

# **The Existence of God - Truth or Fantasy**

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## **The spectacular stories of the Old Testament:**

For most of my life, the general theme at school and in the culture has been that God doesn't exist. Philosophies of evolution have been crammed into every subject and a lot of entertainment. The constant barrage of evolution allowed most of my peers, including those who attended Church with their families, to reject the existence of God.

To be fair, when the supernatural nature of God is removed, most of what the Bible teaches *appears* to be illogical and unbelievable. When I was about 6, God began building a personal friendship with me (discussed later), so the question of God's existence became important to me.

The book of Genesis starts by proclaiming that God spoke the universe into existence, in a very short time, out of nothing, by only the power of His words. The Bible states that the vastness, the intricacies of living creatures, and the complexities of life were created in 6 literal days. This is such a profound claim that there are only two possibilities. Either the Bible is a total fantasy, or it describes a God that is powerful beyond our imaginations.

If life is an accident through evolution, purpose in life is ultimately reduced to striving for happiness, there is no hope of anything after death, and there is no foundation of absolute right and wrong. Many are unaware of the ramifications of evolution but the existence of God is one of the most important questions of life.

The Bible goes on to make other potentially outlandish claims about Adam and Eve's relationship with God. The implications are that the all-powerful creator God desires a relationship with His creation. And then, God placed mankind into a paradise and gave them only one restriction, to not eat from a specific tree. Did God not know that given enough time, Adam and Eve would be tempted to disobey and rebel? Why would He allow the opportunity for disobedience, knowing that the result would be millennia of death, pain, and misery? Again, this story must be either total fantasy or significantly important if true.

However, what is not difficult to understand is that once removed from the garden, the history of mankind is full of selfishness, violence, murder, and every form of sin. It is the nature of the heart of mankind, for the strong to take advantage of the weak. The Bible states that the conditions became so grievous, that God planned to destroy the earth. But Noah was a righteous man who found favor with God and was commanded to build an Ark. There has been considerable debate if the described Ark was capable of saving the life that we have on earth. Some argue that it was not but some analysis indicate that the size of the Ark was feasible, and the design of the Ark was capable of surviving such a

cataclysmic event as the great flood. The Ark Encounter has developed several studies and has built a recreation of the Ark (<https://arkencounter.com/>).

A significant problem is that evolutionists and those who dismiss the evidence of the Great Flood are driven by the need to reject God's moral standards, so they work diligently to argue that there is no God. Thus, they interpret the same scientific evidence that potentially confirms God's existence to "prove" and promote their agendas to nullify the incumbrances of God's moral standards. But the fundamental question for every individual is that the story of the Ark is either another fantasy or a demonstration of an all-powerful God.

After the story of saving mankind from the Great Flood, the Bible continues with more personal stories of individuals having relationships with God. Abraham is a very significant historical individual. God promised him to be the father of nations, but Abraham did not have any children when he was 100 years old and Sarah was 90. The Bible then provides considerable descriptions of how God proceeded to fulfill those promises. Issac was miraculously born and his descendants became a mighty nation that has survived for thousands of years. But again, are these fantasies that have been handed down over millennia or are they evidence of God's power?

Another fantastic series of events involving Abraham's great-grandson, Joseph. The Bible says that Joseph received dreams that God would make him great on the earth. But when Joseph told his brothers, their jealousy motivated them to sell him into slavery. Despite God's tremendous promises, Joseph found himself a slave in Egypt. The Bible teaches that God blessed Joseph, raising him from slavery in the depths of captivity to one of the most powerful positions in Egypt. God could have caused Joseph to be born as a great Pharo but He chose to demonstrate His power by first lowering Joseph down to a foreign slave, imprisoned as a sexual predator, and then raising him to a very high position. Joseph's life is either a fantasy or another example of God's ability to intervene in Joseph's life.

Either Joseph's actions saved Egypt and all of the surrounding countries from a tremendous drought or the story is a lie. After Joseph's death, over the next 400 years, Abraham's descendants grew to probably about 2,500,000 people. Given the nature of mankind, it is not hard to understand that Abraham's descendants (the Children of Israel) were forced into cruel slavery.

To free God's people, the Bible proclaims that God raised Moses. Even from Moses' birth to when he was 80 years old, the description of his life is either a demonstration of God's power or a lie. When he was 80, God sent him to demand that Pharo release the children of Israel. However, Pharo was reluctant to lose such a large cheap workforce, but his real problem was that he didn't like his authority challenged, even if it was by the Creator God of the Universe. The Bible then describes that God brought 10 supernatural plagues to Egypt. Each plague was more severe and after each plague, Pharo agreed to let them go, but then his heart was hardened. After the 10<sup>th</sup> plague, Pharo let them go but even then he sent his army to pursue them. The Bible claims that God protected the children of Abraham with a pillar of smoke during the day and a pillar of fire at night, and when the children of Israel reached the Red Sea, God supernaturally parted the water. It was an obvious trap but Pharo's arrogance prompted him to command his army to follow. And, as expected, when the army was

between the shores, God allowed the water to crash down and destroy Pharo's entire army. Again, so many miraculous and supernatural events demand that it was either all fantasy or that God exists, and designed the situation to demonstrate His power.

After crossing the Red Sea there were many more fantastic stories. However, because of disobedience, God caused the Children of Israel to wander the desert. God provided food and water for millions of His people and their animals for 40 years. During their time in the desert, Moses received the Ten Commandments and wrote the first 5 books of the Old Testament.

When the Children of Israel finally entered the promised land, the spectacular stories of God's supernatural intervention continued as the pagan inhabitants were overthrown.

The time between Moses and Jesus was about 1400 years and the stories of David and Goliath, Samson, Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, and many others either continue to demonstrate the miraculous powers of God or they are mountains of lies upon lies.

### **Out of the darkness into the light:**

The Bible is an ancient book that teaches many truths. One truth is, "Wine is a mocker and strong drink is a brawler". My parents were generally good people but their heavy drinking contributed to their divorce when I was 4 years old. As a single parent with limited job opportunities in the 50s, Mom found work as a cocktail waitress. She worked nights and weekends and I didn't see her for weeks at a time. To care for me, she found an apartment where the landlady was paid to watch over me. Sadly, the landlady only cared about the money and the care was very poor. My daily diet consisted of a cheap hamburger patty, SpaghettiOs, and whatever I could find. I was often very hungry. I avoided her as much as possible and spent significant time in my apartment alone. From about 4 and a half, my biggest problem, which is impossible for me to fully describe, was my tremendous loneliness.

A few days after turning 5, I entered the first grade, and I was very immature. It wasn't difficult for me to become the most disruptive student in class, and it is safe to say that I was not any of the teacher's pets. Mom relied on the teachers to be professionals, so she agreed that I needed to repeat the 1<sup>st</sup> grade to allow me to mature and learn to read. However, I didn't get any more help in my second 1<sup>st</sup> grade or the 2<sup>nd</sup>, or the 3<sup>rd</sup> grades so I made little progress in learning to read. Left to my own devices, I became a mean, grungy little kid who got into a lot of fights.

When I was 6 years old, (after my second 1st-grade year) I was loitering in the park on a summer day and someone captured my attention and presented the Gospel to me. There was no question that I was a sinner and I needed God's love and forgiveness, so I eagerly asked Jesus into my heart.

Despite having Jesus in my heart, my behavior continued to be so bad that most of my schoolmates had strict instructions to not associate with me. I lived on a proverbial deserted island which added to my loneliness. I didn't understand anything about a relationship with God but one day, He gave me the idea to begin to talk and invite Him into my thinking. As a 6-year-old, I was very inconsistent and sometimes there were long periods between when I would spend time with Him. After a long silence, it was as if

God gently tapped me on the shoulder, “Do you remember me?” I would ask His forgiveness and try harder to remember to spend time with Him. The gaps grew smaller and less often. I didn’t know it but God was building a friendship with me. I didn’t hear voices but I asked Him questions, shared thoughts, and ideas, and He prompted me with thoughts, questions, and sometimes instructions.

I wasn’t aware of the depth of my friendship with God until one day I was startled when I realized that my agonizing loneliness was gone. Some may say that my relationship with God was my imagination but even my creative abilities were not capable of overcoming the tremendous loneliness that I had felt.

Entering the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, mom remarried and we moved to a rural school. Sadly, the new teacher was also from the previous school system and she also failed to be any help. However, at the end of the year, the school board, a group of farmers, wanted to know why there was a recommendation for another social promotion. They had a lot of questions that the teacher didn’t have good answers for. She was on probation to help me learn to read, so we repeated the 4<sup>th</sup> grade together. However, she still didn’t spend much time with me, I still couldn’t read, and after that year I never saw her again. Thankfully, for the first time in my life, the 5th-grade teacher diligently worked with me, and with much prayer and effort, I finally learned to read by sounding out words when I was 12 years old.

My friendship with God continued to grow but sadly, as I grew older my moral life degraded as lying, cheating, stealing, and other sins crept into my life. I knew that my thoughts, attitudes, and actions were wrong and to my shame, I was able to compartmentalize when I spent time with God from when I sought to fulfill my selfish wants and desires. I shudder to think what God endured with me.

When I was 13, while walking along, minding my business, the Lord Jesus Christ confronted me. I can’t say it was a vision, I can’t say it was not, but I was in His presence. It is not possible to fully explain, but I still remember being surprised at how totally immersed I was in God’s love. His love permeated every fiber of my being. Before, that time, God’s love was an intellectual concept, but after that, God’s love gripped me. Understanding and embracing God’s love has been a valuable gift and I believe that everyone should diligently search for this priceless treasure.

While being enveloped by God’s love I intuitively understood the Lord Jesus Christ’s power, authority, and holiness. And, my sins began to flow through my mind. **There was no room to argue or to justify them.** Standing before His holiness and righteousness, I quickly confessed and repented from each of my sins and determined to forsake them, and I made Jesus Christ the Lord of my life. However, I did not make Him Lord, **out of obligation, fear, ritual, or religion but as an expression of love back to God.**

When I look back at my younger years, it is clear that He was changing my life from the inside out. God had built a friendship with me before, but afterward His confrontation and my repentance, I began an abiding relationship with Him. When I asked Jesus into my heart, I knew very little about anything and I had no idea that my relationship with God was based on Biblical truths or anything that the Bible taught.

I then found myself in a strange situation. With a solid friendship with God in my heart, most of my environment, school and society in general, there were constant attacks against Him and His existence. So, I began to look for valid evidence.

## The Promised Messiah:

The challenge of evidence from the Old Testament is that it was written between about 2,500 and 4,000 years ago, making it difficult to verify. However, while the claims in the New Testament are potentially just as outlandish, it was written only 2,000 years ago and there is considerable corroborating evidence. In addition to archeological discoveries and other collaborating resources, there are over 5,000 supporting documents. The evidence is either accurate or part of the biggest conspiracy in all of history.

Much of the Bible, the New, and the Old Testaments are focused on the Lord Jesus Christ. A series of evidence that is difficult to refute are the prophecies in the Old Testament of the promised Messiah. Most of these prophecies were written 400 to 800 years before Jesus Christ was born.

[Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.](#)

Immanuel means “God with us”, implying that the all-powerful creator God of the universe was going to humble Himself to be limited to live and suffer on earth as a man. If fulfilled, this and several other prophecies in the Old Testament are evidence that the Lord Jesus Christ is truly God.

The foundation of the New Testament is the 4 Gospels. The Gospels of Matthes, Mark, and John are eyewitness testimonies of the Apostles who spent the last three years of Jesus’ life. The 4<sup>th</sup> Gospel, Luke, and the book of Acts are a chronological composite of the testimonies of many witnesses. What is very important for every individual to determine for themselves is if Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah. If there is fraud, then the Bible is a lie, but if He accurately fulfilled multiple prophecies, then the validity of the Bible must be taken very seriously.

The chart below describes some of the Old Testament prophecies and if they were fulfilled in the New Testament:

Prophecy	Old Testament	New Testament
1. Born of a woman.	Genesis 3:15	Matthew 1:20,21
2. Born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:1, Luke 2:4-6
3. Born of a virgin	Isaiah 7:14	Matt 1:22-23, Luke 1:26-31
4. Descendent of Abraham	Gen 12:3, Gen 22:18	Matt 1:1
5. Descendent of Isaac	Gen 17:19, Gen 21:12	Luke 3:34
6. Descendent of Jacob	Numbers 24:17	Matt 1:2
7. Of the tribe of Judah	Gen 49:10	Luke 3:33
8. Heir of King David	2 Sam 7:12-13, Isaiah 9:7	Luke 1:32-33
9. His throne is eternal	Psalms 45:6-7, Daniel 2:44	Luke 1:33
10. The Messiah will be Immanuel	Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:23

11. Would spend time in Egypt	Hosea 11	Matthew 2:14-15
12. Children would be massacred	Jeremiah 31:15	Matthew 2:16-18
13. A Messenger would prepare His way	Isaiah 40:3-5, Malachi 3:1	Luke 3:3-6, Matt 11:10
14. The Messiah would be rejected	Psalms 69:8, Isaiah 53:3	John 1:11, Luke 23:18
15. Messiah would be a prophet	Deuteronomy 18:15	Acts 3:20-22
16. Proceeded by Elijah	Malachi 4:5-6	Matthew 11:13-14
17. Be declared to be the Son of God	Psalms 2:7	Matthew 3:16-17
18. From Davidic line a Nazarene	Isaiah 11:1-5	Matthew 2:23
19. Would be a great light to Galilee	Isaiah 9:1-2	Matthew 4:13-16
20. Would speak in Parables	Psalms 78:2-4	Matthew 13:10-15, 34-35
21. Would heal the broken hearted	Isaiah 61:1-2	Luke 4:18-19
22. A priest after the order of Melchizedek	Psalms 110:4	Hebrews 5:5-6
23. Would be called King	Psalms 2:6	Matt 27:37
24. Would enter Jerusalem on a donkey	Zechariah 9:9	Matthew 21:4-5, Mark 11:7-11
25. Would be praised by little children	Psalms 8:2	Matthew 21:14-16
26. Would be betrayed	Psalms 41:9	Luke 22:47-48, Matt 26:14-16
27. Price of betrayal would be to buy a potter's field	Zechariah 11:12-13	Matthew 27:9-10
28. Would be falsely accused	Psalms 35:11-12	Mark 14:57-58
29. Would be silent Before His accusers	Isaiah 53:7	Mark 15:4-5
30. Would be spat upon and struck	Isaiah 50:6	Matthew 26:67
31. Would be hated without cause	Psalms 35:19, Psalms 69:4	John 15:24-25
32. Would be crucified with criminals	Isaiah 53:12	Matthew 27:38, Mark 15:27-28

33. Would be given vinegar to drink	Psalms 69:21	Matt 27:34, John 19:28-30
34. His hands and feet would be pierced	Psalms 22:16, Zech 12:10	John 20:25-27
35. Would be mocked and ridiculed	Psalms 22:7-8	Luke 23:35
36. Soldiers would gamble for His clothes	Psalms 22:18	Luke 23:34, Matt 27:35-36
37. His bones would not be broken	Exodus 12:46, Psalms 34:20	John 19:33-36
38. Would be forsaken by God	Psalms 22:1	Matthew 27:46
39. He would pray for His enemies	Psalms 109:4	Luke 23:34
40. His side would be pierced	Zechariah 12:10	John 19:34
41. He would be buried with the rich	Isaiah 53:9	Matthew 27:57-60
42. He would be resurrected from the dead	Psalms 16:10, Psalms 49:15	Matt 28:2-7, Acts 2:22-32
43. He would ascend to Heaven	Psalms 24:7-10	Mark 16:19, Luke 24:51
44. Would be seated at the right hand of God	Psalms 68:18, Psalms 110:1	Mark 16:19, Matt 22:44
45. He would be a sacrifice for sin	Isaiah 53:5-12	Romans 5:6-8
46. The Messiah will establish an everlasting Kingdom	Daniel 7:13-14	Revelations 19

Some of the prophecies are vague but many are very specific. Countless scholars agree that there is significant evidence that the prophecies were given centuries before Jesus was born. It is proposed that because Jesus Christ's life fulfilled the prophecies it is impossible for the prophets to make so many accurate "guesses" without God's guidance.

It is not unusual that the Messiah would be born of a woman [1] but it is unexpected that He would be prophesied to be born of a virgin [3]. It is no surprise that He would be in the line of Abraham and even a descendent of King David [4,5,6,7,8] but it is unexpected that He would spend time in Egypt [11]. If the Messiah were to be God with us, it is surprising that He would be rejected by the leadership of Israel [12,14]. There is not much of a surprise in the claims of 15 through 23, but it is expected that Kings, especially the King of Kings would arrive on a horse, not on the back of a humble donkey [24]. Given

that the Messiah is God with us, the probability of accurately predicting that He would be betrayed [26], falsely accused [28], hated and abused [30,31], and crucified with criminals [32] is very unlikely. The possibility of predicting the price of 30 pieces of silver to betray Jesus and then to be used to purchase the potter's field is impossible to predict hundreds of years before.

Then there is the prediction of piercing his hands and feet which was never practiced before or during the time of the prophecy. Crucifixion only became common by the Romans, hundreds of years later [34]. The prophecies of the soldiers offering Him vinegar [33], gambling for his clothes [36], and not breaking his legs [37] seem to indicate that the Roman soldiers were trying to fulfill prophecies. However, their mocking and ridicule [30,31,32,35] demonstrate their lack of respect for Him so this is very doubtful. It is interesting to note that the common practice to kill those being crucified was to break their legs so they would suffocate, so even if the prophets of old foresaw crucifixion, it is highly doubtful that they could guess that a spear would be thrust into Jesus' side [40] to verify that He had died.

It is not intuitive for us to understand Jesus taking on the sins of the world to pay for our debts but this was prophesized and fulfilled [45].

**1 Peter 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.**

It is well understood that God's holiness rejects sin and it was the goal of the forces of darkness for the Messiah to be forsaken [38]. However, because the Messiah (God with us), when the debt was paid by His blood and death, Jesus Christ's righteousness conquered sin, reuniting Himself with God.

And, in addition to the Old Testament, Jesus also prophesized that He would rise 3 days after His death [42], conquering death (Matthew 1:21).

**I Peter 1:3,4 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,**

Therefore, all who embrace the Lord Jesus Christ are renewed in their spirit (born again) and are covered with His righteousness, allowing them to conquer sin and death, so that they can enjoy an eternal relationship with God. While I knew none or understood any of this when I received Jesus, the Bible is very clear. And just as important, since Jesus' life, death, and resurrection from the dead has been verified by both Christians and by many who opposed the existence of God.

The Bible describes God's plan for the Messiah (God incarnate) to come to earth, to allow Himself to be falsely accused, crucified, and raised from the grave to conquer sin and death. It is natural to expect that the Messiah would then reign on the earth as the King of kings. But it was prophesied and fulfilled that Jesus Christ returned to heaven [43], and is seated at the right hand of God [44]. And because Jesus



Christ gave the ultimate sacrifice, it is no surprise that He has been given all authority in heaven and on earth and is building an everlasting Kingdom [46] (Matthew 28:18-20).

Prophecy 46 also predicts that the Lord Jesus Christ will return with all majesty and power.

The Old Testament makes many fantastic claims that defy logic, but over hundreds of years, many prophets predicted details of the promised Messiah. Stories are easily fabricated but when Jesus Christ was born, fulfilling many prophecies, such claims must be taken very seriously.

Many reject being subjected to God and His moral standards and have ulterior motives to deny the validity of the Bible. However, given the potential eternal consequences, it is vital for every individual to not rely on the opinions of others but to carefully evaluate the evidence for themselves. Sadly, many believe and embrace what they want, rather than seek the truth, especially when the Bible is involved.

### **Evidence of Jesus Christ's Divine power:**

If Jesus Christ is God there should be solid evidence. Countless numbers of scholars have spent their lives comparing, looking for mistakes, and challenging the validity of the New Testament. Instead of revealing significant errors, many have been convinced of the validity of the Bible (See Appendix C). Either the four Gospels describe the Lord Jesus Christ's supernatural power, or they are all lies. Evidence of His divine power is recorded in the 4 Gospels:

Miracle	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
1. Turns water into wine				2:1-11
2. Heals an official's son				4:43-54
3. Drives out evil spirits from a man		1:21-27	4:31-36	
4. Heals Peter's mother-in-law fever	8:14-15	1:29-31	4:38-39	
5. Heals many sick and oppressed	8:16-17	1:32-34	4:40-41	
6. Miraculous catch of Fish			5:1-11	
7. Heals man with leprosy	8:1-4	1:40-45	5:12-14	
8. Heals a Centurian's paralyzed servant	8:5-13		7:1-10	
9. Heals paralytic	9:1-8	2:1-12	5:17-26	
10. Heals man's withered hand	12:9-14	3:1-6	6:6-11	
11. Raises widow's son from the dead			7:11-17	
12. Calms a storm on the sea	8:23-27	4:35-41	8:22-25	

13. Casts demons out of a man into a heard of pigs	8:28-33	5:1-20	8:26-39	
14. Heals woman of long-term bleeding issues	9:20-22	5:25-34	8:42-48	
15. Raises Jairus' daughter Back to life	9:18,23-26	5:21-24,35-43	8:40-42,49-56	
16. Restores sight of two blind men	9:27-31			
17. Heals mute man	9:32-34			
18. Heals crippled man				5:1-15
19. Feeds 5,000 men plus women and children	14:13-21	6:30-44	9:10-17	6:1-15
20. Walks on water	14:22-33	6:45-52		6:16-21
21. Heals many sick	14:34-36	6:53-56		
22. Casts out demon from a girl	15:21-28	7:24-30		
23. Heals deaf and dumb man		7:31-37		
24. Feeds 4,000 plus men plus women and children	15:32-39	8:1-13		
25. Heals blind man		8:22-26		
26. Heals man born blind				9:1-12
27. Casts out unclean spirit from a boy	17:14-20	9:14-29	9:37-43	
28. Pays tax with a coin found in a fish	17:24-27			
29. Heals a blind, mute demoniac	12:22-23		11:14-23	
30. Heals woman with a disabling spirit			13:10-17	
31. Heal man with dropsy			14:1-6	
32. Cleanses 10 lepers			17:11-19	
33. Lazarus is raised from the dead				11:1-45
34. Restored the sight of the blind	20:29-34	10:46-52	18:35-43	
35. Withers a fig tree	21:18-22	11:12-14		
36. Restores a severed ear			22:50-51	
37. A miraculous catch of fish				21:4-11

If the Biblical claims are false, then it cannot be claimed that Jesus Christ was a good man, but the ultimate scam artist and liar. But, if the claims are true, they reveal the supernatural power of the Lord

Jesus Christ and that the Bible is true. This reinforces the critical need for every individual to carefully examine the evidence for themselves.

### **His death and resurrection:**

Again, these are either fantastic events or lies.

Matthew 27:45-56 From **noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land** [1]. About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "*Eli, Eli,<sup>1</sup> lema sabachthani?*" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"). When some of those standing there heard this, they said, "He's calling Elijah." Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. The rest said, "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him." And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. **At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom** [2]. **The earth shook, the rocks split** [3] and **the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life** [4]. They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people. When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!"

[1] Every person in Jerusalem would have seen 3 hours of darkness in the afternoon.

[2] The veil represented the separation between the Holiness of God and sinful man. It was about 45 feet tall and several inches thick so when it tore from top to bottom it signified that through Jesus Christ's death and resurrection, God removed the separation between God and man. The temple and the veil were significant, so this would have been big news for all the inhabitants of Jerusalem at the time.

[3] Upon His death, there was a massive earthquake and breaking open of many tombs. Most people in Jerusalem were probably aware of evidence of that significant event.

[4] Before the separation between God and man was removed, the Bible explains that those who looked forward to the Messiah by faith were in a suspended state until Jesus rose from His grave. They were then resurrected and seen by many. No doubt many who rose from the grave were recognized by friends and family members.

These events were so significant that within the next few weeks, 3,000 people, embraced Jesus Christ at what is called Pentecost. If these events had not occurred, it would have been an obvious lie and it is doubtful that so many would have followed Jesus Christ, especially if they were not convinced that He had risen from the grave. This large group of people is significant verification of the validity of the claims concerning the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some may claim mass hysteria but not long after, Rome demanded that all individuals under their rule bow to Caesar as god. Therefore, all those who followed the Lord Jesus Christ did so under the threat of violent death and Roman crucifixion. History records that countless Believers were crucified along the side of Roman roads for miles. The crucifixions of Christians continued for over 300 years. Not exactly

an attraction for individuals to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ, but the early Church continued to grow and has continued to spread throughout the World for the last 2000 years. The most reasonable conclusion is that many of the original followers witnessed these supernatural events, embraced Jesus as God, were born again, and then developed personal relationships with the Lord Jesus Christ. What further validates their belief that Jesus Christ was God is their willingness to embrace their faith in light of impending Roman torture.

The fulfilled prophecies, the many miracles of His life, His death, and His resurrection present considerable evidence that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah. And then there are the countless numbers who sacrificed their lives to honor Him as Lord over the last 2,000 years. For so many to sacrifice their lives over so many centuries testify their relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ was very real to them.

In addition to what God has done in my life, the evidence of those who were willing to die for their faith strengthens my confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Bible, and the validity of His moral standards.

### **The Purpose of Life:**

The Bible is the only book that claims and is widely accepted as being inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16). If Jesus Christ is embraced as the promised Messiah. It follows that an all-powerful God performed the supernatural events recorded in the Old Testament and history and that God has specific goals for the earth and mankind. And the fantastic nature of the stories reveals that God “is”, His power, and His character. Therefore, it is reasonable to accept that God has prompted, promoted, and *preserved* the integrity of the Bible to reveal His love, hope, His moral standards, and His purpose for our lives.

With the acceptance that God’s Word is inspired and accurate, it is proposed that the Bible instructs us of God’s ultimate purpose for mankind, and His goal is to create an intelligent being (man) to have genuine, close, and loving friendships with Himself. However, genuine agape-type love requires sacrifice and is therefore nullified if it is “programmed” into man’s nature. Agape-type love can only be expressed when there is personal sacrifice, putting the needs of others first. Therefore, for mankind to have the ability to genuine love, God needed to instill free will and strong self-centered desires into mankind. Thus, God placed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden, but He had a plan.

[John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.](#)

In addition to free will, the fall of man allowed God to promote and demonstrate agape-type love by allowing His precious Son to become a humble man, to be falsely accused, painfully crucified, and to suffer the sins of the world.

[Romans 5:8 “But God shows his love for us in that \*\*while we were still sinners\*\*, Christ died for us.”](#)

The downside of giving mankind free will is the tremendous desire to lie, cheat, steal, and murder if necessary to fulfill their lusts and desires, making mankind enemies of God. So, when Christ died for us, God demonstrated perfect love towards His enemies (us), not just “good” people.

And, because of God’s perfect holiness, it is beyond our understanding of the high price the Lord Jesus Christ paid when He took on the sins of the world.

John 3:17-18 for God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. <sup>18</sup> **Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.**

When sin entered the world, mankind was separated from God. Thankfully, Jesus Christ’s payment for sin allows individuals to be made righteous, so when God reveals Himself to individuals, they must humbly embrace their need for a savior and reflect love towards God by yielding their selfish wants and desires to Him by bowing to Him as Lord. When they genuinely repent, the Holy Spirit enters into them, regenerating their spirit, and causing them to be born again.

Titus 3:4-7 **But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.**

With the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ and a renewed spirit, Believers are able to enter into close friendships with God.

Galatians 2:20 **I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.**

It is proposed that to the extent that Believers are gripped by God’s love, they receive the power and the desire to die to self, to be daily crucified, and to genuinely love God and others. However, when an individual is born again, God does not remove the natural desires of the heart because love is demonstrated when these powerful desires are sacrificed for God and others. Therefore, it is also proposed that one of the primary purposes of life on earth is for Believers to be transformed to develop abiding friendships with the Lord Jesus Christ and to perfect love for an eternal relationship with God.

### **Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and Religions:**

Over the years, I began meeting “Christians” who attended Churches but there was limited evidence that they had the same relationship that I had with the Lord Jesus Christ. Many were nominal Christians but others were very active in their Churches and were very “religious”. But they didn’t/don’t have abiding friendships with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible teaches that since the fall, the heart of mankind has been controlled by deceitfulness and selfishness (Jeremiah 29:11). However, the Bible also says that God's law is written on the heart of man (Romans 2:15). These conflicting characteristics create wars and struggles within the heart. The personality, how individuals are raised, and reproofs of life allow some to lean more toward good, often achieving noble accomplishments. But because of my early years, I understand the temptations to yield to selfishness, which is the plight of many. And if God does not restrain them, the product of their lives is evil. Many today do not want to accept that mankind is naturally capable of evil but thousands of years of history attest to the potentially cruel nature of mankind. Examples from only the last 100 years are Adolph Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Mao Tse-tung, and many others. However, regardless of how "good" some are, the Bible clearly teaches that *all* fall short of God's holiness and righteousness (Romans 3:23).

God's law is written on the heart of mankind and when individuals violate it, the result is guilt. To address guilt various religions and even some Christian denominations have formed. While some of the goals are good, followers are pressured to embrace philosophies and moral guidelines to appease the whims of the leaders. Religion becomes more complicated when it is "founded" on Biblical teachings or some other ancient book. What further complicates false religions is the pride of life motivates some to aspire to positions of authority for opportunities to lord over and control followers. Religions define what are acceptable works and sacrifices, and when there are calamities, crop failures, or children dying, religious leaders often teach that they are the consequence of god's wrath against them for their lack of loyalty. Religions use guilt and scare tactics to hold followers under bondage to constantly earn approval from their gods, as dictated by the leaders. This is why every Believer needs to know and understand what the Bible teaches.

Conversely, the Lord Jesus Christ is the only God who has demonstrated genuine love. For the creator God of the universe (Colossians 1:16-20) to humble Himself, to come in the form of a man, to be sacrificed on the Cross, and to pay the penalty for sin is the very essence of love. Furthermore, the Lord Jesus Christ does not demand works or sacrifices, only to accept His substitutional sacrifice for them and to give Him the honor that He deserves. Which includes the willingness to die to our selfish wants and desires. Therefore, religions require followers to earn their god's acceptance but those who embrace God's unconditional love enter into a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, religion and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ should never be confused or equated.

### **The Foundation of Love:**

And, consistent with the Lord Jesus Christ's life and the core teaching of the Bible was love:

Matthew 22:36-40 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And he said to him, **"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."**

Not only did He teach the importance of love but to also love our enemies:

Matthew 5:43-45 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, **Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you**, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.

**But God does not desire love out of obligation, fear, ritual, or religion but as an expression of love back to His love.** The Bible is the only book that promotes relationships with God that are built on a foundation of love and promotes this as the high calling for His Children.

Sadly, many Christian denominations and Jews claim to embrace parts of the Bible but when they reject the Lord Jesus Christ and His substitutional payment for sin, they remain under bondage to earn God's approval and are the essence of false religions. Of all of the requirements that religions devise, few if any promote the importance of God's demonstration of sacrificial love for mankind.

### **The Enemies of God:**

The Bible warns of three primary motivations of man's natural heart, the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life. Those who desire to fulfill their lusts of the flesh are very motivated to reject God's moral standards. And when God's law is thrown out, knowingly or unwittingly lying, stealing, and moral failures are also lost. To gain freedom to do evil they ignore the potential to destroy societies, families, and individual lives. The Lord Jesus Christ has a corner of the market for ethics and morality. Lust of the eyes produces greed and selfishness, not only for material possessions but ultimately to control others. This is the driving motivation for tyrants and dictators. Pride of life motivates individuals to work toward and demand that everything and everyone bow to them.

If God's moral standards are properly applied, they restrain the selfish desires of the heart. Therefore, the enemies of God are highly motivated to reject the Holy Scriptures, God's moral standards, and the Lord Jesus Christ. And, when God is rejected, finding a meaningful purpose in life, striving to perfect love, and having any hope after death are all lost. It may not be obvious, but God allows those who reject Him to have futile thinking, foolishness, and darkness in their hearts.

Romans 1:18-22 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, **who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.** For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, **but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools,**

I have met many, even with advanced degrees who proclaim that "evolution is a fact". However, there are hundreds, probably thousands of questions in every area of science that evolutionary theory fails to answer. And because many of their answers demand acceptance of astronomically impossible events, some have stated that more faith is required to believe in the "religion of evolution" than to embrace the God of the Bible.

The validity of evolution is a topic for another time. But a big problem is that there is evidence that many renowned evolutionists reject God, to justify their lives, philosophies, and moral choices. Therefore, it is proposed that the question of whether God exists or not is too important to give much credibility to evolutionists who have such conflicts of interest.

### **Embracing the Lord Jesus Christ:**

Again, the Bible either proclaims a mountain of lies or fantastic revelations of God's power. **It is proposed that the fulfilled prophecies of the Messiah, the life of Jesus Christ, His resurrection, His teachings, the countless transformed lives, and what God has done in mine and many others are convincing evidence the Bible is true.** Given the abundance of evidence, the challenge for every individual is to carefully validate the Bible. Not to listen to what is popular or to those who claim their own authority but to speak truth in your heart. If God exists, the implications are staggering.

The Bible clearly teaches that no amount of good works or sacrifices can make us acceptable before God (John 14:6). **The Bible also teaches that Jesus Christ is God and He submitted Himself to tremendous humility, pain, torture, and suffering because He loves each of us. Therefore, it is important for every individual to embrace His perfect love and that He is worthy of the highest praise and honor of our lives.** God will cause all those who sincerely receive Him to be born again (John 1:12). They will be covered with the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and will receive the right to enter directly into God's presence.

God's ultimate goal is for born-again Believers to begin a lifelong journey of building an abiding relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. [All Honor to the King- Discipleship](#) discusses important aspects of an abiding relationship with God. [Discipleship Meditation System \(DMS\)-A Handbook for Mentors](#) is designed to help build abiding friendships with the Creator God of the Universe.



## **Appendage A, The Bible has been challenged:**

It is safe to say that the Bible is the most scrutinized Book in all of history. There have been many devout atheists who have sought to prove it to be false, only for some to embrace the truths of the Bible and the Lord Jesus Christ. One example is Lee Stoble. The point isn't to promote him or his books but they are good examples of the level of scrutiny that the Bible has survived.

I grew up in a culture and attended schools that have been antagonistic and critical of the Bible. Some arguments initially sounded reasonable but over time, most have been answered or disproven.

God welcomes honest questioning but those with insincere motives usually go down perverted paths (Romans 1). It has been said that "morality dictates theology". Therefore, it is very important to seek truth regardless of wants, personal motivations, or desires.