of fiction.
 - 1) Such “**cunningly devised fables**” were much available in that day as they are today.
 - 2) The writings attributed to Mohammed, “the Qur’an”; the writings of Joseph Smith, “The Book of Mormon (1830)”; the writings of Mary Baker Eddy, “Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures (1875)”; these are some of the writings that may be described as “**cunningly devised fables**” this side of the cross of our Lord.
 2. The apostle continued to write in verse 16, “**when we made known unto you the power of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.**”
 - a. “**Eyewitnesses**” are one of the best forms of evidence.
 - 1) What did the apostles “**witness**” with their own eyes?
 - a) **I John 1:1, 3**
 - b) But in the context before us, **2 Pet. 1:16**, the apostle is writing of a certain event.
 - c) They witnessed Jesus receiving “**honour and glory**” from God the Father.
 - d) When? “**when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.**”
 - 2) When did this happen?
 - a) Well, those words uttered by the God the Father appear at least two times in the gospel accord:
 - (1) At the baptism of Jesus in **Matthew 3:17**, and **Matthew 17:5**.
 - (2) But the words of the text will identify the one to which the apostle refers.
 - b) **Verse 18**
 - c) **Matt. 17:1-5**
 - b. As good as the evidence is when given by eyewitnesses, there is yet a greater source of evidence.

- 1) **Verses 19-20**
- 2) The prophets of old did not write from their own minds - **Verse 21**
3. The point here is that prophecy is of God and God is the best course of evidence; for as Paul wrote, **“God cannot lie”** – Tit. 1:2.
 - a. Eyewitnesses have been known to lie because of some invested interest.
 - b. On the other hand, it is not in God to lie.
 - c. The voice heard on **“the holy mount,”** the oral word of God, is no more the word of God than is the written word of God.
- B. Therefore, the fulfillment of prophecy proves the inspiration of the Bible; it is the inspired word of God.

I. WHAT IS PROPHECY?

- A. As we study this subject, there is a question that needs answering.
 1. What is prophecy?
 - a. Biblical prophecy is not a mere **“prediction.”**
 - 1) The dictionary misleads us, as it gives a definition of the word **“prophecy”**:
 - a) **“Something predicted; a prophecy; forecast”** (Funk and Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary, 1966, page 1062).
 - b) A prediction may be given based upon some evidence at hand but that is not the case with Biblical prophecy.
 - c) The weather man may give a **“forecast”**: there is a 20 % chance of rain today.
 - (1) That is, if you are in the right place and certain conditions are present at the right time, it may rain;
 - (2) but that is not the nature of Biblical prophecy!
 - B. Biblical prophecy affirms that all things necessary will be present when it is time for the fulfillment of the prophecy.
 1. Biblical prophecy is not a mere prediction of the possibility of something happening;
 - a. nor the forecast of chance that something may happen.
 - b. Biblical prophecy is the certainty of a named event coming to pass in all its details.
 2. One failure, one detail missing, would prove the Bible is not the inspired word of God.

II. THE SEED OF WOMAN

- A. In the opening pages of the Bible, Moses wrote after the events of Mount Sinai, that God himself spoke to Eve in the Garden of Eden, the first prophecy: **Gen. 3:15.**
 1. The words of this text are most unusual, God said, **“her seed”** – the seed of Eve – the seed of woman.
 - a. The inspired penman wrote of the seed of man many times, **“Adam lived a hundred and thirty years, and begat a son”** – Gen. 5:3,
 - 1) **“Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos”** – Gen. 5:6,
 - 2) **“And Enos lived ninety years, and begat Cainan”** – Gen. 5:9.
 - b. There is the common language of the Bible and history; it is the seed of man,

- man begat.
2. Yet, Gen. 3:15, unmistakably speaks of the “**her seed**”; thus, the seed of woman.
 - a. **Genesis 3:15** contains the germ, the seed, of all later Messianic prophecies as it is so universal, so comprehensive, and yet it is so striking and distinct in its fundamental features.
 - b. The seed of the woman is emphatically the second man, another man, not the first Adam but the last Adam.
 - 1) **1 Cor. 15:45-47**
 - 2). The seed of woman is the second Adam, the spiritual Adam; he “**is the Lord of from heaven.**”
 3. The “*seed of woman*” would come through the earthy descendants of Adam and Eve, man and woman but when the time for the fulfillment of this great prophecy arrives; the “**seed**” of prophecy will unmistakably be the “*seed of woman*” and not that of man; as no man will begat “*the second Adam*” – “**the Lord from heaven!**”
- B. Let us tract prophecy through time and history as revealed upon the pages of the inspired word of God.
1. **Luke 3:34-38.**
 - a. We are going to start in the reverse order, with **verse 38** reading backward to **verse 34.**
 - 1) Notice with me that the first Adam “**which was the son of God.**”
 - a) No man begat Adam, he was of the earth, earthy, but God “**breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul**” – Gen. 2:7;
 - b) and so it was to be with the second Adam, no man would begat him, as he would be “**the Son of God.**”
 - 2) From Adam, Luke takes us to Seth, Enos, Cainan, Ma-le-le-el, Jared, Enoch, Mathusala, Laaech, Noe, and he gives the next nine descendants and in **verse 34**, he brings us to Abraham.
 - b. It is with Abraham that we want to pick up the genealogy, and follow that genealogy through Isaac and Jacob.
 - 1) First, Abraham, in **Gen. 12:3**
And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee, and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.
 - a) Here is a prophecy; it is the continuing prophecy of **Gen. 3:15**, but here it is “*the seed of man;*”
 - b) it is the “*seed of Abraham*” through which “**all families of the earth**” are to be blessed.”
 - 2) Second, God speaking to Isaac, in **Gen. 21:12**, “**for in Isaac shall thy seed be called,**” not through Ishmael, “**the son of the bondwoman**”
 - a) but the prophecy of **Gen. 3:15** runs through Isaac.
 - b) In **Gen. 26:4**, God speaking of Isaac, “**in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.**”
 - 3) Third, God said to Jacob, in **Gen. 28:14**, “**in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.**”
 - c. We are not made to wonder as to the identity of this “**seed**” through which all

the families, all the nations, of the earth are to be blessed.

1) **Gal. 3:16**

2) Therefore, Luke in giving the genealogy, stops and writes, **Luke 3:23**,
“**And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph,...**”

C. Jesus was not the seed of Joseph, biologically, **Matt. 1:25**, “**And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.**”

1. As we have tracked the “*seed of woman*” as it went through the “*seed of man*”: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; God did not forget the promise; so he remained Israel that the seed of promise would be the “*seed of woman*” and not the “*seed of man*.”

a. **Isa. 7:14**

1) A “**virgin shall conceive**”; there is the “*seed of woman*” as revealed in **Gen. 3:15**.

2) By natural means it is impossible for a “**virgin**” to conceive but today by means of artificial insemination a virgin may “**conceive**.”

3) But, such a “*conception*” requires the implanting of the “*seed of man*,” therefore, it is not what Isaiah prophesied would take place.

b. Isaiah’s prophecy requires for a “**virgin**” to “**conceive**” without the “*seed of man*,” thus, the inspired penned wrote of Joseph, “**and knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son.**”

2. Be it known that Matthew quotes **Isaiah 7:14**, in **Matthew 1:23**

a. If I may, allow me to take just a little excursion; there is much debate in this nation about when the unborn is a human being.

1) If you will take just a moment to look at **Isaiah 7:14**, who will see that he wrote, “**a virgin shall conceive;**”

2) but Matthew the inspired interrupter of Isaiah’s words wrote, “**a virgin shall be with child.**”

3) That ends the debate among all Bible believing people: at conception a child exists!

b. The “**virgin**” of **Isaiah 7:14** is Mary the mother of Jesus of Nazareth.

3. Therefore, the prophecy in the opening pages of the Bible is fulfilled in the first part when Mary “**conceived**” – was “**with child.**”

4. That fulfillment is announced in **Gal. 4:4**

But when the fullness of the time was come, - that means when it was time for God to begin the fulfillment of his prophecy - **God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.**

a. The word which the Holy Spirit chose to use in **Galatians 4:4**, “**made,**” comes from a Greek term (ginomai) that expresses, “*to become, i.e. to come into existence, begin to be, received being*” (Thayer, page 115).

1) That which was “**conceived**” in Mary, “**a virgin,**” “*came into existence, begin to be*” at the time of the conception.

2) Jesus as a flesh and blood being had both a beginning and an end.

a) The “*conception*” marked the beginning of the fulfillment of the prophecy in **Gen. 3:15**.

- b) It also pointed to the fulfillment of a second part of that prophecy; the “*seed of woman*” was to “**bruise the head**” of the Satan, Moses wrote, “**it shall bruise thy head.**”
- c) We will stop here and pick up the “*bruising of Satan’s head*” later in our study.
- b. But let us now return to the “*seed of woman*” – “**a virgin shall conceive**” – “**a virgin shall be with child.**”

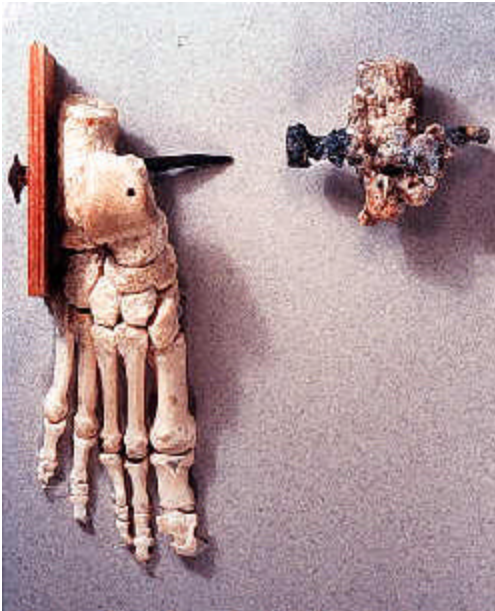
III. GOD WITH US

- A. In **Isaiah 7:14**, the identity of the child to come into existence is announced: “**and shall call his name Immanuel.**”
 - 1. Matthew reveals the meaning of this most unusual word, **Matt. 1:23**, “**and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.**”
 - a. Therefore, in the prophecy of **Gen. 3:15**, God announced this miraculous event; he was pointing to the time when a virgin shall conceive and give birth to a being that would be both man and God.
 - 1) John the apostle starts his gospel account with this truth: **John 1:1**
 - 2) Then, in **John 1:14**,
 - a) Notice the word, “**made,**” in this text.
 - b) It is the same word the Holy Spirit used in **Gal. 4:4**, and means, “**to become, i.e. to come into existence, begin to be, received being**” (Thayer, page 115).
 - b. Understand now, “**the Word**” – the second member of the Godhead - did not come into existence but “**the Word**” dwelling in the flesh did come into existence.
 - 1) In other words, “**God with us,**” God in a flesh and blood body did come into existence and he did so when Mary the virgin “**conceived.**”
 - 2) Thus, John said of him, “**the only begotten of the Father.**”
 - c. Therefore, John the one who baptized, said of that “**conceived**” one, “**He it is, who coming after me, is preferred before me,...**” – John 1:27.
 - 1) The same truth is stated by Jesus in **John 8:58**, “**I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.**”
 - 2) Standing in the present of the Jews, in his flesh and blood body, Jesus affirmed that he was before Abraham; thus, God and man in the same body.
 - 2. Jesus of Nazareth “**conceived**” in the Mary the virgin was Isaiah’s “**Immanuel**” and John’s “**God with us.**”
- B. The mission of this “**Immanuel**” is announced by John the baptizer, **John 1:29**

IV. OTHER PROPHECIES FULFILLED

- A. This brings us to a number of prophecies in the Old Testament which were fulfilled in the New Testament; thus, proving the inspiration of the word of God.
 - 1. **Psa. 22:16** prophecies of the manner of death this one who was before Abraham but after John the baptizer, “**...they pierced my hands and my feet.**”
 - 2. Historically, crucifixion probably originated with the ancient Persians.
 - a. There is evidence, that captured pirates were crucified in the port of Athens in

- the 7th century B.C.
- b. Alexander the Great, born in 356 B.C. and died 323 B.C., introduced the practice of crucifixion throughout his empire.
3. David the writer of this Psalm was born about 1085 B.C and served as king of Israel from about 1055-1015 B.C.
 - a. Therefore, he wrote **Psalms 22** between 1055 and 1015 B.C.
 - b. That means he prophesied of one being crucifixion about three hundred years before it was introduced by the Persians.
- B. Here is the question: ***“Was the prophesy Psalms 22:16 fulfilled?”***
1. **John 19:16-19**
 - a. Notice the words of Thomas after Jesus’ resurrection: **John 20:25** – print of the nails but where is the print of the nails?
 - b. Jesus’ words to Thomas: **John 20:26-27** – The print of the nails in **“my hands.”**
 - c. Here is an illustration of how the Romans crucified people.



- d. In 1968 building contractors working in a suburb north of Jerusalem accidentally uncovered a Jewish tomb dated to the first century after the death of Christ. Lying in a Jewish ossuary bearing the Hebrew inscription 'Jehohanan the son of HGQWL' were the skeletal remains of a man in his twenties, who had been crucified. The evidence for this was based on the right calcaneum (heel bone) of the individual, pierced by an iron nail 11.5 cm. in length. The nail penetrated the lateral surface of the bone emerging on the middle of the surface in which the tip of the nail had become bent. The bending of the tip of the nail upon itself suggests that after the nail penetrated the tree or the upright it may have struck a knot in the wood thereby making it difficult to remove from the heel when the victim was taken from the cross.
2. This graphic shows that the Romans nailed the one being crucified through the feet; thus, when we add the words of Jesus in John 20:27 we get the words of **Psa. 22:16**, **“they pierced my hands and my feet.”**

3. Prophecy fulfilled confirms the inspiration of the Bible.
- C. Now, let us look at some of the prophecies dealing with the crucifixion.
 1. The prophecy of **Psa. 22:18**
 - a. Was this prophecy fulfilled?
 - b. **Matt. 27:35**
 - c. Prophecy fulfilled confirms the inspiration of the Bible.
 2. The prophecy of **Psa. 22:8** – the words of his enemies.
 - a. Was this prophecy fulfilled?
 - b. **Luke 23:35**
 - c. Prophecy fulfilled confirms the inspiration of the Bible.
 3. The prophecy of **Psa. 22:1** the words of the one being crucified.
 - a. Was this prophecy fulfilled?
 - b. **Matt. 27:46**
 - c. Prophecy fulfilled confirms the inspiration of the Bible.
 4. Now, let us move forward to the tomb and the prophecy of **Psa. 16:10**.
 - a. Was this prophecy fulfilled?
 - b. **Mark 16:1-6**
 - c. **Acts 2:27-31**
 - d. Prophecy fulfilled confirms the inspiration of the Bible.
 5. Looking now at the prophecies of **Psa. 110:1** and **Dan. 7:13-14**
 - a. Were these prophecies fulfilled?
 - b. **Acts 1:7-9**
 - c. **Acts 2:34-36**
 - d. Prophecy fulfilled confirms the inspiration of the Bible.

V. CONCLUSION

- A. What does all this mean to the world of today?
 1. **Acts 17:30-31**
 2. **2 Cor. 5:10**
- B. It means one day all that are in the graves will hear the voice of the resurrected one:
John 5:28-29

THE WORD OF GOD AND THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

Kelly White

Introduction: Man has always wondered about life after death. In Job 14:14, Job wondered, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Paul's sermon on Mars Hill in Acts 17 and to King Agrippa in Acts 26 revolved around the credibility of the resurrection. In fact, our only assurance of life after death is based on the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 17:31).

I. The resurrection of Jesus is the foundation fact of Christianity

A. Things that depend on Jesus' resurrection being a fact

1. The inspiration of the Old Testament prophecies (Psa 16:8-10, Acts 2:25-32)
2. The truthfulness of the apostles (Acts 2:32, 3:15)
3. Jesus' claim of Deity (Jn 8:58, 10:25-30; Rom 1:4)
4. Jesus' prophecies of His resurrection (Jn 2:19, Mt 12:40, 16:21, 17:22-23, 20:18-19, 27:63-34)
5. Our sins being forgiven (Rom 6:3-5)
6. The promise of His followers' resurrection (Jn 6:40,44,54; I Cor 6:14, II Cor 4:14)

B. What if Jesus was not raised from the dead (I Cor 15:13-19)

1. The apostles' preaching is vain (v. 14)
2. Our faith is vain (v.14)
3. The apostles are false witnesses (v.15)
4. We are yet in our sins (v. 17)
5. Those who are fallen asleep have perished (v. 18)
6. Followers of Christ are pitiable human beings (v. 19)

C. What else would be true if Jesus were not raised?

1. The Old Testament prophecies were not from God
2. Jesus was either a liar or a lunatic
3. We are without hope of a better life after this one

II. The Reliability of the New Testament – The New Testament is our primary source of information regarding the resurrection of Jesus. Recognizing that we do not possess the original autographs of the New Testament writings, we should first examine whether the New Testament writings we have today have been reliably copied through the ages. In other words, do our New Testaments today contain the very words that the New Testament writers recorded about Jesus' resurrection?

A. Questions applied to all historical documents

1. How many copies of the document are available? Obviously, more copies are better than few copies. Also, with more copies there are more opportunities to compare them with each other.
2. Where were the copies found? If they all came from one place, collusion is possible. But if they are separated by time and location, then collusion is unlikely.
3. What length of time passed between the original and the earliest copies? The shorter the interval of time that exists between the original and its copies, the

greater our assurance in the reliability of the copies.

4. What variations exist between the copies? If the copies are filled with significant variations, it is impossible to know what the original author wrote. However, if the variations are few and minor, the process of copying over the years has been faithful to the original.

B. These questions applied to the New Testament

1. How many copies are available?
 - a. There are over 5,500 ancient Greek manuscripts available ranging from fragments containing just a few words to manuscripts which contain practically the entire New Testament. Additionally, the four gospel accounts appear more often in partial manuscripts than any of the other New Testament books.
 - b. There are over 19,000 ancient copies of the New Testament in the Syriac, Latin, Coptic, and Aramaic languages.
 - c. Over 36,000 quotes from the New Testament exist within the writings of early church leaders. All but 11 verses of the New Testament can be found quoted within these men's writings.
2. Where were the copies found?
 - a. Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Turkey, Greece, Italy
 - b. Such varied locations would make collusion very difficult
3. What length of time passed between the original and the earliest copies?
 - a. Many fragments have been dated as being copied prior to 100 A.D.
 - b. Many other partial manuscripts and ancient copies were copied between 100 and 200 A.D.
 - c. The early church writers mentioned above lived between 100 and 250 A.D.
 - d. The most important and complete Greek manuscripts were copied between 400 and 500 A.D.
4. What variations exist between the copies?
 - a. Experts in the field indicate that there is no doubt as to 99.5% of the words of the New Testament.
 - b. Only about 400 words are in doubt (.5%), and none affects any fundamental doctrine.

C. Conclusion – We can say without a shred of doubt that our New Testaments today contain the very words written about Jesus' resurrection.

III. What does the New Testament say regarding Jesus' resurrection?

- A. On the first day of the week following His crucifixion, His tomb was found to be empty by certain women (Mt 28:6, Mk 16:5, Lk 24:3, Jn 20:1).
- B. An angel had rolled away the stone from the mouth of the tomb (Mt 28:2, Mk 16:4).
- C. Fear of the angel paralyzed the Roman guards (Mt 28:4).
- D. Angels told the women that Jesus had risen from the dead (Mt 28:6, Mk 16:6, Lk 24:6).
- E. Jesus appeared to the women who had seen the empty tomb (Mt 28:9, Mk 16:9, Jn 20:11-17).
- F. Peter and John saw the empty tomb and the grave clothes lying by themselves (Lk

24:12, Jn 20:3-8).

- G. The Roman guards were given money to say that Jesus' disciples had stolen the body while they slept (Mt 28:11-15).
- H. Jesus appeared to two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Mk 16:12, Lk 24:13-35).
- I. Jesus appeared to the disciples in Jerusalem (Lk 24:36, Jn 20:19, 26).
- J. Jesus appeared to the disciples in Galilee (Mt 28:17, Mk 16:14, Jn 21:1).
- K. Jesus appeared to Peter (I Cor 15:5).
- L. Jesus appeared to over 500 disciples at once, most of whom were alive about 25 years later (I Cor 15:6).
- M. Jesus appeared to James (I Cor 15:7).
- N. Jesus appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-6, 21:6-10, 26:12-18; I Cor 15:8).
- O. Jesus' appearances to the disciples spanned 40 days (Acts 1:3).
- P. Jesus ascended into Heaven in the presence of His disciples (Mk 16:19, Lk 24:51, Acts 1:9).

IV. Theories advanced to explain away the resurrection

- A. The Wrong Tomb Theory – this theory assumes that the women who reported that Jesus' body was missing mistakenly went to the wrong tomb and the disciples who went to check on the women's claim also inspected the wrong tomb. However, if this was the case, all the Roman and Jewish authorities would need to do would be to go to the correct tomb and show that Jesus' body was still there.
- B. The Hallucination Theory – this theory says that those who claimed to see the resurrected Christ actually were hallucinating. Again, if this was true, why wouldn't the authorities simply display Jesus' body to show the falsity of the disciples' claims?
- C. The Swoon Theory – this theory says that Jesus did not die during His crucifixion; he merely fainted from exhaustion and loss of blood. In the cool of the tomb, He revived and escaped from it. There are many obvious problems with this theory.
 - 1. All parties involved believed He was dead. The soldiers who crucified Him, the Jewish authorities observing the execution, and the ones who prepared His body for the tomb all believed He was dead. In fact, the Roman soldiers, who were professionals at executing people, pierced His side just for good measure (Jn 19:31-34). It is truly farfetched to think that Jesus showed any signs of life.
 - 2. After a vicious scourging and crucifixion, it is absurd to believe that a person could summon the strength to roll away a great stone and then overpower a guard of professional soldiers. The stone was large enough that 3 women were not able to move it themselves (Mk 16:1-4).
 - 3. If this theory were true, the Jews would have claimed that a swoon had happened rather than manufacture an excuse for the empty tomb.
 - 4. Also, the authorities could have simply captured Jesus again and executed Him for sure to show that He had no power over death.
 - 5. If Jesus had somehow swooned and escaped back to His disciples, He would have been a physical wreck at the point of death. He would have endured the Roman scourge, been nailed to a cross for 3 hours, had his side pierced with a spear, and then spent at least an additional 36 hours in the tomb without food or water. How could He appear healthy enough to convince the skeptical disciples that He was

- raised from the dead? They would recognize Him as having only swooned.
6. What happened to Jesus after the 40 days of recorded appearances? What of the rest of His life?
 7. Why would the apostles live persecuted lives and die as martyrs for a cause they knew to be false?
- D. The Stolen Body Theory – this theory claims that Jesus’ disciples stole His body while the guards slept. This was the explanation the guards gave and what continued on as the primary explanation for those who did not believe in the resurrection. There are a multitude of problems with this theory.
1. The disciples acted as cowards during Jesus’ crucifixion. Peter even denied being a disciple of Jesus. They did not believe the first reports of Jesus’ resurrection. It was their belief that Jesus would establish an earthly kingdom. It is inconceivable that the idea of trying to steal Jesus’ body and claim a resurrection would even enter their minds.
 2. The guards of the tomb were professional soldiers who would be sacrificing their lives if they fell asleep at their post (Acts 12:6-19, 16:27 27:42).
 3. Even if all the guards had fallen asleep, how could the disciples roll away the great stone and remove Jesus’ body from the tomb without waking them?
 4. Also, if the guards were asleep, how could they say it was Jesus’ disciples who stole the body?
- E. The enemies of Christ stole His body – they would have only had to produce Jesus’ body the minute the disciples starting claiming the resurrection.
- V. Facts that support the New Testament’s claims
- A. The witness of the apostles
1. The apostles claimed to be eyewitnesses of the resurrected Christ. They claimed to have seen Him, heard Him, and touched Him (I Jn 1:1).
 2. We cannot doubt the sincerity of their message. They received no visible benefits from their claims of Jesus’ resurrection. They did not receive power, prestige, or wealth. People lie all the time for money, power, or status. However, the witnesses of the resurrected Jesus were scorned, beaten, imprisoned, and executed for the resurrection message (II Cor 11:23-28, I Cor 4:9-13).
- B. The conversion of those who were previously hostile to Christianity
1. Prior to his conversion, the apostle Paul was a rabid enemy of Christianity (Acts 9:1). Yet he later became one of the greatest advocates of the resurrection (Acts 23:6). What could possibly explain this turnaround? Paul said the turnaround came because the resurrected Christ appeared to him (Acts 9:3-6, 21:6-10, 26:12-18; I Cor 15:8).
 2. There were myriads of Jews and Greeks, living in those times, who were as hostile to Christianity as any could be. Yet the evidence was so overpowering that they changed from being enemies to being friends.
 3. None of the apostles ever withdrew, denied, or retracted what they had to say about Jesus. Men simply do not die for that which they know to be a lie.
- C. The empty tomb
1. The empty tomb/missing body is the strongest fact supporting the New Testament claims of Jesus’ resurrection.

2. This is a fact to which all parties to the crucifixion and burial of Jesus agree.
 - a. Justin Martyr was an early Christian writer. Around 165 AD he wrote *Dialogue with Trypho*. In it he wrote that the Jews of his day were circulating a letter claiming that Jesus' disciples stole His body from the tomb.
 - b. Tertullian, circa 200 A.D., wrote of the "stolen body" theory.
 - c. In his writings, John Chrysostom of Antioch (347-407 A.D.) made the point that the stolen body theory only underscored the fact that the tomb was empty.
3. If Jesus was not raised from the dead, the only thing His enemies would have to do would be to produce His body. However, His body was never produced by His enemies during the 1st century nor found by His critics since then.

VI. Conclusion – When Paul was on trial before King Agrippa, he said to Festus: “For the king knoweth of these things, unto whom also I speak freely; for I am persuaded that none of these things is hidden from him; for this hath not been done in a corner” (Acts 26:26). There is no fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort than the resurrection of Jesus. The empty tomb testifies as to His resurrection. The apostles preached that they saw Him after He physically rose from the dead. They suffered and died because they preached and refused to deny the resurrection. Their message is recorded in the best preserved document of antiquity. As Paul asked King Agrippa, “Why is it judged incredible with you, if God doth raise the dead?” (Acts 26:8). The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is a fact.

THE WORD OF GOD, LOGIC, AND ATHEISM

Marion R. Fox

Introduction: Many of the arguments advanced by atheists are fallacious. This outline will consider several common fallacies committed by atheists in their reasoning.

Definition: A fallacy is any argument that seems conclusive to the normal mind but that proves, upon examination, not to establish the alleged conclusion.

I Deductive Fallacies

A The fallacy of inconsistency.

1-Definition: Reasoning from premises that necessarily could not all be true because they logically imply contradictory consequences.

2-Example: One argues that spontaneous generation is not true but accepts organic macroevolution (which is a form of spontaneous generation).

B *Petitio principii*

1-Begging the question.

a-Form of the argument: p is true because p is true.

b-Example 1: The book of Mormon is inspired. How do you know? Because I know it.

c-Example 2: The astronomer claims the meteorites are several billion years old. The isotopic ratios of the elements is then used to prove the Earth is billions of years old (this is related to the isochron method of radiometric dating).

d-The question is begged in several different manners:

α -The conclusion is assumed piecemeal (perhaps in a series of arguments - *one or more of that may be assumed without proof*).

β -Synonyms are sometimes used in begging the question. This is called *hysteron proteron*.

2-Circular reasoning

a-Form of this fallacy:

p is true; because q is true

q is true; because r is true

r is true; because p is true. (go in a circle back to the beginning)

b-Example of the argument: Organic evolution is true because uniformitarian geology has proven it is true. Uniformitarian geology is true because organic evolution has proven it is true.

C *Non sequitur* fallacies

1-Formal fallacies in deduction:

a-Fallacy of affirming the consequent:

$p \rightarrow q$

q

$\therefore p$

α -Example 1:

If John is a citizen of Oklahoma, then John is a citizen of the United States
John is a citizen of the United States
Therefore, John is a citizen of Oklahoma.

β-Example 2:

If organic macroevolution is true, then there should be similarities in the anatomies of various animals.
There are similarities in the anatomies of various animals.
Therefore, organic macroevolution is true.

Another error in this argument is in failing to either recognize or admit that creation also postulates that there should be similarities in the anatomies of various animals. (They had One Designer who used the most effective design for each animal and that design was often the same basic design.)

γ-Example 3:

First Premise: If the Big Bang cosmology is true, then there should be microwave background radiation.
Second Premise: There is microwave background radiation.
Conclusion: Big Bang cosmology is true.

If God stretched out the heavens (Isaiah 45:12), then infrared light would be shifted toward the microwave region from the Doppler effect.

(This explains the microwave background radiation from a creation model of cosmology.)

b-Fallacy of denying the antecedent:

$p \rightarrow q$
 $\sim p$
 $\therefore \sim q$

α-Example 1:

If Joe is a citizen of Texas, then he is a citizen of the United States.
Joe is not a citizen of Texas.
Therefore, Joe is not a citizen of the United States.

β-Example 2:

If archeologists have found the city of Ai, then the city of Ai existed.
Archeologists have not found the city of Ai.
Therefore the city of Ai did not exist.

This fallacy was committed by Callaway (Callaway, Joseph A. "Joseph A. Callaway: 1920-1988." *Biblical Archaeology Review*. Nov./ Dec. 1988, p. 24).

γ-Example 3:

If archeologists have dated the destruction of the city of Ai at about 1,400 BC, then the city of Ai was destroyed in about 1,400 BC.

The archeologists have not dated the destruction of the city of Ai at about 1,400 BC.

Therefore, the city of Ai was not destroyed in about 1,400 BC.

Callaway also made this argument (cf. above).

δ-Example 4:

If Christian "X" can answer argument ____ made by an atheist, then argument _____ made by an atheist has an answer.

Christian "X" cannot answer argument _____ made by an atheist.

Therefore, argument _____ made by an atheist has no answer.

ε-Example 5:

If there is archeological evidence of several million Israelites who both camped and died in the wilderness during the 40 years of wilderness wanderings, then the 40 years of wilderness wanderings occurred.

There is no archeological evidence of several million Israelites who both camped and died in the wilderness during the 40 years of wilderness wanderings.

Therefore, the 40 years of wilderness wanderings did not occur.

Israeli archaeologist Eliezer Oren searched for 10 years and "failed to provide a single shred of evidence that the biblical account of the Exodus from Egypt ever happened" Brown, Barry. "Israeli Archaeologist Reports No Evidence to Back Exodus Story." *News Toronto Bureau*. Feb. 27, 1988.

This argument has an additional problem. There is some evidence that Mount Sinai may be located on the east side of the Gulf of Aqaba, instead of at the traditional site (on the west side of the Gulf of Aqaba).

2-Fallacies of ambiguity (There are several listed in logic books.) Equivocation is one (some definite word or phrase is ambiguous). Fallacy of four terms (This poses as a syllogism, but is not.)

Example 1:

All designing persons are untrustworthy.

All engineers are those who design.

All engineers are those who are untrustworthy.

Example 2:

Evolution occurs when one color variation of a species survives and other color variations of a species do not survive.

Transmutation is a form of evolution.

Transmutation occurs.

(The problem here is the atheist has confused microevolution with macroevolution.)

Example 3:

Charles Lyell committed this fallacy when he introduced his theory of uniformitarian geology: "It is a widespread view among geologists that uniformitarianism, as developed by Charles Lyell in the first half of the nineteenth century, provided an essential antidote to biblically inspired *ad hoc* catastrophism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

However Gould (...) has also shown that this interpretation does injustice to the scientific catastrophists. He also points out that Lyell used the rhetorical trick of giving the same name to the very different concepts of substantive and methodological uniformitarianism, in order to push a rigidly gradualistic view of geological processes which can now be seen to be far from correct." (p. 15) Alvarez, Walter; et al. (1989, S. V. M. Clube, editor).

Catastrophes and evolution: Astronomical foundations. New York: Cambridge University Press.

α-"Lyell used the rhetorical trick ..."

β-This is a classic example of equivocation.

3-Fallacies of irrelevance *ignoratio elechi* (arguing beside the point)

a-Abusive *ad hominem* (to the man)

α-Creationists cannot be correct because they teach some strange doctrines (premillennialism, modern demon possession, etc.).

β-Some creationists hold degrees that are honorary degrees.

b-Appeal to authority *ad verecundiam* (appeal to reverence).

α-Various scientists are quoted as authorities when they are asserting something without offering evidence.

β-Scientists are quoted as authorities when they are making claims about areas in which they have no expertise. (For example, a biologist will be quoted when radiometric dating techniques are questioned.)

c-Appeal to force: *argumentum ad baculum* (appeal to the stick).

α-Example 1: You had better believe me since we will ostracize you, or we will verbally abuse you, etc.

β-Example 2: This is a common problem in science.

d-Black-white fallacy

α-Example: Either you are scientific and accept organic macroevolution or you are an ignoramus and accept creation.

β-Reply: There is more scientific evidence to support creation than there is to support

organic macroevolution.

e-Argument from ignorance *ad ignorantiam*. (appeal to ignorance)

α -Form of the argument: P is true because you cannot disprove it.

β -Example 1:

Atheist: Can you explain how Noah fed the animals on the ark?

Christian: No, I cannot explain how Noah fed the animals on the ark.

Atheist: Then my claim that Genesis 6-9 is a myth is true.

γ -Example 2:

Atheist: Can you explain how animals with a symbiotic relationship survived the flood?

Christian: No, I cannot explain how animals with a symbiotic relationship survived the flood.

Atheist: Then my claim that the flood did not occur must be right.

f-Emotional appeal *ad populum*. (appeal to the people)

α -First form of the argument: p is true because I feel it is true (personal form of argument). This form is not usually used by the atheist.

β -Second form of the argument: p is true because many people feel it is true (objective form of the argument).

Example 1: Organic macroevolution must be true because most scientists accept it.

Example 2: Your group is small, therefore you must not be right when you teach that instantaneous creation occurred.

γ -Third form of the argument: p is true because I told a joke (we meet the opponent's arguments, not by evidence, but by a joke) or because I ridiculed the opponent.

Example 1: When responding to an argument, the atheist may make note of the fact that the opponent is bald headed and tell a bald man joke.

Example 2: Atheists often make fun of Christians or claim they are ignorant without answering their arguments.

Response to this type of argument: "This joke was funny, but the audience wants to hear the truth, they want a reply which makes sound arguments."

δ -Fourth form of the argument: p is true because I drew a false analogy.

Example 1: When responding to the arguments made by a Christian the atheist may draw the analogy that the Christian is a "flat earth advocate."

“Morris now has 69 other equally valid arguments against conventional geochronology, and he published all 70 in a laundry list in his 1977 book, *The Scientific Case for Creation*. (This is still 30 fewer than flat-earther William Carpenter offered in *One Hundred Proofs that the Earth Is Not a Globe*.)” Schadewald, Robert. (Frazier, K. ed, 1986). *Science confronts the paranormal*. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, p. 313.

Example 2: Objections to creation are lumped together in the above book edited by Frazier with arguments against astrology, psychics, UFO's, etc. Anthony Flew drew the analogy that believing in the Bible was a parallel to believing in fairies, in his debate with Thomas Warren.

D Additional fallacies

1-Fallacy of special pleading, consists of appealing to a general statement in refuting another person's assertion, and then ignoring that statement in defending one's own. This is a type of the fallacy of inconsistency. (Monroe Beardsley. [1966]. *Thinking Straight*. Prentice-Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: 3rd ed., p. 286)

a-Atheists make the following argument:

Major Premise: All models that fail to explain every phenomenon are models that are unsound.

Minor Premise: The theistic model is a model that fails to explain every phenomenon.

Conclusion: The theistic model is a model that is unsound.

b-The following argument proves the atheist is irrational (he is committing the fallacy of special pleading):

Major Premise: All models that fail to explain every phenomenon are models that are unsound.

Minor Premise: The atheistic model is a model that fails to explain every phenomenon.

Conclusion: The atheistic model is a model that is unsound.

c-The atheist has committed the fallacy of “special pleading” The atheist has not set forth a theory that explains all the facts (as evidenced by the fact that atheists disagree among themselves) yet he basically argues that the failure of a theistic model to explain all the facts proves that no sound theistic model can be constructed. This demonstrates that some atheists are either irrational or dishonest.

“This is a good illustration of the fact that no scientific theory can or must explain all observations and that a theory that is able to give satisfactory explanation of most observations will not be replaced unless a better one is available.” Brush, Stephen G. (Godfrey, Laurie R., ed., 1983). *Scientists confront creationism*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., p. 72.

6-Diverting the issue.

a-Form of the argument: p is true (or false) because r is true (or false) [where p and r are not logically related or factually related]

b-Example: When asked to answer how they determine ethics (what standard they use) the atheist changes the subject to attack the Scriptures without answering the question.

7-Fallacies in the use of arguments by analogy:

a-The *false analogy*. This is when one supposes or insists that there is a relevant connection when none in fact exists.

α-Some have argued that creation is the same as astrology, ESP, the Bermuda triangle, etc.

β-One common analogy is to draw an analogy between creation and the “flat Earth theory.”

b-The fallacy of “pressing an analogy too far.” This is extending an analogy beyond its actual reach, even when a connection does exist.

α-This error is frequently committed when the atheist claims he has found an error in the Scriptures.

β-This will not be expanded in this treatise.

8-Fallacy of *straw man*. (Some group the straw man as a subdivision of, *secundum quid*).

a-The *straw man* is when one misrepresents an opponents position in order to make it easier to attack or attack a weaker opponent while ignoring a stronger one.

b-Example: Atheists claim that Christians reject evolution and they prove that microevolution occurs and claim to have proven that macroevolution has occurred.

c-“But we are not sure whether we can extrapolate this process of *microevolution* to explain the larger scale events of *macroevolution*.” (p. 25) Raup, David M. “Geology and Creationism.” *Field Museum of Natural History Bulletin*. Vol. 54, March 1983, pp. 16-25.

9-The fallacy of *secundum quid*

a-Definition: To hold a man to the letter of his statement, without regard to obvious limitations upon its applicability, is to trap him by the fallacy of *secundum quid*.

Example 1:

All those who thrust a knife into another person are those who commit an evil act.

Surgeons are those who thrust a knife into another person.

Surgeons are those who commit an evil act.

b-Example 2: Atheists claim there is a contradiction in the Scriptures.

All men have sinned (Romans 3:23).

Jesus was a man.

Jesus sinned.

The obvious limitations are that all except the One perfect person have sinned.

II Inductive fallacies.

A Extrapolation errors.

1-The usage of linear extrapolation when the math equation is non-linear. (This is frequently done with uniformitarian geology. But uniformitarian geology is being rejected by geologists.)

2-Extrapolation in one area but not in another area. Failure to use extrapolation in such areas as:

- a-The theory of plate tectonics is based upon linear extrapolation.
- b-The shrinkage of the Sun.
- c-The erosion of the continents.

“The fourth problem, that of the long lifetime of continents and mountain ranges, is perhaps the most difficult of all. The rivers of the world strip tremendous quantities of rock debris off the continents each year and deposit it in the oceans ... The great rivers are steadily wearing down their basins ... At this rate, all the land masses of the world would be eroded to sea level in something of the order of 10-25 million years.” (Kennedy, George C. “The origin of continents, mountain ranges, and ocean basins.” *American Scientist*. Vol. 47, Dec. 1959, pp. 491-504.)

d-Magnetic field reversals are dated by linear extrapolation.

“But how do we know the dates of the magnetic field reversals in the ocean floor? The age of any reversal can be estimated by extrapolation along the sea-floor magnetic strips, assuming constant spreading rates, once a reliable chronology is constructed for a portion of the strip. Such a reliable chronology has been constructed for the most recent segment - up to 5 million years ago. It is based on direct radioactive dating sequences of lava flows.” (Abell, George O. [Godfrey, Laurie R., ed., 1983]. *Scientists confront creationism*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., p. 37)

B Correlation errors.

1-Many people, including some scientists, do not understand the implications of correlation. Isaac and Michael state:

Science is ultimately concerned with identifying cause-and-effect relationships. Since such relationships are always correlated, there is a strong tendency to reverse the process and infer cause-and-effect status between two or more variables based on an established correlation coefficient. The danger is clear: *correlation does not necessarily imply causation*. Two variables simply may be correlated with a third variable, as in the case of a positive correlation between water temperature and the incidence of drownings along the coast of California. It is incorrect to conclude that warm ocean water is more dangerous and the explanation lies in the obvious fact that more people go swimming when the water

is warm, an activity increasing the exposure factor. (p. 196)

Isaac, Stephen; Michael, William B. (1985). *Handbook in research and evaluation*. San Diego, CA: EdITS Publishers.

- 2-Correlation is misused extensively by some scientists.
 - a-Dendrochronology (tree ring dating) are given relative dates by correlation.
 - b-Varves (sediment layers in lakes) are given relative dates by correlation.
 - c-Ice cores in glaciers are given relative dates by correlation.

THE WORD OF GOD AND ALL SUFFICIENCY

James E. Foster

Introduction:

Scripture reading – 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21

My topic – “The Word of God and All Sufficiency”

A. Scriptures relating to our subject

1. John 14:16-18; 25-26
2. John 15: 26-27
3. John 16: 7-15
4. Jude 3

B. Warnings given concerning adding to or going beyond

1. 2 John 9-19
2. 1 Cor. 4:6
3. Gal. 1:6-9
4. John 12:48

C. Some don't believe it to be complete and all sufficient

1. Because of the doctrine of continuous revelations, the Mormons have strong words for Christians who believe the Bible to be the all-sufficient guide of rule and faith. Joseph Smith, in the *Book of Mormon*, calls such Christians “Gentiles and fools.” I quote a passage from 2 Nephi 29:3-10, “Many of the Gentiles shall say: A Bible! A Bible! We have got a Bible, and there cannot be any more Bible. But thus saith the Lord God...Thou fool, that shall say: A Bible, we have got a Bible and we need no more Bible...wherefore murmur ye, because that ye shall receive more of My word?...Because that ye have a Bible ye need not suppose that it contains all my words; neither need ye suppose that I have not caused more to be written.”

D. More and more the word of God is being sneered and scoffed at. More and more its importance is being ignored.

1. As our Lord, who Himself was the living word, was mocked, abused and crucified – even so today the scriptures, which are the “living and active” word of God, are being mocked, abused, and ignored. They are being sacrificed daily on the altars of “Modernism” and “Liberalism.”

E. People – even members of the church – are “willingly ignorant” (2 Peter 3:5). They do not heed the admonitions to “Take My yoke upon you and LEARN OF ME.” (Matt. 11:29) And to “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.” (Col. 3:16)

F. Necessity of Faith

As I was preparing this lesson, I couldn't help but be impressed by the profoundness of the statement in Romans 10:17, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

1. Faith is absolutely impossible without a knowledge of the scriptures.

G. We must desire to grow in faith.

1. In Luke 17:5-10 we find the setting on which our lectureship is based where the apostles had asked the Lord to increase their faith. (Read)
2. In other words Jesus is saying to use what you've already got.
3. Do you have even just a little faith? Then use it. See what great things you can do with what you have.
4. Like the servant who must finish all that he has been commanded before he is allowed to rest each day, so we must go about our daily service to the Lord.
5. As we go about our work – using what faith we have – we will grow more and more.
 - a. Example: Matthew 25: 14-30. The 5, 2, and 1 talented men.
 - b. The fearful hid his one talent and lost even that and was cast out.
 - c. But those who went to work and used what they had gained even more so that they “had an abundance.” (Verse 29)
 - d. Want greater faith? Then prove what faith you have by your works. (James 2:18)

I. A Knowledge of God and Christ Will Give Us All things Needed (2 Peter 1:3)

A. For Life -

1. This world is literally filled with things of great value: diamonds, emeralds, rubies, pearls, gold, silver, platinum, uranium, oil – to name only a few.
2. There are many wealthy people whose monetary worth reaches into the billions of dollars. They're worth far more than they could ever spend in their lifetimes and yet for all their wealth and power, there are many things they can't buy.
3. They can afford the very finest medical care by the most skilled and prestigious specialists, yet they cannot buy back their good health once it's lost to cancer or some other dreaded disease.
 - a. These days with all the huge medical facilities we have which are bulging at the seams with the latest ultra modern, high tech equipment, you can perhaps prolong your time beyond what would have once been possible.
 - b. But the Bible has told us for thousands of years and we all know it to be true, “There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death.” (Ecclesiastes 8:8; Hebrews 9:27)
4. Life – especially that of our immortal souls – is the most valuable thing in existence and we each have a life, so we each are very wealthy, no matter what our status in life may be.

B. For Godliness –

1. Paul admonishes Timothy in (1 Timothy 4:7-8) “...exercise thyself ...unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” And in verse (11), Paul says, “These things command and teach.”
 - b. We see from these points how valuable our lives are and how important the

exercising of godliness is, to both our physical and spiritual lives.

2. If anyone is truly desirous of saving their souls, having eternal life, and going to heaven to live forever, then they must avail themselves of the greatest amount of knowledge and understanding of the scriptures they are capable of doing.

II. Are the Scriptures REALLY ALL SUFFICIENT?

A. All of us have had to have guidance, training, and advice through every phase of our lives.

1. Even the brightest, most intellectual persons have needed help at times.

B. There are hundreds of thousands of books on thousands of topics –

1. How to raise children, how to raise a garden, how to build a house, choose a career. The list is endless.
2. There are hundreds of philosophers who have published thousands of books telling us how to have happy, successful lives.
3. These books are “all the rage” for a few months. The authors make the rounds on all the talk shows touting their newest best sellers and raking in the big bucks.
 - a. Before you know it, each and every one of them slip into obscurity and no one remembers the books or the authors. After a few years, even the talk shows loose popularity, leave the air and are forgotten.

4. Norman Vincent Peale, Benjamin Spock, M. D., and Zig Ziglar are three examples.

- a. The names of these three were once household words. Now few even remember who they were. Were they authors, actors, or athletes?
- b. The Bible is different. After thousands of years, the names of Jehovah and Jesus Christ and the words Holy Bible are instantly recognized throughout most of the world.
- c. As Christians, it is to these everlasting words which we must turn for guidance and advice. Not to these “flash in the pan” here today, gone tomorrow scribblings of men.

C. We have stated repeatedly that the scriptures are all-sufficient. But can they possibly answer EVERY question? Can they truly provide ALL we have need of to get through our whole life?

1. When you think about it, that’s a huge claim!
 - a. There is no business – for instance a financial institution such as Provident or Edward Jones – not one that would dare claim to be able to pick nothing but winning investments. They all caution their customers to be prepared to sustain a loss from time to time.
 - b. There are no counselors or psychologists that will guarantee to be able to cure all your problems.
 - c. The Bible claims to be an absolutely complete and accurate guide for your life.

Proverbs 3:1–6

2. Well, let’s check it out. Put the Bible to the test and see. (1 Thessalonians 5:21)

III. Words to live by – A Brief Journey Through Life

A. In The Beginning – Learning right from wrong

1. Probably the earliest remembrance a child has is that of mom and dad telling them to “be good.” “You must not tell stories.” “Don’t be selfish, share with others.”
2. Parents teach these Bible principles of right and wrong to their children – they want them to be honest and good. “You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another.” (Leviticus 19:11)
 - a. Example: Parent says to child, “No, no. Put the gum back, you didn’t pay for it.” If the gum somehow makes it all the way home and the parent finds out about it, the child is taken right back to the store and made to confess the wrong and pay for it. (Ephesians 4:28) This usually happens after a good scolding and maybe even a spanking because they didn’t mind in the first place. (Proverbs 22:15)
3. Parents are taught (Eph. 6:4) to bring their children up in the “...nurture and admonition of the Lord.” And children are told to “...obey your parents...” (Eph. 6:1-2).
 - a. Philosophers, however, teach that parents shouldn’t punish a child or make them do something they don’t want to do, such as go to church. That such things might ruin their personality. But the Bible says in Proverbs 23:13-14 “Withhold not correction from the child...thou shalt deliver his soul from hell.”

B. Higher Education – Off to school

1. After they have left the “terrible twos and threes,” they have learned the basics of right and wrong and even a few good manners. “Yes ma’am” and “no sir.” The “magic words,” thank you and please. To treat older people with respect – to call them by their last names, “Mr. or Mrs. Jones,” etc., not by their first names. (Ephesians 4:32; Leviticus 19:3, 32) Now they are off to school with a whole new set of problems they didn’t have at home.
2. They have to learn how to get along with others. Some of whom are bullies that steal their things, pick fights with them, tell lies about them and so forth.
3. Now is the time they learn to –
 - a. “...turn ...the other cheek...” (Matthew 5:39; Proverbs 20:3).
 - b. always tell the truth, even if it hurts. (Psa. 34:13, 51:6; 1 Pet. 2:1)
 - c. not try to get even or get revenge for something bad someone did to them. (Romans 12:19-20; Luke 6:31)
4. They learn to work hard, choose a good career, and be honest.
 - a. Ecclesiastes 9:10; Leviticus 19:35-36; Romans 12:17.
5. The lessons of honesty and self control are difficult, but an important part of growing up.
6. As the school years go on, they are confronted with the theories of evolution. They begin to learn that many have no regard for the sanctity of life, since after all we simply came from slime. Our universe is just here by “accident.” There is no Creator, no higher power to fear. So, if it feels good, do it – the “Situation Ethics” philosophy.
7. Parents have a difficult time combating all these false notions and getting the children “raised” still believing in God, but they are fully equipped with all they need from the scriptures: Gen. 1:1, Gen. 1:26-27, 2: 1, 7; Psa. 19:1-3, Psa. 92:5-6,

139:13-16; Acts 17:26.

8. The Bible is filled with references to the value of human life and how precious we are to God. John 3:16; Pro. 6:16-17; John 13:34; Rom. 5:8, 8:39.
 - a. All this promotes many good results, but one of the most important is good mental health, because as they grow up they will have a good self image. If children are taught they came from animals, they will not have a good self image and will act accordingly.
9. The Bible also teaches how to dress, (1 Tim. 2:9). And to respect and care for the body, (Matt. 6:25; Rom. 12:1-2). Respect for ourselves, others, and life itself was once commonly taught, but many of today's children have not been taught respect for any of the above.

C. Senior High School

1. By the time they reach senior high they feel that they have "arrived."
2. They think they pretty much know it all. After all, they can:
 - a. Drive a car; get a job; go on dates, etc.
3. But as soon as they think they know it all, here comes yet another whole new set of problems.
 - a. Self control is a whole lot harder and a whole lot more important now than ever before. Keeping one's self control at this stage in life is more important now because losing it can have life-long consequences. This cannot be over emphasized to our teens. Proverbs 16:32 b
 - b. Choosing the right kind of person to date, and what qualities are important to look for in a future mate: Proverbs 11:22, 18:22 (key word here being "wife" - not a "significant other"), also Proverbs 19:14; 1 Timothy 2 :9-10.

D. Time goes on – age 25

1. Most by this time have finished college, started a career, married and established their own homes and started families.
2. The basics of life have come full circle.
 - a. All the problems have been solved; all the questions answered, right? "WRONG!"

E. Higher Education II: The "University of Hard Knocks"

1. After we grow up, we have to grow old. And yet another whole new set of problems present themselves. But just as God provided answers and guidance to get us from babyhood to adulthood, He'll also provide all the answers we need to get us from adulthood to the grave. Or as someone else has said, "from here to eternity."
2. There is an endless array of problems, questions, and situations that arise throughout our lives so it's impossible to deal with all of them in this lesson, but here are a few examples that I have chosen to mention. For time's sake I won't try to read or quote them all, but I encourage you to study them out at home.
 - a. Marital Problems – Most of these can be avoided by choosing the proper mate. Then always following the teachings of the scriptures. Two points I'll specifically mention are: the seriousness of the marriage vows (Matthew 19:4-9) and the fact that "...be thou faithful unto death..."(Revelation 2:10)

applies to every aspect of the Christian's life – including being faithful to one's spouse "till death do you part." (Proverbs 31:10-12; Ephesians 4:26-27; Romans 7:2-3; Proverbs 5:18-20; 1 Corinthians 7:10-16). "Woe, wait just a minute," someone might say. "I'll bet you there's not a single word in the Bible about what to do with a monster-in-law, I mean mother-in-law." Yes there is. Try these— Romans 12:18; Ephesians 4:32; Romans 12:20-21; Proverbs 16:7. As Abraham Lincoln once said, "The best way to destroy an enemy is to make him your friend."

- b. Money Problems – Most of these can be solved or avoided by spending it on what we NEED rather than what we WANT (Luke 12:15). And by having a proper attitude toward it. (Proverbs 3:9-10, 10:2-5; Matthew 6:19-21; 1 Timothy 6:6-8)
- c. Politics and Everyday Secular Life – In Romans 12:9 b and c we are taught to "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." This would certainly apply to choosing our political leaders. Also Romans 13:1-7; Proverbs 29:2; and 1 Timothy 2:1-3 are good advice for our secular/civil life.
- d. Discrimination – The Bible has much to say on this subject. Here are only a few references. Acts 17:26; Job 31:13-15; Romans 12:3, 16; Galatians 3:28; James 2:1-4.
- e. Morals – Probably the majority of the New Testament deals with the subject of morals and guidelines for living the Christian life. I'm only mentioning a few: 1 Timothy 6:9-11, 17-19; 1 Thessalonians 5:22; Galatians 5:16-23.
- f. How to Treat Animals – Animals play an important role in our lives. God has put them in our care and we know from the Scriptures that He takes special note of them. We are to respect and care for them. (Genesis 1:26; Proverbs 12:10; Matthew 10:29).
- g. How to Have a Long and Happy Life – Everyone wants to live as long as possible. Obedience to the Scriptures will do more good than all the vitamins, health foods, and personal trainers in the world. Proverbs 4:10-13; 1 Peter 3:8-12.
- h. How to Find the One True Church and Its Organization – Without doubt, the most important question that will ever arise in our lives is, "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). Do I have to "join" a church? Which is the right church? One church is as good as another isn't it? It takes an entire sermon to answer each of the above questions and since this is not the topic at hand I will only say that we must look to the Scriptures for the answers. God's word is the only place where these answers can be found. (1 Timothy 3:15; Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18, 24; Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47; Romans 16:16; 1 Timothy 3:1-12; Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Corinthians 12:27).
- i. Acceptable Worship – With worship as with everything else, we are to please God and not ourselves. God has revealed what He wants – nothing more, nothing less will be acceptable to Him. Just as the plan of salvation is simple and easily understood, so is the pattern of worship we are to follow. An easy way to learn and to remember the five items of worship is with what I call the "Five Ps": Preach – the word (2 Tim. 4:2); Pray – make known to Him our needs and gratitude (1 Tim. 2:1; 1 Thess. 5:17; Eph. 6:18).

Partake – of the communion (1 Cor. 11:23-26); Praise – in Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19); Provide – lay by in store that His work may be done (1 Cor. 16:1-2)

- j. What Is God Like? - First we note that God is love (1 John 4:8). Paul lays out one of the most beautiful pictures of God in the entire Bible in 1 Cor. 13:4-8a. In this passage one learns what love truly is, and thus what God really is like.
- k. Loneliness – Loneliness can happen at any time in life, but especially affects those who are older and have lost their husbands or wives. Friends are a wonderful blessing from God and help to make our lives more pleasant – especially in the lonely older years. God is the truest friend we will ever have and knowing that He will “never leave... or forsake” us (Heb. 13:5) strengthens and cheers those who are sad and lonely.
- l. Old Age – It’s strange how we spend the majority of our lives planning, working, preparing, and saving for our “golden years” only to wake up one morning, look in the mirror, and see a gray-haired, wrinkled stranger staring back at us. We think to ourselves, “How could this have happened already? I’m not ready to be old yet.” (Job 7:6) For many, their hearing, eyesight, and health are starting to fail. As people begin to see themselves growing old, they become sad, scared and confused. The kids have long been grown and gone. Their careers have ended now. They’re not really up to taking care of that beautiful big home and yard anymore so they move to a “retirement home” or “assisted living center.” They begin to look back over their lives and wonder, “What was it all for?” “What was life all about, anyway?” As soon as they’re able to afford all the things they wanted, they’re too sick and old to enjoy it. All those years of back breaking work were for nothing. (Ecclesiastes 1:3; 2:22-23) Well, life isn’t easy. That’s why it’s called the “University of Hard Knocks.” Now as the end of life’s journey draws near, we’re back to square one. Those same haunting questions must be answered. And we find that the answers have been there waiting for us to find them all along. Where did I come from? Answer – Genesis 1:27. Why am I here? Answer – Ecclesiastes 12:13. Where am I going? Answer – Hebrews 9:27. All of our lives the LORD has been telling us in His “all sufficient” scriptures that this life is “...vanity and grasping for the wind.” (Ecclesiastes 2:10-11) And “For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?” (Matthew 16:26). Both the scriptures and the passing of time teach us that this life is temporary (James 4:14; 2 Corinthians 4:18). When we finally accept this fact – if we are wise– we will heed the Lord’s command to “...not lay up for yourselves treasures on the earth, where moth and rust destroy... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven,...” (Matthew 6:19-20). We find that all the trials and temptations of this life are a testing of our faith (James 1:12) and that “...faith is the victory that overcomes the world” (1 John 5:4; 2 Corinthians 5:7; Romans 5:1-2).
- m. Death – The final challenge and fear that must be faced is that of death (Hebrews 2:15). But by faith in the scriptures we know that the tomb of Christ is empty (Matthew 28:5-7). That neither death nor the grave are the victors (1 Corinthians 15:55-57); but that Christ has overcome both the world

(John 16:33) and him who had the power of death, that is, the devil (Hebrews 2:14). Those who are in Christ have, through Him, overcome the world and the fear of death. The Lord comforts us with the promises of a new body (1 Corinthians 15:52-54) and eternal life with Him (1 John 2:25; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

- n. Passions, virtues, vices, emotions, works of the flesh, fruit of the Spirit. Anger (Eph. 4:26); Hatred (1 John 2:11, 3:15); Love (1 John 3 :16; 1 Cor. 13:13; Gal. 5:14) Forgiveness (Matt. 6:14-15); Self-control (Gal. 5:23); Humility (Luke 14:7-11); Diligence (Heb. 11:6); Cowardice (Revelation 21:8). Did I say something about an endless array of problems, questions, and situations?

Conclusion:

- A.** Actually, as you can see, this lesson can't be concluded. All I can do is stop.
1. Just as God has supplied an overwhelming victory over the world for us through Jesus Christ – so He has overwhelmingly supplied our every need in life (Phil. 4:19).
- B.** 1 Thessalonians 2:13 “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which EFFECTUALLY worketh also in you that believe.”
1. Webster says of this word effectual: “Having adequate power or force to produce an intended effect.” “Sufficient and authoritative.” “Potent in effect.”
 2. Here Paul has, without apology, declared that the word of God “worketh effectually in those who believe” - that is – the word of God has adequate power, force and authority to produce the intended effect.
 3. The inspired scriptures is the work of the Holy Spirit for the purpose God intended – to direct men to be saved, stay saved, and have eternal life.
 - a. James 1:21 says to “...receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls.”
 - b. Paul told the elders in (Acts 20:32) “And now I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace which is ABLE to build you up and to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified.”
 - c. 1 Timothy 4:16

THE WORD OF GOD AND THE DESIGN ARGUMENT

Benjamin J. Williams

“A little science estranges a man from God; a little more brings him back.”

Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

INTRODUCTION

- I. Science is often seen as being at odds with religion. However, there is a growing belief that a more diligent and honest pursuit of science reveals a strong case for the existence of an Intelligent Creator.
 - II. The strongest apologetics text ever written is the Word of God. It is sufficient and necessary for healthy faith. While scientific knowledge is forever subject to change, the immutable evidence of the Scriptures offer a compelling case for God to all generations.
 - III. The Bible appeals to extra-Biblical evidence.
 - a. **Hebrews 3:4** For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.
 - b. **Romans 1:20** For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:
 - c. **Psalms 19:1** The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.
-
- I. Definitions
 - a. Creation Science
 - i. This is the study of origins based on a literal interpretation of the Genesis account.
 - ii. *Edwards v. Aguillard*, 482 U.S. 578, 107 S.Ct. 2573 (1987)
 1. Supreme Court ruled: “The Act's primary purpose was to change the public school science curriculum to provide persuasive advantage to a particular religious doctrine that rejects the factual basis of evolution in its entirety. Thus, the Act is designed either to promote the theory of creation science that embodies a particular religious tenet or to prohibit the teaching of a scientific theory disfavored by certain religious sects. In either case, the Act violates the First Amendment.”
 2. Creation Science cannot legally be used in the public school system without violating the current interpretation of the “establishment” clause of the first amendment.
 3. However, in the ruling the following comment was made: “In a similar way, teaching a variety of scientific theories about the origins of humankind to schoolchildren might be validly done with the clear secular intent of enhancing the effectiveness of science instruction.”
 - b. Intelligent Design

- i. Scientific theory claiming “that intelligent causes may have played a crucial role in the origin of the universe and of life and its diversity.”
- ii. This view could conceivably be taught in schools because it is secular in nature, not leaning on any specific creation account or any interpretation of the creation.
 1. It does not offer any particular view of God.
 2. It does not make any judgment on the state of man or the relationship of man to whatever force caused design.
- iii. This view is based on mathematical analysis of empirical evidence.

II. Recognizing Design

- a. Gene Myers of the Human Genome project: “What really astounds me is the architecture of life ... The system is extremely complex. It’s like it was designed ... There’s a huge intelligence there.”
- b. Intuition
 - i. Commonly, people can recognize design when they see it, even if they cannot give a rigorous, mathematical explanation for their conclusion.
 1. In simple terms, this is the intuition that causes you to believe that the watch you find on the roadside did not arrive by the same process as the rock beside it.
 2. Stonehenge and similar stone structures are never interpreted as chance rock formations or the result of natural processes.



3. While it is possible for wind and erosion to make a rock look remotely like a human face, no one confuses the Easter Island stone figures with the surrounding unaltered rock.



- ii. What people are intuitively aware of is the high sense of symmetry, detail, and complexity of these structures.
- c. Tests for Recognizing Design
 - i. The Function Test
 1. NDISGE – This string of symbols have no encoded meaning or function beyond the significance of the individual letters.
 2. DESIGN – This string of the same symbols has a recognizable meaning beyond that of the meaning of the individual letters. Words are examples of something with encoded information that fulfills a specific purpose or function. Encoded information is a sign of intelligence.
 - ii. The Scrabble Test
 1. Given a virtually endless bag of Scrabble tiles, what are the odds of spelling the word “DESIGN” one letter at a time by pulling tiles from this bag?
 - a. Drawing a “D” = 1 in 26 chance
 - b. Drawing a “D” and then an “E” = 1 in 26^2 chance
 - c. Drawing “DESIGN” = 1 in 308,915,776 chance (roughly 1 in 10^8)
 2. What about a larger word like “ANTIESTABLISHMENTARIANISM”?
 - a. The same calculations tell us that the odds are something like 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 (written 10^{35})
 - b. Obviously, this is a far less likely event. Finding this word spelled out in Scrabble tiles would leave us to

believe that in all likelihood, the tiles had been purposely selected to spell the word.

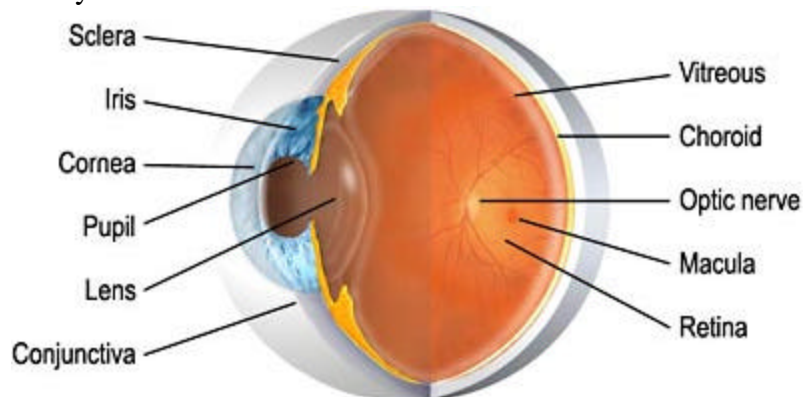
3. What about a large text like the King James Bible?
 - a. Someone has said that the Bible has 3,556,480 letters.
 - b. The odds of randomly selecting letters to form the King James Bible would be about 1 in $10^{5,032,324}$.
 - c. Consequently, no one who sees a Bible believes it is the result of random letter selection.
 4. What would we consider “impossible”?
 - a. Some might irrationally argue that as long as there is 1 chance in $10^{5,032,324}$, then the feat is technically possible. However, that would be a foolish definition of impossible.
 - b. We can use science and even the theory of evolution to arrive at a fair definition of impossible.
 - i. Take the estimated number of elemental particles in the universe (10^{80})
 - ii. Multiply by the number of transitions that each elemental particle can make in a second (10^{45})
 - iii. Then multiply by the estimated age of the universe in seconds according to the evolutionary model (10^{25}).
 - c. Thus, we can reasonably say that any event that has on a 1 in 10^{150} chance of occurring is impossible.
 - d. If some event has occurred that is statistically impossible from mere random chance, then we should look to another explanation of the event.
- iii. Summary of Tests
1. If something exists that can be intuitively recognized as designed, then we can say with a least some certainty that it is designed.
 2. If something exists that fulfills a specific function or purpose and its arrival through random processes can be said to be virtually impossible, then we can say that there is a very high certainty that it is the result of non-random processes. In other words, it has been designed.

III. Examples of Design
a. DNA



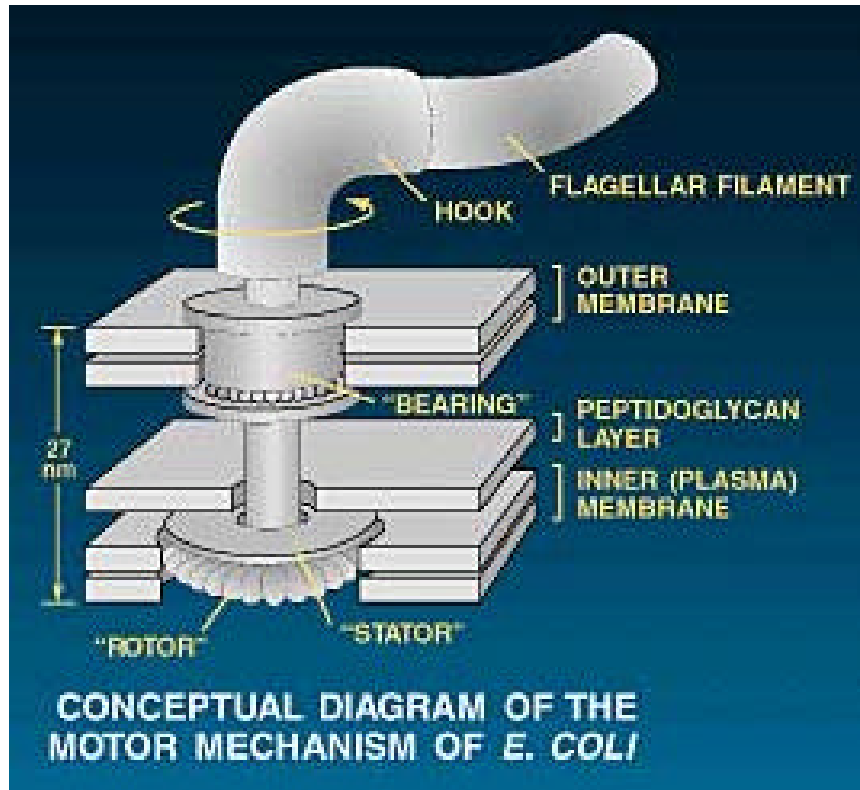
- i. Besides the complex helical structure of DNA, we should be impressed that DNA is a highly complex collection of encoded information.
- ii. Professor Andrews said: “It is not possible for a code, of any kind, to arise by chance or accident. The laws of chance or probability have been worked out by mathematics ... A code is the work of an intelligent mind. Even the cleverest dog or chimpanzee could not work out a code of any kind. It is obvious then that chance cannot do it ... This could not more have been the work of chance or accident than could the “Moonlight Sonata” be played by mice running up and down the keyboard of my piano! Codes do not arise from chaos (1978, pp. 28,29).”

b. The Eye

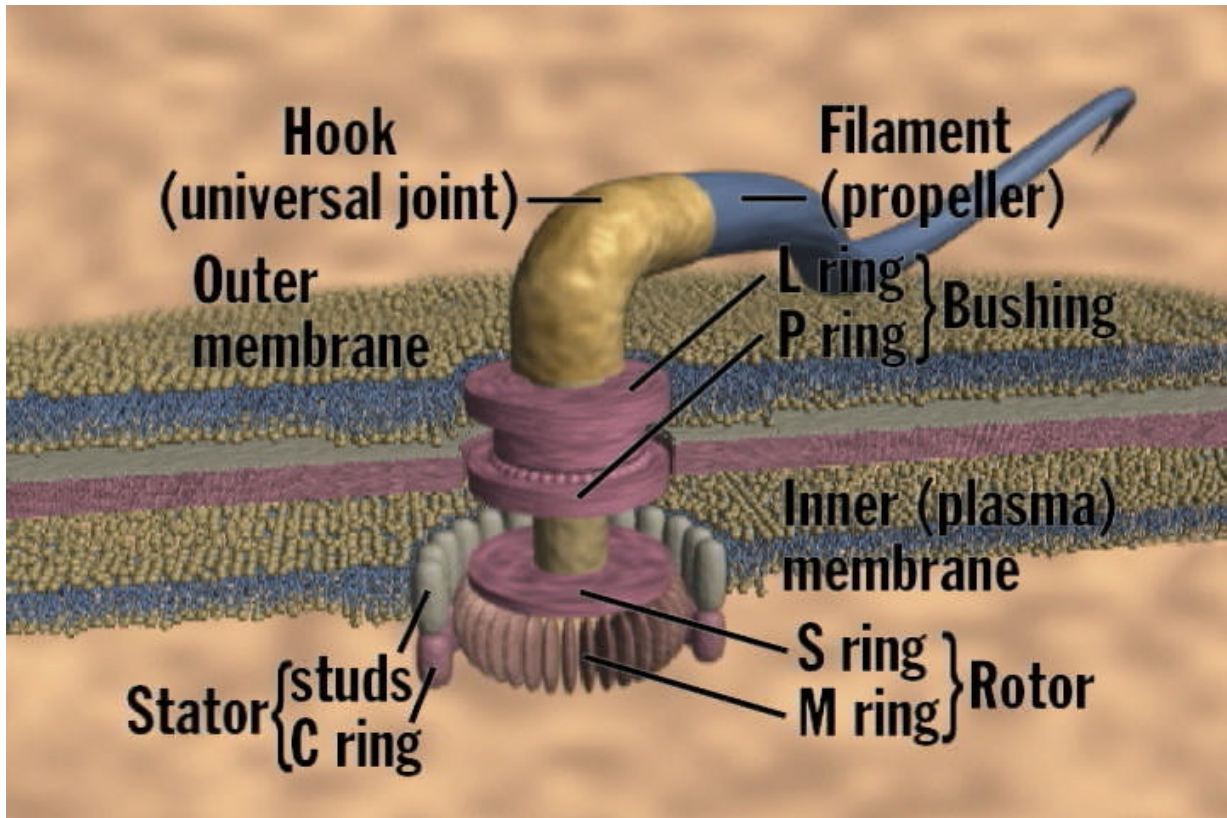


- i. Charles Darwin admitted: “To suppose that the eye with all its inimitable contrivances for adjusting the focus to different distances, for admitting different amounts of light, and for the correction of spherical and chromatic aberration, could have been formed by natural selection, seems, I freely, confess, absurd in the highest sense” (*Origin of the Species*)

- ii. Robert Jastrow of NASA fame admits: “The eye appears to have been designed; no designer of telescopes could have done better. ... It is hard to accept the evolution of the eye as a product of chance” (*The Enchanted Loom: Mind in the Universe*)
- c. E. coli Flagellum



- i. The flagellum is the highly complex appendage of microscopic organisms used for propulsion. The construction of the device is similar to a motorized propeller used on a small fishing boat. The more details science discovers about the flagellum, the more astounding it becomes.
- ii. Furthermore, removal of any one of the parts of the flagellum prohibits the unit from functioning at all. This “irreducible complexity” is a devastating blow for the evolutionary method of chance.
 - 1. Not only must they have the individual pieces coming from chance mutations ...
 - 2. They also must have all the pieces mutating into existence at the same time. If the pieces arrived one at a time, then the mutation that caused the structure to form would be bred out of existence, but the unhelpful and useless incomplete flagellum would make the organism less “fit” than its competitors.



d. "Fine-Tuning"

- i. Another example of evident design is what is sometimes called the "fine-tuning" of the universe.
 1. Consider a warehouse full of timber.
 - a. If two pieces are found to be of identical size and proportion, then we might consider this a coincidence.
 - b. If all of the timber was of the same size, then it is reasonable to believe that either someone purposely collected timber of the same size or that someone cut the timber to be the same size.
 2. The mark of quality craftsmanship is in even, identical pieces put together with high attention to detail. The universe demonstrates this same quality.
- ii. "The force of gravity, the mass of the electron, the charge of the proton, etc. are real values. Were they even slightly different from what they are, not only would life not exist, *nothing* (of any significance) would exist."
- iii. The specifications of the Earth and of its relationship to the Sun are somewhat unique.
 1. Scientists have determined that any life-bearing planet would require very similar specifications.
 2. At present, no other planets, either inside or outside of our solar system, have been found to meet that specific criterion.

CONCLUSION

- I. The intelligent design movement has its shortcomings.
 - a. As Romans 1:20 declares, nature is able to reveal the power and intelligence of the Creator/Designer of all things.
 - b. However, nothing in nature declares the nature or character of this force or being.
- II. It is the work of the Word of God to reveal God.
 - a. Faith, created by the Bible, is the tool needed to know that the Creator the heavens declare is the Almighty God.
 - b. Only the Word of God can supply the evidence needed to build such faith and supply such knowledge.

Helpful Online References

- Apologetics Press Online (<http://apologeticspress.com>) for searchable database of articles dealing with apologetics
- Intelligent Design Network (<http://www.intelligentdesignnetwork.org>) for various articles and reference on intelligent design and related legal issues
- FindLaw (<http://www.findlaw.com/casecode/supreme.html>) for information about Supreme Court rulings on this subject

THE WORD OF GOD AND THE MORAL ARGUMENT

Kelly White

I. The Universal Acceptance of Morality and Ethics

A. Morality and ethics are standards of behavior to which we appeal to govern our lives.

B. In our everyday lives we acknowledge the existence of morality and ethics.

1. When we feel outrage over an injustice done to a weaker member of society

2. When we feel satisfaction over the punishment of a notorious criminal

3. When we feel guilt or remorse about something we personally did or said

4. When we pass judgment on the behavior of others

5. When we critique the beliefs of others

C. Morality and ethics are what distinguishes mankind from animals

1. Guilt and remorse do not exist in the animal kingdom.

2. Animals do not attempt to teach their children principles of right behavior.

3. The idea of selflessness is unknown in the animal kingdom.

D. Morality and ethics transcend human opinion and feelings.

1. For a society to function, we recognize that individuals must act morally and ethically even when they really want to do otherwise.

2. It is universally recognized that a society of selfish people will not function for long.

3. Selfishness has been disdained in every society throughout all of history.

II. The Possible Origins of Morals and Ethics

A. Morals and ethics came from within man and evolved over time. Man observed that certain behaviors tended to preserve the species and developed rules that aligned with those behaviors.

B. Morals and ethics came from outside man. God has given man a natural sense of right and wrong – a sense of “oughtness”. He has also given man a rulebook, the Bible, by which to govern our lives.

III. Naturalistic philosophies to explain the existence of morality and ethics

A. Nihilism – If there is no God, then there is no justification for ethical standards. In this system, “anything goes”, “might makes right”, and “survival of the fittest” are all justifiable.

B. Relativism – There is no universal system for determining morals and ethics. One system is just as good as another.

C. Hedonism – The only good is pleasure. One should obtain the greatest possible individual pleasure with the least amount of individual pain.

D. Utilitarianism – What produces the greatest amount of pleasure for the most people with the least amount of pain for the most people is the correct action to take.

E. Situationism – There are no permanent standards of right and wrong. Each individual situation determines the correctness of an action.

F. Determinism – Man is really not responsible for his actions. Our actions are controlled by our instincts which have evolved over time.

IV. Do naturalistic philosophies explain real-world human behavior?

A. Nihilism – This is the most logical of the systems described. If there is no God, there is no justification for morals and ethics. However, it is obvious that such a system creates total chaos. Also, it is doubtful that there are many who would truly desire to live in such a society. Those who practice such a philosophy are labeled as sociopaths.

B. Relativism – Under such a philosophy, no one could say that Nazi-ism was wrong or that jihadism is wrong. No judgments could be made on the actions of any culture, regardless of how destructive it might be. This would mean a world of no right and wrong. However, we make judgments all the time on the rightness or wrongness of a culture's actions. In fact, those who preach relativism condemn those they perceive as judgmental.

C. Hedonism - When pleasure is God, the results are catastrophic. Aids, divorce, and broken lives are the result of the hedonistic philosophy. Cultures all over the world decry the lowering of sexual morals and want to reverse the trend.

D. Utilitarianism – First of all, this philosophy tries to ascribe good behavior that is actually based on a belief in God and attribute it to a desire to benefit society. However, if God does not exist, why should a person care whether his behavior benefits society? Secondly, who gets to judge as to whether an action benefits society? In short, utilitarianism does not exist in “the real world”.

E. Determinism – If determinism is true, then a person could never do anything that went against his instincts. Yet, in our everyday lives, when we act contrary to our carnal desires, we show that determinism is not true.

Conclusion: No naturalistic explanation for morals and ethics can explain why we act the way we do. People generally acknowledge the existence of absolute standards of right and wrong and recognize their deficiencies in living up to those standards. As a result, most people desire their actions to be more closely aligned with what they believe is good. Also, people generally recognize the importance of guilt and remorse in governing behavior. Secondly, moral and ethical standards could not have evolved because when human beings act according to any naturalistic philosophy of morals and ethics, mankind is degraded, not elevated.

V. Do morality and ethics come from God?

A. What does the Bible say about morality and ethics?

1. Some ideas of right and wrong are within our nature (Rom 2:14).
2. However, man does not have the ability to be moral in and of himself (Jer10:23).
3. Society breaks down when man is the source of his own morality (Rom 1:18-32).
4. The path we should take in life is visible only through the illumination of God's Word (Psa 119:105).
5. We often act contrary to our own beliefs and principles (Rom 7:14-23), but this causes guilt within us and we desire to do better (Psa 51).

B. Biblical principles of morality

1. The golden rule (Mt 7:12)
2. Helping those in need (Lk 10:25-37, Mt 25:31-46)
3. Honoring of marriage commitments (Mt 19:9)
4. Showing due respect and honor to those in authority (Rom 13:1-7, Eph 6:1-2, Heb 13:17)
5. Loving God and loving your neighbor (Mt 22:37-40)

C. Purposes of the Bible

1. To reveal to us that God is unchanging and perfect in all His attributes (Mal 3:6, Mt 5:48, I Tim 1:17, Psa 89:14; 106:1)
2. To reveal to us that we have been created by God in His image (Gen 1:26-27).
3. To reveal to us about who God is, why He created us, and what He expects of us (Isa 43:7, Eccl 12:13, Micah 6:8, I Pet 1:15-16)
4. To teach us more specifically about what is sinful (Rom 7:6-7, Rom 1:29-32, I Cor 6:19-20, Gal 5:19-21)
5. To warn us that we will give an account to God for our actions here in this life (II Cor 5:10)

VI. Does the Bible explanation of morals and ethics correspond to what we see in the real world?

A. What the Bible says about morality and ethics

1. We do observe that human beings have an in-born sense of justice and fair play.
2. The fact that each one of the naturalistic explanations of morality is illogical and unworkable shows that man does not have the ability to be moral in and of himself.
3. When man is the source of his own morality, he must exclude God from the equation. When God is excluded, then it logically follows that our lives are not a gift and that our lives have no purpose. Without a motive to be selfless, there is nothing to restrict us from fulfilling our basest desires. In other words, without God in the equation, human beings act like remorseless animals.
4. There are many activities that the world views as harmless, such as gambling. However, people destroy their lives by becoming ensnared in them. The Bible illuminates our path in life by teaching us what is sinful (Rom 7:7).
5. The popularity of self-improvement books and gurus show that we have a deep desire to better ourselves. Humanity has an in-born desire to be, and admiration for, selflessness.

B. Does application of Biblical moral principles elevate or degrade humanity?

1. Does the application of the golden rule elevate or degrade humanity?
2. Does being a good Samaritan elevate or degrade humanity?
3. Does honoring our marriage commitments elevate or degrade humanity?
4. Does showing due respect and honor to those in authority elevate or degrade humanity?
5. Does loving God and loving your neighbor elevate or degrade humanity?

VII. Conclusion: There is no naturalistic explanation for the existence of morals and ethics. Belief in God is the basis for any belief in right and wrong. God-based morality explains human behavior while naturalistic philosophies are illogical and unworkable. The true application of naturalistic life philosophies degrades humanity. The application of Bible-based moral principles elevates and improves the lives of all who practice them.

THE WORD OF GOD AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

Marion R. Fox

Introduction: When all of the other arguments of the atheist have been answered, this argument is brought forth as the ultimate argument proving that God does not exist.

The argument in summary form: If God is truly all-good (omnibenevolent), all-powerful (omnipotent), and all knowing (omniscient); then God should not allow any evil to occur. But, evil occurs, therefore God cannot exist.

John Hick summarized this argument: “As a challenge to theism, the problem of evil has traditionally been posed in the form of a dilemma: if God is perfectly loving, he must wish to abolish evil; and if he is all-powerful, he must be able to abolish evil. But evil exists; therefore God cannot be both omnipotent and perfectly loving.” (p. 40)

I The argument set forth in the form of a logical argument.

A Some aspects of logical arguments.

1-In order to be sound (prove the conclusion) an argument must have the following characteristics.

a-It must be valid (properly constructed).

b-Both premises must be true.

c-If either “a” or “b” is not true, the conclusion has not been established.

2-Characteristics of unsound arguments (examples to illustrate).

a-Suppose that we wanted to know the total amount of money that a man (Joe) and woman (Sue) have.

α -Suppose that Joe has \$10

β -Suppose that Sue has \$5.

1-It is evident that the sum (T) of Joe’s (J) and Sue’s (S) money is: $J + S = T$

2-The sum (T) of their money is: $\$10 + \$5 = \$15$

b-Suppose that we add their sum and get \$20 (perform an invalid mathematical process). We put correct information into the formula (math is a logical process) and incorrectly add, then we are not going to get an answer that is known to be correct.

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c-Suppose that we know that Joe has \$10 but think that Sue has \$6 (instead of \$5) and we correctly perform the math (perform a valid process), we do not get the correct sum of their money (we add $\$10 + \6 and get \$16, instead of \$15). This means that even a valid process (correct process) with some correct information may not get the correct answer if we put incorrect information into the process.

d-Suppose that we think that Joe has \$9 (instead of \$10) and think that Sue has \$6 (instead of \$5) and we correctly perform the math process (perform a valid process), we just happen to get a correct answer (an accident in this case). We see that we might accidentally get a correct answer with incorrect information.

e-Suppose that we think that Joe has \$25 (instead of \$10) and think that Sue has \$10 (instead of \$5) and we incorrectly subtract their amounts (perform an invalid math process for this problem), we just happen to get a correct answer (an accident in this case also). We see that we might accidentally get a correct answer with incorrect information and an invalid process.

f-From these (“a” through “e”) we learn that we must have correct information and a valid (correct) process in order to know for certain that we have a correct answer.

g-From these (“a” through “e”) we also learn that with incorrect information and an invalid process, we may still get a correct answer.

h-We refer to an argument that has a valid (correct) process and correct (true) information in both premises as a sound argument.

i-We refer to an argument that has either an invalid process, incorrect information in either premise, and/or a combination of these as an unsound argument.

3-In order for the atheist to prove his case, his argument must be sound (have a valid process and true information).

B The argument from the existence of evil set forth by the atheist.

1-The argument in simple form: If God existed, He would not allow evil to occur because He is all loving and all powerful.

2-The argument stated in logical form:

a-If God exists, then God must be omnibenevolent and omnipotent.

b-If God is either not omnibenevolent or not omnipotent, then God does not exist.

c-If God exists and is both omnibenevolent and omnipotent, then evil should not exist.

d-Evil exists.

e-Therefore, either God does not exist or God is not omnibenevolent or God is not omnipotent. (If God is either not omnibenevolent or not omnipotent, then He is not God.)

3-An evaluation of the argument. We will restate the argument in simplified form:

If God exists, then evil should not exist.

Evil exists.

Therefore God does not exist.

a-The argument is valid (properly constructed). (This valid process is referred to as *modus tollens* [the consequent is denied and the antecedent is denied].)

b-I admit that the second premise is true.

c-I deny that the first premise is true. (The consequent is not a necessary condition for the truth of the antecedent.)

C We have a problem with the definition of the word “evil” because it is used in two different ways in both common English speech and in the Bible.

1-It is used to refer to an immoral act, such as: murder, stealing, lying, etc.

a-The Scriptures speak of evil thoughts and purposes of heart (Gen. 6:5).

b-The Scriptures speak of evil words or speech (Pro. 12:6, 3 Jn. 10, etc.).

c-The Scriptures speak of evil actions (Neh. 9:35, Mt. 15:18-20, etc.).

2-The Scriptures speak of events or things that occur as evil (meaning that something bad occurs).

a-This is the meaning of Gen. 44:34.

b-This is the meaning of Ex. 32:14.

c-This is the meaning of Deut. 7:15.

II Answers to the argument from evil.

A The existence of evil (from the first definition of evil [that evil is an immoral act]) does not prove that God cannot exist.

1-Another attribute of God demonstrates the unsound nature of this argument.

a-God is a free-moral Being (able to choose either good or evil).

b-Because God is totally good, He always chooses to do what is good.

c-God created man in His image (Gen. 1:27). This means that man is free to choose either good or evil.

α -Every choice we make has an effect (it either affects us and others in a positive manner [if we choose to do good] or it affects us and others in a negative manner [if we choose to do evil]).

β -As long as God allows us freedom of will, there will be both negative and positive effects of our choices.

d-As a totally righteous (just) Being, God has decreed that there are consequences for our choices.

α -If we choose to do good, there will be good effects upon other beings and we will be rewarded for the choice.

β -If we choose to do evil, there will be bad effects upon other beings and we will be punished for the choice.

2-The atheist has no basis for condemning God for allowing evil to occur.

a-Without a supreme Being, there is no objective standard for determining good and evil (right and wrong).

b-Only God may determine what is good and what is evil.

3-It is not possible to create a finite being without the possibility of the being choosing to do what is evil.

a-This premise has been challenged by J. L. Mackie and Antony Flew but their arguments are specious.

b-These arguments were answered by Smart.

B All pain and suffering is not evil.

1-When a man gets an injury or a disease, such as a case of appendicitis, he may need medical attention or (in some cases) he may die.

a-The appendicitis causes pain in his body but the pain is a signal that something is wrong.

b-When we have pain in an infected tooth, we go to a dentist to get the infection cured.

c-It is evident that some pain is good for us because it warns of that something is wrong.

2-Pain can be a deterrent to our continuing an act.

a-A child sees a hot stove and burns his hand on the stove. He remembers the pain and does not touch a hot stove again. In this instance the pain is good.

b-If the child did not feel pain he might be curious to watch his flesh cook or to smell the cooking of meat while his hand was being cooked.

c-Obviously some pain is not evil but, it is (in fact) good.

3-If we have been taught to love other people (this is only taught in the Scriptures). We will see pain in other people that occurs (as a result of some of our actions) and we will refrain from committing the acts that caused the pain.

a-Pain that results from sin also becomes a deterrent to our committing more sin (unless our heart is evil).

b-We also see the pain of sins committed by other people (sometimes we are the recipients of that pain). This becomes a deterrent to our committing the same sins.

c-Clearly we are taught not to sin and cause pain (upon others) through our sin (Mt. 7:12, Lk. 6:31, etc.).

III Some unsound arguments made by various people to answer the argument from evil.

A The Christian Science religion teaches that the physical realm is nothing more than an illusion (only our spirits exist, the physical realm is an illusion of the mind).

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- 1-If they were correct, pain and suffering would be an illusion.
 - 2-Time does not permit us to consider their arguments but they are contrary to the Scriptures.
- B Another option is to claim that God has coexisted throughout eternity with the Universe.
- 1-This has the problem of contradicting the Scriptures (Gen. 1:1 etc.).
 - a-Clearly God is eternal (Ex. 3:14). This expression is derived from the verb from which we obtain the word “Jehovah” (it depicts one who is self existent).
 - b-Clearly God created the Universe (Gen. 1:1).
 - 2-This also has the problem of contradicting fundamental laws of science.
 - a-The second law of thermodynamics proves that the Universe cannot exist for an eternity.
 - b-The principle of entropy also proves that the Universe cannot arise from a state of chaos to orderliness.
- C The Calvinist ignores the problem by saying “God is sovereign and may do as He wills.”
- 1-Calvinism can easily be refuted and the whole system of theology is unsound.
 - a-The acrostic depicting five of the fundamental doctrines of Calvinism is:
 - T-Total hereditary depravity (also called “total inability”)
 - U-Unconditional election (also called “unconditional predestination”)
 - L-Limited atonement
 - I-Irresistible grace
 - P-Perseverance of the saints (also called “eternal security of the believer” and it depicted by the expression “once saved always saved”)
 - b-All five of these fundamental doctrines of Calvinism are unsound.
 - 2-The Calvinistic idea is that God is sovereign and we do not have to answer the argument from the presence of evil.
 - a-The Calvinist claims that God causes everything that occurs (therefore He has caused people to sin and to do evil acts).
 - b-God is not responsible for any evil (Jas. 1:13).

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ALLEGED CONTRADICTIONS OF THE BIBLE

Norman Easter

The Principle of Contradiction is simply stated as: When "A" which was asserted to be "A" is also contended to be "Not A"

Rather than tackle a whole list of so-called contradictions in one sitting, we have decided to approach the matter of alleged contradictions in general. It is better to deal with one issue at a time. Atheists and Moslems alike try to overwhelm with a barrage of supposed contradictions. Each one, however, can be dealt with one at a time. Mormons, modernists, atheists, and today's Muslims seem to combine their efforts to try to discredit the Bible. Muslims talk often about the many contradictions in the Bible. The number of contradictions varies depending on whom you are talking to. Kairanvi's Izhar-ul-Haq presents 119 numbered contradictions, while others such as Shabbir Ally have supposedly found 101 contradictions. The problem, as they see it, concerns their supposition that any religious book claiming absolute divine authority must not include any contradictions, as a message emanating from an Omniscient being must be consistent with itself.

The Muslims quote from the Quran (4:82) which says "do they not consider the Qur'an (with care). Had it been from any other than Allah, they would have found there-in many a discrepancy." This appears to me to be a dodge concerning the many contradictions and misstatements of the Qur'an.

Attitudes toward the Bible have changed. At one time students were taught to read by the use of the Bible in school and today it is banned altogether. Old timers accepted its syntax without question and patterned their spelling and speech by the Bible. I have heard preachers of years gone by declare that the King James Bible was perfect in its English and form. Today, the Bible is challenged from every angle and many different sources. A Dr. Rogers, we chummed within the fifties, told me of one of his patients with a mental disorder. He said the man made his own Bible in a scrap book by clipping out Scriptures he liked and discarding the rest. I told the doctor that the man was at least honest in his actions. I have known many denominational preachers that did the same thing mentally. I heard one elder teaching Ephesians say, "These verses are negative, we'll just skip them."

I read this quote concerning alleged contradictions, "Of all the challenges to a Christian's faith, surely one of the most troubling in this day and age is skepticism's charge that the Bible is filled with various discrepancies and contradictions. If true, such a charge (which is occurring with increasing frequency) certainly would serve to negate the inerrancy and inspiration of God's Word. It is a simple matter for an unbeliever to hurl a barrage of alleged discrepancies and/or contradictions at a believer, but it is not always a simple task for the believer to respond quickly and effectively. This is the case because many of the so-called discrepancies and contradictions cannot be answered adequately via a 'quick wave of the hand,' but instead require in-depth, painstaking research in order to craft a reply that can dismantle each one on a case-by-case basis."

Many years ago Dr. Snuggs, a liberal, who was also head of the Bible Department at Tulsa University, wrote a series of questions for me, such as "Who killed Goliath?" "What were the inscriptions on the cross?" etc. I soon saw that he could glibly ask a question in thirty seconds that would take thirty days for a serious answer. There are some questions that we cannot answer, although it is obvious that the answer is just simply out of our reach. John said that God is a Spirit (Jn.4:20-24). What is a Spirit? John also said, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1Jn.3:2)

The Sacred Scriptures are unique in the sense that they are a collection of 66 books written in the span of 1500 to 2,000 years, by writers from different nations, of different professions, having varying styles of writing and temperaments but united in doctrine under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Add to this the fact that they were written in three ancient languages (now dead languages). Surely with this in mind a modern reader would first need to bridge the gap from when the passage was written, to the present day before he is able to draw practical applications from it. Language and idiom evolve in the passing of time. It was once said, "Ain't, ain't in the dictionary," but it is in the unabridged dictionary now. Living languages are undergoing constant change. If you don't believe it, try telling a happy man that he looks "gay" to you.

Each of the alleged contradictions may be cleared up by (1) clearing the confusion in reckoning (2) correcting the interpretational error (3) explaining the genealogical perplexities and (4) fixing the chronological jumbles. It must be understood that all four cases are brought not by the Holy Writ upon itself but by those who question it-the skeptics. We must therefore classify each alleged contradiction according to its "cause": Confusion in reckoning; Misunderstood context or idiom; Genealogical perplexities, Chronological jumbles. Within this structure we must understand a number of difficulties to be overcome.

I do not suggest that there are no difficulties or deep questions in the arena of Bible study. Since we are finite and are dealing with the infinite, we are at a great disadvantage in solving matters that are problems to our understanding about the infinite. The simple statement that God is from everlasting to everlasting is more than we can grasp, since we are limited to time and space. We have no experience of a past eternity upon which we may rest our case. Who are we to counsel God? It is well beyond us to search out every detail of the past and to know all of the circumstances around events of the past. We simply were not there when He laid the foundations of our universe, I do not subscribe to the suggestive song that says, "You ask me how I know. I know because He lives within my heart." I do believe that God has provided ample substance to under gird our faith. I do believe that in the study of His Word our faith is built on an unshakeable foundation. I also believe that our problem areas are not due to the error of divine revelation, but to the inadequacy of man. Difficulties, yes we have them, but with proper study they can be overcome, one by one.

We begin considering alleged discrepancies by considering the problem of dates. Dating an event or passage can be very perplexing. Try nailing down the exact dates of the writing of books of the Bible. Events are often dated by the reign of kings. However, another king from another area may overlap the first king mentioned (such as the kings of Israel and Judah).

Dating may well be taken from the beginning of the reign of one king and later the dating begins with another king. Ancient methods of dating may vary. Sometimes dates are based on earthquakes, volcanoes or wars and battles. The repetition of similar happenings can confuse the issue.

Animals are another source of frustration to us in nailing down the exact name. If you told the modern teen that you were going "hare" hunting, he would likely think you were going to buy a wig. Most of us have read the story of the "Hare and the Tortoise." If you said I am going rabbit hunting, at least the kids from the country would know of your intentions. Animals were called by different names in different parts of the country or world. Much has been made about the behemoth (Job 40:15) or the leviathan or the unicorn. (Num.23:22) Much has to do with what the animal was called in that time and in that country, but this is no contradiction of Scriptures or of science. Did you ever hear "panther" or "painter" stories of Missouri and Arkansas?

Linguistics can also produce a challenge in seeming contradictions and misunderstandings. Producing translations from ancient languages to modern language can be difficult. Add to this the problem of a team of translators being assigned different passages or books of the Bible to translate. Each team or person may have a difference as to the choice of words. This is true especially in the use of verbs, adjectives and synonyms. Therefore, a slightly different word might be used in different sections of good translations. The King James translators sometimes used one word to translate several different words in the original, as the word "worship" or the word "hell," for instance. At other times the translators went through a series of synonyms to translate one word. The very structure of a sentence or the need of supplied words may give rise to difficulties. The King James Version makes use of italics where it is needed to complete the sentence. Sometimes their efforts are of great benefit and at other times they are not so helpful. A word in one language may not have an exact equivalent in another language. When we were in Russia the first time I was mindful of the length of time it took for a sermon. With the translator repeating everything said it took twice as long as without the need of a translator. I assured the crowd that I would keep them no longer than necessary; I mentioned "I am aware that the mind can only absorb what the seat can endure." The crowd roared with laughter. Then the translator explained to me, "We have no nice word for seat."

Sometimes there are synonyms with varying shades of meanings; some words are picture words in one language and not in another. I am told that there are at least a thousand words in Arabic for our word water. Some words describe a whole oasis while others describe an almost dry water-hole.

There is a difference in translation and interpretation. Our missionaries have well understood this problem. Many years ago a team of missionaries were in Italy. Their hearers seemed confused until the missionaries discovered that when they said "preacher" the translators interpreted it "priest" and when they said "baptism" the translator interpreted it "sprinkle." The sixteen eleven translators had difficulty with "immersion" in face of the church of England.

There are also words that have emotion in one language and not in another. There are sound alike words in different languages that have entirely different meanings. There are words that sound harsh or with a different meaning from one language to another. The Russian word "Nit" (no) is pronounced with an almost insulting quality, while the word "da" (yes) could have the sound of a bad "blond" joke in English. I am told that U. N. translators have difficulty in translating harsh sounding words and phrases into diplomatic meaning with out losing the word interpreted or angering their hearers. Much confusion arose over the translation of monogenes in John 3:16. I heard Brother Hugo McCord wrestle with this problem. Jesus is the "only begotten" Son of God by the virgin birth. Christians are the "begotten" children of God- Yet, not in the same sense.

Idioms are also a problem that must be studied for correct meaning. Can you imagine how the phrase, "He's in a pickle," could confuse one who was not accustomed to our English? How about the phrase, "He's up a creek without a paddle." I am told that in Holland when one says, "I fell down the stairs." He means, "I have a headache." These do not result in contradictions; they are problems in language and translation.

These linguistic problems are further complicated by archaic language. Any living language goes through its changes. We have followed the word "psalmos" through its stages from pulling the hair in Nehemiah, to plucking the bow string and the harp string, to the song sung with the harp to just singing the song that plucks the heart string. The word lyric is similar in that it was used with the lyre instrument and finally came to mean just the words of a song without the music. There are more than three hundred obsolete words in our beloved King James Version. When David "prevented the morning," he did not stop the daylight; he got up before sun up. The righteous that are alive at the coming of the Lord, in 1Thess.4, will not stop the dead from being raised, but the dead in Christ shall rise first. In Rom 1:13, Paul says in the K.J. V., "Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles:" (Rom 1:13) In 1611 the word "let" meant to "hinder." Paul was explaining that he wanted to go to Rome but up to that point he had been hindered from doing so. The word "let" has reversed its meaning since 1611.

Genealogies also produce problems of apparent contradictions. The fact that women were not counted in many of the genealogical accountings? Gaps are also in the genealogical accounts. This is often the result of what the writer intended to show. Sometimes it is said that someone is the son of someone else while it is to be understood that the son was a grandson or a great, great grandson.

Numbers can also present problems in apparent discrepancies. Different numbering methods were used in different times and parts of the countries. We often number off things A, B., C.,D., etc., or we may number items I, II, III, IV, etc., or we may number 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. or we may number one, two, three, four, etc. or we may use a barcode. Was it "y, 2, K" or "Y, 2, M." ? Have you read the dating on old court houses in our own country? While in ancient times one thousand meant an innumerable number, we hear gigabytes used glibly today. Now, we are using millimeters, centimeters and liters, in the metric system. I remember the confusion for U. S. mechanics when foreign cars called for metric tools. Do you refer to the

temperature in Fahrenheit or in Centigrade? This difference in numbering may account for some of statistical errors found in our present text or versions. (2Kg.18:13).

Sometimes the Bible just gives us the facts. Sometimes as in the Gospels, the same sermon was preached or a similar event took place in a different place and time. The reports of the events may have minor differences according to which writer was writing about which place. Any preacher that has preached for very long can attest to these situations. Many times it is the same happening at different places with different faces. When Jesus went from village to village preaching the same message, the similar happening could be stated in one Gospel as those reported by another writer of another time and place. All of the details of the happening may not be necessary to make the point that the writer through inspiration wishes to convey.

Another fact that can be added to the facts of the matter is that fact is often stranger than fiction. Since the world could not contain the volume that revealed every detail, it was necessary that the writer just gave us the facts of the situation. Things happen in our daily lives that if they were reported without the full background details would seem to be contradictory. Have you read the "Believe it or Not," stories? Many years ago, in the Springfield Missouri area, people saw what appeared to be a lantern carried without the help of man, floating down a trail on a moonlit night. The facts were reported, the witnesses testified of what they saw. It appeared to be a lantern floating in the air, going from one side of the woodsy trail road to the other side of the road and then disappear. The witnesses were reliable and their testimony was obviously true. Years later, upon examination, it was found that the phenomenal light was produced by decaying wood and was known as "fox fire." There was no contradiction of facts. It was just that all of the facts were not yet reported. Then, there is the problem of scribal errors or commentaries. It would appear that from the best evidence that John 5:34 might have slipped into the text from the marginal commentary of a scribe. The comparisons of manuscripts and manuscript families become important when one realizes that copies of the Scriptures were made by hand. Many of the letters were similar and sometimes the dots or parts of a letter would be dim on the scroll being copied and another word could be substituted for the original.

It is amazing that such errors are so minimal. It is also a sign of the providence of God that other manuscripts are preserved for comparison. As we suggest, many Bible difficulties result from a minor error on the part of a copyist in the transmission of the text. In the Old Testament such transmissional errors may have resulted from a poor reading of the vowels; Hebrew was originally written in consonants only, and the vowel signs were not added until a thousand years after the completion of the Old Testament canon. But there are also some consonants that are easily confused because they look so much alike (e.g., [d, daleth] and [r, resh] or [y, yod] and [w, waw]). Besides that, some words are preserved in a very old spelling susceptible of misunderstanding by later Hebrew copyists. In other words, only a resort to textual criticism and its analysis of the most frequent types of confusion and mistake can clear up the difficulty.

Custom also plays a great part in our understanding the Scriptures. In Russia one would not give a dozen roses to his love. He might give her eleven or thirteen roses, but an even number is considered bad luck. When one enters a home in many parts of Europe he must take off his

shoes and leave them at the door. To fail to do so would be considered impolite. One might eat an ice cream on the sidewalk in Siberia but he is not to drink a pop while walking on the side walk. A woman must not smile at a man in a public place in Russia, in doing so she may well imply the wrong message to the man. It is necessary that we study the customs of the times of the event about which we are reading. Life on the rooftop was common in the Palestine area. One can certainly see why he should not light a lamp and put in under the basket customarily left in the middle of the room while it was not in use.

It would be most impossible for us to over emphasize the context of a passage. When one fails to do so almost anything can be made of the Bible or the daily news paper. The headlines "Clinton takes a shot at Bush!" taken out of context could be taken to mean a number of things. In Mt.27:5 it states than Judas "went and hanged himself" and in Lk.3:11 it is commanded, "he that hath meat, let him do likewise." And Deut.12:30 states, "even so will I do likewise." The old Pentecostal preacher did not like the custom of the ladies of his church to wear their hair in a knot on the top of their head. He looked for a passage that would condemn that ugly hairdo- Finally he found it and preached his text loudly, "The Scriptures plainly says, `Top not,' come down!" His Scripture was, Mat 24:17, "Let him which is on the house top not come down to take any thing out of his house."

Punctuation and spelling can sometimes present problems since the original Hebrew had only consonants and the Greek was without punctuation. The punctuation of 1 Cor.7:39,40 makes a great difference. The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. But, she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God. With different punctuation it could be read "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband lives, but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will. But, only in the Lord she is happier if she so remains according to my judgment. And I also think that have the Spirit of God. (ICor.7:39,40) Note: all of the translations that I consulted said she is to marry only a Christian or in the Lord. Or, Eph 4:28 Let him who stole steal no more, but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, so that he may have something to give to him who needs. A distortion might read, "Let him who stole, steal, no more working with his hands."

The old laws of hermeneutics still serve us well. Consider the context, observe when it was written, to whom was it written, why was it written and what was written.

There is one final thing with which I must conclude. I ask, "Is the inquirer about alleged discrepancies honest?" One of my professors at Tulsa University, a Dr. Brown, who himself taught New Testament Greek, engaged myself and others in a discussion. In the discussion Dr. Brown attempted to prove that the New Testament contradicted itself. His most persuading effort was to say that Acts 9 and Acts 22 contradicted each other. "One passage," he said, "says that they who were with Saul heard the voice and the other passage says that they did not hear the voice." It is difficult for me to believe that a professor, who had taught Greek for many years, did not know the difference between "akouo" with the genitive and "akouo" with the accusative. It was then that I decided that Dr. Brown, a liberal theologian and a Greek teacher was not being honest but was making his smoke screen for his students

in order to make his point. He was apparently not interested in truth but in destroying the faith of others, and the credibility of the Bible. On this passage A. T. Robertson comments. Act 9:7- That journeyed with him (hoi sunodeuontes autoi Not in the older Greek, but in the Koine with the associative instrumental. Speechless (eneoi)). Mute. Only here in N.T., though old word. Hearing the voice, but beholding no man (akouontes men tes phones,, modena de theorountes). Two present active participles in contrast (men, de). In Act 22:9 Paul says that the men "beheld the light" (to men phos etheasantō), but evidently did not discern the person. Paul also says there, "but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me" (*te~~n~~ de pho~~n~~e~~n~~ ouk e~~r~~ousan tou lalountos moi*). Instead of this being a flat contradiction of what Luke says in Act_9:7 it is natural to take it as being likewise (as with the "light" and "no one") a distinction between the "sound" (original sense of *pho~~n~~e~~n~~as* in Joh_3:8) and the separate words spoken. It so happens that *akouo~~n~~s* used either with the accusative (the extent of the hearing) or the genitive (the specifying). It is possible that such a distinction here coincides with the two senses of *pho~~n~~e~~n~~?* They heard the sound (Act_9:7), but did not understand the words (Act_22:9). However, this distinction in case with *akouo~~n~~?* though possible and even probable here, is by no means a necessary one for in Joh_3:8 where *pho~~n~~e~~n~~?* undoubtedly means "sound" the accusative occurs as Luke uses *e~~r~~ousen pho~~n~~e~~n~~?* about Saul in Act_9:4. Besides in Act_22:7 Paul uses *e~~r~~ousa pho~~n~~e~~n~~?* about himself, but *e~~r~~ousa pho~~n~~e~~n~~?* about himself in Act_26:14, interchangeably.

W.B. Johnson commented on Ac.22:9 Heard not the voice. Some have insisted that there is a contradiction between this statement and that of Act 9 7, but the word hear is often used in the sense of "understand-" Once the writer heard Abraham Lincoln address a great audience. Some, at a distance, cried out, "We cannot hear." They meant understand, for they could hear the sound of his voice. I could not see for the glory of that light. In chapter 9 we are told that he was blinded, but not the cause.

I urge that with any alleged contradiction an open study of a good commentary, a good word study of Bible words a good translation and good studies such as John W. Haley's "An Examination of Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible", George De Hoff's "Alleged Contradictions of the Bible" and etc. There are many classical studies in archaeology, customs of the Bible times, geography and history of the Bible lands etc. A comprehensive set of Bible encyclopedias are also a great help. There are even many great helps on the internet. Sometimes the study is tedious and even hard, but at the conclusion one's faith is strengthened with a powerful conviction of the inerrant make up of the Bible.

THE WORD OF GOD AND ACCEPTABLE FAITH.

Brent Fluegel

Introduction:

1. In the realm of "Christian" religion many people have sought to explain what one must do in order to receive eternal life, which is the result of maintaining "Acceptable Faith". Many have looked to their own wisdom as the means for understanding and explaining the eternal principles of how one obtains and retains eternal Salvation (i.e. maintains acceptable faith). In light of this consider what the Bible teaches from the mind of God, concerning the direction man's wisdom can take him in life.

Pr 14:12 There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.

Jer 10:23 O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.

Isa 55:8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways, " says the LORD. 9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.

1Co 1:19 For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent... Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

1Co 4:6 ...that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.

Pr 16:6; Ro 12:16, 1Ch 28:9.

- A. Truly man's wisdom cannot guide him in accurately answering how one obtains and retains Acceptable Faith, which results in Eternal Salvation.
2. It is for this reason Solomon, a man given great wisdom and understanding by God, wrote,

Pr 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil. 8 It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones.

3. Paul through inspiration wrote this, **Ro 12.16** "...Do not be wise in your own opinion."

4. If we cannot trust our own wisdom then whose wisdom do we trust?

- A. God's Wisdom is the only safe Guide to teach us about how to Faithfully obtain and retain eternal Salvation. **2Pet 1:3, 2Tim 3:16;**

Joh 10:7 Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life. and that they may have it more

abundantly. 11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.

5. Some may ask, "Why must we look to God for answers concerning Faith and Salvation?"
- A. Well, the answer is simple. Because God is the Author of life and eternal salvation, He has the Authority to say who receives it, how they receive it, and how they retain it.
- B. Therefore, He establishes the terms and conditions for Faithfulness:
Heb 5:9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,
Heb 12:2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith....

6. We learn from the writer of Hebrews that Jesus is the Author of eternal salvation handed down to Him by the will and authority of God the Father.

Heb 2:6 "What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him? 7 You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands. 8 You have put all things in subjection under his feet." For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. 9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. 10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12 saying: "I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You. "13 And again: "I will put My trust in Him." And again: "Here am I and the children whom God has given Me."

7. How did God choose to reveal His terms and conditions of Faithfulness and Salvation?

Then:

2Pe 1 :21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Ro 15:4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

Now:

Heb 1:1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

- A. He reveals the terms and conditions for "Acceptable Faith" through Jesus' teaching and example. He says we do. He did we follow.

- a. Remember what the Bible says concerning Jesus.

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

- B. Thus, since God's will has made Jesus the Author of Eternal Salvation then it is He to whom we should look to for the terms and conditions of Salvation and "Acceptable Faith."

Joh 14:6 Jesus said ... "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me".

Joh 15:14 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.

Joh 8:31 If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. Joh 8:32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

a. Jesus said to Jehovah,

John 17:17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth

Mt 28:18 ... All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and 10, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.

- C. We must remember that Jesus came to reveal God's will to Mankind. He came to reveal to man the way to Salvation, which reveals the terms and conditions of Faithfulness.

John 10:10;

Joh 12:46 I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.47 And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. 48 He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him--the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.49 For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. 50 And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.

- D. Jehovah's divine will is the reason Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our Faith and our Eternal Salvation if we will Obey Him. **Heb. 5:9; 12:2**

I. What does the Author of our Eternal Salvation and Faith teach one must do to become Faithful and stay that way?

Joh 14:21 He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.

Joh 14:23 If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.

A. It is important that we know that the doctrine Jesus taught explicitly and implicitly is the way of Faithfulness or Eternal life. **John 12:46-50; 14:6ff; Mt 7:21; Luke 6:46ff**

1. Jesus' body was the perfect sacrifice to fulfill the Old Sacrificial Law and establish the New Covenant by His Blood. **Heb 9:13-15; 1:3; 6:1; 7:27; 10:22; IPe 1:19**

Joh 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.

2. Yet, it is obedience "Faithfulness" to His words, which bring us to Eternal Life through the sanctification of His blood. Jesus was faithful by obeying God's words. We are labeled Faithful in all things by obeying Christ's Law given by command and example.

B. It is important also to note that the words spoken by the Apostles are in fact the way of Faithfulness.

1. Jesus taught the Apostles all things the Father commanded Him: **Mt 28:19ff, John 17:8, 16.**

2. The Helper (Holy Spirit) would remind the Apostles of all Jesus commands **Joh 14:16,24,26; 16:7,13**

3. The Apostles were commanded to Go Preach all these Commands to all Nations: **Mt 28:18ff**

4. When the Apostles received the power from the Holy Spirit they Preached the whole Gospel of Christ. **Lu 24:46-49; Joh 2:22; 12:16; 15:26; ; Acts 2:ff**

C. It is important to know and understand that the examples of life and Godliness in the New Testament are the way of Faithfulness; the way to life eternal. **2Tim 3:16; 2Pet 1:3; Php 3:1Co 4:16; Php 4:9; ITh 1:6**

Php 3:17 Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.

1 Co 11:1 Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

1 Tim 3:15

1Cor 2:11-16

D. Thus, all the Doctrine in the New Testament teaches mankind how to live a life of proper "Faith" which will be acceptable to God in the end, by which one will receive his or her reward for Faithfulness which is Eternal Salvation. **Ro 1:16-18**

1Co 1:18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

1 Co 1:24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

1Co 2:5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

2Co 6:7 2Ti 1:8

IPe 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to

His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.

II. Summing it all up! Acceptable Faith is...

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

Heb 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Heb 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.

1. Biblical faith is defined as the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. **Heb 11:1**,

The Apostles spoke of the wonderful works of God in **Acts 2:1-11**, as Jesus did throughout His Ministry.

Joh 10:36 do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, You are blaspheming, I because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? 37 If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; 38 "but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him.

2. The Substance that creates and sustains Faith is one's trust in the Word of God. (Heb. 11:6, Ro 4:20). The Bible teach of His words, deeds and Promises. = Substance

A. Faith is based and built on our trust in God, we trust He is and will do all that He says. Look at what was said of Abraham and what his trustful, unwavering belief resulted in.

Ro 4:20 He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being (fully convinced) that what He had promised He was also able to perform. 22 And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness."

1. Trusting = Fully Convinced = Belief w/action = Righteousness = Faithfulness

B. Now harmonize this fact with

Heb 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.

3. The "Hope of Faith" is the looking and longing for the promises of the heavenly reward, which belongs to all those who believe and trustingly obey the words of God with expectation of the reward. (Faith is not just believing). **Heb 11:6**

4. "Faith's Evidence" of the things not seen, are found in the form of eyewitness testimonies of the works of God and Christ as well as in the things that are made (**Ro 1:20 Psalm 19:1**). The eyewitness testimonies are recorded to convince us that God is who He says He is, Jesus is the Son of God who died and was raised by the Fathers Power, and that God is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him through obedience to Christ's words, which are God's commands. The reward is "Eternal Life." **Roman 1:20; Acts 2:11**

Joh 6:28 Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" 29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent." 30 Therefore they said to Him. "What sign will You perform then. that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? 31 Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat." 32 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

5. The Following Outline Illustrates What Acceptable Faith Consists of

A. Trust - acknowledgement - fully convinced - "Unwaivered" belief: Ro 4:20

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

Ro 2:13 for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified;

(The principle that states those who are justified in the sight of God are those who fulfill or abide in the law is carried into the New Testament Law, which is Christ's Law. The point being those who are doers of the Law of Christ are Justified, Righteous and Faithful).

Ro 4:16-22 (Abraham fully trusted God and acted according to God's Command producing a great example of what Biblical faith is).

James 1:22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

Matt. 7:21ff c.f. Luke 6:46; 11:28;

1Jo 3:7 Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.

B. Hope - expectation of reward for Obedience Faithfulness: Hebrews 11:1, 4

1Pe 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away. reserved in heaven for you. 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (The living hope = inheritance which does not fade away)

C. Evidence. Proof that God is Trustworthy and Keeps His Word: Heb 11.1, Ro 1:20; Psalm 19:1;

Joh 20:24 Now Thomas..., said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe. Joh 20:27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here. and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving. but believing. "28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God"29 Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed "30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples. which are not written in this book; 20:31 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 evidence was sufficient to produce faith and the eyewitness testimonies of those events is as well).

Ac 14:17 "Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. "

John 10 'I am the Son of God'? 37 "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; 38 "but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works. that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him." (Jesus works were a testimony of who He is).

D. Faith Examined

HEARING + GOD'S WORD = FAITH

SUBSTANCE + HOPE + EVIDENCES = FAITH

SUBSTANCE = Trust in God and His Word

HOPE = Believing in and longing for God's promise's complete fulfillment.

EVIDENCES = Believing The actual things, which took place in the past but were not actually seen by those who believe that they happened, because of their trust in the eye witness testimonies, which are recorded by inspiration of God by which they believe in the validity of the evidence, which is recorded and can be reviewed and produces Faith in the individual.

1. These Scriptures are given to show that the evidence, which is basis of man's faith in God does not render it a blind "Faith". God has in fact given us all we need to be convinced He is who He says He is and He will do what He has said He will do. It teaches us even more so that Jesus is His Son and died on the cross for our sins, was buried and rose on the third day according to what the Scriptures teach. It further proves God has given us enough evidence to trust He will reward those who diligently seek Him by following Christ's example and teachings, which are all recorded in the Bible. It is therefore by one's believing trust that God is, along with his or her obedience to His commands given through Christ that produces "Acceptable faithfulness".

2. It is true that one can look at creation and see that God does in fact exist. (**Ro 1:20; Ps 19:1**). Yet, knowing that God exists is not enough to save an individual or to label him faithful. Only seeking and obeying the guidance of God through following His word can produce the "**Acceptable Faith**" that is needed to generate Salvation.

A. God's Word says to receive the gift of Salvation one must obey the gospel of Christ (**Ro. 1:16; 1Cor 15:1ff; Ro 6:1-4; Believe Mk 16:1Sff; Luke 24:46; repentance Acts 2:38-47; Confession Ro 10:10; Baptism Acts 22:16**).

III. Conclusion:

It can be concluded that Biblical faith involves the acknowledgement of the material Universe being the result of the divine acts of God as well as the workings of trust, conviction and obedience toward the teachings of the New testament, which is the word of God, which are the evidences of things not seen and the message leading the way to Eternal Salvation through Faithfulness.

1. Each of Faith's key points involve a specific link in the make up of Biblical Faith as described by the Biblical pattern, without one of the links, one's faith would be rendered vain and unworthy of the benefits that are designated for a "saving Faith" The same principle applies when one considers this point. A person is told to deliver a whole pie to a location. If the person delivering the pie removes any portion of the pie then the recipient would no longer consider it a whole pie and is not going provide the deliver the reward for delivering a whole pie. Thus, it is the case with Biblical Faith, if we were to remove any portion of the key elements required to have Biblical faith then it would be rendered vain and not received as the genuine faith we read so many examples of in the book of Romans, Hebrews and James.
2. One clear Biblical fact is that God demands and commands works' of faith in order for a person to attain and retain eternal salvation, which is the result of "acceptable faith". **Heb 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.* **Heb 11: 7** *By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.* **8** *By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.* **9** *By faith he dwelt in the land of promise...* (c.f. James 2). Paul also makes the point that faith involves obedient works. He says concerning eating meats sacrificed to idols in Romans 14:2 that if anything is not done in faith it leads to sin. To understand the significance of this statement we must take into consideration what constitutes Biblical faith. Remember faith come by hearing and doing the word of God. Therefore, whatever is not done according to God's will, when it pertains to spiritual matters, is not done in faith and it leads to sin. This is truth because the word faith

Paul uses is an obedient faith. You see sin is merely disobeying God. Therefore, it is clear, why Paul said, Ro 14:23... "for whatever is not from faith is sin." He is saying whatever is not done in trusting obedience to God's Word is disobedience / sin. Again, we clearly read the Bible emphasize the need for faithful obedience in order to obtain and retain salvation through **“Acceptable Faith”**.

INCREASING OUR FAITH By Means of the Word of God

Luke 17:5

Willard Cox

Introduction:

In the context of this verse, Jesus had been talking to His disciples about offenses. Jesus told them that offences are inevitable, but woe to the person through whom they came. It is serious business to offend anyone and cause him to fall from the truth. Jesus stated here that it would be better for the offender that a millstone was hanged about his neck, and he was cast into the sea than to “offend one of these little ones”.

Jesus expects us to be up front with our brothers in Christ. If a disciple of Christ has offended me, put a stumbling block into my way, hurt my feelings, discouraged me to the brink of quitting the church, I have the obligation to go tell him of his sin, rebuke him, and if he genuinely repents, I must forgive him. If he continues to offend me and repents, even to seven times a day, I must forgive him.

At this teaching, the apostles could see the seriousness of causing one to fall away, and the responsibility of the one who was offended to make the offender aware of his sin. Also there is the responsibility of forgiving him if he repents. It is such a sensitive procedure that the apostles said to Jesus, “Increase our faith”. In the next verse Jesus replied, “If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.” (Luke 17:6).

Since this subject of offenses and forgiveness between brethren is very sensitive, and since it was the apostles who wanted Jesus to “increase our faith”, and since Jesus gave such a profound answer concerning the power of faith, I believe the word “faith” refers to a miraculous faith. The apostles were asking for the degree of faith that is seen in 1 Corinthians 12:8,9: “For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit...(etc.).

The degree of this miraculous faith was a gift which was essential to the early church. Peter needed this faith in order to know the sin, and the courage to rebuke Ananias and Sapphira for their sin. The apostle Paul also needed this miraculous faith to rebuke and chastise Elymas for trying to turn Sergius Paulus from the faith (Acts 13:6-12). This degree of miraculous faith was also needed to cause men to rapidly mature and qualify in order to become elders in local churches in the early days of the church (Acts 14:23). At the coming of the perfect, complete revelation of God’s will for man’s salvation, the work and worship of the church, etc., the miraculous works ceased. They had served their purpose by confirming the Word (Mark 16:19,20; Heb. 2:3,4).

- I Today the Word of God, the Bible, is Complete and Sufficient in Its Revelation of God to Man.
 - A. All the miraculous gifts of the Spirit have completed their purpose.
 - 1. They have ceased (I Cor. 13:8-10), and have been done away.
 - 2. Miraculous faith, like the apostles and prophets of the New Testament had, is ceased.
 - B. The Bible is the Source of our faith today.

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1. The New Testament is the Pattern in which our faith is to work and worship in the church.
2. Our Faith in God comes from diligent study of the Bible, God's revelation to man.
3. Faith comes naturally, through much effort in Bible study, and in applying its teaching in our lives.
4. Romans 10:17, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
5. John 20:30,31, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."
 - a. Faith in God comes from the Word of God, as we read it, study it and apply God's Word in our lives.
 - b. Faith in God is neither a special endowment nor a miraculous gift to man today
6. From our TEXT, it can be seen that faith in God can be increased. Our faith can grow!
7. As individuals study the Bible, especially the New Testament, they can increase their faith in God, and become strong in the faith.

II Degrees of Faith

- A. The Bible speaks of the "measure of faith" (Rom.12:3), and the "proportion of faith" (v.6).
- B. Briefly, the Bible speaks of a
 1. Dead faith - James 2:17, "Even so faith, if it hath not works is dead, being alone."
 2. Weak faith, - Romans 14:1, "Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations."
 3. Strong faith - It is written of Abraham in Romans 4:20, "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God."
- C. "Little faith" is seen in:
 1. Matthew 6:30, when Christ's disciples were worried over food and clothing.
 2. Matthew 8:26, when Christ's disciples were afraid of the "great tempest in the sea".
 3. Matthew 14:31, when Peter took his eyes off Jesus, saw the boisterous wind, and began to sink while he was walking on the water to Jesus.
 4. Matthew 16:8, when the disciples did not understand that the word "leaven" had the figurative meaning of "doctrine", a reference to the false teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.
 5. It may be well to note that every time Jesus spoke of those who had "little faith", it was to His disciples. May this not be said of you and me as Christians today, as we strive to increase our faith in God.
- D. "Great faith" is seen in:
 1. Matthew 8:10, when a centurion, a man of great authority, came to ask Jesus to cure his servant, but he told Jesus he was not worthy that Jesus should come under his roof, but that Jesus just speak the word, and his servant would be healed. Jesus said. "I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel".
 2. Matthew 15:28, when the woman of Canaan persevered through some difficulties in pleading to Jesus, "Lord, help me," for her daughter was vexed with a devil. Jesus said to her, "O woman great is thy faith."

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3. It may be well to note that Jesus spoke of those who had “great faith” only twice, and both times it was to Gentiles, not to God’s people, the Jews.
4. We may note also that only twice, it is recorded that Jesus marveled:
 - a. He marveled here because of the “great faith” of this centurion, probably a Roman.
 - b. Jesus marveled again because of the “unbelief” among those of “his own country, “his own kin” and “his own house” (Mark 6:1-6).

III What It Takes to Increase our Faith

- A. One must have the Desire to Increase in our Faith.
 1. Faith in God is designed to increase, to grow, and to become stronger.
 2. No one should be satisfied with a stagnant, non-growing faith, a dead faith.
 3. No Christian should feel content just to have a little faith, or a weak faith.
 4. A small, weak faith does not get the work done.
 - a. A little faith does not cause the church to grow. It does not seek to save lost souls.
 - b. A little faith does not help send missionaries to foreign fields to preach the Gospel.
 - c. A weak faith that is not steadfast in attending the worship assemblies remains weak.
 - d. A weak faith is irregular and spasmodic in attendance of Bible classes.
 - e. A little faith sacrifices very little, gives very little, and encourages others very little.
 - e. A little faith makes excuses, tries to serve two masters, and is lukewarm.
- B. It takes effort, a lot of desire, study, meditation, and work for our faith to increase.
 1. 1 Peter 2:2, “As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.”
 2. Every Christian should want to increase his faith, in order to be more effective and efficient in serving Christ in His church.
 3. Every Christian should want to challenge himself/herself to grow in faith, so they can overcome the many burdens, problems, adversities by a strong faith in Christ.
 4. Every Christian should want to have a strong faith in order to be a good example to young people and to other members in he church.
 5. Every Christian should realize that a better church and a better world begin with me, as I grow in the “work of faith and labor of love” (1 Thess.1:3).
- C. Church members must have the attitude of the father who had the demon-possessed son.
 1. Mark 9:24, “And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.”
 - a. The father was honest enough to acknowledge his own unbelief.
 - b. Yet he wanted to believe. He wanted to grow in his belief, make his faith increase.
 2. Sometimes people will be so filled with grief, or so depressed and discouraged that they quit attending Bible classes and the worship services.
 3. We go to visit them about it, and at first they avoid admitting the real reason, and finally they will confess their doubts and disbeliefs.
 4. I tell them: when you have doubts and are confused about something, don’t feed your doubts by failing to meet with God’s people to study and worship. Quitting the church is the opposite of what people ought to do.
 5. When one has doubts and unbelief, there is even more reason to meet with God’s people for

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worship and Bible study.

6. A husband with a weak faith may say to his wife: I wish I had the faith in God that you do.
 - a. That is a good attitude to have, but it is not enough. It is insufficient within itself!
 - b. It takes a great desire, plus a lot of effort of home Bible study, attending regularly the worship assemblies Sunday morning and Sunday night, attending Bible classes Sunday morning and Wednesday night, and listening closely to the teacher and preacher, and taking notes, asking questions, and doing more Bible research.

IV Why Should One Increase His Faith?

- A. So we can overcome the many heartaches, disappointments and problems.
 1. Church members may lose their job, or get hurt, or have death in the family, and with a weak faith may blame God for it, stop attending the church services, and have a defeatist, negative attitude about things.
 2. These members need to read the Word of God in the Book of Job. With Job's great financial loss, with the loss of all ten of his children, with sores from head to foot, with his wife turning against him, with his friends falsely accusing him, Job said in:
Job 13:15, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him..."
 3. They need to read the Word of God in
 - a. James 1:3, "...the trying of you faith worketh patience."
 - b. 1 Peter 1:7 "That the trial of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."
- B. We want to Increase our Faith, so we can help new Christians, young people or others to be faithful to Christ.
 1. This can be done by being good students of the Word of God.
 - a. 1 Timothy 4:16, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in so doing thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee."
 - b. 1 Peter 3:15, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."
 2. We want to increase our faith that motivates us to be good examples.
 - a. Faith is known in a person by what that person does. This truth is seen many times in Hebrew 11, that by faith, by faith, by faith a certain person did a certain thing.
 - b. Hebrews 11:4, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice.... and by it he being dead yet speaketh." (Abel is an example of obedient faith for us today.)
 - c. 1 Timothy 4:12, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."
- C. We want to Increase our Faith so we can help keep the church pure and sound in doctrine.
 1. Many false teachers are out in our world today. Satan is making advances into the church to neutralize it, and take away its distinctive identity. The devil's agents are out to denominationalize it, and to make it a mere religious club with a social gospel.
 2. People with strong faith use the Word of God, to teach:

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- a. 1 Timothy 4:1,2, “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;”
- b. 2 Timothy 4:1-5, “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.”
3. Do you want to see the church here or anywhere to compromise with error, depart from God’s plan of salvation, and forsake what the Word of God teaches?
4. If you do not want to see the church fall away, then increase your faith. Study, read, learn, be alert to what is happening to the church, and humbly become more vocal about keeping the church Biblical and sound in her work and worship.

V Increase your Faith by Gaining a Greater Knowledge of the Word of God

A. God’s Word is Truth

1. John 17:17, In His prayer to His Father, Jesus said, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”
2. In Ephesians 1:13, it is called “the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation”.
3. In 2 Timothy 3:15, it is called “the holy scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Christ”.
4. This word of God, this Gospel of your salvation, these “holy Scriptures”, and “All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God” (1Tim. 3:16).
5. 2 Peter 1:21, “...holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”
6. Acts 20:32, “And now, brethren, I commend you to God and the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”

B. Increase your Faith in the Deity and Authority of Christ

1. The Inspired Word of God teaches that Jesus is God in the flesh.
2. John 1:1-3,14, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made.....And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”
3. Philippians 2:5-11, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus

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- Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”
4. Matthew 16:15,16, Jesus “saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God.”
 5. Does your faith in God allow you to confirm this truth too? If not, you need to increase your faith in order to be saved from your sins.
- C. Increase your Faith to accept the Truth of the One True Church which Jesus Built.
1. Matthew 16:18, “And I say unto thee, Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”
 2. In 1 Corinthians 12:20, we learn there are “many members but one body” and in 12:13 we learn: “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, and of even the local church at Corinth it is written in 12:27, “For ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”
- D. Let’s all increase our faith by having a greater knowledge of what the Word of God teaches about Sin and its consequences, the Way of Salvation, our personal accountability on the Judgment Day, glory of Heaven, the horror of Hell, and all other Bible topics.
- E. If anyone in the world today has a great faith in God, it should be God’s children, the church.

Conclusion:

A great compliment is given to the church at Corinth by the apostle Paul in the form of an optimistic expression of confidence in them when he wrote in 2 Corinthians 10:15, “...but having hope when your faith is increased that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly.” We all should have this optimistic attitude toward each other. If you are not a Christian, you need to believe in Jesus, repent of your sins and be baptized into Christ, so you can go to heaven. If you have erred from the faith, or have fallen away, we plead with you to confess it, repent of it, and let us all pray for your forgiveness.

THE WORD OF GOD: STAND, THEREFORE

Lyndal L. Werner

I. INTRODUCTION:

- A. Our Theme of *“Increasing Our Faith By Means of the Word of God”* is a priority topic of the day. It is a major part of the Walk of a Christian’s life as we grow in faith.
1. Rom 10:17 *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* This is the source of all faith and the means of maintaining that faith.
 2. From the word of God, we learn of the kind of Faith which pleases God (Heb 11:1).
 3. The Patriarchs and the prophets, all understood we must live and move by a *“thus saith the Lord”*.
- B. It is my privilege to consider the subject of *“The Word of God: Stand, Therefore”*.
1. From the Word of God, we learn everything; we need to know to walk in obedience before God. Yes, it gives man faith. Yes, it edifies man. Yes, it gives men God’s pattern for everything such as: how to live, how to worship, how to work, how to be pleasing before God.
 2. *“Stand”* tells me that in the word of God is the place were I find the all sufficiency of everything I need to know to be pleasing to God.
 - a. In the first century the Apostles understood and knew that they must speak when God speaks (Acts 4:18-20). They understand we must be obedient to that which they had seen and heard from God.
 - b. Acts 5:29 *“Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.”* with our soceity, the soceity will give lip service to this concept, and then go every where from this concept and do as that soceity sees fit.
 3. I found it interesting that the title ended with *“therefore”*. The conclusion is that we live in, walk in, and will die walking in the Word of God. In Ecc. 12:12-14, We learn from Solomon that the whole of man is to *“fear God and keep His Commandment”*. What more do we need as servants of God to do?
 4. Thus, it is our purpose to understand concerning this **Word of God** so that we can have faith, and fear (as in respect of) God as we keep His commandments.

II. FROM THE WORD OF GOD SEVERAL THINGS ARE EVIDENT FROM THESE INSTRUCTIONS FROM GOD, WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD.

Let us notice some things, which are evident:

- A. It is Evident from the Word of God, where the earth, Heaven, creatures, fowls of the air, plant life and man came from.
- B. It is Evident from the Old and The New Testament that men of Faith function from the Word of God, or as we should say *“Thus saith the Lord”*.

- C. It is Evident that The Bible, the Word of God, is all-sufficient in scripture.
- D. It is Evident that the Bible is the bases of fellowship and must be defended.
- E. It is Evident that the Bible, discusses acceptable faith and unacceptable faith.
- F. It is Evident that the Bible will maintain and increase our Faith.
- G. It is Evident that the Bible is where we must stand in all things concerning faith and obedience to the Lord.
- H. It is evident that the Bible, which is the “*Word of God*”, is ones road map to Heaven.

III. LET US NOTE HOW THE “WORD OF GOD” IS USED IN THE SCRIPTURE:

- A. There is a phrase that echoes all through the Old Testament by the prophets who were moved by a “*Thus saith the Lord*”. The men of God understood that this was their authority for what they were going to do. They understood that when God spoke, they could do nothing, but obey and to prophesy. These men not only spoke because of this, but they stood firmly on the Word of God and their conviction, which was based on that spoken word.
- B. Even the Prophets heard “*that I may shew thee the word of God.*” 1 Sam. 9:27
- C. The Word of God brings Revelation, which will instruct God’s people.
 - 1. The Word of God came to the men of the Old Testament as the Holy Spirit moved them. (2 Pet. 1:21; 1 King. 12:22; 1 Chr. 17:3.) These Holy Men of the Old Testament were moved to speak God’s Word to man, so that man can know the will of God and obey that will.
 - 2. Prov. 30:5 informs us that “*Every word of God is pure...*” This means, since it is pure, it is not mixed with error of man’s doctrine or the devil’s doctrine.
 - 3. The doctrines and traditions of men can hinder the Word of God. Mark 7:13 “*Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.*”
 - 4. Luke 4:4 “*And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.*” God’s word is the only trustworthy word to live by.
 - 5. Notice this statement: Luke 8:11 “*Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.*” From this seed of God’s Word, man will be moved to belief and to obedience to that word.
- D. As one reads the Bible, it becomes evident that the word calls for something to be heard and believed and then it becomes something for that individual to “do”.
 - 1. Did you notice this is something “to do” (Luke 8:21). This word is not passive but active in doing God’s will. The Word of God always calls for something to be done about what it teaches the individual
 - 2. We also observe this Word of God is something to be “kept”. Luke 11:28
 - 3. We see then the “*Word of God*” is something to “do” and “keep”.
- E. The First Century preachers were distinct in what they said and preached.
 - 1. Acts 4:31 “... they spake the word of God with boldness.”
 - 2. When the Apostles where settling a misunderstanding, which is found recorded in Acts 6th chapter there was an important revelation in this decision to them. Notice Acts 6:2 “... *It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and*

serve tables.” These men understood what was top priority in their lives and the work of the church. That priority was not serving tables.

- F. Let us notice the word of God, as they preached that word.
 - 1. When the preachers of the first century went forth spreading the Gospel according to the Great Commission, they preached the Word of God. Acts 6:7; Acts 8:14. Philip had been busy preaching and teaching the word of God which had made many converts to Christ. It even converted the head witchdoctor, who had observed Philip’s miracles and heard the preaching of the gospel. Acts 11:1; Acts 12:24; Acts 13:5; Acts 13:7.
 - 2. In the preaching of the Word of God, man is delivered a form of doctrine that he is not to change. Now notice what Paul says in Rom. 6:17 *“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that **form of doctrine** which was delivered you.”* This was a pattern set by God and not man. This was a pattern to be obeyed and lived.
- G. In certain Cities, the word of God was mighty enough that whole cities came out to hear the Gospel Preached as we see in Acts 13:4.
- H. Acts 13:46 *“Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.”* As one reads through the Book of Acts, it becomes evident that the Jews rejected the Word of God and followed their own ways (Rom 10:2). Yet, the Gentiles gladly received that same word believed and even obeyed that word. The Gentiles obeyed that which did the Jews, which the Jews did not want, reject. It must be kept in mind that whether rejected or accepted, does not change the power of the Word.
- I. At Berea, we see the Majesty and power of God’s Word winning over the Jewish traditions as they reasoned with Paul.
 - 1. Acts 17:13 *“But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people.”* It is interesting to notice as the Jews refused God’s word they went about to harm anyone, who preached it in its purity. They wanted to stop it at all cost.
 - 2. The Jews of Berea heard the word of God on the first Sabbath and did not response much to what was being said. In fact, we would believe they rejected it. We read in Acts 17:11-12 *“11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. 12 Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.”* When one investigates and allows the word to speak for itself, it will change and convert even the atheist. Neither the Atheist nor the Agnostics can stand against the power of the Word of God.
- J. Folks can handle the word of God in such a manner that it does not teach what God intended, they twist it to say what they want the word to say and teach.
 - 1. 2 Cor. 2:17 *“For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.*

2. 2 Cor. 4:2 “But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.”
3. Peter in writing his second epistle makes some interesting statements about Paul. Notice, what Peter mentions in 2 Pet 3:15-16 that some men twisted Paul's writings and teachings. These men are not doing Paul harm or fighting against Paul, they are fighting against the Lord, and do not realize what they are doing. In reality they are fighting against the Lord and not you as an individual.
- K. Note the following: Eph 6:17; Col. 1:25; 1 Thes 2:13; 1 Tim 4:5.
- L. With out any question in my mind, we are to live by The Word of God.
 1. Rom 10:17 “*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*” The Word of God is the source of our Faith. It is the knowledge of how to have faith and to live in faith, which is pleasing in the sight of God (Heb 11:6). Thus, we are to live by faith as is clearly pointed out in Rom. 1:17, Hab. 2:4; Gal 3:11; Heb. 10:38.
 2. Luke 4:4 “And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.”
 3. Ecc 12:13 ‘Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.’”
- M. One important point begins ringing clear in my ears, that it was and is by this Word that men of old stood and remained faithful, just as we must today.

IV. CONCLUSION:

- A. 1 Cor 4:6 “And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.”
 1. We must not go beyond the word as has been revealed to us through the Apostles and other inspired men.
 2. We are obligated to point out all false doctrines, which moves one beyond God's word and rejects it, because the word does not support them.
- B. On the foundation of the Word of God – We stand in faith before God.
 1. The Word of God – instructs us
 2. The Word of God – feeds our souls and takes care of our deepest thirst.
 3. The Word of God – strengthens us
 4. The Word of God—keeps us faithful when obeyed and lived in.
 5. When I as a servant of God submits through faith to God's will based on the Word of God, I have the all sufficiency to know Him and obey Him.
- C. “*Stand, therefore*” we end with a plea to stand firm on and in the Word of God as a way of life before God.
- D. “*The Word of God*” provides a firm foundation for the individual's life which will keep us near and walk with the Lord.