

# **Practical Evangelism**

**A Handbook of Helpful Verses, Illustrations, Hints, and Suggestions  
for the workers of Christ, to enable them to effectively witness for  
Christ and answer the most frequent questions of unbelievers.**

**“...always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks  
you for a reason for the hope that is in you... with gentleness and  
respect.”  
(1 Pet 3:15).**

**“Go therefore and make disciples of *all* the nations...”  
(Matt 28:19)**

**“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to *all* creation...”  
(Mark 16:15)**

**“...and you shall be witnesses to Me... *to the end of the earth*”  
(Acts 1:8)**

**“Him we preach, warning *every* man and teaching *every* man in all  
wisdom, that we may present *every* man perfect in Christ Jesus”  
(Col 1:28)**

**John T. Tolbert (2014)**

## *Acknowledgements*

The English Standard Version of the Bible (ESV) is used throughout this text except where it may be noted otherwise. All of the questions contained in this book are questions which I have actually been asked while sharing the message of the Bible in over seven countries. The answers are mine, and I believe them to be Biblically true.

I wish to thank my wife Beverly who in 2005, back in Viet Nam, urged me to “put on paper” how I trained those who came to Christ through my ministry. As was my experience in the US, I found many Vietnamese Christians to be afraid of “witnessing” because they did not know how to answer the questions they knew they would be asked. The Vietnamese version of this book has been used in Vietnam since around 2007 and a Burmese version in Myanmar since 2011. As of this writing, a Spanish version is almost done.

I would also like to thank Beverly, (and other brothers and sisters in the ABWE family) for proofreading the text. Any remaining errors, mistakes, or blunders are solely my responsibility.

Both Beverly and I wish to acknowledge and thank Ron Berrus, Lead Pastor of Bible Baptist Church, Shiremanstown, Pennsylvania for the idea of the cover of this Handbook, and for his inspiration and influence on our lives when our paths crossed at ABWE years ago. We once heard Ron say “The greatest tool you have for evangelism, outside of the Bible, is your kitchen table”. The idea stuck. Thanks Ron!

John T. Tolbert

**Author’s Note:** Questions and Answers, and all Bible studies like “What about those who have never heard?” and “The Greatest Work in the World” are mine. All anecdotes, stories and illustrations from others are given full attribution.

**John T. Tolbert, J.D., D.Min. (2014)**

## *Preface and Testimony*

On a human level, one way to explain why this small manual has been written is to explain how God saved me.

My mother was Irish Catholic and my father was a World War II veteran and an atheist. When I was around five years old, I was outside our house in Newport, Delaware when suddenly I noticed the glory of the stars, and realized there must be a God.

But when I asked my dad if there was a God, he said “I don’t know”, obviously not wanting to destroy my new faith in God. I was about to start eight years of Catholic school, and in those eight years we never opened a Bible in school, I never owned one, and I never saw my mother open one. Consequently, I grew up not knowing God, and not knowing what the Scriptures said.

When I was seventeen years old, I graduated from high school and joined the army in the middle of the Vietnam War (August 31, 1967). In basic training, some guys who had been drafted out of college took pity on me after learning that I still believed in God and gave me a book by Mark Twain called “Letters to the Earth”. Even though I had never opened a Bible, Twain’s book persuaded me that there was no God, and the Bible was nonsense.

After studying the Vietnamese language for one year in Ft. Bliss, Texas, I was shipped off to Vietnam. During my tour we endured many rocket attacks in which I found myself running for the nearest bunker thinking (if not saying) “God save me”. I realized I was a hypocrite, and then and there, made the decision that “Yes, there is a God, but I sure don’t know what is happening down here”.

I returned to the United States in 1970, enrolled in the University of Delaware and then went to law school. The ten years between my return from Vietnam and 1980 were one prolonged, agonizing search for meaning in life, through whatever the world had to offer. I passed the Bar Exam in 1978 and was admitted to practice law in the courts in Delaware and then Pennsylvania.

While practicing law in Wilmington, Delaware our law firm was retained by the pastor of a church and I was assigned the case. This pastor always brought a Bible with him, and often prayed about decisions that had to be made - right in front of me, and out loud. I had never experienced such a strange thing.

However, thinking I was so much smarter than he, after a few weeks, I challenged him. I picked up his Bible put it right up to his face, and said “How can you believe the Bible when it is wrong in the very first chapter?” He smiled, and responded, “What do you mean, Mr. Tolbert? Evolution?” I said “Yes. Six day creation, Noah’s Ark. Come on!” He smiled again, and asked me a

question that changed my life. He said, “You’re a lawyer right? Do you always form conclusions before you’ve studied both sides of the evidence?”

I was stunned. “Are you saying there is actually *evidence* for creation and against evolution?” “Yes”, he responded, “Do you have an open mind?” I said I did, and he promised to send some people from his church with some books for me to read, all written by PhD scientists. One of the people who brought down the books was a young woman who had been saved three years. After reading those books, I realized that the arguments for evolution were preposterously weak and lacking in evidential value. But most important, I was, for the first time, exposed to what the Bible says about the origin of the universe, man, and death, as well as God and Jesus Christ.

For five months, I meticulously studied all of the possible objections (that I had discovered) concerning the Bible and what it said. I studied the issues surrounding the canon, the transmission of the gospels and letters, as well as what is the “best explanation” for the fact that our world is so overwhelmingly characterized by death, and yet the universe is so breathtakingly beautiful. For the first time in my life, my question as to how there could be a good God but such a terrible world was answered. Genesis 3 provided the first and only satisfying explanation I have ever heard.

At the end of that 5 month “investigation”, I got down on my knees in my little two room apartment over someone’s garage and gave my life to Jesus Christ. Three years later I married the book delivery girl.

My journey from skeptic to believer is why I have written the “Evangelism Handbook”. Just as I had good sound questions that needed to be answered before I could follow Christ, so do millions of others. And if we don’t provide those answers, (from a human perspective), they just may not believe (1 Peter 3:15).

I hope this book helps you or others you may give it to in your walk as a witness (Acts 1:8) and an ambassador for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20).

John T. Tolbert  
January, 2014

## ***Table of Contents***

My Commitment as a Christian -----	1
The Greatest Work in the World (Winning Souls for Christ)-----	2
The Joy and Command to Win People to Christ-----	3
Some Theological Elements of Evangelism -----	4
Ten Reasons to Evangelize-----	5
Helpful Suggestions for Witnessing -----	6
Following Paul’s Method of Evangelism -----	7
Understanding the Natural State of Man-----	8
Various Prayers for Souls -----	9
What about Those Who Have Never Heard?-----	10
Where do we start? -----	11
Common Questions and Objections (The inspiration and Authority of the Bible) -----	12
Bible Prophecy-----	13
The Canon; Variants, Inerrancy, and Transmission Issues -----	16
Examples of the historical accuracy of the Bible -----	19
Questions about Jesus-----	21
God, Satan, Suffering, Punishment, Heaven and Hell -----	28
Creation/Evolution Issues -----	44
Dinosaurs -----	47
Marriage, Adultery, and Homosexual Acts-----	48
Frequent Objections and Misunderstandings of Catholics -----	50
Mormonism -----	55
Jehovah’s Witnesses -----	56
Engaging People from a Muslim Background -----	57
Hinduism -----	61
Ancestors, the Dead, and Idol Worship -----	62
Evangelism Practicum -----	66
Transitional Questions -----	67
What is the “The Gospel”?-----	75
Topical Index-----	76-77

## ***Illustrations/Stories***

Bill Bright’s Maxim-----	42
Brainerd’s One Desire -----	48
Claiming the Seats-----	39
Cords of Evangelism -----	37
Different Approaches to Evangelism -----	24
From Kimball to Graham-----	32
He Gave her a Bible-----	15
How Norman Geisler Began Witnessing -----	29
John Harper’s Last Convert-----	73
No Reserves. No Retreats. No Regrets (William Borden)-----	71
The Lesson of David Flood -----	34



## *My Commitment as a Christian*

I'm part of the fellowship of the unashamed. I have Holy Spirit power.  
The die has been cast. I have stepped over the line. The decision has  
been made. I'm a disciple of His. I won't look back, let up, slow down,  
back away, or be still.

My past is redeemed, my present makes sense, my future is secure. I'm  
finished and done with low living, sight walking, small planning, smooth  
knees, colorless dreams, tamed visions, mundane talking, cheap living,  
and dwarfed goals.

I no longer need pre-eminence, prosperity, position, promotions,  
plaudits, or popularity. I don't have to be right, first, tops, recognized,  
praised, regarded, or rewarded. I now live by faith, lean on His presence,  
walk by patience, lift by prayer, and labor by power.

My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my  
way rough, my companions few, my Guide reliable, my mission clear. I  
cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back,  
deluded or delayed. I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in  
the presence of the adversary, negotiate at the table of the enemy, ponder  
at the pool of popularity, or meander in the maze of mediocrity.

I won't give up, shut up, or let up, until I have stayed up, stored up,  
prayed up, and preached up for the cause of Christ. I am a disciple of  
His. I must go till He comes, give till I drop, preach till all know, and  
work till He stops me. And when He comes for His own, He will have  
no problems recognizing me-my banner will be clear.

--written by a young African pastor and tacked on the wall of his home.

# ***The Greatest Work in the World***

## ***Winning Souls for Christ***

**Winning souls for Christ is the Greatest Work in the World because:**

**1. It offers the Greatest Opportunity.**

It is open to everyone, no matter how sinful our past (Jn 4:15-18), and whether young or old, rich or poor, educated or not, they “all” (Acts 8:1) “went everywhere preaching the word” (Acts 8:4). The fruit of their evangelism started the church at Antioch (11:19) which was the church that commissioned Paul (13:1-3).

**2. It demands the Greatest Responsibility.**

Christians are meant to tell others (Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Col 1:28). We are “watchmen” who must blow the warning trumpet (Ezek 3:17-18; 33:6-8). Failure to do so makes us liable to having the unrepentant sinner’s “blood required at (our) hand” (3:18; 33:6, 8). Paul so understood this passage (Acts 18:6; 20:26).

**3. It presents the Greatest Challenge.**

Christ’s demand upon His followers is far beyond that of any secular enterprise (Lk 9:22). We must “decrease” (Jn 3:30). We must “die” (Jn 12:24) to bear much fruit (Jn 15:8).

**4. It Encounters the Greatest Resistance.**

The devil is not concerned about stopping dictators, billionaires, or musicians from achieving their goals. He *is* determined to resist Christians from reaching others (1 Thess 2:18; 3:5).

**5. It results in the Greatest Satisfaction.**

Facing death, Paul had no regrets of a wasted life. He was ready to meet his Lord (Phil 1:23; 2 Tim 4:6-8).

**6. It receives the Greatest Support.**

Christ has promised to never abandon His servants (Matt 28:19; Heb 13:5-6), and He never has (2 Tim 4:17).

**7. It receives the Greatest Reward.**

Soul winners are “wise” (Prov 11:30) and will shine as the stars in heaven (Dan 12:3). Unlike earth-only enterprises, our rewards cannot be lost (Matt 6:19-20), and our efforts for Christ will be properly rewarded (1 Cor 15:58). Even the “at home” supporters of soul-winners will share in their rewards (1 Sam 30:24).

“No worldly pursuit compares to the joy of experiencing the change of one soul from death to life.” Dillon Burroughs



# ***The Joy and the Command to Win People to Christ***

(Prov 11:30; Daniel 12:3).

## **The Joy of Witnessing**

Witnessing for Christ is a joy (Phil 4:1; 1 Thess 2:19, 20; 3 John 4), and the opportunity to do so is a great privilege to *share in the joy of heaven* when a sinner repents (Lk 15:7, 10).

## **The Command to Witness**

All Christians are commanded to share the gospel with others (Matt 28:19-20; Acts 1:8), and the New Testament records that all did (Acts 8:1-4) resulting in the first church to officially send out missionaries (Acts 11:19-21; 13:1-4).

## **The Necessity of Witnessing**

Paul declared that people *cannot* be saved unless they hear the gospel (Rom 10:13-15), and Jesus said that no one has a relationship with Him unless they “hear the word and do it” (Lk 8:21). Without the Spirit of Christ indwelling them, no one can be saved (Rom 8:9), and the Spirit can only indwell after one hears the gospel and believes (Gal 3:2). Biblical faith that “saves” can ONLY come from hearing the Word of God and believing (Rom 10:17).

## **The Necessity of Using the Bible When Witnessing**

Although some of us may know a lot about the Bible, *our* words are *not* powerful, and cannot convert anyone (1 Cor 2:4-5). Only the Bible is “spirit” and “life” (John 6:63) and sharper than any sword ever devised by man (Heb 4:12). Only the Word is “like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces” (Jer 23:29). *Only the word of God* can convert a soul (Psalm 19:7). So we must be willing *to open a Bible* and share just as Jesus did (Lk 4:17-21; 24:24, 31, 45). Jesus always emphasized the Scriptures (Matt 21:42; 22:29; 26:54).

# *Some Theological Elements of Evangelism*

## **1. The Election (“Choice”) of the Believer by God (Eph 1:4; Acts 13:48).**

- “Just as He *chose* us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love” (Eph 1:4). But see John 3:16; 1 Timothy 2:4,6; 2 Peter 3:9; 1 John 2:2).
- *eklegomai* – occurs 22 times in the New Testament and means “to pick out, choose out, to select for oneself” (Mark 13:20; Luke 6:15; John 13:18; 15:16, 18; James 2:5).
- “as many as had been *appointed to eternal life* believed” (Acts 13:48). From Greek word “tasso” meaning to “appoint, designate, ordain, or determine”. Occurs 8 times (cf. Matt 28:16; Acts 15:2; 22:10; Acts 28:23; Rom 13:1; 1 Cor 16:15).

## **2. The “Drawing” by God (John 6:44; 12:32)**

- from Greek *helkuo* meaning “to draw toward, to drag toward, to haul toward”. *Helkuo* occurs a total of 6 times in NT (cf. John 18:10; 21:6, 11; Acts 16:19; 21:30; James 2:6). But “belief” is also required (John 6:47).

## **3. The Convicting Ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 16:7-8; Luke 3:10; cf. Zech 12:10; Acts 2:37; 7:54)**

- “And when He (the Holy Spirit) has come, He will *convict* the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8; cf. James 2:9; Jude 15).
- From Greek word “*elencho*” meaning to “reprove, rebuke (1 Tim 5:20), convict (James 2:9; Jude 15), tell one’s fault, or expose (John 3:20) or bring something to light” (cf. John 3:20)

## **4. The preaching (warning) to the lost by the believer (Ezek 3:17-21; 33:6-9; Acts 18:6; 20:26; Rom 10:14-15; Col 1:28)**

- “give them *warning* from Me” (Ezek 3:17)
- “...and how *shall they hear* without a preacher” (Rom 10:14)

## **5. The responsibility/choice of every man or woman to “hear” (obey) what Christ says (Matt 23:37; Lk 9:35; John 6:47; Deut 18:15, 18-19; Acts 3:22-23).**

- “This is my beloved Son. *Hear Him!*” (Lk 9:35)
- “And it shall be that every soul *who will not hear* that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people” (Acts 3:23)

## *Ten Reasons to Evangelize*

1. Because of the command of Christ (Matt 28:19–20; Mark 16:15; Jn 20:21; Acts 1:8).
2. Because of the example of Paul (Col 1:28; cf. Rom 15:19-20).
3. Because of the example of the first church (Acts 8:1-4). Everyone witnessed.
4. Because of the condition of all men (Matt 9:36–38; Rom 3:23; 6:23; Rev 20:15).
5. Because only the gospel of Jesus Christ saves (Rom 1:16; Acts 4:12; 26:18).
6. Because Jesus died for *all* men (John 3:16; 1 Tim 2:4,6; 2 Pet 3:9; 1 John 2:2; 2 Cor 5:14).
7. Because if they don't hear the Word, they cannot be saved (Rom 10:13-15), or "born again" (Jn 3:1-8; 1 Peter 1:23), or have a relationship with Jesus (Matt 7:23; Lk 8:21), or have the Holy Spirit dwell in them (Rom 8:9; Gal 3:2), or have Biblical "faith" (Heb 11:6; Rom 10:14).
8. Because of the reward (Prov 11:30; Dan 12:3; 1 Cor 3:13-15; 15:58; 2 Tim 4:8).
9. Because even righteous people (by human standards) like Cornelius (Acts 10:2) can only be saved by hearing the Word (Acts 10:44; 11:13-14). Note: In Acts 10:44, Peter spoke "words". What "words"? The "words" of the gospel (Acts 10:37-42). Notice the Holy Spirit fell on all those who "heard the word" (Acts 10:44). The angel who appeared to Cornelius (Acts 10:3-6) and Peter (Acts 10:22) told them that Peter would tell Cornelius "words" by which you and all your household will be saved" (Acts 11:14). Note the word "will"; Cornelius *was not saved*, (despite his human goodness, prayers, and desire to know God), *until he heard the word and believed*.
10. Because we will be held accountable by God, if we don't (Ezek 3:18; 33:6-10; Acts 18:6; 20:26-27; Rom 14:10-12; 2 Cor 5:10).

# *Helpful Suggestions for Witnessing*

**Relationship FIRST!** Developing at least a minimal “relationship” with the person is crucial. It gives you the “right” to ask them spiritual questions. Be wise, and show a gracious concern for them (Col 4:5-6). Find out what his/her life has been like before you tell them what it should be like (Prov 18:13). Note: obviously there are exceptions to “relationship first”, such as people on their deathbed, or people who you will never see again and this is your only opportunity to speak of Christ.

**Start at the beginning (“Moses” - Genesis), like Jesus did** (Luke 24:27). Don’t assume they know the “Biblical” truth about Creation and the Fall; very few do.

Always pray before any opportunity for witnessing. Ask God to “open their hearts” (Acts 16:14). *Only* God can draw someone to Christ (John 6:44). Remember that we are “ambassadors” for Christ (2 Cor 5:20).

***“If you alter or obscure the Biblical portrait of God in order to attract converts, you don't get converts to God, you get converts to an illusion. This is not evangelism, but deception.” — John Piper***

- Remember to always show “grace” when witnessing; do *not* be critical or judgmental (Eph 4:29; Col 4:6)!
- Remember your words can be a “tree of life” or death (Prov 15:4). Endeavor to make all that you say give knowledge to the other person (Prov 15:7).
- Remember to “nurture” with love like Jesus and Paul did (Matt 12:20; 1 Thess 2:7).
- Be ready to sacrifice your time, and money (1 Thess 2:8).
- Be sure to “listen” to what they have to say (James 1:19). Let them talk all they want, as long as it is answering your questions. Let them explain how they feel and what they think, and why. They may tell you very important things about themselves; and they will like *you* for listening.
- Be careful not to talk “too much”, restraint in speaking is good; it shows wisdom (Prov 10:19; 13:3; 17:27). Be sure to *let them finish speaking*; let them answer your question completely before speaking. Do *not* interrupt them (Prov 18:13).
- Be prepared to witness to everyone (Col 1:28), but be wise, not all will listen (Matt 7:6).
- Be humble and God will help you (Prov 29:23; 1 Pet 5:6). Rely only on the Word of God, the Cross of Jesus, and the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:1-5). Remember the Word of God will convict (Acts 2:37) and give life (John 6:63) to all who want to know God (Prov 2:3-5; Jer 29:13; Matt 7:7-8).

# ***Following Paul's Method of Evangelism***

When the time comes, always *open your Bible*, and ask the unbeliever (*who can read*) to read the relevant passage out loud. This is the only way you can be *sure* that they read it. Remember, the devil wants to prevent them from “understanding” (Ps 119:30), so he can steal the Word from their hearts (Matt 13:19).

When we open the Bible, we do what Paul did (Acts 17:3). The same word translated “explaining” in Acts 17:3 is the Greek word *dianogo* which means to “open”, and is so translated in Acts 16:14 and Lk 24:32. We cannot “explain” the message of Christ, if we don’t open the Scriptures. The word translated “proving”, “alleging” or “demonstrating” (Acts 17:3), is the Greek word “*paratithemi*” which means to “set before, aside, or near”. It is the same word translated “*set* (a meal, or food) *before* them” in Acts 16:34. When Paul opened the Scriptures, he was setting a spiritual meal before his audience. That was his “custom” or “manner” (Acts 17:2). It should be ours too.

## **Frequently Check for “Understanding” (The mark of the evangelist)**

In the only undisputed words of Philip recorded in the Scriptures also the only person the NT calls an “evangelist” (Acts 21:8), the first thing he says when he meets the Ethiopian eunuch is: “Do you understand what you are reading” (Acts 8:30)?

It is a good idea to often ask the person to whom you are witnessing if there are “any questions”. Understanding is crucial, as without it, the demons can literally “snatch away what (*the word*) was sown in the heart” (Matt 13:19). Some people may be embarrassed, or too timid to ask questions, and our job is to help them be fortified against the Enemy whom they may not yet even believe exists.

**Be prepared to change, or adapt to any situation  
to win souls to Christ!  
(1 Cor 9:22)**

# *Understanding the Natural State of Man*

The descendants of fallen Adam and Eve are “dead (spiritually) in trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1), and are born “children of wrath” (Eph 2:3). In fact, the whole world “lies in wickedness” (1 John 5:19). Those who don’t know Christ are “blinded by the god of this world” (2 Cor 4:4) who is Satan (John 12:31; 14:30; Rev 12:9). Men are by nature “without hope, and without God” (Eph 2:12), and until they put their faith in Christ, everyone is “already condemned” (John 3:18). We are naturally “enemies” of God by birth (Rom 5:10; Col 1:21)

There are none who are good (Rom 3:12), because in our flesh dwells no good thing (Rom 7:18). Only the Holy Spirit’s restraint of evil (Gen 6:3; 2 Thess 2:7) in conjunction with the “sword” of human government keeps mankind from descending into a nightmare of horror, as it will someday when the Holy Spirit’s restraining influence is “taken out of the way” (2 Thess 2:7; cf. Rev 13:4,8).

Before the Flood, God destroyed men because “every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts were evil continually” (Gen 6:5), and He restated that description after the Flood, as still true of mankind (Gen 8:21). Jeremiah tells us that the human heart is “deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it” (Jer 17:9). That means that the heart is *so wicked* that only God knows the depths of the potential of human wickedness. In brief, these facts explain why Jesus said to his very own disciples, that they were “*evil*” (Luke 11:13).

## **Why Must the Lost hear the Word (John 6:63, 68) to be saved (Rom 10:13-14)?**

1. To be “born again” (Jn 3:7) one *must* hear the Word (1 Pet 1:23).
2. To have a relationship with Jesus (Matt 7:23), one *must* hear the Word and “do” it (Luke 8:21).
3. To have Biblical “faith” in Jesus, one *must* “hear” the Word (Rom 1:16; 3:26; 10:17).
4. To receive the Spirit (necessary to be called “His”, Rom 8:9), one *must* “hear” the Word and believe it (Gal 3:2; cf. 2 Thess 2:13).
5. To be “cleansed” (John 15:3) and “sanctified” (John 17:17) one *must* hear the Word.

## *Various Prayers for Souls*

**George Whitefield (1714-1770)**; the famous English evangelist, said, “O Lord, give me souls, or take my soul!”

**Henry Martyn (1781-1812)**; missionary to India and Persia, kneeling on India’s coral strands, cried out, “Here let me burn out for God.”

**David Brainerd (1718-1747)**; missionary to the North American Indians: “Lord, to Thee I dedicate myself. O accept me and let me be Thine forever. Lord, I desire nothing else. I desire nothing more.” The last words in his diary, seven days before he died, “O Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.”

**Thomas a’Kempis (1379–1471)**; “Give what Thou wilt, and how much Thou wilt, and when Thou wilt. Set me where Thou wilt and deal with me in all things, just as Thou wilt.”

**Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899)**; “Use me then, my Savior, for whatever purpose and in whatever way Thou mayest require. Here is my poor heart an empty vessel; fill it with Thy grace.”

**Martin Luther (1483-1546)**; (some words from his great agony of prayer on the night preceding his appearance before the Diet of Worms) “Do Thou, my God, do Thou, God, stand by me against all the world’s wisdom and reason. O do it! Thou must do it. Stand by me. Thou True, Eternal God!”

**John McKenzie (1835-1899)**; prayed a prayer of a young missionary candidate as he knelt on the banks of the Lossie: “O Lord, send me to the darkest spot on earth!”

**“Praying Hyde (1865-1912)**; a missionary in India: “Father, give me these souls, or I die.”

**Mrs. Comstock (1812-1843)**; a missionary to the Arracan state of Burma in a prayer of parting when she sent her children home: “Lord Jesus, I do this for thee.”

**John Hunt (1812-1848)**; a missionary to the Fiji Islands, a prayer upon his dying bed: “Lord, save Fiji, save Fiji, save these people, O Lord; have mercy upon Fiji; save Fiji!”—

Wesleyan Methodist<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Tan, P. L. 1996, c1979. *Encyclopedia of 7700 illustrations: (a treasury of illustrations, anecdotes, facts and quotations for pastors, teachers and Christian workers)*. Bible Communications: Garland TX

# ***What about Those Who Have Never Heard?***

## **Seven things God has done for those who have never heard the Gospel**

1. God has structured the universe to make known His existence, majesty and glory to man (Ps 19:1-4; Rom 1:20).
2. God has determined the exact time and place of our lives so that we will seek God under the most propitious circumstances as determined by His perfect wisdom (Acts 17:26-27).
3. God has put the “work of the Law in their hearts” and given them a conscience (Rom 2:14-15). The “law” declares sinners “guilty” (Rom 3:19-20) and leads them to Christ by causing them to seek a Savior (Gal 3:24).
4. God is constantly searching for those who really want to know Him (2 Chron 16:9; cf. Proverbs 5:21 15:3; Jeremiah 32:19).
5. God has promised to answer all who seek Him (Prov 2:3-5; Jer 29:13; Ps 119:2, 10, 58, 69, 145; Matt 7:7-8).
6. God has sent Jesus Christ into the world to give Light to those who seek Him (John 1:9; John 12:32).
7. And finally, **God has sent US** to reach those who have not yet heard (Matt 28:19; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; 26:18).

## **Are those without Christ because they have never heard, really “lost”, and in need of hearing the gospel?**

Let’s look at what Jesus told Paul about the need of those who had not yet heard the truth (Acts 26:18). Paul’s proclamation of the gospel to them (Acts 26:16) would have the following results (if they believed):

- a. It would “open their eyes” (Isa 35:5; 42:6; Luke 4:18), and
- b. “turn them from darkness to light” (John 1:4-8; 8:12), and
- c. “from the power of Satan to God” (2 Cor 4:4; 1 John 5:19; Rev 12:9)
- d. “that they may receive (*don’t have it yet*) forgiveness of sins” (Acts 10:1-2; cf. 11:14)
- e. “and an inheritance (Acts 20:32; Rom 8:17; Eph 1:11; Col 1:12; Heb 9:15; 1 Pet 1:4)
- f. “among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me” (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

**Note:** Matt 11:21, 23 demonstrates conclusively that *the amount of revelation a person receives* DOES matter. Tyre, Sidon and Sodom *would have repented* if they had seen Christ’s works, and yet the Word of God is even more powerful than witnessing Christ’s greatest work, the resurrection (Lk 16:31).



**Note:** Even the “devout”, “God fearing”, “alms giving”, “praying” Cornelius (Acts 10:1-2) needed to *hear* “words whereby you and all your house will be saved” (Acts 11:14). But what we also need to remember here is the extraordinary measures that God will take to reach those who want to know Him (2 Peter 3:9; cf. Ezekiel 33:11).

## *Where do we start?*

Only decisions made in “good soil” (Matt 13:23; Mark 4:20; Luke 8:15) result in real salvation and lasting fruitfulness for Christ, which is our goal (Matt 28:19). We must be sure that the listener really understands, or the devil can “steal” the Word from their heart (Matt 13:19). Some people seem to really get excited about the gospel, but in reality, have no “root”, and in time of testing, they “fall away” (Lk 8:13). Others, like soil full of thorns, never grow up because the seed is “choked” by the cares of this world (Matt 13:22; Mk 4:19; Lk 8:14).

***“Beginning with sin instead of creation is like trying to read a book by opening it in the middle: You don’t know the characters and can’t make sense of the plot.” — Nancy Pearcey, Total Truth***

When Jesus wanted the two disciples to deeply understand the significance of His life, death, and resurrection, Luke records, “And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Lk 24:27). The gospel writer Matthew began with two crucial Old Testament personalities, David (1 Sam 16:11-13) and Abraham (Gen 11:26; 12:1 ff.). When not speaking to Jews intimately familiar with the Old Testament, Paul started with Genesis (Acts 14:15; 17:24-27) to make sure they understood about the Creator God and His relationship with men (Gen 1:26; 2:7-25), and how man’s sin brought separation from God, and death into the world (Gen 2:17; 3:1-24; cf. Romans 5:12).

Sometimes, a person may know many of the events in the Bible, but not really understand the connections or meanings. In these cases, it is still necessary to probe to see what exactly a person does believe. They may believe in God, but do they believe He is the “only God”? Do they believe He made all the universe, earth, and man for benevolent purposes? What do they believe about man’s relationship to God, and His intent for man? What do they believe about the origin of sin and death? A non-superficial understanding of all these things is necessary for a “good soil” decision.

To make a “good soil” decision, a person who does not believe in a personal, creator God (e.g. a Buddhist) needs to be grounded in Genesis much more thoroughly than a solid monotheist (e.g. a Catholic) who may accurately understand these major truths, but only be lacking in reliance on Christ alone to save them. These things must be explored, and this takes time. Give God’s Word a chance to work (Mark 4:26-29) while you enjoy the fun of getting to know another human being. Evangelism is a “process”...not an “event”.

# The Bible and Missions

“The greatest missionary of all is the Bible in a person’s own language. It never needs a furlough, and it is never considered a foreigner”.

*Cameron Townsend*, founder of Wycliffe Bible Translators

## *Common Questions and Objections*

### **Dealing with the Inspiration, Reliability and Authority of the Bible**

#### **1. I believe the Bible is just a great book of Western literature, but it is not really God’s Word.**

Although this does not establish that the Bible is indeed the Word of God, we must start our answer by first showing that the Bible claims to be the Word of God. Additional evidence then follows.

**The Bible claims to be the Word of God hundreds of times** (Gen 4:6; 6:3; 15:1,4), Moses (Exodus 4:2-24), Samuel (1 Sam 15:10), Nathan (2 Sam 7:4), 1 Sam 9:27; King David (2 Sam 23:2-3; Proverbs 30:5; Isaiah 6:8; Jeremiah 1:1-4; Ezekiel 1:1-3; Luke 3:2; John 10:35 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20-21).

#### **2. How can I know that the Bible is trustworthy and really is the Word of God?**

a. **The Bible claims to be the “Word of God”** hundreds of times between Genesis and Revelation, by phrases such as “the Word of the Lord came to” (101X in the OT) or “the Lord Said” (275 X in the OT). For instance, “the Word of the Lord came to” Abraham (Gen 15:1,4), Samuel (1 Sam 15:10), Nathan (2 Sam 7:4), Gad (2 Sam 24:11), Solomon (1 King 6:11), an unknown prophet (1 Kings 13:20), Elijah (1 Kings 18:1), Isaiah (2 Kings 20:4), David (1 Chron 22:8), Shemaiah (2 Chron 11:2).

b. **The Bible supports its claim to be the Word of God** by making numerous prophecies of future events which have been fulfilled perfectly. For instance, the Bible predicted the rise of three kingdoms after Babylon: Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome (Daniel 2:37-43; 7:1-10). The Bible accurately predicted:

- Christ (the Jewish “Messiah”) would be born of a virgin (Isa 7:14; Matt 1:18, 24, 25; Luke 1:26-35).
- Christ would be the “Son of God” (Psalm 2:7; Matt 3:17; 16:16).
- Christ would be a descendant of Jacob (Gen 49:10; Num 24:17; Luke 3:23, 34).
- Christ would be a descendant of Isaac (Gen 21:12; Luke 3:23, 34).
- Christ would be a “son” of David (2 Sam 7:14-16; Matt 1:1; Luke 3:23,31).
- Christ would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Matt 2:1).

- Christ would be “God” (Isa 7:14; Matt 1:23).
- Christ would enter Jerusalem on a donkey (Zech 9:9; Matt 21:6-11).
- Christ would be rejected by His own people, the Jews (Isa 53:1; Ps 118:22; Jn 1:11).
- Christ would rise from the dead (Ps 16:10; Matt 28:6; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:36-43).

### **Only Bible Prophecy has these distinguishing features:**

- Prophecies made long before the event (Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem, Micah 5:2, 750 years before Christ’s birth)
  - Prophecies with sufficient detail to identify what is actually being predicted that no one except God could know. (Death by crucifixion, which wasn’t even in existence when David wrote Psalm 22, 1000 years before Christ’s death).
  - Prophecies exactly fulfilled (cf. Ezek 26:12-14) like the passage about Tyre. Only God knows the future (Isaiah 46:8-10; cf. 41:21-23).
  - The Old Testament prophets spoke through “the Spirit of Christ in them” (1 Peter 1:11) and were “carried along” by that Spirit (2 Peter 1:21; cf. 2 Samuel 23:1-3; Jeremiah 1:7-9; Matt 22:43; Rom 8:9; Gal 4:6).
- c. **Jesus said the Old Testament was from God** (John 10:34-35) and was without error even in the smallest detail (Matt 4:4; 5:18), and declared that the New Testament also would be without error (Matt 24:35; John 14:26).
- d. **The Bible equates “the Scriptures say” with “God says”.** Compare the following Old and New Testament passages.
- |                                   |                                      |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| “The Lord said” (Genesis 12:1, 3) | “The Scripture says” (Galatians 3:8) |
| “The Lord said” (Exodus 9:13, 16) | “The Scripture says” (Romans 9:17)   |
- Similar passages:
- |  |              |             |             |
|--|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| (The Bible says)... quoted as from “God” |              |             |             |
| Gen 2:24                                 | Matt 19:4-5  | Psalm 16:10 | Acts 13:35  |
| Psalm 2:1                                | Acts 4:24-25 | Psalm 2:7   | Hebrews 1:5 |
| Isaiah 55:3                              | Acts 13:34   |             |             |
- e. **Jesus often quoted from the Scriptures (Old Testament) verifying their reliability** (Matt 4:4; 12:3, 5; 19:4; Mark 12:10), and He taught from the Scriptures (Luke 24:27).
- f. **All Scripture is inspired by God** (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20-21), and cannot be broken (John 10:35).

- g. **All Scripture is historically accurate:** Creation of the world and Man (Gen 1-2; Matt 19:4-5); The Flood (Gen 6-8; Lk 17:26-27); the supernatural destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:24-29; Luke 17:28-32). Every “word” is the word of God (1 Cor 2:13; 1 Thess 2:13)
- h. **Even the “tenses” and “number” used in the Scriptures are accurate** (Matt 22:32; cf. Matt 5:18). Jesus refutes the Sadducees who did not believe in the resurrection by quoting Exodus 3:6 where God says “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” using the present tense “am” and not “was” (which would be proper) if Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were not still living. Paul even argues that the promise of God was to one Man, Christ, on the basis of the Holy Spirit showing him that the word “seed” in Gen 22:17 was singular in number, and not plural (Gal 3:16).
- i. **Supernaturally “perfect” memories.** Jesus promised that when the disciples wrote the New Testament, it would not be just their memory, but the Holy Spirit would supernaturally bring to their minds “all things” which He said to them (John 14:26). Paul, who was chosen by Jesus to bring the revelation of the New Testament to the Gentile world (Acts 9:15; 22:10; 26:17-18), was given his revelation directly by Jesus (Gal 1:11-12).
- j. **The perfection and completeness of the Scriptures mandates that it not be altered or added to**, and that is what Jesus commanded at the very last page of the Bible (Rev 22:18-19; cf. Deut 4:2).

**The Bibliographical Test:** Since we do not have the original autographs of Scripture (the actual original writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, James, Jude), how reliable are the copies from which the Bible has been compiled?

The Old Testament (Hebrew) was written approximately 1400-400 BC and the New Testament (Greek) was written between around 45 AD and 95 AD.

There are around 25,000 manuscript copies of, or portions of the New Testament, including over 5,600 Greek manuscripts. The next best testified (through existing manuscripts) work of antiquity is Homer’s *The Iliad* which has only 643 copies. In addition, the interval of time which elapsed between the original writings of the Bible, and the extant copies is extremely small compared to other ancient works like *The Iliad* which has a gap of 400 years between the original (800 B.C.) and the earliest copies (400 B.C). The earliest known New Testament manuscript or portion is “P52”, which is a passage from the gospel of John (18:31-33) which scholars date at around 100-125 A.D. Since John is believed to have written His gospel around 85 A.D., the elapsed time is only around 20 years from the time of the original, compared to over 400 years for the next closest work (*The Iliad*) of antiquity. Copies of Plato’s works (whose authenticity no one doubts) are dated 500 years after the original, and only 7 copies exist. If Plato and Homer’s works are reliable, then surely so is the Bible.

\*\*\*\*\*

## *He Gave Her a Bible*

Dr. Doren Edwards, a surgeon in Erin, Tennessee, tells of a patient of his, Blanche Bennet, whose alcoholic husband had died. Her two children were giving her problems, finances were tight, and life was very hard. She wasn't a Christian.

One day she came to see Dr. Edwards with physical problems, and he diagnosed cancer, with multiple organs involved. No treatment was available, and she was very bitter. Dr. Edwards, a Christian and a Gideon, wanted to talk with her about the Lord, but she wouldn't allow him to share his witness. She did, however, accept a small New Testament.

A few weeks later, the doctor learned from the newspaper obituary that she had died. He sent a card to the family, telling them he had donated Bibles in her memory to the Gideons.

The woman's daughter called him. "Could you please send us a Bible like the ones you donated in memory of our mother?" she asked. "We don't have a Bible in our home. The last six days she was alive, her whole life changed. She was no longer bitter, she wasn't afraid to die, and she said something about knowing Jesus. But she asked that her Bible be buried in her hand, and we couldn't keep it. Would you please send us a Bible so that we can find what Mama found in that book?" Dr. Edwards sent them a Bible, and to date the daughter, the son, and one sister have been saved as a result.<sup>\*2</sup>

\*\*\*\*\*

---

\* Personal conversation with the author.

<sup>2</sup>Morgan, R. J. 2000. *Nelson's complete book of stories, illustrations, and quotes* (electronic ed.). Thomas Nelson Publishers: Nashville

# *The Canon, Variants, Inerrancy, Transmission Issues*

1. **But aren't there many places where the copies of Scripture from the second and third centuries show differences (variants) in the manuscripts? How do we know we have the Word of God after so long?**

Actually, the variants result from simple copying errors and are most often simply spelling errors or changes in word order that make no difference in the meaning. "Textual critics" who specialize in the study of the early manuscripts tell us that, in fact, the more "variants" there are the easier it is to confirm the original meaning of the New Testament writers.

2. **But isn't the New Testament just a list of books chosen by 4<sup>th</sup> century Christian leaders and ordered to be called the Canon? Were there other books claiming to be written by apostles (like the "Gospel of Thomas") that were rejected by these same church leaders and excluded from the Bible?**

No, the New Testament was not compiled as you describe it. To start, no one "selected" what books would be in the Bible (the "Canon"), but the commonly accepted books of the New Testament (27) were **first affirmed in writing "officially" by a church council in the 4<sup>th</sup> century**. However, as early as 50 A.D. some of the individual writings of the New Testament were recognized as "inspired by God" (2 Tim 3:16-17), and as "the word of God" (1 Thess 2:13). Peter recognized Paul's writings to be "scripture" (2 Peter 3:15-16), and Paul recognized Luke's writings to be "Scripture" (1 Timothy 5:18; cf. Luke 10:7), etc. Jesus said the entire Old Testament (every word and individual Hebrew mark) was the word of God (Matthew 5:18) etc. And by 95 A.D. when John wrote the book of Revelation, he was clearly told that there would be no more books added to God's revelation (Rev 22:18-19).

In 95A.D, Clement, bishop and elder in Rome, in a letter to the church in Corinth (1 Clement), referenced several of the Gospels and many of Paul's letters (Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians). And at a time when there were no copy machines or printing presses, and travel was difficult, it is clear that substantial evidence exists of widespread second century acceptance of a "fourfold gospel" (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) in many parts of the Roman Empire, including from Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis (Asia Minor) who writing around 130 A.D. (but referencing a time around 100A.D) also shows knowledge of the four canonical gospels.

An excellent reference for this question is "Who Chose the Gospels" by C.E. Hill (Oxford University Press, 2010).

### **3. What about the so-called “Gospel of Thomas” and other “Lost Gospels”.**

As far as books like the “gospel” of Thomas or the “gospel” of Peter, all scholars reject these works as NOT written by the real apostles, and as being mere forgeries written (at the earliest) in the late second century or later. The early church only recognized books actually written by the apostles or someone very close to the apostles (like Mark and Luke) or the brothers of Jesus, James and Jude. In addition, a further test was required: any book to be accepted as part of the New Testament had to be consistent in theology with what Jesus and the apostles said or wrote. This fact alone excluded virtually all the other forged books.

Finally, Jesus promised that His Word would be preserved to the end of time (Matthew 24:36), and His disciples who would write the New Testament would have perfect, flawless Holy Spirit inspired memories when writing (John 14:26). This, history shows to have occurred.

### **4. Well then, how DID the Christians determine which books were inspired by God and which weren’t?**

The early church accepted books only written by an Apostle, or someone very close to an apostle like Mark and Luke, or the actual physical brothers of Jesus. Mark and Luke both worked with Paul (Col 4:10; Philemon 24; 2 Tim 4:11) and Mark worked with Peter (1 Pet 5:13). Both Jude (Jude 1; Matt 13:55) and James (Mark 6:3; 1 Cor 15:7; Acts 12:17; Gal 1:19) were Jesus’ half-brothers. The books also had to be written within the physical lifetime of the apostles, or they were rejected. A more mysterious criterion was the internal power of the books (John 6:63,68; 10:27; Hebrews 4:12), often called their “self-authenticating” nature, which Justin Martyr (2<sup>nd</sup> century Christian philosopher and apologist beheaded for his faith around 165 A.D.) described as their being “filled with the Spirit of God, and big with power, and flourishing with grace.” A final criterion was their consistency with previous revelation.

### **5. Does the Bible really teach that it is has no mistakes (“inerrant”)?**

Yes. The Bible makes it clear that God’s Word is without error because:

- God is true, or real (John 7:28; 8:26).
- God cannot lie (Titus 1:2; Rom 3:4; Heb 6:18).
- God gave us the Scriptures (2 Tim 3:16).
- The Lord Jesus is Truth (John 14:6), bears witness to the Truth (Jn 8:14), and speaks truth (John 8:40).
- The Holy Spirit, who guided the Scripture writers (2 Peter 1:21) is the “Spirit of Truth” (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13).
- God’s Word is truth (John 17:17; Ps 119:60), is perfect (Psalm 19:7), and pure (Prov 30:5).

## **6. How can I know that the apostles accurately recorded the words of Christ?**

Jesus promised that when the Holy Spirit came He would enable the apostles to “remember all things that I said to you” (John 14:26). It wasn’t just human memory they were relying on, but the supernatural power of God (2 Peter 1:21). All Scripture is inspired by God (2 Tim 3:16). In addition, when different Scripture writers comment on or record a particular event or saying there is remarkable agreement. Remember, Luke (a physician and historian) carefully checked his sources (Luke 1:1-4), Matthew and John were eyewitnesses, and Mark probably recorded (eyewitness) Peter’s version of events. Paul’s testimony was in total agreement with the earliest eyewitnesses (1 Corinthians 15:1-8; Galatians 2:7-9).

## **7. Isn’t the Bible filled with stories that are unbelievable? Did Jesus believe all the stories in the Old Testament?**

The Bible has many stories about miracles because it is the story of God’s dealings with man, and He has often done miracles to show His power on our behalf. Jesus vouched for everything in the Old Testament (Matt 5:18), including the story of creation (Matt 19:1-4), the global Flood in the days of Noah (Luke 17:26-27), the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Lk 17:28-29), and Jonah’s being swallowed by a huge fish (Matt 12:39-40). If we can believe in God, then miracles are easy to believe.

## **8. Does the Bible really say that Moses wrote the first five books of the Old Testament?**

Yes. Jesus said so (John 5:45-47; 7:19, 23: cf. Mark 7:10; 10:3-5; 12:26; Luke 5:14; 16:29-31; 24:27, 44). See OT evidence (Exodus 24:4; 34:7; Numbers 33:2; Deut 31:9, 22). Joshua’s testimony (Josh 1:7; 8:31-32; 23:6). David’s testimony (1 Kings 2:3). Solomon’s testimony (1 Kings 8:53,56, 61). Cf. 2 Kings 14:6; 21:8; 23:25).

## **9. How can I believe the Bible when it says that men used to live hundreds of years (Genesis 5) but I always hear that the life span of man has been increasing recently?**

In fact, men and women did live a lot longer at that time. Adam and Eve, the first man and woman, would have lived forever if they had not disobeyed God (Gen 2:17). When they disobeyed (Gen 3:1-7), God removed them from the Garden of Eden where they had access to the “Tree of Life” (Gen 3:22-25). Even so, because of their initially perfect physical constitutions, the effect of sin only killed them after hundreds of years. Adam lived to the age of 930 (Gen 5:5) but subsequent generations which inherited their parents’ now flawed and increasingly defective genes, lived shorter lives. Abraham (2000 BC) lived only 175 years (Gen 25:7), and Moses (1400 B.C) died at the age of 120 (Deut 34:7) at a time when the average lifespan of a man or woman (assuming they survived childhood diseases) had declined to just 70 years (Psalm 90:10).



The Bible records that someday man will again live forever on a New Earth where there will be no more death (Rev 21:1-4) and where the horrors of today's animal world will cease and the lion will lie down with the lamb AGAIN (Genesis 1:30; Isaiah 11:6-8; Romans 8:19-23).

## ***What are some examples of the historical accuracy of the Bible?***

### **The Chronology of Abraham's Year of Birth**

Note how the Bible provides an accurate date for the year of birth of Abraham, our spiritual father (Gal 3:29). Starting at 1 Kings 6:2 we learn that Solomon began to build the Temple 480 years after the Exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt. We also know from the "Assyrian Eponym List" that the date was 966 B.C.

Therefore, the Exodus can be dated at 966+480, or 1446 B.C. Turning to Exodus 12:40, we learn that the children of Israel were in Egypt for a total of 430 years. That time began when Jacob was 130 years old (Gen 47:9). Therefore, the sojourn in Egypt began in the year 1876 B.C. (1446+430). Since Jacob was 130 years old at the time, we know that his birth date was 2006 B.C (1876+130). We also know that Isaac, Jacob's father, was 60 years old when Jacob was born (Gen 25:26). Therefore, Isaac was born in the year 2066 B.C. Since Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born (Gen 21:5), we know that Abraham was born in the year 2166 B.C.

**The Bible's statement as to the origin of the world's languages.** Most modern-day philologists now believe that the evidence suggests that sometime in the distant past there was a common language on the earth, which is what the Bible said 3,400 years ago (Gen 11:6).

**The 2nd millennium B.C. origin of Genesis** (Moses circa 1400 B.C.). The customs referred to in Genesis 16, 27, and 31 have been confirmed by archaeologists as having been common in the Middle East in the 2nd millennium B.C. **but not** in the first millennium B.C.

**The sojourn of Israel in Egypt.** Israel's time in Egypt as slaves can be confirmed by many references in the Scriptures to customs or practices which only occurred in Egypt, and not in Israel. For instance, the Jews did not have the practice of a ruler wearing a chain of gold, but the Egyptian Pharaohs did (Gen 41:42). William F. Albright's theory of a late date exodus from Egypt in the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC is inconsistent with the Biblical data, and the archeological data discovered since then, is consistent with the 1446 BC Exodus date.

**The discovery of the Ebla Tablets.** In 1974-75 a great palace was discovered at Ebla in modern day Syria. Ebla was in its glory around 2300 B.C. Included in this discovery was a library containing over 16,000 clay tablets which include the names of historical cities mentioned in the Bible like Ur (Gen 11:28, 31; 15:7), and Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 10:19; 13:10-13; 14:2-22; 19:1, 4 24). The Ebla tablets also show a people who believed that the universe was created out of nothing by a single Being. They were monotheistic at a time when modern Bible critics were saying that monotheism did not emerge until the Jews of the 1st millennium B.C.

**Sodom and Gomorrah.** Sodom and Gomorrah were discovered in 1924 by Dr. William Albright, and later excavations between 1965-73 revealed evidence of a massive fire which destroyed the city, leaving it buried under several feet of ash. Dr. Bryant Wood declared that the evidence suggests that the fires began on the roofs of the houses, until the roofs collapsed, spreading the fire to the interior. This is consistent with the Biblical account which says that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by fire from the sky in God's judgment (Gen 19:24). In addition, a huge burial ground outside the city contained thousands of skeletons showing that the city was heavily populated in the time of Abraham.

**The Hittites.** The Hittites are a people mentioned dozens of times in the Old Testament (Gen 15:20; 23:10; 25:9...), but until the late 19th century no archeological evidence of their existence had been discovered, which critics used to ridicule the Bible as being riddled with stories and fairy tales. Then in 1876, a discovery was made in Turkey, which after further excavations resulted in the 1906 confirmation that the Hittite nation referred to in the Bible, along with its capital city (Boghaz-koy) had been found. The critics were again proven wrong, and the Bible again proven to be right.

**King David.** Despite the crucial importance of David in Biblical history (2 Sam 7:14-16; Matt 1:1; 22:43; Acts 15:16), until the summer of 1993, there had been no archeological evidence (outside the Bible) of his existence. Since David is so important, this was clearly a problem. However, in 1993, archeologist Avraham Biran was excavating Tell Dan in northern Galilee, when a royal house was discovered. While clearing the debris, the archeological team found a black basalt stele, or a stone slab, with 13 lines of writing. Two of the lines contained the phrases "King of Israel" and "House of David". Pottery which was discovered at the site suggests a date of around the early 9th century B.C. just a century or so from David's time. In 1994, two more pieces were discovered which contained the names of Jehoram, the son of Ahab, the ruler of Israel, and Ahaziah, the ruler of the "House of David". David's historicity had been proven from archaeological finds. Again, the critics were wrong, and the Bible was right.

“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: ‘I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God.’ That is the one thing we must not say. A man who said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

## *Questions about Jesus*

### **1. Was (is) Jesus really God?    Yes.**

- a. Study John 1:1-12, 14. Jesus (1:17) was the “Word” who “was” God (John 1:1) and who became a man (1:14). Jesus said he was “one with God” (John 10:30). His birth as a human child (who would be called “God”) in Bethlehem was predicted 700 years before (Isa 7:14; 9:5-6; Micah 5:2).
- b. Jesus most often referred to Himself as the “Son of Man” (Matt 9:6; 12:8; 24:27, 30, 37, 39; 25:31; 26:2; Luke 19:10). The “Son of Man” was an Old Testament figure who appears before God the Father and is given an eternal kingdom, dominion, and all the peoples of the world serve Him (Dan 7:13-14). Clearly, this Old Testament figure is the same as the “Son” and “Child” in Isa 9:5-6 who is called “Mighty God” (Isa 9:6). Jesus, the “Son of Man”, claimed authority over the Sabbath (Matt 12:8) which was created by YAHWEH (Gen 2:3).
- c. Jesus applied the “I am” sayings of God (Exodus 3:6; Isa 41:4; 43:10, 13, 25; 46:4; 48:12) to Himself when He disclosed His existence *before* Abraham, who had lived 2,000 years before Christ (John 8:58).
- d. Jesus forgave sins, something only God can do (Mark 2:5-12; Col 3:13).
- e. Jesus claimed to be God when He unilaterally declared truth (Matt 5:18) without the Old Testament’s requirement of two witnesses (Deut 17:6) or when He modified the meaning of the Old Testament prophecies which were inspired by God (Matt 5:18; 2 Pet 1:20-21). Jesus often authoritatively expanded the meaning of God’s statements in the Old Testament, by saying “*But I say to you*” (Matt 5:22, 28, 32, 34, 39).

- f. Jesus accepted worship as God from His disciples (Matt 28:16-17; John 20:28), and expressly affirmed Peter's identification of Him as the Son of God as coming from God Himself (Matt 16:15-17).
- g. Jesus said the entire Old Testament had been written about Him (John 5:39; Luke 24:27, 44).
- h. Jesus claimed God had given Him ALL power in heaven and earth (Matt 28:18; John 5:21-23, 26-27; cf. Acts 17:31), and proved it by raising the dead (John 11:39-44).
- i. Other New Testament declarations of the deity of Christ (Rom 9:5; Phil 2:6; Col 1:16; 2:9; Titus 2:13). "Lord of the Sabbath (Gen 2:3; Matt 12:8). His blood was called the "blood of God" (Acts 20:28).

## **2. Was (is) Jesus really a Man? Yes.**

- At His birth, Jesus became a real Man (John 1:1,14; 8:40).
- At His death, Jesus did not abandon his human body but even after His resurrection He had "flesh and bones" and ate a "piece of broiled fish" (Luke 24:36-43; John 20:25-27).
- At His Ascension, Jesus was still a man (Acts 1:11).
- During Stephen's martyrdom, He was still a man (Acts 7:56).
- When He appeared to Paul, He was still a man (Acts 9:5; cf. 1 Cor 9:1; 15:8).
- In John's vision on Patmos, Jesus appeared as a man (Rev 1:13-17).
- He will return to judge the world as a man (Acts 17:30-31).

## **3. Was Jesus really born of a virgin?**

Yes. The apostle Matthew who was an eyewitness of Christ's ministry (Matt 9:9; 10:3) recorded that the birth of Jesus to Mary and Joseph happened "before they came together" (Matthew 1:18), and at a time when Joseph "did not know her" (Matt 1:25). Similarly, Luke records Mary responding to the angel's announcement that she would give birth to a child by saying: "How can this be, since I do not know a man" (Luke 1:34).

The Scriptures explain that Mary conceived as a result of the action of the Holy Spirit who came upon her "and overshadowed" her (Lk 1:35) in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy (Isaiah 7:14). Note: The Greek word used by the translators of the Old Testament to translate the Hebrew word for virgin (*almah*) in Isaiah 7:14 into Greek in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. translation called the "Septuagint" or "LXX" was the Greek word *parthenos* which always meant "virgin" (cf. Gen 24:14,16,43,55). That is the same word used by Matthew in Matt 1:23 and Luke 1:27.

**4. Muslims claim that Jesus never really died on the cross. What is the evidence that Jesus was *actually crucified* in Jerusalem?**

The Quran (written in the seventh century, hundreds of years after the events of Christ's life) is at variance with ALL first century writers. Not only did the Christians unanimously testify that Jesus was crucified and died on the cross (Matthew 27:1-66; Mark 15:1-47; Luke 23:44-56; John 19:28-42; Phil 2:8; Heb 2:9, 12:2; 1 Peter 2:24), so did the first century *Jewish historian* Josephus (*Antiquities*, 18:64), as well as the first century Roman historian Tacitus (55-120 A.D.).

**5. Is there first century testimony that Jesus actually rose from the dead?**

Yes, all Christian writers from the first century unanimously agree that Jesus rose *physically* from the dead (Matthew 28; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24; John 20-21). In addition, former persecutor of Christians, Paul, also testified that he saw Jesus alive (1 Corinthians 9:1; Acts 22:6-8). To demonstrate the reality of his physical resurrection to his unbelieving disciples, Jesus told them to touch Him and even ate real food in their presence (Luke 24:36-43).

**6. Did Jesus really rise from the dead? Note: to have Biblical “faith” in Jesus, a person must also believe that He rose from the dead (Rom 10:9).**

Yes. Jesus predicted that He would rise from the dead (Matt 16:21; 17:23; 20:17-19, 28; Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22; 18:33; John 2:19). His resurrection is recorded by all four gospel writers (Matt 28:5-6; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-18) and He was also seen by Paul (1 Cor 9:1; 15:8). One scholar notes that “we know more about the details of the hours immediately before, and the actual death of Jesus...than we know about the death of any other one man in all the ancient world”.

**7. Did Jesus actually rise from the dead physically?**

Yes. In fact, Jesus emphasized that His resurrected body was a real physical body by urging doubters to touch His wounds (Luke 24:29; John 20:27), and by eating fish (something only real physical bodies can do, Lk 24:41-42). Jesus wanted all to understand that He was not just a “spirit” (Lk 24:39). Over five hundred people at one time saw the risen Christ (1 Cor 15:6)! The apostles openly preached the Resurrection of Christ, in the middle of Jerusalem (where He was killed) just weeks after His crucifixion (Acts 2:1, 22-24). The Apostle John wrote that he and his followers had actually seen, heard, and handled the Word of life (1 John 1:1).

\*\*\*\*\*

## ***Different Approaches to Evangelism***

According to Mark Mittelberg, director of evangelism at Willow Creek Community Church of suburban Chicago, “God knew what he was doing when he made you. He custom-designed you with your unique combination of personality, temperament, talents, and background, and he wants to use you to reach others in a fashion that fits your design.” For example, says Mittelberg, consider these six people in the New Testament:

- **Peter’s Confrontational Approach**—He was direct, bold, and to the point.
- **Paul’s Intellectual Approach**—He could be confrontational, but he was a well-educated man who could reason from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that Jesus was the Christ.
- **The Blind Man’s Testimonial Approach**—The man in John 9 didn’t know a great deal of theology, but he could say, “One thing I know: I once was blind and now I see.”
- **The Samaritan Woman’s Invitational Approach**—Leaving her water jug at the well, the woman in John 4 went into her village and invited her friends to come and hear the man “who told me everything I ever did.”
- **Matthew’s Interpersonal Approach**—In Luke 5:29 Matthew put on a big banquet for his tax-collecting buddies in an effort to expose them to Jesus. He relied on the relationships he’d built with these men and sought to further shore up their friendships, inviting them into his home and using his channels of friendship for evangelism.
- **Dorcas’ Service Approach**—In Acts 9:36, we meet a woman who witnessed by serving others in Jesus name, making clothes for the needy and helping the poor.<sup>\*3</sup>

\*\*\*\*\*

---

\* Mark Mittelberg, “Discover Your Evangelism Style,” *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 95, September/October 1996.

<sup>3</sup>Morgan, R. J. 2000. *Nelson's complete book of stories, illustrations, and quotes* (electronic ed.). Thomas Nelson Publishers: Nashville

## *Questions about Jesus (Cont'd)*

### **8. Perhaps the disciples were hallucinating and didn't really see Jesus?**

**Answer relies on “Gunning for God” John C. Lennox (2011), p. 214**

- Hallucinations most often occur to people with vivid imaginations and a specific kind of temperament. But the disciples represented varied personalities and temperaments: Peter a “tough fisherman”, who once doubted he was really seeing Jesus (Matthew 14:28); Matthew a very practical and business like tax collector (Matt 10:3), Thomas, a pure skeptic. All saw Jesus. Finally, Paul who had hated Jesus and His disciples (1 Cor 9:1) saw Him.
- Hallucinations usually concern events which are expected or hoped for; the disciples did not expect and did not dare hope for a real physical resurrection of Jesus. There was nothing in Jewish tradition to support such a thing, and they couldn't understand Jesus when He tried to tell them (Matt 16:22; Mark 9:31-32; Luke 24:25-26, 37). When He did appear to them, they were hiding in fear that they might be crucified too (John 20:19).
- Hallucinations usually recur over a relatively long period, either increasing or decreasing, but the appearances of Christ occurred frequently over a period of forty days (Acts 1:3) and then abruptly ceased. None of the disciples ever claimed a similar experience again, except for Stephen (Acts 7:56) and Paul (Acts 9:1-8; 22:6-11; 26:12-18; 1 Cor 9:1).

### **9. Where does the Bible say that Jesus died for *my sins*?**

Note: It is very important to be able to explain from the Bible that Jesus died on the cross (Rom 5:8; 1 Pet 2:24; Heb 9:28; 1 Jn 2:2) for our sins, and that He “gave Himself” voluntarily (Matthew 20:28; John 10:18; Titus 2:14).

Isaiah prophesied 700 years before that Jesus would be “wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities” (Isa 53:5), and that God the Father would “lay on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isa 53:6; cf. 2 Cor 5:21). In fact, the earliest prophecy of Christ's sacrificial death for our sins occurs in Genesis where He is the “seed of the woman...who bruises your (the Devil's) head” (Gen 3:15).

### **10. What is “sin” anyway?**

“Sin” is any act or thought contrary to the law or will of God (1 John 3:4), and it includes any failure to act or think as we should (James 4:17); even a foolish thought is a sin (Prov 24:9). Sin came into the world through Adam (Rom 5:12) and we are all born in sin (Gen 5:3; Psalm 51:5; cf. Job 15:14; 25:4). Sin is an “abomination” to God (Prov 15:9) and deceives us (Heb 3:13) into thinking we are okay when we are not (Ezek 18:4). The “wages” of sin is death (Rom 3:23) and no one is without sin (1 Kings 8:46; Romans 3:23) except Jesus Christ (Heb 4:15; 7:25-27; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5). Sin separates us from God (Isaiah 59:2).

### **11. Why did Jesus have to die such a horrible death on the cross? Could He not have died another way?**

The horrific nature of Jesus' death on the cross is commensurate with the horrific nature of sin to a Holy God. God tells us He "is of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look upon wrong" (Habakkuk 1:13). There apparently was no other way than the cross (Matt 26:39), as only through the cross and the shedding of blood (Heb 9:22) could God show His righteousness and His justified anger against evil (Rom 3:25-26) and placate His holy wrath (the "propitiation", Rom 3:25) against sin (Ezekiel 18:4). Our failure to understand why such a horrific death was necessary shows our failure to appreciate the horrific nature of our sin (2 Cor 4:4).

Another reason Jesus had to die on the cross was to fulfill all the prophecies made in the Old Testament about His manner of death (Matt 26:24; Luke 22:22; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28).

For instance, it was predicted that He would be given vinegar at His execution (Ps 69:21; Matt 27:34), His executioners would gamble over His clothing (Ps 22:18; Matt 27:35), and His hands and feet would be "pierced" (Ps 22:16; Zech 12:10) which were fulfilled by the execution method of crucifixion (Matt 27:35). Also, it was prophesied that He would be "numbered with the transgressors" (Isa 53:12) which was fulfilled when Christ was crucified between two thieves (Mark 15:27).

### **12. Wasn't Jesus a sinner too?**

No. The Bible clearly says that Jesus never sinned (John 8:46; 2 Cor 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5).

### **13. Are there any ancient sources (besides the Bible) that refer to Christ so as to provide independent verification that He was an historical figure?**

Yes, there are many:

- a. Cornelius Tacitus, a Roman historian** (c. A.D. 55-120) wrote "The Annals and the Histories" which cover the period from A.D. 14 to A.D. 96 in which he mentions Christ (misspelled as "Christus") as having been "put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the reign of Tiberius..."
- b. Suetonius, another Roman historian**, wrote the "Life of Claudius" also referred to the Jews being expelled from the city of Rome in A.D. 48 because of their activities devoted to "Chrestus" (another misspelling). This expulsion is referred to by the physician Luke in Acts 18:2. In another place ("Lives of the Caesars"), Suetonius wrote of Nero's punishment of "Christians, a class of men given to a new and mischievous superstition".



- c. **Pliny the Younger, the governor of Asia Minor** (A.D. 112) wrote a letter to the Roman emperor Trajan seeking advice on how to deal with the “Christians”. He said he often made the Christians “curse Christ, which a genuine Christian cannot be made to do”.
- d. **Thallus, a first century writer** (A.D. 52) whose works have now all been lost is quoted by a Christian writer, Julius Africanus (A.D. 221) as having attempted (in the third book of his histories) to explain away the darkness which covered the earth when Christ was crucified (Matt 27:45) as having been the product of a solar eclipse.
- e. **Mara Bar-Serapion** (after A.D. 70) was a Syrian philosopher who wrote a letter from prison to his son in which he compared Jesus to a “wise king”. He went on to say that the Jews had been driven from Jerusalem (A.D. 70) because they had rejected their King.
- f. **Josephus, the Jewish historian**, also affirms the historicity of Christ and His crucifixion by the Romans, as well as mentioning the high priest Ananias, and James the brother of Jesus (“Antiquities” XVIII, 33; XX, 9.1)
- g. **The Babylonian Talmud** (circa A.D. 550), is a collection of Jewish religious literature which is anti-Christian and refers to Jesus as an historical figure who was justly executed by the Romans on the “eve of Passover” just as the Apostle John says (John 19:14).

#### 14. “Second Coming”? Is Jesus really going to return to earth someday?

At the end of the future Tribulation period (Rev 6-19), Jesus will return to earth to judge the world (Matthew 24:29-31; Revelation 19:11-20:14). Jesus clearly said that no one knows the day nor the hour when he will return (Matthew 24:36). Jesus also promised that he would return someday and take his followers to be with him in his Father’s house (*heaven*, John 14:1-3; 1 Thess 4:16-18). At that time, believers will be given immortal bodies like Jesus’ body (Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 John 3:2).

#### 15. Does the Bible really teach that God is a “Trinity”? Is the Holy Spirit also God?

Yes, although it is a very difficult doctrine for humans to comprehend, the Bible clearly teaches that there is only one God, but He consists of three distinct Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). We first see the Trinity clearly in Matthew 3:16-17 where Jesus, after his baptism, is standing in the water and sees “The **Spirit of God** descending like a dove on him” and then, “behold a voice from heaven (the “**Father**”) said ‘This is my beloved **Son**, with whom I am well pleased’”.

Jesus claimed to be God (John 10:30), but also acknowledged that His Father would send the Holy Spirit (in Jesus’s name) to help the believers (John 14:25-26). The Book of Acts records Peter calling “the Holy Spirit”... “God” (Acts 5:3-4). We can see the Trinity (One God, but three Persons) working in Acts 16, where the Holy Spirit (16:6), and the Spirit of Jesus (16:7), work together with “God” (16:10) to accomplish God’s purposes.

See also (Rom 15:30; John 1:1; Rom 9:5). There are even Old Testament hints that God has a “plural” nature (“us” or “our” Gen 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; Isaiah 48:16). As far back as Genesis 1, the Father (God) created the universe (1:1), along with the Spirit (1:2), and we know from John 1:3 that it was Jesus doing the actual creating by the authority of the Father. Throughout the Bible, we see both the Holy Spirit, and Jesus the Son, doing things that only God can do. All three share and possess divine attributes such as omnipresence (Jeremiah 23:23; Eph 1:23; Psalm 139:7), omnipotence (Gen 17:1; Heb 1:3; Luke 1:35), and omniscience (Psalm 147:4-5; John 2:24; 21:17; 1Cor 2:10-11).

## ***General Objections and Questions***

### ***God, Satan, Suffering, Punishment, Hell, Heaven, etc.***

#### **1. I’m not even sure there is a God.**

That is why God has given us the Bible so we could know for sure (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1-3). Then, invite your friend to start studying the Bible with you. Ask him to read Psalm 14:1, and assure him **that after reading the Bible** he will agree with Psalm 14:1 that only a “fool” denies the existence of God.

#### **2. If God is really “good”, then why is there so much evil in the world today?**

God made the world perfect (Gen 1:31), but He did not want to create “robots” without free will. His goal was to have a world where His creations would choose voluntarily to love Him (John 14:15, 21-23). God warned Adam and Eve that their rejection of His single prohibition would result in death (Gen 2:16-17) which it did (Rom 5:12). Despite their sin, God did not abandon His goal of an eternity with men and women who would voluntarily love Him. Instead, He chose to die for them as their Substitute (Rom 5:8; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18) so ALL can be saved by grace through faith (Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:5). A world where sinners can reject God or love God VOLUNTARILY is the ONLY way to have an eventual world (heaven) where ALL have *chosen* to love God.

God did not just permit death into the world which would only affect human beings. **Once God allowed Adam and Eve to sin, it not only meant human suffering and death, it also meant God’s suffering and death** (Genesis 2:17; 3:15; Matthew 20:28; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 1:19-20). His love for the world (John 3:16; Rom 5:8) led His Son to partake in that suffering to the fullest and beyond (Heb 2:14-15). The infinitely sensitive Son of God endured not just crippling pain, humiliation and abuse for hours at the hands of men, but at the hands of demons as well, and then endured His Father “forsaking” Him (Matt 27:46) as he “became sin” for us (2 Cor 5:21).

## *How Norman Geisler Began Witnessing*

Some years ago, theologian Norman Geisler wrote a candid article in which he said: “I have a confession to make. I was a director for a Christian youth organization for three years, a pastor for nine years, a Bible college teacher for six years, and in all that time I did not witness for Jesus Christ. I scarcely ever shared my faith one-to-one with other people.”

Geisler offered several reasons for this: He didn’t think he had the gift of evangelism. He felt instead his gift was that of teaching the Word to those already Christians. He had read a book about evangelism and God’s sovereignty that had turned away his zeal for personal evangelism. He had known someone who had practiced impersonal, cold-turkey evangelism, and Geisler had determined that “lifestyle” evangelism was more desirable. But as a result, he lived a Christian life but seldom vocalized his witness to an unsaved person.

Eventually, Geisler became convicted by the words of a little song that said: “Lead me to some soul today, / O teach me, Lord, just what to say.” Those words became a sincere prayer for him, and his life began to change.

One day, having prayed that prayer, he was approached by a girl from the college where he taught. She had spiritual needs in her life, and he was able to lead her to Christ. (She later went to South America as a missionary).

Shortly afterward, Geisler volunteered to participate in a Monday night visitation program at his church. On his first outing, he found himself knocking on the door of a man who turned out to be an atheist. “Do you mind if we ask you a very serious spiritual question?” asked Geisler, when the man came to the door. After a long conversation and a couple of visits, the man prayed to receive Christ into his heart. (He is now a deacon in a church with his family committed to Christ as well.)

Now Geisler says: “The most rewarding experiences I’ve had in my Christian life have not come from teaching, pastoring, or ministering around the world. They have come from meeting with non-Christians and seeing one after another come to know Christ.”\*4

\*\*\*\*\*

## ***General Objections and Questions (Cont’d)***

### **3. Is there really a “heaven” and a “hell”? What does the Bible say?**

Yes. Jesus said that hell is a place of torment, horrible suffering, and burning by fire (Lk 16:19-31; Mark 9:47-48) that was originally created for the devil and his angels (Matt 25:41). Anyone who goes there will go there forever (Matt 25:46; Rev 14:11; 20:11-14). Heaven is where God lives with all the believers who previously died. It is a place of unimaginable joy (Ps 16:11; 17:15; Romans 8:18; 1 Corinthians 2:9; Rev 21:1-4).

### **4. I don’t believe there is a real hell because God is Love and He would not create such a place.**

Yes, God IS love, but that is not all He is. He is also just (Deut 10:18; 32:4) and holy (Isaiah 6:3; Habakkuk 1:13), and must punish sin (Ezekiel 18:4). Jesus said God DID create hell...for Satan and the rebellious angels (Matthew 25:41). Jesus warned us about hell many times (Matthew 5:22; 8:12; Mark 9:47-48; Luke 16:19-31; Rev 14:11; 20:11-14). He said the road to hell is wide, but the way to heaven is narrow (Matthew 7:13-14). Jesus said BOTH heaven and hell are eternal (Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:48; Luke 16:26; cf. Rev 20:10). Paul who was taught by Jesus (Galatians 1:12) called hell the place of “punishment of eternal destruction” (2 Thess. 1:8-9).

**“There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God,  
‘Thy will be done’, and those to whom God says, in the end,  
‘Thy will be done.’ ”**

**C.S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce***

---

\* Norman L. Geisler, “Excuses,” 1983.

<sup>4</sup>Morgan, R. J. 2000. *Nelson's complete book of stories, illustrations, and quotes* (electronic ed.). Thomas Nelson Publishers: Nashville

**5. I believe that if I simply believe that there is a God, that is good enough to go to heaven.**

God warns us that our thinking is often wrong (Proverbs 14:12). Even the demons “believe in God” and tremble in terror (James 2:19). Sincerity and zeal for God is not enough (Rom 10:1-4; cf. Acts 26:18; Matthew 7:21-23; John 1:12, 3:16 etc.).

**6. Can’t I decide to seek God later in life? Now, I want to have fun.**

The Bible tells us that no one is promised tomorrow (Proverbs 27:1), and that we must seek the Lord while He may be found (Isaiah 55:6). When God causes us to begin to learn about Him, that is the time when He wants us to pursue Him (2 Cor 6:2; Acts 24:22-27, Proverbs 1:24-33; 27:1; Ecclesiastes 12:1, 13; Luke 13:24-25; Heb 4:13). We should never tempt God by putting Him off (Jeremiah 11:11-14; 14:11-12; 15:1; Ezek 8:18; 14:13-20).

**7. Isn’t “Satan” just a symbol of evil but not a real living being?**

No, Satan is a real spiritual being who even tried to tempt Jesus Himself (Matthew 4:1-10; Mark 4:15; 8:33; Luke 4:1-13). Jesus said Satan is a murderer and a liar (John 8:44) and the Bible says he still has the power to blind people from the truth (2 Cor 2:11; 4:4). He can even disguise himself as an angel (2 Cor 11:13-15), and he is always seeking an opening in our lives to destroy us (Ephesians 4:27; 6:11-12; 1 Thess 2:18; 2 Thess 2:9; 1 Peter 5:8; Rev 12:9; 20:1-3; 7-10).

Satan was created by God (Ezekiel 28:13, 15) “perfect” (Ezekiel 28:12, 15) but rebelled against God (Isaiah 14:12-15). He still has immense power over the earth (John 12:31; 14:20; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 John 5:19; Rev 12:9), until Jesus returns (Rev 20:1-3, 10).

**8. I don’t think that anyone can know for sure that they he will go to heaven when he dies.**

Jesus said you CAN know! The Bible says that anyone who puts his or her faith in Jesus alone “has” eternal life (John 3:16; 5:24; 20:31). Jesus said He gives His sheep “eternal life” and “they shall never perish” (John 10:28). That is why John ended his first letter by saying that we can “know” (1 John 5:13) that we have “eternal life” (not “guess” or “hope”). In fact, John wrote that “**now** we are children of God” (1 John 3:2). After we ask Christ into our life, the Holy Spirit begins to witness inside of us that we are saved and HAVE eternal life (Rom 8:16).

**9. I believe God loves everyone and will not punish me for my sins.**

God does love us, and in His love He warned Adam and Eve that He would punish them for their sin (Gen 2:17), and He warns us too (Ezekiel 18:4; John 3:16-19, 36; 8:23-24; Hebrews 2:3-4; Rev 20:11-14). Jesus told us many times that God will punish us for our sins (Matthew 10:28; Luke 13:3-5; John 8:23-24).

**10. I believe Jesus was love but the God of the Old Testament was mean and wrathful. Isn't there a contradiction here?**

No. Jesus said the Old Testament was totally accurate (Matthew 5:18), but also warned us of the consequences of sin before a HOLY God (Matthew 10:28; 25:31-41). Jesus promised that He would destroy all unrepentant sinners when He returns (Luke 19:11-27; John 5:28-29; Rev 19:11-15) and they would be cast into the lake of fire (Rev 20:11-15).

\*\*\*\*\*

## ***From Kimball to Graham***

A Sunday school teacher, a Mr. Kimball, in 1858 led a Boston shoe clerk to give his life to Christ. The clerk, Dwight L. Moody, became an evangelist and in England in 1879 awakened evangelistic zeal in the heart of Frederick B. Meyer, pastor of a small church.

F. B. Meyer, preaching on an American college campus, brought to Christ a student named J. Wilbur Chapman. Chapman, engaged in YMCA work, employed a former baseball player Billy Sunday, to do evangelistic work.

Sunday held a revival in Charlotte, North Carolina. A group of local men were so enthusiastic afterward that they planned another campaign, bringing Mordecai Hamm to town to preach.

In the revival, a young man named Billy Graham heard the gospel and yielded his life to Christ. Billy Graham ... (The story goes on and on).<sup>5</sup>

\*\*\*\*\*

---

<sup>5</sup>Tan, P. L. 1996, c1979. *Encyclopedia of 7700 illustrations: (a treasury of illustrations, anecdotes, facts and quotations for pastors, teachers and Christian workers)*. Bible Communications: Garland TX

## ***General Objections and Questions (Cont'd)***

### **11. Most people are not Christians. Can everyone else be wrong about how to get to heaven?**

Yes. Jesus said that the Way to eternal life is narrow and only a few find it, and that the broad way leads to death (Matt 7:13-14) “There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death (Prov 14:12). Jesus said He is the only Way to God and Heaven (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). Don’t let the failure of others to investigate the claims of Christ influence YOU to throw away YOUR eternity.

Note: **Buddha** (and virtually all unbelieving [non-Christian] scientists prior to 1950), taught that the universe was eternal, but this was **proven wrong** when 20<sup>th</sup> century science proved that the universe was expanding, something today’s scientists say is because of an explosion popularly called “The Big Bang”. **Islam can be proven wrong** because it contradicts all first century witnesses (Jewish, Christian and Roman) that the man Jesus WAS actually crucified and killed in Jerusalem approximately 33 A.D.

### **12. But there are so many different religions; how can just Christianity be right?**

If you check carefully, all other religions require a person to do something, in order to be saved. Only Christianity says we can do nothing to be saved (Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:5) except believe (John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9). Since the Garden of Eden, God has rejected man’s efforts (Gen 3:7-8) as a covering for sin (Gen 3:22) and required faith in Him (Gen 15:6). All of man’s religions are just a variation on sewing fig leaves and hiding from God (Gen 3:7-8). Christianity’s origins are in heaven (John 8:23-24), all other religions have their origins in the corrupt minds of men and are futile (Job 9:29-31).

### **13. Christians say that only followers of Christ go to heaven but didn’t Jesus say NOT to judge other people?**

It was JESUS himself who said that only those who follow him would go to heaven (John 8:24; 14:6). In the passage where Jesus says not to judge others, the context clearly shows that he meant that his followers must first be sure that their moral vision is clear before trying to help someone else by showing them their errors (Matthew 7:1-6). A parallel passage shows that Jesus’ meaning was that Christians “judge with right judgment” (John 7:24). Paul added that Christians should not be “judging” non-Christians but Christians, those already following Christ. It is God’s role to judge non-Christians (1 Corinthians 5:9-13).

\*\*\*\*\*

***“Enemy-occupied territory---that is what this world is. Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed, you might say landed in disguise, and is calling us to take part in a great campaign of sabotage.” —***

C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

\*\*\*\*\*

**14. I have done so many bad things that I don't think God will accept me. Is there any hope for me? OR I'm afraid Jesus won't accept me. I am too big a sinner.**

Jesus promised to save *anyone* who came to Him (John 6:37). God the Father promised to save “whosoever” put their faith in Jesus (John 3:16; Rom 10:13). God even set forth Paul (a murderer of Christians) as an example to all in the future who would follow (1 Timothy 1:15-16). Paul had participated in the persecution, imprisonment, and even the murder of Christians (Acts 7:58; 8:1, 3; 9:1; 22:4), and yet God saved him (Acts 9:3-15; 1 Tim 1:16; Gal 1:15-16). Paul confirmed this in his letter to the Romans: “Anyone who calls on the Lord shall be saved” (Rom 10:13). No one is beyond the forgiveness of God, if he or she will simply ask. The blood shed on the cross by Christ is capable of cleansing the worst of all sins, including murder and adultery (Eph 1:7). David, a king of the ancient Jewish people was called by God “a man after His own heart” (Acts 13:22), yet David was a murderer and an adulterer (2 Sam 11:1-17). He tried to hide his sin from everyone, but God knew his sins and exposed them (2 Sam 12:1-7). However, David repented and God forgave him (2 Sam 12:13)

\*\*\*\*\*

## ***The Lesson of David Flood***

### **The Missionary Who Forgot How God Works**

From: “Aggie: A Girl without a Country” by Aggie Hurst and Doug Brendel

**“Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance” (Ps 42:5)**

Back in 1921 youthful missionaries David and Svea Flood left for Africa with their 2 year old son to serve God in the area then called the Belgian Congo. They and another couple decided to set up a mission in a remote area where no one had gone before. However, when they arrived at their destination deep in the jungle, the village chief refused to allow them to enter, and they were forced to build makeshift shelters on a mud slope over a half-mile away. Despite continuous prayers for God to intervene, they saw only “failure”.



The only native who they ever had the opportunity to witness to was a young boy from the village that had rejected them. He would periodically bring Svea eggs and chickens, and she would tell him about Jesus. But the then pregnant Svea contracted malaria, and after giving birth to a daughter, Svea died just a couple of weeks later. That is when David broke.

David dug a grave for his 27 year old Svea who had been a popular singer in her home country. Returning to the central mission station, David gave his daughter away to other missionaries, and announced that God had ruined his life and that he was returning to Sweden. David Flood walked away from God.

When the missionaries to whom David gave his daughter both died of a mysterious disease, the daughter was given to other missionaries who called her Aggie. At three years old, Aggie arrived in America. She grew up to attend Bible College and eventually married Dewey Hurst who would become head of North Central Bible College.

Many years later, happily married with two children of her own, Aggie was surprised to discover in her mailbox a Swedish magazine with an article which included a picture of a grave and a cross, with her mother's name on it, Svea Flood. The story was translated by a faculty member who knew Swedish. Aggie then learned the story told of young missionaries who came to this jungle village, faced incredible hardships, and how the young mother had died in the jungle, but not until after leading one young boy to Christ. That young boy had then led his entire village to Christ, over six hundred people, including the chief who had rejected them. Then one young boy had become one of the leaders of the church in the entire nation of the Belgian Congo.

On her 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, Aggie set off to Sweden to find her father, David Flood, who had married Svea's sister, an unbeliever, and who had fallen into a tragic life of drunkenness and ungodliness. The father of four more children, David Flood remained bitter towards God and would not even allow His name to be spoken in his house.

Aggie was warned by her half-brothers and sisters that if she even spoke the name "God" her father would erupt in bitter rage. He still blamed God for ruining his life.

When Aggie walked into her father's room, it was littered with empty liquor bottles, and the 77 year old man was in failing health and suffering with cataracts. David Flood began to cry. But when Aggie began to talk about God, he grew angry. "God took everything from me; He ruined my life", he said. But then Aggie began to gently tell him what God had done in Africa, *after* he had left the field. The little six year old boy had gotten saved, and led his entire village of over six hundred people to Christ, and now there were a hundred thousand believers, including dozens of Bible schools, and dozens of Bible preaching medical clinics and hospitals.

And then the Holy Spirit gave David Flood repentance, and he opened his heart again to God. David Flood died just weeks later, after learning that he had been hating the

God who gave he and his wife one of the most successful missionary stories of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As God would have it, that little six year old boy, the ONLY convert of the Floods in Africa eventually became the superintendent of ALL the churches in the Belgian Congo. He would tell Aggie that her mother Svea Flood was the “most famous person in our country’s history”.

Shortly thereafter, as an African pastor read aloud the words of Christ that “Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed, but if it dies, it produces many seeds”, Aggie knelt before her mother Svea Flood’s white cross (grave) in the jungles of Africa and gave thanks to the God who allows evil but means it for good.

David Flood forgot the words of Psalm 126:5:”Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy”. May we, who know not the future (or God’s plan for our lives), never forget the tragic lesson of David Flood, the missionary who forgot how God works (Gen 50:20; Rom 8:28).

\*\*\*\*\*

## ***General Objections and Questions (Cont’d)***

### **15. I think I will go to heaven when I die because I am a pretty good person.**

Perhaps compared to me and other humans, you are good, but according to God’s standard (His perfection) there is no one who is good (Rom 3:10, 12). In fact, ALL of your good deeds are nothing but filthy rags to God (Isa 64:6) who is infinitely pure beyond our imagination (Hab 1:13; Job 15:15; 1 Pet 1:15-16).

### **16. I’m not a really bad sinner.**

Even one “little” sin makes us guilty of breaking ALL of God’s Holy Law (James 2:10). Even God’s own prophet Isaiah said “our iniquities (sin), like the wind, take us away” (Isa 64:6). The prophet Jeremiah said our hearts “are deceitful above all things and desperately wicked” (Jeremiah 17:9). Jesus called His own disciples “evil” (Luke 11:13).

### **17. I believe that when we die, God weighs our good deeds, and if they are greater than our bad deeds, we will go to heaven.**

The Old Testament prophet Isaiah said that “all of our righteous deeds are like filthy rags to God” (Isa 64:6). God says: “I will declare your righteousness and your deeds, but they *will not profit* you” (Isa 57:12; 59:6). Even Joshua, the high priest of Israel, could not stand before God in his own righteousness (Zech 3:3-5). All our “secret sins” are known to God (Ps 90:8; Heb 4:13).

**18. If none of us can keep the commandments of God, then what is the purpose of the Commandments?**

The purpose of the Law (the Commandments) is to show us that we are guilty before God, to stop our bragging (Rom 3:19), and to give us the “knowledge of sin” (Rom 3:20). By giving us the knowledge of sin, the Law acts as a schoolmaster to “bring us to Christ” by showing us the need for a Savior (Gal 3:24-25).

**19. I know that God is holy and righteous, and I am a sinner. How could I ever hope to be acceptable to Him?**

Great question, my friend. It shows that God has been working in your life. You are right. God is holy, and He commands that we be holy too (Matthew 5:48; 1 Peter 1:16). Because God knew that we can’t be perfectly holy, He sent Jesus to live that perfectly holy life for us, as our Substitute, and then die in our place (Rom 5:8; 1 Pet 2:24). When we put our trust in Christ alone to save us, God sees all of our sins, and us, as crucified with Christ (Gal 2:20), and all of Christ’s righteousness, the “righteousness of God” is given to us (Rom 6:23; 2 Cor 5:21).

\*\*\*\*\*

## ***Cords of Evangelism***

In his book *What in the World is God Doing?* Dr. Ted Engstrom relates a story told him by a veteran Korean Christian. In the early 1880s three Korean workmen, laboring in China, heard the Gospel and embraced the Lord Jesus. The three soon conspired about getting the message of Christ into their own country, an action forbidden by the government. Since the Korean and Chinese alphabets were similar, they decided to smuggle in a copy of the Chinese Bible. They drew straws to see who would have the privilege of bringing the Gospel into Korea.

The first man buried the Bible in his belongings and headed toward the border, a journey of many days by footpath. There he was searched, found out, and killed. Word reached the others that their friend was dead. The second man tore pages from his Bible and hid the separate pages throughout his luggage. He, too, made the long trip to the border only to be searched and beheaded.

The third man grew more determined than ever to succeed. He ingeniously tore his Bible apart page by page, folding each page into a tiny strip. He wove the strips into a rope and wrapped his baggage in his homemade rope. When he came to the border, the guards asked him to unwrap his belongings. Finding nothing amiss, they admitted him.

The man arrived home, untied the rope, and ironed out each page. He reassembled his Bible and began to preach Christ wherever he went. And when the missionaries of the 1880s fanned into the country, they found the seed already sown and the first fruits appearing.\*<sup>6</sup>

\*\*\*\*\*

## ***General Objections and Questions (Cont'd)***

### **20. I believe a sincere Buddhist, or Muslim, or other member of the world's religions will go to heaven if they do good and are *sincere*.**

Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (Jn 14:6). There is *no other way* (Acts 4:12). Sincerity is insufficient because it cannot deal with the *sin problem* (Rom 3:23; 6:23). Sincerity does not save us from accidents, disease, or wars on this earth, and there is no reason to believe that it will save us from eternal judgment.

Paul's countrymen, the Jews, were sincere, but lost (Romans 10:2-3). "There is a way which seems right to a man, but the end thereof is death" (Prov 14:12). Nicodemus was sincere (John 3:1-2); Jesus told him he **MUST** be born again! Cornelius was sincere (Acts 10:2) but lost (Acts 11:14). Sincerity does not eradicate guilt for sin; God says **ONLY** shed blood (death) can make atonement for sin (Heb 9:22). When God's wrath is poured out upon the world only those upon whom God sees the blood of Christ will escape judgment (Ex 12:13). Even being a victim of the most terrible injustice does not wash away sin, or create a relationship with God (Ex 12:29).

### **21. Why did God choose Israel? What was so special about them?**

There was nothing special about the nation of Israel that made God love them and choose them (Deuteronomy 9:4-5). God simply sovereignly chose to love them (Deut 4:37; 7:7-8) and to make them His witnesses (Isaiah 41:8-9; 43:10,12; 44:8). They too were sinners just like the rest of the people of the earth (1 Kings 8:46; Romans 3:23), and God gave them the Promised Land because of the wickedness of the nations then possessing it, not because of anything good about them (Deut 4:37; Leviticus 18:1-30). It was because God decided to love their "fathers" (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), that He chose to save Israel and make it a special people (Exodus 19:5-6) for His own redemptive purposes (Genesis 12:3). Through the Jews (John 4:22), God would bring His Son, Jesus Christ into the world (Matthew 1:1; John 4:22) to save all peoples (John 3:16-17). Just as Israel was chosen by God, now since Israel's rejection of Christ, the Church is also called God's "chosen race" and "holy nation" (Matthew 21:43; 1 Peter 2:9) and the Church consists of people from all the different nations of the world (Revelation 5:9; 7:9).

---

\* Ted W. Engstrom, *What in the World is God Doing?* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1978), 161.

<sup>6</sup>Morgan, R. J. 2000. *Nelson's complete book of stories, illustrations, and quotes* (electronic ed.). Thomas Nelson Publishers: Nashville

## **22. Has God chosen just some people to be saved and condemned the rest to Hell?**

This is one of the most difficult questions to answer for someone who does not yet know Christ. Here is a suggested response which is Biblically true and yet attempts to avoid deep theological issues which may cause a problem for those new to the Bible.

There are two streams of Biblical thought on this issue of God's choosing some and not choosing others for salvation. One stream emphasizes God's role in salvation which includes His "choosing" people to be saved (Ephesians 1:4) and drawing them to Christ (John 6:44). The other stream of thought emphasizes God's desire and call to all people to respond to the truth and come to Jesus (Matthew 11:28; John 3:16; 1 Timothy 2:4,6; 2 Peter 3:9). Paul said "everyone" (*pas ho*) who calls on the name of the Lord would be saved (Romans 10:13). Both streams of thought are Biblically true, and yet do not contradict each other (Spurgeon said "I have never heard them arguing!").

It is perhaps best to simply show the seeker these truths and then simply add that God has kept us from full understanding of this mystery for now (Deuteronomy 29:29), and end with "no one has really been able to completely grasp this amazing revelation from God, but I am sure that when we get to heaven God will explain it all to us" (1 Corinthians 13:9-12; Rev 22:4).

## **23. I am afraid my family will not agree with me if I follow Christ and become a Christian.**

Jesus said if we are ashamed of His words, He would be ashamed of us when He returns to earth (Luke 9:26). Jesus warned us not to choose our families over Him (Matt 10:37; Lk 12:51-53), and said we should *expect* to suffer persecution (Matt 5:10-12; John 15:18-20). Paul said everyone who follows Christ closely would be persecuted (2 Tim 3:12).

### ***Claiming the Seats***

The Rev. George Grubb tells in his book, *What God Hath Wrought*, the following incident. During one of his campaigns he entered the tent a little earlier than usual one evening, and found the tent attendant walking up and down the rows of seats. "What are you doing?" Mr. Grubb asked.

"Well," he said, "I am claiming all the people who sit in these seats tonight for Jesus, for God says that "every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you," so I am walking up and down these seats and claiming them for God" (Josh. 1:3). —*King's Business* <sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup>Tan, P. L. 1996, c1979. *Encyclopedia of 7700 illustrations: (a treasury of illustrations, anecdotes, facts and quotations for pastors, teachers and Christian workers)*. Bible Communications: Garland TX

**24. I have heard that Christians opposed Copernicus and Galileo because the Bible said that the world was flat. Is that true?**

No. It was the *Catholic Church* that persecuted Galileo, and they were *not using the Bible* when they did it (but a second century Ptolemaic Greek view of the world). The Bible nowhere teaches that the world is flat. In fact, over 1500 years before Christ, Job said that the world was suspended in empty space, and that the earth was hung on nothing (Job 26:7). The Bible even teaches that God has “stretched out” (Heb. “natah”) the heavens (Isa 45:12; 51:13), a concept remarkably consistent with modern astronomical observations of the expanding universe.

In addition, around 700 years before Christ, the prophet Isaiah said that the shape of the earth was spherical (Isa 40:22; cf. Prov 8:27). **Note:** the Bible’s references to the “four corners” and the “four winds” of the earth (Rev 7:1; 20:8) are clearly poetic in nature, and were common idioms to mean north, west, south, and east, or the entire compass of the thing referred to. See also Job 28:4; 38:3 and Isa 5:26; 11:12; 24:16 and 38:13 (“skirts of the earth”).

**25. Didn’t Christians participate in the massacre of Muslims and Jews during the Crusades? Why should I want to be “Christian” if that is what it means?**

Yes, terrible things have been done in the “name of Christ” throughout history; but terrible things have not been done by “following” Christ. Jesus prohibited the use of violence to advance His cause (Matthew 5:39; 26:52-53; Ps 5:6b; Prov 20:22). Jesus commanded His real followers to “love your enemies, bless those who curse you, and pray...” for them (Matt 5:44). The real followers of Jesus have never used violence to advance the goals of the Kingdom of God. But many have died as martyrs because they would not stop telling others about Christ. The Christ follower’s “weapons” are spiritual (2 Corinthians 10:4).

**26. If I become a Christian, does God promise me health, wealth and prosperity?**

In the next life, yes, God has promised us perfect health (1 Cor 15:51-53; Phil 3:21; Rev 21:4), and infinite wealth, prosperity and fullness of joy (Psalm 16:11; 17:15; Luke 12:32; Rom 8:17; 1 Cor 3:21), but in this life, we are NOT promised ease, comfort, or freedom from tribulation and difficulties (Matt 16:24; John 15:18; 16:1-2, 33; Acts 14:22; Philippians 1:29; 1 Peter 4:12; 5:9). In fact, the New Testament overwhelmingly teaches that the path to “Christ likeness” is the same as His, through suffering (Hebrews 5:8; cf. John 15:20; 16:1-2; Phil 1:29; 1 Peter 4:12). Christians, especially Christian leaders must not be pursuing the wealth of this world (Luke 12:15; 1 Tim 3:3; Heb 13:5; 1 John 2:15-17).

There is great danger in the teaching that “godliness” will lead to financial gain (1 Timothy 6:5). Jesus told us we should not be seeking wealth here on earth (Matthew 6:19-21; Luke 12:15), and Paul said we should learn to be content with food and clothing (1 Tim 6:6-10; Phil 4:11-13). Our main focus must be God’s Kingdom and leave our

standard of living to him (Matt 6:33). The earliest Christians joyfully suffered the loss of the things of this world in exchange for the everlasting things of heaven (Heb 10:34-35; 11:13-16). THE TWELVE APOSTLES, EXCEPT PERHAPS JOHN, SUFFERED MARTYR'S DEATHS.

## **27. Is it true that the Bible condones slavery?**

No. Although most slavery mentioned in the Bible is more like voluntary indentured servitude (Leviticus 25:39-41), the Bible has always led the world in its proclamation and protection of human rights. As early as 1445 B.C. at a time when a real slave trade was widely accepted around the world, God told Moses that the slave trade was forbidden, and anyone who engaged in it, or anyone who was found in possession of someone sold into slavery was to be put to death (Exodus 21:16).

Unlike the Code of Hammurabi (c. 1800 B.C), the Bible prohibited run-away slaves from being returned to their masters. Instead, they were to be allowed to live in Israel, wherever they wanted, and could not be harmed (Deut 23:15-16).

Unlike other Ancient Near East (ANE) nations, slaves (servants) were to be treated as “persons” not property; a person who struck his slave and killed him was subject to the death penalty (Ex 21:12), and permanent injury resulted in his/her mandatory release (Ex 21:23).

Job was a good example of the Bible's ethics concerning servants or slaves (Job 31:13-15). One day of rest a week was required (Ex 20:10; Deut 5:14), and Israel was commanded to love the stranger and alien in their midst (Lev 19:33-35).

The New Testament eliminates all such distinctions among Christians, and boldly says there is no longer any distinction between the “slave or free” (Gal 3:28; Col 3:11). Paul commanded Philemon (c. 60-65 A.D.) to accept back his former slave Onesimus, “forever...as a beloved brother” (Philemon 15-16), and to treat him as Paul's own “child” (v.10) and “heart” (v.12).

## **28. What does the Bible say happens to little children who die before they can hear and understand the gospel?**

Although the Bible does not answer this question directly, many Christians including this author, believe that little children who die before they have reached the age where they know the difference between right and wrong (the age of “accountability”, Isa 7:15-16) go directly to heaven. Job recognized that babies who die in the womb are “at rest” (Job 3:16-17). There is something about little children that is descriptive of those who enter heaven (Matt 18:3). When David's son died, David said he (David) would go to see him (in heaven) (2 Sam 12:23). Jesus also said that “the kingdom of heaven belongs to people who are “like these little children” (Matt 19:14 NCV). Finally, whether or not a person believes in Christ is the key.

Someone not capable of hearing and believing because he/she is an infant, a little child, retarded, or insane (from birth), would incur no condemnation because they are not capable of believing (cf. John 3:18). God may perform an act of special grace in the life of a dying child because of His special love for children (cf. Matt 18:10). Note that John the Baptist was given the indwelling Holy Spirit as an infant while in the womb of his mother (Lk 1:15), suggesting perhaps that it could be done for other infants who die without a chance to hear and understand the gospel.

Finally, since the Cross, “grace reigns” (Rom 5:21). Would He who prayed for the forgiveness of His murderers (Luke 23:34) condemn those who have from birth had no understanding or ability to repent (John 5:22)? Of course not.

**29. I would like to follow Christ but I don’t think I have the will power to keep His commands. I am afraid I will fail.**

No one has the power naturally within themselves to follow Christ, including everyone who is a Christian now. But God promises that if we invite His Son into our lives (Rev 3:20) as Lord and Savior (Rom 10:9), He (God) will change us, by giving us a new heart and a new Spirit (Ezek 36:26). In fact, God promises He will put HIS Spirit in us and cause us to follow Him (36:27). The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit makes us a “new creature” and “old things pass away” and “all things become new” (2 Cor 5:17-18).

***Bill Bright’s Maxim***

Although I have shared Christ personally with many thousands of people through the years, I am a rather reserved person and I do not always find it easy to witness.

But I have made this my practice, and I urge you to do the same: ***Assume that whenever you are alone with another person for more than a few moments, you are there by divine appointment to explain to that person the love and forgiveness he can know through faith in Jesus Christ.***<sup>\*8</sup>

---

\* Bill Bright, “How To Tell Others About Christ,” *Worldwide Challenge*, April 1993, 17.

<sup>8</sup>Morgan, R. J. 2000. *Nelson's complete book of stories, illustrations, and quotes* (electronic ed.). Thomas Nelson Publishers: Nashville



**30. I believe that Jesus is the Son of God and died for my sins, and then rose again. But I need some time to think about accepting Him as my Lord and Savior.**

Note: If you are sure the person really understands about sin, Jesus as the Son of God, and the sinner's substitute, you may respond as follows, otherwise, ask if he or she has any questions about anything that you have said or that he or she has read in the Bible.

The Bible says that no one is guaranteed tomorrow (Prov 27:1), and that we should seek the Lord while He may be found (Isa 55:6)! We simply don't know what will happen "tomorrow" (James 4:13-15). The Scriptures say that "today" is the "day of salvation" (2 Cor 6:2). Do not delay, there may not be a "tomorrow" (Luke 12:20).

**31. I don't think my mother (father, grandmother, brother, sister, etc.) had ever heard the gospel before she died. Where is she?**

No human being can know for sure the destiny of another. No one knows what private decisions a person may have made before his/her death. But we do know that God is a just God, and He has promised that anyone who really wants to know Him and is seeking Him with all their heart WILL find Him (Jeremiah 29:13; Matthew 7:7-8). What we do know is that if your mother did accept Christ, the only way you will ever see her again, is if you accept Christ too. Remember, Jesus loved your mother more than you do and consider His words (Matt 10:37).

**32. When we die, I have heard that Christians must wait to sometime in the distant future before we "wake up" and go to heaven. Is that true?**

No. Jesus told the thief on the cross who repented that "This day you shall be with me in paradise" (Lk 23:43). When Lazarus and the rich man died, they both immediately experienced heaven or hell (Luke 16:22-23). The Apostle Paul added that when we are "absent the body" we are present with the Lord' (2 Cor 5:8). For that reason, Paul said that to "die is gain" (Phil 1:21), and to "depart and be with Christ is far better" (Phil 1:23).

**33. I believe in God. Isn't that enough?**

No. Actually, it isn't. Acknowledging that God exists is simply recognizing the obvious and logically irrefutable (Psalm 14:1). The Bible says that even the demons believe in God, and tremble (James 2:19). In fact, the demons even believed and confessed that Jesus was the Son of God (Mark 5:7) but they are consigned to hell for eternity (Matt 8:29; 25:41; Rev 20:10). "Belief" must be based on the person of Jesus, and must include repentance (a decision to change our mind and ways concerning God) to be real Biblical faith that saves (Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 17:30; 20:21; 26:18; Rev 2:5,16, 21, 22; 9:20; 16:9, 11).

### **34. But some people are really zealous and dedicated to doing things for God? What about them?**

“Zeal” for God (a fervent sincerity), is also not enough (Rom 10:2-3). Even dedicating one’s whole life to God, with a ministry marked by apparent miraculous results (Matt 7:21-22) is not enough (Matt 7:23). Jesus said everyone **MUST** be born (again) from above (John 3:7-8).

## ***Creation/Evolution Issues***

### **1. Haven’t scientists proven that man is a descendant of apes according to the theory of evolution?**

No. In fact, there are thousands of scientists with Ph.D.’s who say that there is no evidence that man has descended from another species through evolution. The fossil record of the earth has not yet yielded even one clear fossil of a transitional creature from one species to another. If evolution were true, there should be hundreds and hundreds of millions of transitional fossils in the earth. There are none.

### **2. Isn’t it possible that God used *evolution* to create man?**

Possible? Of course, anything is “possible”. But, the evidence in the earth (the fossil record, etc.) does not support Darwin’s theory of evolution. All theories of macro-evolution (from one species to another, i.e. reptile to mammal, mammal to bird, monkey to man, etc.) presuppose and *require* at least hundreds of millions of years of life, death, and transitional creatures. In other words, millions of years of death would be necessary leading up to the “creation” of man by evolutionary processes. Not only does the earth’s fossil record categorically refute this, but so does the Bible. Genesis 1:30 says God created the animal world with vegetarian diets; they were not carnivorous (they did not eat each other). Romans 5:12 says: “Just as by one man, sin entered the world, **and death by sin...**”. In other words, **the Bible says there was no death until sin... and there was no sin until man**. Evolution says there was *first* death (for hundreds of millions of years) and then man, directly contrary to God’s Word. – In fact, God promises that in the future, he will restore the world to the conditions before sin, and the “lion will lie down with the lamb” (Isaiah 11:6-8) again.

### **3. Were the six days of creation “24 hour days” or “long periods of time”?**

Although, Christians can certainly differ on this issue, the evidence in the Bible strongly supports the conclusion that they were “24-hour days”. God spoke to Moses “clearly, and not in riddles” (Num 12:8). Every time the Hebrew word for “day” is used (yom), and preceded or followed by an ordinal number (1,2, 3 or first, second, third, etc.) it always clearly means a 24 hour day (see Numbers 7:12, 18, 24, 30, 36, 42, 48, 54, 60, 66, 72, 78), except in Hosea 6:2 which is not clear because of very difficult grammatical and interpretative issues. In fact, in Exodus 20:8-11, God grounds the seven-day human week

on the fact that He created the world in six days, and rested on the seventh. Jesus also indicated the earth to be very young, when he placed Abel as having shed his blood (Genesis 4) “from the foundation of the world” (Luke 11:50-51, “*apo katabole kosmou*”). Paul said that human beings had been observing the majesty and power of God “since the creation of the world” (“*apo ktiseos kosmou*”, Romans 1:20), not billions of years later. See also Hebrews 9:26.

**NOTE:** “Old Earth” advocates assert that Psalm 104 is a “creation psalm” and that verse 21 proves there was carnivorous activity in the animal world at creation. But this assertion is clearly contradicted by verse 26 which has the psalmist observing “ships” (which did not exist in the Garden of Eden) and using language (*Leviathan*) peculiar to Ugaritic myths of the second and third millennia B.C. A better view is that Psalm 104 *begins* with the creation, moves to the Global Flood (Ps 104:9) which recounts the “rainbow promise” of Gen 9:15 which the prophet Isaiah places at the time of Noah (Isa 54:9), and then moves quickly to the general time period of the writer, perhaps David (says the Septuagint) which would be around 970-1010 B.C.

#### **4. Isn't there a contradiction between the “order of creation” in Gen 1 and Gen 2?**

Genesis 1:1–2:3 gives us a chronology of the order in which God created. It only refers to mankind starting in Gen 1:26. However, in Gen 2:7 Moses\* begins a more detailed account which focuses on the creation of the first man, his duties, the creation of Eve, etc. On first reading, and without keeping in mind the focus and purpose of chapters 1 and 2, some see an apparent contradiction in that Gen 2:7 says God “formed” Adam from the dust of the ground, and then the writer lists other things like the creation of trees (Gen 2:9) that have already happened according to Gen 1:11. The apparent contradiction\*\* disappears when we understand that the writer of Genesis uses the Hebrew word , יצר (yatsar) “formed” in Gen 2:7, and this word can also be translated in the pluperfect “had formed” (Gen 2:19, ESV, NIV). With this understanding, the “problem” disappears, as Gen 2:19 shows that God had already created (“formed” the trees and animals prior to making Adam (Gen 2:7).

\* It is hardly likely that Moses himself did not recognize this apparent “contradiction” if in fact his intent was to indicate that the order of creation was not as he had just described it in Gen 1.

\*\*Inerrancy note: it is always good to remember that no translation of the Scriptures is guaranteed ‘inerrant’ (without error). ONLY, the original monographs are promised “inerrancy”, so even the best translations can differ on difficult passages.

#### **5. If God made everything as the Bible says, then who made God?**

The greatest of the early scientists like Isaac Newton, Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Robert Boyle, Michael Faraday were Christians, and all believed in an eternal God who created the universe. All Christians are saying, and all the Bible asserts, is that “only things that have a beginning, must have a cause” (John 1:1-3).

The idea of an eternal Creator (or “First Cause”) is one we get from the ancient Hebrew sacred writings, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”. God’s pre-universe existence is clearly stated. Famous atheist scientists and philosophers like Carl Sagan, Richard Dawkins, and Bertrand Russell have never objected to the idea of an eternal Universe, they only object to the idea of an eternal “God”! So if atheists can say the universe needs no prior “first cause”, then why should God logically need to have a cause to explain His existence?

**Note: The ancient Greek Philosophers** - In the 5th century B.C., Plato’s teachings in Athens, included that of a “first cause” of everything (Plato’s famous “forms”), and Aristotle (384-322 B.C), Plato’s student believed the universe had an infinite past (always existed) and postulated the idea of an “unmoved mover” who caused everything else (Book 12 of his Metaphysics).

## **6. Was the flood in Genesis 6 really a global flood?**

Everything in the Bible indicates that it WAS a GLOBAL flood. God intended to destroy ALL living things on the earth including birds (Genesis 6:7, 17). The result was that all the highest mountains on the earth at that time were covered with water (Gen 7:19), and that “all flesh died” a fact repeated several times in Gen 7:21-24. Peter said that in “the last days” men would “deliberately overlook” the fact of the global flood in which everything outside the Ark died (2 Peter 3:3-7). Jesus confirmed the story of Noah’s Ark and the Genesis Flood (Luke 17:27). There is simply no way all the “birds of the heavens” would have been killed (Gen 6:7) if it had only been a local flood (Gen 7:21, 23). They would have simply flown to safety outside the boundaries of the flood.

## **7. How did Noah get all the animals in the Ark? Was it big enough to hold them all?**

God made the animals go to the Ark (Genesis 6:20). No doubt, young animals were taken to save space, but the ARK was huge (around 140 meters long, Genesis 6:15) and was the largest ship ever built up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Also, remember only two of each “kind” were taken into the Ark, and a “kind” (Heb. “min”) was very likely a much more limited class than today’s “species”. For example, all of today’s different “species” of “dogs” would have been descended from the original pair of the dog “kind” taken into the Ark (See Genesis 1:21-25; 6:20; 7:14).

## **8. I know the Bible says that there was no death before Adam sinned (Genesis 1:30-31; Romans 5:12) but didn’t plants and microbes have to die for animals and Adam and Eve to eat?**

Good question. However, the Bible never equates the “death” of a microbe or plant with that of air breathing animals or men. “Life” according to the Bible resides in the “soul,” which is the English translation of the Hebrew word “nephesh.” This might be equated roughly with the concept of consciousness. This quality is ascribed only to man and some animals, but never plants. The Bible is also very clear as to what happens to plants—

"they wither and fade" (Job 8:12; 18:16; Psalm 90:6; Isaiah 40:6-8; "*xeraino-wither*" in Matt 13:6; 21:19, 20; James 1:11; 1 Peter 1:24) but plants do not "die" (*apothnesko*), as the Bible says animals and men do. They have biological life, but not soul-life. Men and animals could eat plant life without death, in Biblical terms, taking place.

### **9. Where did Cain get his wife (Gen 4:17)?**

The Bible says Adam lived for 930 years in a time when there was no contraception and he and his wife Eve had physical constitutions that were initially meant to live forever. They continued to have children throughout their lives (Genesis 5:3-5). By the time Cain was a hundred years old, he would have had numerous sisters to choose from. Marriage to one's sibling was not forbidden by God in the beginning since that was the only way to propagate the race. (Cf. Gen 19:30-38). By the time of Moses it was forbidden (Lev 18:6-18).

### **10. Dinosaurs; didn't they live millions of years before man appeared on the earth?**

Good question! Dinosaurs and man lived on the earth at the same time. According to Genesis (which Jesus believed was literally true, Matthew 5:18; 19:4; Luke 17:27 etc.) all the "beasts of the field" were made on the 6th day, right before God made Adam and Eve (Gen 1:24-26). In fact, Job, who wrote (probably) around 2000 B.C or before, records that there were still present on the earth in his day, huge creatures which resembled the fire-breathing dragons so common in all the "legends" of ancient cultures around the world (Job 41:15-34). They eventually died out as a result of the Curse (Gen 3:17-19; Rom 5:12) and the radical climate changes resulting from the Global Flood of Genesis 6-8.

### **11. Isn't the creation account in Genesis 1-2 just a "demythologizing" of the older Mesopotamian and Ugaritic accounts of creation? Isn't Gen 1-2 just Jewish legend?**

No. Although there are of course similarities between the Biblical account of creation and other ancient near east (ANE) accounts, they are no more than to be expected when telling such an important story in similar cultures and times. The differences are what is so striking. Only the Biblical account is monotheistic and fiercely so; only the Biblical account shows the Creator God to be the undisputed sovereign of the universe (other ANE accounts have the main "god" in a power struggle of some kind with other gods), and only the Biblical account gives honor to the human beings as being created in the image of God (Gen 1:26-27) and as His sovereign agents on earth (Gen 1:28).

In contrast, the ANE accounts show mankind as created (in very strange ways) as slaves to the gods. Whereas the Genesis account depicts mankind as the pinnacle of creation, the Babylonian account describes man as created by one of the "chaos" monsters to provide food and adulation to the pantheon of gods. Finally, the ANE accounts indicate a belief in eternal matter, from which even the "god" emerges, whereas Genesis declares an "ex nihilo" (out of nothing) creation by a pre-existent, self-existent Creator.

## ***Brainerd's One Desire***

While David Brainerd, one of the most celebrated of our missionaries, was laboring among the poor, benighted Indians on the banks of the Delaware, he once said, "I care not where I live, or what hardships I go through, so that I can but gain souls to Christ. While I am asleep, I dream of these things; as soon as I awake, the first thing I think of is this great work. All my desire is the conversion of sinners, and all my hope is in God."<sup>9</sup>

## ***Marriage, Adultery, and Homosexual Acts***

### **1. What does the Bible teach about the relationship between men and women?**

The Old Testament states that both Adam and Eve were given dominion over the earth ("God said to THEM...", Gen 1:28). In the New Testament (written between 48-95 A.D.), the equality of women is confirmed (1 Corinthians 7:14; 11:11-12; 2 Cor 6:18; Galatians 3:28) and Luke records that several women traveled with Jesus and the twelve apostles and they were major financial supporters of Jesus (Luke 8:1-3). Women also were honored with being the FIRST witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus (Matthew 28:1ff; Mark 16:1ff; Luke 24:1ff, John 20:1ff).

**Note:** Sometimes an inquirer will ask "Why do most churches not allow women to be the pastor of the church?" The Apostle Paul taught that the position of "pastor" or "elder" in a church is reserved for specially qualified men (1 Timothy 3:1-2), and women should not teach men in an authoritative teaching position in a church (1 Timothy 2:11-13). Paul based his doctrine on the order of creation (1 Tim 2:13), the fact that the woman was deceived (1 Tim 2:14), and perhaps also the special symbolic nature of the marriage relationship between Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:31-32). There are examples of women teaching men (outside the official meeting of the church) such as Priscilla and her husband teaching Apollos (Acts 18:24-26). Note: it should be emphasized that Paul is not saying that all women are easily deceived. However, the rebellion of Eve has left consequences for all her female progeny. There is much more that can and should be said here, but space does not allow.

---

<sup>9</sup>Tan, P. L. 1996, c1979. *Encyclopedia of 7700 illustrations: (a treasury of illustrations, anecdotes, facts and quotations for pastors, teachers and Christian workers)*. Bible Communications: Garland TX

## 2. What does the Bible say about “marriage”?

The first marriage in the Bible is recorded in Genesis 2:18-25 where God put Adam to sleep and made Eve from one of his ribs, brought her to him, and they became “one flesh” (2:23-25). Note: God made Adam “one” wife, not many, and she was “female” (Matt 19:4-5. Adultery is condemned (Exodus 20:14; Matthew 5:27-28).

**Note: Homosexual acts and fantasies are sin according to the Bible, just like heterosexual adulterous acts and fantasies are sinful (Lev 18:22; 20:13; Romans 1:24-27; 1 Cor 6:9; Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Timothy 1:10; Eph 5:5). Jesus died for those enslaved by homosexual sin also, and they are to be told of the Bible’s message with the same gentleness, respect and firmness as others (1 Peter 3:15).**

Marriage was ordained by God to be a permanent commitment between one man and one woman (Matthew 19:3-6). Marriage is necessary for most people to avoid the sin of fornication or sexual immorality (1 Corinthians 5:9; 6:9). Therefore, each man and woman should have their own spouse (1 Corinthians 7:2). Sexual activity outside marriage is condemned and God will judge those who participate in it (Hebrews 13:4). A man should be satisfied sexually with his wife alone (Prov 5:18-20).

The marriage of one man and one woman is meant to picture the marriage of Christ with His bride, the Church (Ephesians 5:31-32).

The husband must love his wife as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for her (Eph 5:25; 1 Peter 3:7). As Jesus died for the Church on the cross (Acts 20:28), so the husband must be willing to die to his own desires in order to care for his wife. He must love her, just as he loves himself (Eph 5:28), and must be patient, kind, not rude or arrogant and not insisting on his own way, bearing and enduring all things (1 Cor 13:4-7). In turn, the wife must submit herself to her loving husband as the Church must submit to Christ (Eph 5:22-24; Colossians 3:18). The “submission” (*hypotasso*) of wives to their husbands is the same word Paul uses to describe the submission of Christ to God the Father (1 Corinthians 15:28), a submission grounded in equality and love.

The husband must not be harsh with his wife (Colossians 3:18), but love her (Eph 5:25; 1 Peter 3:7), and the wife must always respect her husband (Ephesians 5:33), because they represent to the world, the marriage of Christ to his church (5:32).

God’s desire for His people was that they marry another Christian. The Mosaic Law clearly stated that an Israelite was never to marry a foreigner, as he/she would be constantly tempted to embrace the spouse’s god as well (Ex 34:10–17; Deut. 7:3–4).

Likewise, the apostle Paul commanded the members of the church at Corinth, to only marry a believer “in the Lord” (1 Cor 7:39), and “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers” (2 Cor 6:14).

In eternity, we will not be married to our spouses on this earth (Matthew 22:30), but will be “married” to Christ (2 Cor 11:2; Ephesians 5:26; Revelation 19:7-9).

# *Frequent Objections and Misunderstandings of Catholics*

1. I was “born again” when I was baptized as a baby (John 3:5). (Catholics believe the “water” in John 3:5 represents baptism).

When Jesus used the term “water” (Greek “*hydor*”) in the gospel of John it was used as a symbol of the Holy Spirit (cf. Jn 4:14; 7:37-39). Note that Jesus omits the word “water” in John 3:8 showing it is just another symbol of the work and power of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5) working through the Word of God (John 15:3; Eph 5:26). The Catholic Church’s purported “first Pope” Peter himself said that we are “born again” through the Word of God, not through baptism (1 Pet 1:23). Being “born again” is what happens when the Spirit of God (John 3:8) comes into us in fulfillment of the promise in Ezekiel 36:26-27), and God puts His spirit in us and gives us a “new heart”. Being “born again” makes us “new creations” and “old things pass away” (2 Corinthians 5:17-18)

2. Why do Protestants not follow the Pope, or honor Peter as the first Pope?

Catholics believe that Jesus made Peter the first Pope on the basis of Matt 16:18, where Jesus called Simon Barjonah “Peter” (Greek word *petros*), but then said “Upon this *rock* (*petra*) I will build my church”. However, Peter (*petros*) is the masculine gender, and “rock” (*petra*) is the feminine gender, *suggesting two different concepts*.

## **Seven reasons why Jesus was NOT making Peter a Pope in Matthew 16:18-19**

- **James was pastor of the Jerusalem church, *not* Peter.** In the New Testament, Peter was the leading apostle in the beginning (Acts 1-11), but was soon overshadowed by Paul who became the preeminent apostle (Acts 13:1- 28:30). Peter is not mentioned in Acts after Acts 15:7, and was *not* even the pastor of the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:13; 21:18). James was apparently pastor even earlier, because Peter wanted a report sent to “James and the brethren” (Acts 12:17).
- **Paul rebuked Peter.** When Paul went to Antioch, he found that Peter had fallen into grievous sin and had to rebuke Peter openly in front of the whole church (Gal 2:11-14). It is unlikely that this kind of failure was suitable for someone that is “infallible”. Catholics consider the Pope to be “infallible” (can do no wrong on church matters). See also Matthew 16:21-23 where Peter speaks the thoughts of Satan and is rebuked by Jesus right after the “rock” passage.
- **Scripture says the “Rock” was God.** To say that Matthew 16:18 is saying that Jesus was making Peter the first “Pope” contradicts too many passages in the Bible. In the Scriptures, the “rock” is a description for God (Deut 32:4, 18; 2 Sam 23:3; Ps 18:31; 42:9; 62:2; 78:35; 95:1; Hab 1:12). And Christ had earlier used the word “rock” (*petra*) in reference to *Himself* (Matt 7:24-25) and would use



similar language (*lithos*) again (Matt 21:42). The feminine form of the word (*petra*) only occurs as a name for a person three other times in the New Testament, and all three times it refers to Christ, not Peter (Matt 7:24-25; 1 Pet 2:8).

- **Peter agreed that the “Rock” was Christ.** Furthermore, Peter did NOT claim any special authority but considered himself just one of many “elders” (1 Peter 5:1). *Even Peter* understood Christ to be the Rock, when he used the word *petra* to refer to Jesus as the “rock of offense” (1 Pet 2:6-8).
- **Paul confirmed that the “Rock” was Christ.** The New Testament confirms that the usage of the word “Rock” in the Old Testament was a reference to Jesus Christ (1 Cor 10:4). In another place, *all the apostles and prophets* are said to be the foundation of the church (not just Peter), with Christ the chief cornerstone (Eph 2:20).
- **Apostles could not transfer their authority to successors.** The Bible does not say that Peter was a “Pope”, or that he could transfer his apostolic authority to any successors, so as to create a line of Popes. In fact, apostles could not transfer their apostolic authority to others, because to be an apostle one would had to have seen Jesus (Acts 1:21-22; 1 Cor 9:1-2) and have performed miracles (2 Cor 12:12). Since apostles could not transfer their apostolic authority, neither can any alleged “popes”.
- **The “keys” (the power to “bind and loose”) were not just given to Peter** (Matt 16:19), but to ALL the “disciples” (Matt 18:1, 17, 19), where “you” (18:19) is plural and means the entire church gathered in a disciplinary setting.

### **3. Weren’t the apostle Peter and the Catholic “popes” who followed him “infallible”?**

Peter was not infallible, and in fact, was rebuked by Jesus for allowing Satan to speak through him (Matt 16:21-23). Peter denied Jesus three times (Matt 26:69-75). Even after Pentecost, Peter failed miserably at Antioch and was rebuked by the Apostle Paul in front of all the church there (Gal 2:11-14). The Catholic doctrine of the “infallibility” of the Popes was not announced until the First Vatican Council of 1869-70.

### **4. Why do Christians not worship Mary, or believe that she was taken *bodily* up into heaven (“The Assumption of Mary”).**

Because, Mary was a sinner herself (Luke 1:47) just like everyone else (Rom 3:23), and there is nothing in the Bible to suggest that she wasn’t. She was not given special honor by Jesus (Luke 8:20-21), nor by the early church (Acts 1:14). When important messages were delivered, Mary did not give them, Peter did (Acts 1:15).

With regard to the “Assumption of Mary”, this did not become a Catholic doctrine until 1950 when Pope Pius XII made it so. The first known Catholic theologian to ever teach

the doctrine of the Assumption of Mary was John Damascene (A.D. 675-749). The Scriptures say nothing of such an event happening, and surely the Apostle John who was appointed by Jesus to take care of Mary (Jn 19:25-27) would have mentioned such an astounding miracle.

### **5. Wasn't Mary born sinless just like Jesus?**

No. Only one human being was sinless, and that was Jesus. Mary, herself, admitted she was a sinner like all other merely human beings (Rom 3:23) when she acknowledged that God was her Savior (Luke 1:46-47). Mary told us to “do whatever He (Jesus) says” (John 2:5). Jesus said “worship God only” (Matthew 4:10b).

### **6. Isn't Mary, as the mother of Jesus, the “Queen of Heaven”?**

No. Actually, the title “Queen of Heaven” was a title pagans used to describe an ancient pagan goddess of Babylon (probably *Ishtar*), who was the goddess of love and fertility (Jeremiah 7:18; 44:17-19). Somehow, that pagan title was transferred to Mary by some who did not honor or follow the testimony of Jesus, the first church, or the Bible (Luke 8:19-21; Acts 1:14-15).

### **7. Didn't Mary remain a virgin even after giving birth to Jesus, as Catholic doctrine says?**

No. The gospel writers Matthew, Mark and Luke recorded that Jesus had siblings, both brothers and sisters (Matt 13:55-56; Mark 6:3; Acts 1:14).

### **8. Is it wrong to pray to Mary?**

Yes, in the Bible, prayer is always offered to God alone (Psalm 5:2; Matthew 4:10b). God's people never pray to anyone except God (Genesis 4:26; 12:8; Psalm 116:4; Acts 22:16). When the Holy Spirit came on Pentecost, Mary was just one of the other believers waiting for God to send His Spirit as promised (Acts 1:4, 14).

### **9. I believe the “Word of God” includes the traditions of the Catholic Church.**

The Word of God has always been limited to that which came directly from the mouth of God (Matt 4:4), by God speaking to His prophets directly, as Peter said (2 Pet 1:21). The revelation ended with the death of the apostles (John 14:26; Acts 1:21-23; Jude 1:3), and the Book of Revelation was ended 1900 years ago with the warning not to add anything to it (Rev 22:18-19). In fact, Jesus warned us not to mix the traditions of men with His Word (Matthew 15:8-9; Mark 7:3-13). When “tradition” contradicts the Scriptures, Jesus said it “makes the Word of God of no effect” (Mark 7:13), and the one following the tradition worships Jesus “in vain” (Mark 7:7).

## **10. Why does the “Protestant Bible” contain less books than our Catholic Bible?**

The Catholic Bible contains seven additional books in its Old Testament that were declared to be part of the Bible by the Council of Trent in 1546 after the Protestant Reformers (Luther etc.) pointed out that several Catholic doctrines could not be found in the Bible. The seven additional books were added in an attempt to bolster the Catholic Church’s claim to orthodoxy for its doctrines of purgatory, indulgences, penance etc. None of these books were included in the accepted Jewish canon of the first century, and were never quoted or alluded to by Jesus or the apostles.

## **11. Why do Protestants not call their leaders “Father” as we do our priests?**

Because when referring to our religious teachers, we have been forbidden to call any mere man our “father” (Matt 23:9). Neither priests, bishops, nor popes are our mediators with God; we have only one Mediator, the Man Christ Jesus (1 Tim 2:5).

## **12. Why do Christians allow their “priests” to marry?**

Because the Bible says that pastors should be the “husband of one wife” (1 Tim 3:2). Peter himself was married (Matt 8:14; Luke 4:38; Mark 1:30; 1 Cor 9:5), as were other apostles and the brothers of Jesus (1 Cor 9:5). Also, the Holy Spirit warned that the doctrine that anyone (including “priests”) should be “forbidden to marry” is a “doctrine of demons” (1 Tim 4:1-3).

## **13. Is it wrong to call the Pope, our “Holy Father”?**

Yes. Jesus said the “Holy Father” was God in heaven (John 17:11).

## **14. Why do Christians not abstain from meat on Friday? (Still common in many Catholic communities around the world).**

Christians to not abstain from meat because the Holy Spirit told the Apostle Paul that commanding people to “abstain from foods” was a “doctrine of demons” (1 Tim 4:1-3). “Everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer (1 Tim 4:4-5).

## **15. Why do Protestants not go to confession to have their sins forgiven?**

The Bible teaches that only through Jesus Christ (God) can men have forgiveness of sins (Mark 2:7; Eph 1:7). There can be no other intermediary between God and man except Christ (1 Tim 2:5). Peter himself testified that forgiveness of sins is free to all who “through His name...believe in Him” (Acts 10:43). Peter did not require that sins be confessed to him, or any other person; he said “through His name” not, through His “intermediaries” (priests). There is no record in the Bible of anyone confessing their sins to another (including a “priest”) to obtain forgiveness from God.

## **16. Did not Jesus “delegate” the power to forgive sins to the apostles (John 20:23).**

The apostles did not think so, and there is no record in the New Testament of any apostle “forgiving sins” on behalf of God. Nothing in the book of Acts, the letters of Paul, or the letters of Peter suggest such a thing. John 20:21 is best understood as the delegation of authority to act as God’s agents in proclaiming the terms of the pardon for sins, similar to what God said to Jeremiah (Jer 1:10). Note: Jeremiah was not literally “set over kingdoms” and did not “root out, destroy, or pull down” any kingdom. The refusal of Israel and other kingdoms to listen to God’s Word resulted in the pulling down of Israel, and the other kingdoms.

Those who heard these words from the mouth of Jesus (Jn 20:21) including Peter clearly believed that the power to forgive sins remained in Christ (Acts 10:43; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18) and all a sinner has to do is confess our sins to Him and He will forgive him or her (1 John 1:9; 3:20). Paul warned that it is important not to “exceed what is written” about religious teachers (1 Cor 4:6). The words of Christ in John 20:21 are a description of *the power of proclamation* which, for example, was exercised by both John the Baptist and Peter (Mark 1:4; Lk 3:3; Acts 10:43).

In other words, those who obeyed the gospel that the apostles would proclaim could honestly be told (on the authority of the Word of God) that their sins were forgiven, as John the Baptist, and Peter did. Those who rejected the gospel could be told that they had rejected eternal life and their sins were not forgiven (Acts 13:46; cf. John 3:36). Note that when Jesus commissioned Paul, He clearly stated that “forgiveness of sins” would follow “faith in Me” (Acts 26:18), NOT after some “confession” of sins to a priest.

Finally, if John 20:21 were a delegation of power to individuals to actually forgive sins, it was not delegated just to the apostles, for many others were in the upper room when Jesus spoke (Jn 20:18; Lk 24:28-33, 48-49; cf. Acts 1:15).

## **17. Why do Christians not do “penance” like Catholics?**

Christians do not do penance because the Bible clearly teaches that no act of men can add to the finished work of Christ for the forgiveness of sins (John 19:30; Heb 10:10-14). If a Christian confesses his sins, they *are* forgiven, *period* (1 John 1:9). We cannot “work” for forgiveness (Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:5). In fact, if we “work” at all towards our salvation, we cannot receive it; only those who “do not work” have their faith “accounted for righteousness” (Rom 4:4-5).

## **18. If we are not good enough to enter heaven, but not really “bad”, don’t we go to purgatory, when we die?**

The Bible nowhere speaks of a “purgatory” or a place we go to be “purified” of our sins when we die. Jesus said we go to heaven or to hell (Matthew 25:41-46; Luke 16:25-26). We are either forgiven totally of our sins in this life through faith in Jesus alone (John 3:16; 8:23-24; Colossians 1:22) who promises us eternal life (John 10:28-29), or we die “in our sins” (John 8:24) and spend eternity in hell (Matthew 25:46; Revelation 20:11-14).



## ***Mormonism***

Mormonism is a 19th century religion arising in the United States when Joseph Smith (1805–44), claiming special revelation from the “angel Moroni”, organized a church in Fayette, New York, which later became the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Severe opposition forced them to move several times before settling in Kirtland, Ohio. In 1843, Smith claimed he received a revelation allowing polygamy (cf. Matt 5:27-28; 1 Tim 3:2), and after threatening his first wife, he and his friends burned down a newspaper opposing him. He was arrested and finally killed in a gun battle, in which Smith probably killed two people trying to assassinate him (cf. Matt 26:52-53; John 18:36). He was succeeded by Brigham Young.

Mormonism teaches that God the Father has a body (cf. John 4:24; 1 Tim 1:17; Isa 31:3) and humans are destined to become gods, thus the popular Mormon saying, “As man is, God once was: as God is, man may become.” Mormonism says that what Christians call the “Fall” (Gen 3) was necessary for Adam to have children and fulfill his destiny to become a god. The Bible calls Adam’s sin a “transgression” (Hosea 6:7) and “sin” (Romans 5:12). Mormons reject the Biblical teaching of justification by faith (Rom 1:17; 3:22; 4:5; 5:1) and instead teach salvation by works through the Mormon church (cf. Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:5).

Most of the major Mormon doctrines do not come from the Bible but from revelation allegedly received by Smith or subsequent leaders starting in the 19th century (the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and The Pearl of Great Price). The Bible says revelation ended with that given to the Apostle John at the end of the first century (Rev 22:18-19; Jude 3), the last apostle to write the words of Jesus (Heb 1:1; John 14:26). Mormons do NOT consider the Bible the final authority in matters of faith. A former leader of the Mormons (Brigham Young) taught that Adam *was* God the Father, and the father of Jesus Christ (!), but this doctrine was subsequently abandoned.

Mormonism is not Trinitarian like Christianity. It is tri-theistic. Mormon theology teaches that Jesus is an incarnation of Elohim, conceived as the literal son of God. But we too can become gods like Jesus, says Mormonism (cf. John 1:1, 14; 8:23). The Mormons “believe” in Jesus but in a different way than Christians. They believe Christ’s atonement was satisfaction for Adam’s sin only, not for ours individually (cf. Rom 3:2-26; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18). Mormons believe Jesus was a spirit brother of Lucifer, even though Jesus said Lucifer was “a murderer and a liar from the beginning” (John 8:44), and the Bible says Jesus made everything (John 1:3), including the angels, which means he isn’t a “brother” of Lucifer. Mormons also believe Jesus was created by God the Father through a sexual union of some kind with a “spirit wife” and was not “in the beginning with God” as the Bible teaches (John 1:1).



## ***Jehovah’s Witnesses***

Jehovah’s Witnesses (JW) is another American spawned religion that started with Charles Russell (1852-1916) in the year 1879 when he began to publish “The Watchtower” magazine. JW’s do not believe in hell, or eternal punishment (see questions on hell in this book). They also reject the doctrine of the Trinity (cf. Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19; John 10:30; Acts 5:3-4; Rom 9:5; 15:30; cf. Gen 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; Isaiah 48:16). They do not believe Jesus is God (John 1:1, 14), they do not believe Jesus rose from the dead physically, contrary to the Bible (cf. Luke 24:36-43), and they deny that the Holy Spirit is God (cf. Acts 5:3-4).

JW’s also believe Jesus was the archangel Michael (Dan 12:1-2) who became a man. They also believe that good works are necessary for salvation which is definitely not true (Luke 23:39-43; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5).

They also assert that only their church members are saved, and they are the only source of Truth on the earth. According to JW’s only the 144,000 “witnesses” of Rev 7:4-8 will go to heaven, but the 144,000 are clearly Jews from the twelve tribes of ISRAEL, and not JW’s. In fact, the very next verse, says there will be so many people in heaven that they cannot be numbered (Rev 7:9).



## ***Engaging People from a Muslim Background***

The following is a brief overview of some of the crucial issues for discussing matters of faith with Muslims. The following quotation is from a western missionary who was born in a Muslim country, the child of missionary parents, and who is fluent in Farsi and continues to engage Muslims on a daily basis, in conversations about Jesus and the Bible.

*Muslims are taught not to question Allah or Islamic authority. Thus they do not learn to debate or think on the basis of evidence or logic the way we do.*

*Example: Why do I have to pray in Arabic? Does not God understand Persian? Answer: Don't question God.*

*If you get into an argument with a Muslim it will not get you far, because there will not be a genuine conversation about evidence and facts. The contradictions don't matter. To them, religious loyalty to Allah is far more important. Arguments are often counterproductive.*

*What speaks to Muslims is the love of Jesus and the joy and peace they see in the lives of Christians. Often they are moved by the experience of the presence of God in a Christian worship service. If you offer to pray for a Muslim they almost always will be thankful and accept your prayer for them. Eventually they will begin to ask questions that reveal their doubts. Just love them.*

If you would like to learn more about evangelism to Muslims, please note that ABWE (The Association of Baptists for World Evangelism) has an excellent seminar on reaching Muslims in North America. You can email them at this address for information on the next seminar:

[heartmindsoul@abwe.org](mailto:heartmindsoul@abwe.org)

## ***What are some differences between the Bible and the Quran?***

The Bible was written under the inspiration of God by more than 40 different men from three different continents, over a period of 1500 years (1400 B.C. – A.D. 90). The Quran records the words of one man, Mohammed, and was completed after Mohammed died in 632 A.D. The Quran claims to speak definitively on Christ, yet it has *no eyewitness accounts*, and was written over 500 years *after Christ and His apostles lived*. The Bible contains *first-hand* (eyewitness) accounts of the apostles (Matthew, John, Paul, Peter), and the half-brothers of Jesus (James and Jude), as well as other accounts of Christ recorded by writers in the early church (Lk 1:1-3, cf. Mark, Acts). In modern courts, no testimony about events which occurred over 500 years before, purporting to be “evidence” would be given any credence, especially when they contradict those who lived at the time.

### **Doesn't the Quran say that the Bible has been corrupted, and is not reliable?**

No. The Quran NOWHERE, says either the Old or the New Testament is corrupted. Surah 5:46 says “And in their footsteps We sent Jesus the son of Mary, confirming the Torah that had come before him: We sent him the Gospel: therein was guidance and light. And Confirmation of the Torah that had come before him: a guidance and an admonition to those who fear Allah”. (Note: the “Torah” is the first five books of the Old Testament, and sometimes can mean the entire Old Testament).

The Quran is using a present tense imperative to emphasize that Christians should (at the time the Quran was written, circa 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D.) follow both the Torah (Old Testament) and the “gospel” as “guidance”, light” and “admonition” (Sura 5:46-47; cf. “guidance and light”, 5:44). The Quran is saying that the Bible had not been corrupted, but was to be trusted and relied on. In fact, v. 47 makes it very clear that Jews and Christians were to “judge” by what “Allah” had revealed. What had Allah revealed”? The confirmation of the Torah and the Gospel!

And furthermore, the phrase “come before him” in Sura 5:46, is *ma beyna yadihi*, which literally means “that which is between his hands” which is an Arab idiom referring to two things that exist alongside of each other. So the Quran is confirming that Jesus held in his hands the Torah and the Gospel which existed alongside of each other as guidance and light from Allah.

This truth is reinforced in Sura 5:43 which says that the Torah is the “command of Allah”. In Sura 5:68, it says “O People of the Book! You have no ground to stand upon unless you stand fast by the Torah, the Gospel, and all the revelation that has come to you from Your Lord”. The Quran also supports the inspiration and purity of the entire Old Testament (not just the Torah) when it says, “We have sent thee inspiration, as We sent it to Noah and the Messengers after him: we sent inspiration to Abraham, Isma’il, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes, to Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon, and to David We gave the Psalms” (Surah 4:163). **Notice** in Surah 4:163 the truth of the “inspiration” of the



Bible is specifically applied to major biblical figures, including “David” and “the Psalms”, “Job” (the “writings”), Solomon (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes?) and Jonah (prophets). In the light of the above discussion, we can now see that the major passage which Muslims rely upon to support their assertion that the Bible has been corrupted (Sura 2:79) is actually only saying that at the time the Quran was written there were some who did not know the true text of the Bible but wrote their own ideas and tried to attribute inspiration to these writings. This would most likely refer to the apocryphal gospels and or the Jewish “Targums” of the intervening centuries between Jesus and Mohammed. Otherwise, Sura 2:79 would clearly contradict Sura 5:46-47 quoted above. The most trusted of early Islamic commentators interpreted 2:79 as only saying that some would attempt to misapply or misinterpret the meaning of the Torah and Gospels but would never be able to actually change its words, because as Sura 6:115 and 18:27 say, “None can change His words”. In fact, the Quran says “Allah” gave power to Jesus’ disciples to “prevail” over those who would corrupt the New Testament (Sura 61:14; cf. 3:55).

## Prophecy

The Bible contains hundreds of specific prophecies about the future, and many prophecies about Jesus, made hundreds of years before He was born, were exactly fulfilled (Gen 12:3; Numbers 24:17; Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; 53:3-12; Zechariah 9:9 etc. ). Only God can predict the future accurately. *The Quran does not contain prophecies.*

## Miracles

Jesus did many miracles including healing the blind (John 9:1-7), the paralyzed (Mark 2:3-12), walking on water (Matt 14:25-27), and even raising the dead (Matt 9:18; John 11:38-44). *Mohammed did not claim to do miracles.*

## Some Major Theological Differences between the Bible and the Quran.

The Quran and Muslims teach that “Allah” (Arabic for “God”) is not a Trinity (Quran or “Sura” 5:73) whereas the Bible teaches that God IS a Trinity (Matt 3:16-17; 28:19; Rom 15:30, etc.). The Quran teaches that God has no Son (Quran 2:116; 9:30; 18:4-5), whereas the Bible teaches that God does have a Son (Isa 9:6-7) and that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God (John 1:18; 3:16; 5:19-27; 10:30, 34-36). Islam teaches that Jesus was NOT God, but just a Messenger (Quran 5:17, 75) while the Bible teaches that Jesus IS God (John 1:1,14; 8:58; 10:30; 20:28; Rom 9:5; Titus 2:13; Heb 1:8; Rev 22:13). The Quran teaches that Jesus was not crucified (Quran 4:156-157) whereas the New Testament writers say He was crucified (Matt 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:33; John 19:18; Phil 2:8; 1 Peter 2:24). Both Roman historians and the Jews confirm that Jesus was crucified and died at Calvary (see “*Suetonius*” and “*Josephus*” at pages 26 and 27 of this book). See also Question #1 “*Was Jesus Really God?*” in “*Questions about Jesus*” (page 21).

The Quran also teaches that the Holy Spirit, whom the Bible says is God (Acts 5:3-4) is actually the angel Gabriel (Sura 2:97; cf. 16:102). The Bible teaches salvation by faith (Eph 2:8-9); the Quran teaches salvation by works (Sura 3:135; 7:8-9; 21:47; 49:14; 66:8-9). The Bible teaches that Abraham offered Isaac up for sacrifice (Genesis 22). The Quran doesn't mention the name of the child but Muslims teach it was Ishmael (Sura 37:99-109).

### **Doesn't the Quran say that the Bible has been corrupted, and is not reliable?**

No. The Quran NOWHERE, says either the Old or the New Testament is corrupted. Surah 5:46 says "And in their footsteps we sent Jesus the son of Mary, confirming the Torah that had come before him: We sent him the Gospel: therein was guidance and light. And Confirmation of the Torah that had come before him: a guidance and an admonition to those who fear Allah". (Note: the "Torah" is the first five books of the Old Testament, and sometimes can mean the entire Old Testament).

The Quran is using a present tense imperative to emphasize that Christians should (at the time the Quran was written, circa 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D.) follow both the Torah (Old Testament) and the "gospel" as "guidance", light" and "admonition" (Sura 5:46-47; cf. "guidance and light", 5:44). The Quran is saying that the Bible had not been corrupted, but was to be trusted and relied on. In fact, v. 47 makes it very clear that Jews and Christians were to "judge" by what "Allah" had revealed. What had Allah revealed"? The confirmation of the Torah and the Gospel! This truth is reinforced in Sura 5:43 which says that the Torah is the "command of Allah". In Sura 5:68, it says "O People of the Book! You have no ground to stand upon unless you stand fast by the Torah, the Gospel, and all the revelation that has come to you from Your Lord". The Quran also supports the inspiration and purity of the entire Old Testament (not just the Torah) when it says, "We have sent thee inspiration, as We sent it to Noah and the Messengers after him: we sent inspiration to Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes, to Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon, and to David We gave the Psalms" (Surah 4:163). **Notice** in Surah 4:163 the truth of the "inspiration" of the Bible is specifically applied to major biblical figures, including "David" and "the Psalms".

### **How to Treat Unbelievers**

Jesus taught that Christians should love even their enemies (Matt 5:44-45; Rom 12:14, 20; 1 Peter 2:23). The Quran teaches that those who won't convert to Islam should be enslaved or killed (Quran or "Sura" 2:191-193; 8:12, 39; 9:5, 29, 123 and many more). Jesus taught that Christians must never use violence to spread the Faith (Matt 26:50-52). Note: regrettably, in the past, many claiming to be Christians did use violence to kill Jews and Muslims.

## Origin of Man

The Quran says that man was created from a “blood clot” (Sura 23:14), but in another place says he was created “out of nothing” (Sura 19:67), and in another place, that he was created out of “clay” and “mud” (Sura 15:26). All three cannot be right. The Quran also records Mohammed as saying that the sun sets in “a spring of murky water” (Sura 18:86). The Bible says the first man, Adam, was created from the dust of the ground (Gen 2:7; 3:19).

## Contradictions in the Quran

The Quran seems to say that *Abraham* was the first to believe in Allah (Sura 2:132), and then suggests that *Jacob* was (2:132). In another place, the Quran says *Moses* was the first to believe (7:143), but in yet another place, the Quran says *Muhammad* was the first to believe (39:12). They could not all be the first to believe.

## The Love of God

If God is “love” as the Bible says (John 3:16; 1 John 4:8, 16 etc.) and is also an Eternal Being, then in order for God to have been “love” for “eternity” there must have been Someone else to love from eternity. The Bible solves this dilemma but stating that God is “triune”, three persons but ONE GOD. Thus, the Father loved the Son, loved the Holy Spirit, and the Son loved the Father, and the Holy Spirit loved the Son, etc., *from eternity*. The Quran cannot establish how an eternal God can be “love” from eternity.

## The Trinity

### Does the Quran correctly understand the Bible’s assertions about the Trinity?

Muslims assert that the Bible says and Christians believe that “Allah” (God) is “three” different gods whereas the Quran is emphatic that God is “One” (**Sura 5:73**). **Sura 5:73** says: “They do blaspheme who say: Allah is one of **three in a Trinity**: for there is no god except One Allah. If they desist not from their word (of blasphemy), verily a grievous penalty will befall the blasphemers among them”. Abdullah Yusuf Ali,\* “The Meaning of the Holy Quran,” at <http://www.quran4u.com/aya/Eng/005Ma'ida.htm>. To read about Abdullah Yusuf Ali, see Wikipedia article at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdullah\\_Yusuf\\_Ali](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdullah_Yusuf_Ali)

Also the Quran says in **Sura 4:171**. “O People of the Book (the Bible)! Commit no excesses in your religion: Nor say of Allah aught but the truth. Christ Jesus the son of Mary was (no more than) an apostle of Allah, and His Word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a spirit proceeding from Him: so believe in Allah and His apostles. **Say not three (“Trinity”)**: desist: it will be better for you: for Allah is one Allah: Glory be to Him: (**far exalted is He**) **above having a son**. To Him belong all things in the heavens

and on earth. And enough is Allah as a Disposer of affairs. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, “The Meaning of the Holy Quran,” 2004. <http://www.quran4u.com/aya/Eng/004Nisa.htm>

This Sura shows that the Quran teaches that the ‘three’ (Trinity) consists of God, Jesus and Mary, and that Christians are not really monotheistic, which shows that “Allah” (the undisputed author of the Quran) seriously misunderstood the Christian doctrine of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Matt 28:19), which was very clearly “officially” stated at the Nicene Council of 325 A.D, at least three hundred years before the Quran was written.

### **How could “Allah” (if really “God”) misunderstand something so clear?**

Also, in **Sura 5:116**, we read “And God will say, “**O Jesus son of Mary**, did you say to the people, ‘**Take me and my mother as gods** rather than God?’“ He will say, “Glory be to You! It is not for me to say what I have no right to. Had I said it, You would have known it. You know what is in my soul, and I do not know what is in your soul. You are the Knower of the hidden”. <http://www.clearquran.com/quran-chapter-005.html> So **Sura 5:116** also shows that the writer of the Quran misunderstood Christian doctrine, for nowhere in the Bible does Jesus (or anyone) suggest that Mary is a “god” (cf. Luke 8:19-21; John 2:5; Acts 1:14). A careful examination of the writings of the Quran’s earliest interpreters (Baidhawi, Jalaluddin, and Yahya) clearly show that they believed the Quran was teaching that Christianity had three separate and distinct gods, a form of polytheism. Further support for this point comes from **Sura 6: 101** which says “To Him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth: How can He *have a son* when He hath no consort? He created all things, and He hath full knowledge of all things”. <http://www.quran4u.com/aya/Eng/006An'am.htm>

Once again, by connecting the idea of “son” with a “consort” of God, the Quran *wrongly* implies that the Christian view of the Trinity is that Jesus was the “son” of a physical relationship between God and Mary, something the New Testament clearly refutes (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1,14).



## ***Hinduism and Buddhism***

There are hundreds of millions of Buddhists and Hindus in the world, and the beliefs in these religions can vary widely. Several very common beliefs are reincarnation (transmigration of the soul), karma (law of cause and effect between past acts in a

previous life and one's status in this life), the eternality of the universe, and the authority of the Buddha (for Buddhists) and their sacred writings, or the Vedic Scriptures for Hindus. The Hindu concept of "God" can differ greatly, so you must carefully inquire of your friend exactly what he or she might believe about "God". Buddha apparently did not believe in God although many modern Buddhists do. Hinduism has millions of "gods". Buddhism has "Four Noble Truths" and an "Eightfold Path" to Nirvana so it is a "works based" religion.

For a good summary of what most Hindus believe go to:

<http://www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/Hinduism/2000/06/A-Summary-Of-What-Most-Hindus-Believe.aspx#>

For excellent tips on evangelism to Hindus, go to:

<http://www.equip.org/articles/witnessing-to-hindus/#christian-books-2>

For a good basic understanding of Buddhism go to:

<http://www.letusreason.org/Buddh1.htm>

As always, try to develop a friendship, ***be patient***, and make your goal to get them to study the Bible with you. God's word is "spirit and life" (John 6:63). It is like a sword that will penetrate their hearts and consciences (Heb 4:12), and it is like a hammer that will "break the rock in pieces" (Jer 23:29). ***All being drawn by God will respond*** (John 6:37,45).

## ***Ancestors, the Dead, and Idol Worship***

### ***A Few Facts about the Dead According to the Bible***

*Note: Often Asian, African or other religious cultures will have some form of belief which requires the worship of ancestors in one form or another. In this case, it is important to be able to show the unbeliever the Biblical truth concerning those who are "dead", because they may believe that their ancestors can return and curse them and their families if they do not worship them on their "death anniversaries". Also some cultures have given ancestor worship such high respect, that, at the very least, severe societal and/or familial ostracism occur for the person who converts to Christianity and must abandon this practice. The following Scripture passages will help the new believer or the interested unbeliever be strengthened for the struggle ahead.*

## **1. Will I have to stop worshipping my ancestors if I become a Christian?**

Yes. The Bible makes it very clear that we must worship God “and Him only” (Matt 4:10b; cf. Ex 20:3-4; Deut 6:13-14; Josh 24:14; 1 Sam 7:3). This does not prevent you from showing the deepest respect in appropriate ways that do not involve praying to or for the dead or worshipping them.

## **2. What does the Bible say about consulting mediums or fortune tellers?**

God forbids His people to consult fortune tellers, mediums or engaging in any form of witch-craft or sorcery (Lev 19:31; 20:6, 27; Isa 8:19). One of the reasons God killed King Saul was because he had consulted a witch (1 Chron. 10:13-14) instead of God (cf. 1 Sam 28:6-25).

## **3. But can't my ancestors return on the death anniversary and see that I am not worshipping them, and then curse me?**

No. Once a person dies, his or her fate is fixed forever, and they cannot return to the earth (Job 7:10; Luke 16:19-26) and they have *no* part in what is happening under the sun (Eccles. 9:6).

## **4. How about those who aren't Christians but worship idols sincerely believing that they are doing what is right?**

Behind every idol is a demon (1 Cor 10:20), and the prophet Isaiah showed the futility of idol worship when he described how one is made (Is 40:19-20; 44:9-17). Paul described idolatry as the *natural result of the rejection of the true God* (Rom 1:20-23). All the “gods of the peoples are idols” (Ps 96:5; cf. 97:7) and even the most “innocent” of idol worship practices leads to greater depravity and abuse (Ps 106:34-39). “They have mouths but they do not speak; Eyes they have, but they do not see; they have ears but they do not hear; Noses they have, but they do not smell; they have hands, but they do not handle....” (Ps 115:4-8; 135:15-18). “There is a way which seems right to a man, but the end thereof is death” (Prov 14:12).

**5.** God forbids us to worship people (living or dead, Exodus 20:3-5; Rom 1:23), and no one must obey their parents if their parents want them to worship idols instead of following the commandments of God (Ezek 20:18; Acts 5:29). Jesus said we must worship ONLY God (Matt 4:10).

**6.** A person who has died has been judged already (Heb 9:27). His or her destiny has been fixed by decisions made in life (Lk 16:25) and no one can change the circumstances of the dead (Lk 16:26) and no one can redeem them or pay ransom for their souls (Ps 49:7). – **Significance:** there is no need or profit in praying for the dead. The souls of the dead “return to God” for judgment and either go to heaven or hell (Lk 16:22-23). Jesus told the thief on the cross: “Today you will be with Me in Paradise” (Lk 23:43). And Paul said “we are confident that absent the body, we are present with the Lord” (2 Cor 5:8). –

**Significance:** The deceased are either in heaven or hell; they are not watching their descendants on earth.

7. Those who have died cannot return to their homes (Job 7:10), and “they have no part or share in the things that are done under the sun” (Ecc 9:5-6; 12:7). These are very powerful passages to show specifically that ancestors cannot return to their former homes and watch their descendants worship them on their death anniversary.

8. The Bible warns us to never offer food for or to the dead (Deut 26:14; Ps 106:28). Furthermore, we should not cut our bodies (cf. 1 Kings 18:28) or mark (tattoo) our bodies for the dead (Lev 19:28; Deut 14:1).

9. Attempting to ask questions of the dead (mediums, spiritists) is also condemned by God (Isa 8:19; Deut 18:11; Lev 19:31; 20:6). – Significance: Even in the West today, mediums abound.

## ***Never Too Old To Bear Fruit for God!***

Dr. Charles McCoy never married. He devoted his years instead to pastoring a church and pursuing a plethora of educational goals. At age seventy-two, when his denomination required that he retire from ministry, he reluctantly left his Baptist pulpit in Oyster Bay, New York. He wasn't sure what to do with himself. Over the years, he had accumulated seven different college degrees, but now they all seemed futile: *I just lie on my bed thinking that my life's over, and I haven't really done anything yet. I've been pastor of this church for so many years, and nobody really wants me much—and what have I done for Christ? I've spent an awful lot of time working for degrees, but I haven't won very many people to the Lord.*

But just a week after his retirement, he met a missionary who abruptly invited him to come to India to preach. Dr. McCoy deferred, citing his age. He had never been overseas, had never even traveled across America, had never flown in a plane. He couldn't imagine traveling to India. Furthermore, he hadn't the money. The thought, however, nagged at him.

And so white-haired old Dr. Charles McCoy announced he was going to India. He sold his car and few possessions and bought a one-way plane ticket. “By yourself?” asked his horrified friends. “To India? What if you fall ill? What if you should die in India?” “It's just as close to heaven from there as it is from here,” he replied.

He arrived in Bombay with his billfold, his Bible, his passport—all of which were promptly taken by pickpockets. He was left with only the clothes on his back and the address of some missionaries that he had clipped from a magazine. The man who had originally invited him had remained in America, and when he showed up on the missionaries' doorstep, they weren't sure what to do with him.

After a day or so, McCoy declared he was going to visit the mayor of Bombay. *Don't waste your time*, advised his new friends. After several years of trying, they had never been able to see the mayor. McCoy prayed about it and went anyway. He presented his calling card to the receptionist, and she looked at it carefully, then disappeared through a door. Returning, she told him to come back at 3 o'clock.

McCoy returned that afternoon to find a reception in his honor attended by the most important civic leaders in Bombay. It seems the city fathers had been greatly impressed by McCoy's tall frame (he was 6'4"), his distinguished white hair, and especially by the long string of degrees after his name on his calling card. *He is a very important man*, they thought. *Perhaps even a representative of the President of the United States.*

Dr. McCoy spoke for a half-hour, giving his testimony about Jesus Christ. At the end, he was politely applauded by the assembled crowd, and afterward he was approached by a man in an impressive military uniform who invited him to speak to the students of his school. As it turned out, his school was India's equivalent to West Point. After his first address, McCoy was invited back repeatedly.

Invitations soon poured in from all over India, and he began an itinerant ministry of preaching the Gospel. In Calcutta he started a Chinese church. He was asked to do the same in Hong Kong. He was invited to Egypt and the Middle East, traveling everywhere on a shoestring but with an energy that he had seldom before felt. His evangelistic ministry stretched to sixteen years, and at age 88, he again found himself in India, in Calcutta.

His host dropped him off at the Grand Hotel, and as he stepped from the car he said, "You know I'm speaking tonight at the YMCA. I have time for a cup of tea and a bit of rest. I don't want to be late for the meeting." He ducked into the hotel, took the elevator to his floor, and suddenly the Lord called him home. It was just as close to heaven from India, he had said, as from America. Dr. Charles McCoy had wonderfully embodied the final words of Psalm 92:13-14.



*Those who are planted in the house of the Lord  
Shall flourish in the courts of our God.  
They shall still bear fruit in old age;  
They shall be fresh and flourishing,  
To declare that the Lord is upright;  
He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.\*<sup>10</sup>*



*Do not cast me off in the time of old age;  
forsake me not when my strength is spent.  
So even to old age and gray hairs,  
O God, do not forsake me,  
until I proclaim your might to another generation,  
your power to all those to come. Psalm 71:9,18 (ESV)*

---

\* *Parables, Etc.*, October 1983, 1–3. From: Franklin Graham, *This One Thing I Do*.

<sup>10</sup>Morgan, R. J. 2000. *Nelson's complete book of stories, illustrations, and quotes* (electronic ed.)  
. Thomas Nelson Publishers: Nashville

# *Evangelism Practicum*

*Believers can start using this practice technique at any time, but it will be most effective once the common Questions and Objections cited herein have been studied.*

## ***Introductory Questions – How to have a conversation with anyone!***

Everyone will be interested in talking to you if YOU show interest in them. A conversation can easily be started and maintained by asking questions like “where do you work”, “what do you do”, “how long have you been there”, “are you married”, “where did you meet your spouse”, “how many children do you have”, “how long have you lived here”, “where did you grow up”, “what are your hobbies”, “where did you go to school”? “what did you study”? etc. These questions will tell you a lot about the basic facts surrounding your new acquaintance. Once a foundation for a personal relationship is laid, at the right time, the *transitional questions* on the next page can be asked.

### **Questions to facilitate an introduction can vary according to the situation:**

At a bus stop: “Is this bus usually on time”? Or, “Is this bus usually so crowded”?

At a restaurant: “What do you usually order? I’m not familiar with the menu”.

At the grocery check-out: “Should I buy that (item) next time? It looks interesting”!

*“Iron sharpens iron...” (Prov 27:17; cf. Mal 3:16)*

“Practice makes perfect” is a common saying we are all familiar with. In order to really have confidence about witnessing, one needs practice. Therefore, we want to urge to continually challenge each other to answer the common objections or questions of the unbeliever. This can easily be accomplished by imagining you are sitting at a coffee shop, and have met someone new. After preliminary greetings, getting acquainted and at the appropriate time, consider using one of the transitional questions below to start a discussion that could reveal more about the “world view” and spiritual condition of your new friend. This is important because most people will not bring up the subject of God, death, sin, etc. ***You must do it.***

### **Knowing the Hearer**

It is important that we explore “who” the person is that we are about to witness to before we present the gospel. For instance, if we know what his or her needs or concerns are before we witness, that knowledge can make our presentation of the claims of Scripture more effective (Isaiah 28:23-29). Knowing the “worldview” of the hearer enables us to focus our conversation on the things which are more likely to interest the hearer (Colossians 4:6).

## ***Transitional Questions: Turning trivial conversations into evangelism opportunities.***

The following questions will help us to get our listeners to share with us what their worldview is, or what is really most important to them. These questions will also often prompt our friends to ask us “What do *YOU* think?” That is what we want to happen!

“Why do you think the world is so messed up”?

“What has been your greatest joy in life? What has been your greatest disappointment?”

“Has your life lived up to all that you had hoped for it up to this point?”

“If you were God and you could change three things about the world (life), what would they be?”

“So what do you think the purpose of life is?” OR,

“What do you think the meaning of life is?”

“So what do you think happens to a person when he or she dies?”

“Do you believe there is life after death?”

“How do you plan to teach your children about right and wrong?”

“Why do you think our society is so violent?”

“Do you think the earth and the universe were formed by accident, or by God?”

Can *you* think of other questions that can turn the conversation into a serious one?

### ***The Importance of Asking “Why?” or “Why do you say that?”***

Many times when trying to share about God, we encounter people who say things that we know are totally without any basis, and/or are argumentative. Often, we are momentarily puzzled as to how to reply. One of the best responses to this kind of situation is to simply ask “Why do you say that?” Here are a couple examples:

1. “All religions are the same”. Reply: “***That’s interesting. Why do you say that?***”
2. “The Bible was just written by men”. “***Really, why do you say that?***”
3. “I think if you are a good person you will go to heaven when you die”. “***Interesting. How did you reach that conclusion? Is that just your opinion, or someone else’s?*** If they say it is just their opinion, then you can gently lead them into the fact that they are making their “opinion” of higher value than that of Jesus Christ (John 14:6).

\*Another advantage of asking “Why do you say that?” is that it will give you more time to compose your answer AND give more information about your friend as to why he/she actually believes what they just said. (It may just be they heard it on “Oprah”!).

**Major Point:** Rather than immediately opening the Bible and getting into a pushing contest, it is often better to deal with these kinds of statements by simply SMILING and non-offensively asking them “Why do you say that?”

**What does “Why do you say that?” accomplish?** OFTEN, this will be the first time that anyone has ever asked them to support logically what they just said! For instance, now the person making statement #1 above is being politely asked to show his evidence for why he thinks “all religions are the same”. *Did he actually STUDY “all the religions”* (?), there are several thousand. Did she actually thoroughly study the major religions, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism? These religions clearly contradict each other on major truth claims. See pages 55-63. Invariably, the person making such a claim, “All religions are the same”, is seriously misinformed. Islam teaches “one God”, Christianity teaches “one God in three Persons”, Hinduism teaches millions of “gods”, and Buddha did not talk about God.

Sometimes this simple “why” question instantly reveals to the objector that he is on very weak footing, and he will drop the objection or move to another one.

**“The Bait and Switch” Objection: “Are *YOU* telling me that I must believe in Christ to go to heaven?”**

The “bait” is the frontal challenge to us by not agreeing with what we are trying to show them. This “emotionally” ignites us.

**The “switch” is *changing the authority of the statement from the Bible to us!***

Recently, at an outdoor BBQ in the US I had the opportunity to open the Bible to John 3, and ask an unbeliever to read verses 1-8. After reading it, he said to me: “Are you telling me that unless I am born again, I won’t go to heaven”?

What the unbeliever has done here is to try to switch the authority of the Bible (the words of Jesus) to me. – **It’s best to not let this “bait and switch” occur.** Remember, at this moment, the devil is trying to snatch the Word of God right out of the heart (Matthew 13:19). My immediate and very gentle response was:

“No, I am not telling you anything. ***It’s Jesus that is telling you that.*** Please look at verse 7 again.

He repeated “Are *YOU* telling me....” several more times before he finally accepted that he was arguing with what the Bible said, not with what I said, and a remarkable change in his demeanor and openness took place.

## ***Role-Playing***

The best way to “sharpen your skills” is to role-play with another person; one person plays the role of the Christian, and the other plays the role of the unbeliever. Start by role-playing the process of getting acquainted; use the transitional questions. For the sake of the role-play, the “lost” person should choose one of the sample questions from the study book, and the Christian must respond to the question by opening his/her Bible to an appropriate verse(s). It is NOT enough to just quote the answer.

A real unsaved person has no way of knowing if what you are saying is just *your opinion*, or is really the Word of God. Once they see what the Bible *IS*, they often become more interested. Ask them to read the passage in the Bible themselves. This often eliminates unspoken objections about whether or not the Bible can be made to say what an individual wants it to say. The reading of the Word itself convicts the reader that the Bible is the Word of God (John 6:63; Hebrews 4:12).

### **Sample Questions Which Provoke Significant Dialogues about Spiritual Things**

The following dialogues may occur *after* the necessary foundations are laid. These questions are most effective when asked in one-on-one situations where there will be, at least, a few minutes for possible discussion.

**Soul Winner (SW): (Name), why do you think the world is so messed up?**

**Note:** This question will compel the unbeliever to open up their heart to you and reveal his or her basic worldview. And now, the relationship will be moved into a significant discussion of reality and truth, without you ever having used the words, God, Jesus or Bible.

Some possible answers:

**1. Hmm... I’ve never really thought about it.** – (don’t reply right away...just keep smiling and give him/her time to consider the question, and give an answer).

**2. Probably because people are so selfish** (or greedy, self-centered etc.). SW should reply something like: “*I agree with you.* But WHY do you think people are “selfish” or “greedy” etc.?” This second question will help elicit his or her worldview about the “nature of man”. If possible, always try to find some area of “agreement” – this will help them like you, and not be offended or uncomfortable with further questions.

**3. “I don’t know...what do YOU think?”** WONDERFUL! This is the opportunity that you have been hoping for ever since you met this person! *He or she has just asked us to tell them the basic message of the first three chapters of Genesis* – So do so! You now have permission from them! If possible try to open a Bible and ask them to read a couple verses like Genesis 1:1; 2:17; 3:1-7, 22-24 etc.

**YOU: (Name), if you could change three things about the world (life) what would they be?** This question has the virtue of requiring your listener to tell you *what he/she thinks* are the three most important and distasteful (horrible?) things about life on this planet.

**Usually, answers include “I would stop all (war, poverty, cancer, injustice... etc.).”** Perhaps the one who answers “war” has had a friend or relative hurt or killed in a war, or now in the military and he or she is very concerned. You can offer to pray for that relative in the military. Those who say “cancer” may have had a friend or relative (or perhaps themselves) who has been diagnosed with cancer. These are all opportunities for you to win this person’s affection by offering to pray for him.

**This is also an opportunity for you to explain that God did not create the world this way, with war, and cancer, and poverty and injustice.** *This is in fact a hidden objection of most people to seeking God; they think God made the world this way.* Show him or her that God warned Adam and Eve what the consequences of disobedience would be (Gen 2:17), and that we live in a world under a curse (Gen 3:17-19; Rom 5:12). But God has promised to fix it all in the future (Rev 21:1-4), at the price of His own death (Acts 20:28).

**YOU: (Name), how are you going to teach your children about right and wrong? Or, how will you bring up your children so they do not fall prey to drugs, sexual immorality or criminal behavior?** **Your friend:** I really don’t know, *or* I’ve never really thought about that. This question will often cause your friend to respond with “What do you do?” or “What do you think?” or “How do you teach your children to choose to do what’s right and turn away from what is wrong”? NOW, you have a serious discussion that can lead to the benefits of the Bible’s teachings.

**Your response could go something like this:** *“I had no idea either* (identify with your friend) *until* (describe briefly how you began to study the Bible) *a friend opened a Bible and began to teach me about why the world is like it is, and how we can know the truth and escape the consequences of making bad decisions. What do you know about the Bible? Remember, it is very important to start the story the same way God, Jesus and Paul did, with Genesis* (Luke 24:27; Acts 14:15-17; 17:24).

## ***No Reserves. No Retreats. No Regrets.***

**"Do not put out the Spirit's fire." -- 1 Thessalonians 5:19**

Quotations taken from *Borden of Yale*, by Mrs. Howard Taylor, Moody Press, Chicago



In 1904 William Borden graduated from a Chicago high school. As heir to the Borden Dairy estate, he was already a millionaire. For his high school graduation present, his parents gave him a trip around the world. As he traveled through Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, Borden felt a growing burden for the world's hurting people. Finally, he wrote home to say, "I'm going to give my life to prepare for the mission field." After making this decision, William Borden wrote two words in the back of his Bible: "No Reserves."

Borden arrived at Yale University (Connecticut) in 1905 trying to look like just one more freshman. Very quickly, however, Borden's classmates noticed something unusual about him. One of them wrote: "He came to college far ahead, spiritually, of any of us. He had already given his heart in full surrender to Christ and had really done it. We who were his classmates learned to lean on him and find in him a strength that was solid as a rock, just because of this settled purpose and consecration."

Borden's first disappointment at Yale came when he heard the university president speak on the students' need of "having a fixed purpose." After hearing that speech, Borden wrote: "He neglected to say what our purpose should be, and where we should get the ability to persevere and the strength to resist temptations." Looking around at the Yale faculty and student body, Borden lamented the results of this empty philosophy: moral weakness and sin-ruined lives.

During his first semester at Yale, Borden started a movement that transformed the campus. One of his friends described how it happened: "It was well on in the first term when Bill and I began to pray together in the morning before breakfast. I cannot say positively whose suggestion it was, but I feel sure it must have originated with Bill. We had been meeting only a short time when a third student joined us and soon after a fourth. The time was spent in after a brief reading of Scripture. Bill's handling of Scripture was helpful. . . . He would read to us from the Bible, show us something that God had promised and then proceed to claim the promise with assurance."

Borden's small morning prayer group was the beginning of the daily groups of prayer that spread to the whole campus. By the end of his first year, 150 freshmen were meeting for weekly Bible study and prayer. By the time he was a senior, one thousand out of Yale's 1,300 students were meeting in such groups.

Borden made it his habit to choose the most "incorrigible" students and try to bring them to salvation. "In his sophomore year we organized Bible study groups and divided up the class of 300 or more, each man interested taking a certain number, so that all might, if possible, be reached. The names were gone over one by one, and the question asked, 'Who will take this person?' When it came to someone thought to be a hard proposition, there would be an ominous pause. Nobody wanted the responsibility. Then Bill's voice would be heard, 'Put him down to me.'"

Borden's outreach ministry was not confined to the Yale campus. He rescued drunks from the streets of New Haven. To rehabilitate them, he founded the Yale Hope Mission. "He might often be found in the lower parts of the city at night, on the street, in a cheap lodging house or some restaurant to which he had taken a poor hungry fellow to feed him, seeking to lead men to Christ."

Borden's missionary call narrowed to the Muslims in China. Once that goal was in sight, Borden never wavered. He also inspired his classmates to consider missionary service. One of them said: "He certainly was one of the strongest characters I have ever known, and he put backbone into the rest of us at college. There was real iron in him, and I always felt he was of the stuff martyrs were made of, and heroic missionaries of more modern times.

"Although he was a millionaire, Bill seemed to realize always that he must be about his Father's business, and not wasting time in the pursuit of amusement." Although Borden refused to join a fraternity, "he did more with his classmates in his senior year than ever before." He presided over the huge student missionary conference held at Yale and served as president of the honor society Phi Beta Kappa.

Upon graduation from Yale, Borden turned down some high paying job offers. He also wrote two more words in his Bible: "No Retreats."

William Borden went on to graduate work at Princeton Seminary in New Jersey. When he finished his studies at Princeton, he sailed for China. Because he was hoping to work with Muslims, he stopped first in Egypt to study Arabic. While there, he contracted spinal meningitis. Within a month 25-year-old William Borden was dead.



When news of the death of William Whiting Borden was cabled back to the U.S. from Egypt, "a wave of sorrow went round the world. Borden not only gave (away) his wealth, but himself, in a way so joyous and natural that it (seemed) a privilege rather than a sacrifice.

Was Borden's untimely death a waste? Not in God's plan. Prior to his death, Borden had written two more words in his Bible. Underneath the words "No Reserves" and "No Retreats," he had written: "No Regrets.

Portions reprinted from *Daily Bread*, December 31, 1988, and *The Yale Standard*, Fall 1970 edition.

Howard Culbertson, Southern Nazarene University, 6729 NW 39th, Bethany, OK 73008 | Phone: 405-491-6693 - Fax: 405-491-6658 Copyright © 2002 - Last Updated: October 24, 2004 | URL: <http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert.fs/regret.htm>  
You have permission to reprint what you just read. Use it in your magazine, at your web site or in your newsletter. Please include the following footer: For more original content like this, visit: <http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert.fs>

## *John Harper's Last Convert*

Let me take you back in time; the date is Wednesday, April 10, 1912, and the world watches in awe as the glamorous *Titanic* begins her maiden voyage. But, little did the world know that the greatest ship man ever made would be on the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean only four days later.

And on that ship, in the second-class section, was a man named John Harper who was coming to America to preach at the Moody Church in Chicago. I first heard the phenomenal story of John Harper, many years ago while growing up in Canada. My brother showed me a one-page tract titled "*I was Harper's Last Convert*". It was the story, told by a man, who floated next to Harper briefly in the icy waters of the Atlantic.

If you had been with John Harper on the *Titanic* that fateful night you would have felt a tremendous jolt when the mighty ship collided with an iceberg on the starboard side of her bow. You would have heard the hull plate's buckle as an iceberg tore a 300-foot long gash in the side of the ship.

And you may have even heard the panic in the Captain's voice when he knew his ship was sinking, and he only had enough lifeboats for half of the passengers.... The

Captain also knew he had to keep order among the 2,227 people on board. So he asked John Harper to remain on deck and keep peace among the passengers.

If you had been on deck you would have seen families torn apart. Husbands saying goodbye as they watched their wives and children leave on lifeboats. Wives deciding to stay on board to die with their husbands. Children waving goodbye to their parents—and praying that they would see each other again.

And you would have seen John Harper kiss his six-year-old daughter, Nana, goodbye and put her safely in a lifeboat.

As the minutes crept by, and all of the lifeboats were gone, 1,521 people were left on board the sinking ship—including Harper. With every minute that passed the deck became steeper as the bow plunged under the water. Finally the ship broke in two, hurling the remaining passengers into the icy depths of the Atlantic.

It is said the ship's lights blinked once, then went out, leaving people to freeze to death in the darkness of the Atlantic.

And the few hundred people that were safe in lifeboats could see their husbands, fathers, and many other families as they were shrieking in terror and thrashing in the water trying to gasp for breath.

But, during this horrific tragedy God was at work. You see, John Harper wasn't afraid to die; he knew that he was going to come face to face with his Maker. And he wanted other people to know his Lord and Savior.

So with death lurking over him, Harper yelled to a man in the darkness, **“Are you saved?”** **“No”** replied the man. **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and ye shall be saved!”** Harper screamed as he struggled in the dark, cold, Atlantic.

Then the men drifted apart into the darkness. But later the current brought them back together. Weak, exhausted, and frozen, a dying Harper yelled once more, **“Are you saved?”** **“No”!**

Harper repeated once again, **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and ye shall be saved.”** And with that, Harper slipped down into his watery grave.

The man whom Harper sought to win to Christ was rescued by the S.S. Carpathia. Because of Harper, he dedicated his life to Jesus Christ right there, two miles above the floor of the ocean, and lived to tell people that he was *Harper's Last Convert*.

It makes me wonder, how many other dying people did Harper convert before he drowned? Harper sacrificed his own life so he could share the plan of salvation with the dying. He was a man who lived and died by his immense faith in Jesus Christ.

There are so many things that come to mind when people speak about the great loss of human life on the *Titanic*. Some may even ask could it have been avoided.

What if the owner hadn't determined to surprise America by arriving a night early? Or if the Captain hadn't cut the corner on an area of ocean they knew had been dangerous before? Or simply, what if the lookout's binoculars hadn't been missing from the crow's nest?

If only one of these things had not been the case, the *Titanic* might have been the very definition of luxury, romance, and fortitude.

But those things did happen. *I'd like to ask, what if John Harper hadn't been on board traveling to Moody Church? How many people would have died not knowing that they could be eternally saved?* (Erwin Lutzer, The Moody Church Radio Ministries monthly letter, June, 1998)

***What about you? What effect will you have in the lives of those around you who don't yet know God, and don't even know that God is seeking them?***

## ***What is the "Gospel"?***

According to the Bible, the gospel is the "power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Rom 1:16). The content of the gospel is that Christ died for our sins, the Just One for the unjust, was buried, was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that through faith in him alone, by God's grace, we can be saved (1 Corinthians 15:3-4; John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 Peter 3:18). Because Jesus bore our sin on the cross, we can have His righteousness (the "righteousness of God") credited to us (2 Cor 5:21). No amount of our personal "righteousness" is sufficient (Isaiah 64:6; Rom 3:10,12). Our faith must be in Him alone (John 1:12; 3:15-17; Acts 26:18).

## *Topical Index to Evangelist Handbook*

Abraham	11,12, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21, 38, 59
Adam and Eve	8, 18, 25, 28, 31, 45-49, 59
Adultery	30, 42, 43
Animal World	19, 44, 46
Ancestors	62-65
Archeology (confirms Bible)	19-20
Atheism	29, 45
Baptism	27,50
Belief in God (is not enough)	43
Bible	13-19
Born Again	5, 8, 38, 50
Buddhism	11, 33, 38, 61
Cain's wife	47
Canon, the (Bible)	16-18
Catholic Bible	53
Catholicism	39, 49-54
Children (go to heaven?)	41
Confession (Catholicism)	53-54
Creation/evolution issues	44-47
Cross (Why necessary?)	26
Crusades	25
Devil (Satan)	8, 10, 28, 30-31
Dinosaurs	47
Divinity of Jesus	21-22
Election and Free Will	3,39
Equality between men and women	48
Evil (Origin of)	28
Evolution	44-47
Flood, global	45-47
Forgiveness (of sins)	10, 34, 42, 53, 54
Genesis (a myth?)	47
God (who made God?)	45-46
Good people; good deeds	8, 36, 37
Gospel	77
Health and Wealth Gospel	40-41
Heaven	2, 27-31, 33, 36, 38, 43
Hell	30, 39, 43, 54
Hinduism	61
Homosexuality	48-49
Idols, Idol Worship	63
Infants (in heaven?)	41
Inerrancy	16, 17, 45
Islam (Muslims)	33, 57-61

Israel	19-20,36, 38,41,54,56
Jehovah Witnesses	56
Jesus (Questions about)	21-26
Judging others	33
Long Life Spans (Genesis 5)	18
Lost Gospels	17
Mary	22, 51-52, 58, 61-62
Marriage	48-49
Miracles (believed by Jesus)	18, 51-52
Mormons	55-56
Moses	11, 12, 18, 19, 41, 44, 45, 47, 59
Muslims, Islam	33, 57-61
New heart, new spirit	42
Noah's Ark	18, 45-46
Old Testament (Jesus' view)	13, 16
Persecution	34, 39
Peter	50-51
Pope	50-53
Priests	53-54
Prophecy (Biblical, distinctiveness)	12, 22, 25, 58, 60
Prosperity Gospel	40-41
Purgatory	53-54
Quran	58-61
Religions, different	33, 38, 67, 68
Resurrection of Jesus	23, 25, 48
Return of Christ	27
Satan	8, 10, 28, 30-31
Scripture	3, 7, 11, 13, 14, 16-18
Second Coming	27
Sin, What is it?	25
Slavery (condoned by Bible?)	41
Submission, of wife to husband	49
Suffering	28, 30, 39, 40, 41, 43
Ten Commandments, purpose of	37
Trinity	27, 56, 58, 60, 61
Virgin Birth (of Jesus)	12, 22, 52
Women and men, equality	48-49
Variants (Bible Transmission)	16-17

If you have found this handbook helpful, if you have stories to share about how the information in this book made a difference in being able to lead someone into a relationship with Jesus Christ, or if you have suggestions, or other comments, please email the author at

[busforvn2@gmail.com](mailto:busforvn2@gmail.com)