

Christian Apologetics Series:
INTRODUCTION TO APOLOGETICS
Compiled by Dennis McBride

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INTRODUCTION TO APOLOGETICS
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I. WHAT IS APOLOGETICS?

A. GREEK = Apologia

B. ENGLISH TRANSLATION = “Defense” or “Answer” (KJV)

C. REPRESENTATIVE DEFINITIONS

1. *Practically speaking, it is to answer the question, Why are you a Christian?*
2. *Webster = “(Apology) A formal justification or defense.”*
3. *Wilbur Smith, Therefore Stand, Baker Book House = “A verbal defense, a speech in defense of what one has done or of truth which one believes.”*
4. *W. E. Vine = “A verbal defense, a speech in defense.”*
5. *Example: When you speak out in class or write a paper defending your Christian beliefs. Or when you speak out at work in defense of what you believe.*

D. BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF DEFENSE IN GENERAL

1. *Acts 21:40-22:1* - Paul, addressing the angry Jewish mob, stood “on the stairs, motioned to the people with his hand; and when there was a great hush, he spoke to them in the Hebrew dialect, saying, ‘Brethren and fathers, hear my *defense* which I now offer to you.’”
2. *Acts 25:16* - “Festus, Governor of Judea, said to King Agrippa regarding Paul, “It is not the custom of the Romans to hand over any man before the accused meets his accusers face to face, and has an opportunity to make his *defense* against the charges.”
3. *I Cor. 9:3* - Paul said, “My *defense* to those who examine me is this.”
4. *2 Tim. 4:16* - Paul, speaking of his court battles, said, “At my first *defense* no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them.”

E. BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF DEFENDING CHRISTIANITY

1. *1 Pet. 3:15* - “Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a *defense* (apologia) to every one who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.”

2. *Phil. 1:7,16* - “Both in my imprisonment and in the **defense** and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me. . . . The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel.”
3. *Jude 3* - “**Contend earnestly** for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” (Same concept, different word).
4. *Apologetics can be applied in a formal or informal setting. Both are equally important.*

F. TYPES OF APOLOGETICS

1. *Biblical*
2. *Theological*
3. *Philosophical*
4. *Practical*
5. *Evidential*
6. *Presuppositional*

II. WHY STUDY AND APPLY APOLOGETICS?

A. WE HAVE A BIBLICAL MANDATE TO DO SO

1. *1 Pet. 3:15* - “Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a **defense** (apologia) to every one who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.”
2. *Jude 3* - “**Contend earnestly** for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”
3. *2 Tim. 2:24-26* - “The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, **with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition**, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.”
4. *Titus 1:9-11* - An Elder must be one who “[holds] fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and **to refute those who contradict**. For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach, for the sake of sordid gain.”

B. WE HAVE A BIBLICAL PATTERN TO FOLLOW

1. *Paul - Examples given above under Biblical Mandate, plus -*
 - a. *Acts 9:22* - “Saul [Paul] kept increasing in strength and **confounding the Jews** who lived at Damascus by proving that this Jesus is the Christ.”

- b. *Acts 17:1-3* - “Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. And according to Paul’s custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths *reasoned* with them from the Scriptures, explaining and giving *evidence* that the Christ had to suffer and raise again from the dead, and saying, ‘This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ.’”
- c. *Acts 19:8* - “[Paul] entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months, *reasoning and persuading* them about the kingdom of God.”
- d. *Acts 28:16-24* - Paul at Rome. He was relentless!

“When we entered Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who was guarding him. And it happened that after three days he called together those who were the leading men of the Jews, and when they had come together, he began saying to them, ‘Brethren, though I had done nothing against our people, or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. And when they had examined me, they were willing to release me because there was no ground for putting me to death. But when the Jews objected, I was forced to appeal to Caesar; not that I had any accusation against my nation. For this reason therefore, I requested to see you and to speak with you, for I am wearing this chain for the sake of the hope of Israel.’

“And they said to him, ‘We have neither received letters from Judea concerning you, nor have any of the brethren come here and reported or spoken anything bad about you. But we desire to hear from you what your views are; for concerning this sect, it is known to us that it is spoken against everywhere.’

“And when they had set a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God, and *trying to persuade them concerning Jesus*, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening. And some were being persuaded by the things spoken, but others would not believe.”

2. *Apollos - Acts 18:24-28*

“Now a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John; and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. And when he wanted to go across to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him; and when he

had arrived, he helped greatly those who had believed through grace; for *he powerfully refuted the Jews in public*, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.”

C. APOLOGETICS CAN CONFIRM THE FAITH OF BELIEVERS (Its primary purpose)

1. *John 2:11* - “This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and *His disciples believed in Him.*”
2. *John 20:30-31* - “Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but *these have been written that you may believe* that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.”
3. *John 20:26-29* - Jesus with Thomas

“After eight days again His disciples were inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst, and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ Then He said to Thomas, ‘Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing.’

“Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.’”

D. APOLOGETICS CONFIRM THE SIN OF UNBELIEF (when rejected)

1. *Matt. 12:13-14* - Jesus healing a man with a withered hand--questioned by the Pharisees re: healing on Sabbath--“But the Pharisees went out, and counseled together against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.”
2. *Matt. 12:22-24* - The “unforgivable sin.”

E. APOLOGETICS MAKES PEOPLE ACCOUNTABLE TO THE TRUTH ABOUT GOD, WHICH THEY ALREADY KNOW TO BE TRUE

Rom. 1:18-22 - “The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools.”

F. APOLOGETICS OFTEN PROVIDES THE INTELLECTUAL BRIDGE NEEDED TO EMBRACE THE GOSPEL

1. ***We are rational beings:***

- a. ***Matt. 22:37*** - “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.”
- b. Faith doesn’t eliminate reason. It takes us *beyond* what we know, but never *contrary to it*.
- c. We must never deny or ignore that we are, by God’s design, rational, cognitive, thinking beings. The gospel embraces that aspect of our creatureliness.

- ***Note: 1 Cor. 15:1-5*** - The gospel is historical and rational.

“Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.”

- ***Note: On the Emmaus Road - Luke 24:13-35*** - Jesus wanted those disciples to be grounded in God’s Word, not simply in their personal experience with Him.

- d. If we depreciate or neglect the factual and intellectual aspects of our faith, we risk:

- Losing folks to subjective, emotional, experiential religious whims.
- Losing our young people to worldly philosophies.
- Being tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine - Eph. 4:14.
- Tending to doubt God with every adverse circumstance.
- Our witness will lack confidence and authority because we don’t know in whom we have believed, nor are we truly persuaded that He is able to fulfill His promises (2 Tim. 1:12).

2. ***Apologist Mark Hanna comments on the role of Christian apologetics:***

“To be sure, apologetics cannot accomplish the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit uses truth, evidence, and proof to communicate the

Christian message so that it can be understood (Matt. 13:23) and believed (Rom. 1:16).

“Without the Holy Spirit, no amount of preaching, witnessing, or adducing of evidence can avail to replace man’s exaltation of himself with repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 12:3).

“Although the apostle Paul states emphatically that his message and preaching were in the power of the Spirit so that the faith of his listeners should not rest on the wisdom of men but on the power of God (1 Cor. 2:4-5), we frequently read about him persuading and arguing for the case of the gospel (Acts 9:22; 17:2-3, 22-34; 19:8; 28:23). No incongruity is involved, however, for he was acting in accordance with the apologetic mandate which he himself enunciated in 2 Timothy 2:24-26.

“Truth, evidence, and proof are not inherently efficacious in producing saving faith, but they are instrumentally effective in the hands of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, apologetics should not be underestimated. Of course, it should never be allowed to supplant the proclamation of the gospel, but it performs an essential ancillary function nonetheless” (Mark Hanna, *Crucial Questions in Apologetics*, Baker Book House, p. 74).

III. SOME GUIDELINES FOR AN APOLOGETIC WITNESS

A. UNDERSTAND AND PRESENT CHRIST ACCURATELY

1. *It must be God-centered, not man-centered*

We must not continually present Christ on the basis of *what He will do for us* (as important as that aspect of salvation is), but must present Him on the basis of *who He is*, and bring people to an understanding of why He has an authoritative claim on their lives.

2. *Four dynamics (elements) of effective witness:*

- a. The Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:4-5)
- b. God’s Word (Rom. 10:17)
- c. Empirical Evidence (1 Cor. 15:1-4)
- d. Personal Experience (1 Tim. 1:12-17)

B. GIVE SUPPORT FOR THE GOSPEL JUST AS GOD GAVE IT TO US

1. *Foundational principle for Christian apologetics:*

Every subjective claim must have objective support before it can be verified. Anybody can claim anything and it is impossible to refute the claim, or to

substantiate the claim, without objective support. The claims of Christianity rest upon, but are not limited to, objective evidences.

- a. ***Subjective defined:*** “Having to do with the perception or conception of a thing by the mind as opposed to its reality independent of the mind” (*Webster’s New World Dictionary*).
- b. ***Objective defined:*** “Being, or regarded as being, independent of the mind; real; actual” (*Webster’s New World Dictionary*).
- c. Example: An exam or test wherein the student claims to have learned the material presented in class (subjective claim). The instructor gives a written exam whereby the student can give objective support for his subjective claim.

2. God applies this principle throughout Scripture to support His revelation:

Examples:

- a. Moses

Ex. 4:1-9 - “Then Moses answered and said, ‘What if they will not believe me, or listen to what I say? For they may say, “The Lord has not appeared to you.”’

“And the Lord said to him, ‘What is that in your hand?’ And he said, ‘A staff.’” Then He said, ‘Throw it on the ground.’ So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. But the Lord said to Moses, ‘Stretch out your hand and grasp it by its tail’--so he stretched out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand-- ‘that they may believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.’

“And the Lord furthermore said to him, ‘Now put your hand into your bosom.’ So he put his hand into his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow. Then He said, ‘Put your hand into your bosom again.’ So he put his hand into his bosom again; and when he took it out of his bosom, behold, it was restored like the rest of his flesh.

““And it shall come about that if they will not believe you or heed the witness of the first sign, they may believe the witness of the last sign. But it shall be that if they will not believe even these two signs or heed what you say, then you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground; and the water which you take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground.”’

- b. The Old Testament tests of a true prophet

- 1) **Deut. 13:1-5** - “If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,’ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you to find out if you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall follow the Lord your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him.

“But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has counseled rebellion against the Lord your God who brought you from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, to seduce you from the way in which the Lord your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from among you.”

- 2) **Deut. 18:17-22** - “The Lord said to me, ‘They have spoken well. I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And it shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him. But the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.’

“And you may say in your heart, ‘How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?’ When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.”

c. Jesus

- 1) Referred to Old Testament prophecies concerning Himself (Luke 24:27, 44; 4:20-21; 22:37; John 5:39, 40, 46-47; 15:25).
- 2) He performed signs and wonders to confirm His message (John 10:37-38).
- 3) With Thomas (John 20:24-29).
- 4) Prophecies regarding His resurrection (John 2:13-22; Matt. 12:38-40).

d. The Apostles

- 1) Preached resurrection in Jerusalem, where it could most easily have been refuted if not true.
- 2) Paul defended the faith (see previous discussion).
- 3) Apollos powerfully refuted the Jews (Acts 18:28).
- 4) John based his gospel on the claims and corresponding works of Jesus (John 20:30-31).

C. UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF “PROOF”

1. Scientific proof

Scientific proof is based on observable, repeatable phenomena (i.e. “Ivory soap floats”).

2. Legal proof

- a. Legal proof is the kind of proof entered into evidence in a court of law: eyewitness accounts, circumstantial evidence, historical documentation, etc.
- b. The truth and credibility of the witnesses and other evidence is at issue, not repeatability.
- c. An illustration of legal proof:

“A truly scientific attitude will keep open the possibility of the supernatural and test claimed extraordinary events in past history by searching questions: Were there eyewitnesses? If so, was their number sufficient and their character and intelligence trustworthy? How tenaciously did they hold to their testimony under pressure? Are there early written records, or only late records written long after mythology could have invaded oral tradition? Questions like these put the claims of other religions to supernatural events in a poor light, the claims of Christianity in a favorable light.

“In the case of Jesus’ career there were many eyewitnesses. Those who allied themselves with Jesus willingly suffered ostracism, torture, and even death for what they proclaimed concerning Him--and they felt constrained to make proclamation even at such cost. They could have saved themselves by admitting falsehood in their testimony about Jesus or simply by ceasing to witness. Furthermore, the records of Jesus’ ministry began to be written well within half a century after Jesus lived. The interim was too short for mythological development, especially with the restraining influence of both friendly and unfriendly eyewitnesses.

“The very extravagance of the stories from a naturalistic point of view makes it unlikely they were invented and accepted during the period when eyewitnesses were still living. (Concerning apostolic miracles, Paul would not have dared appeal argumentatively to the miracles he had performed among the Galatians if they had never seen him do any [see Gal. 3:4]).

“Thus the claims of other religions to the miraculous do not at all undercut Christianity’s similar claims when both are tested by the tools of historical research in an open minded way. Instead, they show that men do expect and have a right to expect God to reveal Himself in ways that are unusual” (“Excursus on Gospel Miracles”) by Robert Gundry in *A Survey of the New Testament*, Zondervan, p. 123.)

Christian Apologetics Series:
THE RELATIONSHIP OF FAITH TO FACT

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The question**
- B. The prerequisite**
- C. A working definition**

II. SOME POPULAR MISCONCEPTIONS

- A. Faith is faith in faith**
- B. Faith, in and of itself, is sacred**
- C. Faith creates reality**
- D. Faith is for those too weak to deal with real life**
- E. Faith is purely subjective**
- F. Faith need not have any basis in fact**
- G. Faith is primarily a feeling**

III. SOME KEY PRINCIPLES

- A. Faith is dynamic, not static**
- B. Faith is universal, not selective**
- C. Faith goes beyond, not contrary to**
- D. Faith is active, not passive**
- E. Faith is dependent, not independent**
- F. Faith is rational, not irrational**

Christian Apologetics Series:
THE RELATIONSHIP OF FAITH TO FACT

I. INTRODUCTION

A. THE QUESTION

Is there any relationship between faith and fact? If so, what is it?

B. THE PREREQUISITE

We must first understand what we mean by “faith” - whether Christian or “secular.”
What characteristics do each have in common?

C. A WORKING DEFINITION

1. *Heb. 11:1* - “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”
2. *1 Pet. 1:6-9* - “Though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.”
3. *“Faith is when my commitment exceeds the evidence.” Josh McDowell*

II. SOME POPULAR MISCONCEPTIONS

A. FAITH IS FAITH IN FAITH

1. *“It doesn’t matter if something is true or not. If you believe it’s true, that’s what matters.”*
2. *Usually such thinking is linked to “religious” faith: “It doesn’t matter if God exists or not. What matters is if you believe He exists.”*
3. *But Christian faith is not faith in faith, as we will see.*

B. FAITH, IN AND OF ITSELF, IS SACRED

1. *The “I never argue religion or politics” mentality.*
2. *We are not to challenge or try to change one’s beliefs.*
3. *We never operate on that basis in “real life.” Only re: religious faith.*

4. **Illustration:** An early-morning apartment house fire. People frantically calling to others who were sleeping. Imagine the response if someone were to say, “Don’t bother them. They believe all is well. We mustn’t upset their beliefs.”
5. **Christianity does not teach that faith in and of itself is sacred. Only faith in Christ is sacred. All else is deception.**

C. FAITH CREATES REALITY

1. **If you believe something hard enough, it somehow becomes true.**
2. **“Tinker Bell” mentality.**
3. **Also the approach of the mind science cults, as well as Word of Faith movement. Speak the word; create the reality.**
4. **But Christian faith doesn’t create reality; it responds to reality. We are saved by grace through faith.**
5. **Illustration:** Old man dying of malnutrition when in fact he was a millionaire.

D. FAITH IS FOR THOSE TOO WEAK TO DEAL WITH REAL LIFE

1. **Faith is for religious weaklings who can cope with real life.**
2. **But Christian faith isn’t for weaklings.**
 - a. Jesus said, “Count the cost.” You will be outcasts; some will be killed for my sake.
 - b. Paul said, “All will be persecuted.”
 - c. **1 Thess. 1:6** - “You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit.”
 - d. **Phil. 1:29** - “To you it has been granted for Christ’s sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me.”
 - e. **2 Cor. 11:23ff** - Paul’s afflictions.

E. FAITH IS PURELY SUBJECTIVE

1. **It’s a matter of one’s own opinion.**
2. **Subjective** - “Having to do with the perception or conception of a thing by the mind as opposed to its reality independent of the mind” (*Webster’s New World Dictionary*).

- a. Anyone can claim anything subjectively. We must appeal to objective evidence to verify subjective claims.
 - b. **Examples:** Students taking tests; Doctors performing surgery; athletes competing in games; faith without works being dead; testing false prophets.
3. **Objective** - “Being, or regarded as being, independent of the mind; real; actual” (*Webster’s New World Dictionary*).
 4. **But Christian faith is not purely subjective. It is faith IN Jesus Christ.**
 5. **Illustration:** The Parable of the Two Explorers (cited in Paul Little, *Know Why You Believe*, pp. 14-15).

The point: Every subjective religious claim (other than Christianity) is silenced due to lack of objective support.

“Once upon a time two explorers came upon a clearing in the jungle. In the clearing where growing many flowers and many weeds. One explorer says, ‘Some gardener must tend this plot.’ The other disagrees, ‘There is no gardener.’ So they pitch their tents and set a watch. No gardener is ever seen.

“‘But perhaps he is an invisible gardener.’ So they set up a barbed wire fence. They electrify it. They patrol with bloodhounds. (For they remember how H.G. Wells’ *The Invisible Man* could be both smelled and touched though he could not be seen.)

“‘But no shrieks ever suggest that some intruder has received a shock. No movement of the wire ever betray an invisible climber. The bloodhounds never give cry. Yet still the believer is not convinced.

“‘But there is a gardener, invisible, insensible to electric shocks, a gardener who comes secretly to look after the garden which he loves.’ At last the skeptic despairs, ‘But what remains of your original assertion? Just how does what you call an invisible, intangible, eternally elusive gardener differ from an imaginary gardener or even from no gardener at all?’“

Paul Little adds: “Evangelical scholar John Montgomery comments on this: ‘This parable is a damning judgment on all religious truth-claims save that of the Christian faith. For in Christianity we do not have merely an allegation that the garden of this world is tended by a loving Gardener; we have the actual, empirical entrance of the Gardener into the human scene in the person of Christ (John 20:14-15), and this entrance is verifiable by way of His resurrection.’“

F. FAITH NEED NOT HAVE ANY BASIS IN FACT

1. **The anti-intellectual approach to faith.**

2. *“Faith is believing something you know isn’t true.”*
3. *“All you have to do in becoming a Christian is to shelve your brains.”*
4. *Christianity is faith in an object: Christ.*

G. FAITH IS PRIMARILY A FEELING

1. *Another aspect of the anti-intellectual approach to faith.*
2. *The “I believe for every drop of rain that falls, a flower grows” quality of faith.*
3. *“Rocky Mountain High” - “Talk to God and listen to the causal reply.”*
4. *Christian faith is not feelings alone!*

III. SOME KEY PRINCIPLES

A. FAITH IS DYNAMIC, NOT STATIC

1. *Faith grows, develops, matures.*
2. *Faith is built on:*
 - a. **Personal experiences** - (John 2:11 - Water to wine; John 20:26ff - Thomas)
 - b. **Observations** - (John 20:1-10 - Empty tomb-Peter believed!)
 - c. **Reliable testimony** - (**John 20:30-31**)
 - d. **Evidence** - (includes the other three)

B. FAITH IS UNIVERSAL, NOT SELECTIVE

1. *Everyone has faith.*
2. *“I wish I had your faith” - Someone who makes such a statement misunderstands that they do have faith. They may not place it in Christ, but they have faith none-the-less!*
3. *Faith is a normal part of everyday life. Life as we know it could not exist without faith.*

Examples: Eating in a restaurant
 Sitting in a chair
 Entering a building
 Driving a car

4. *Those are examples of reasonable faith, but faith just the same.*

C. FAITH GOES BEYOND THE EVIDENCE, BUT NOT CONTRARY TO IT

1. *Remember our definition*

Faith is when my commitment exceeds the evidence.

2. *Examples*

Flying in airplane - 100% commitment.

*John 20:30-31 - Believing *beyond* the evidence.*

3. *Implication: it is fallacious to say: "Prove to me beyond any doubt that Christianity is true."*

D. FAITH IS ACTIVE, NOT PASSIVE

1. *Faith is a choice.*

2. *Issue isn't whether or not someone has faith. Issue is in whom or what do they choose to place their faith.*

3. *Someone expressing no faith in Christ might have seemingly infinite faith in themselves.*

4. *We must remember that true biblical faith is God's gift (Eph. 2:8-9) and is accomplished through the Spirit's work in the human heart.*

5. *However, from the human perspective, we must try to help unbelievers see that their unbelief is contrary to, not consistent with, the evidence.*

6. *In other words, apologetics will make an appeal to the non-believer's intellect; how-ever, the Holy Spirit must penetrate their unbelief and grant faith.*

7. *Our primary task is to present the gospel and help the unbeliever see that Christian faith is founded on fact.*

E. FAITH IS DEPENDENT, NOT INDEPENDENT

1. *Faith is only as good as its object (as explained above).*

- a. *Believing what is false doesn't make it true.*
- b. *Disbelieving what is true doesn't make it false.*

2. *Faith links us to an object, thereby determining our behavior relative to that object.*

- a. **Implication:** It matters very much what we believe.
 - b. **Illustration:** Sign, “Bridge washed out ahead.”
 - c. **Illustration: John 3:36** - “He who **believes** in the Son has eternal life, he who does not **obey** the son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides upon him.”
3. ***Don’t be afraid to point that out, and to lovingly challenge the object of people’s faith. Believe me, they will challenge yours!***

“Be ready to give an answer, a reason for the **disbelief** that is within you!”

F. FAITH (CHRISTIAN) IS RATIONAL, NOT IRRATIONAL

1. It is based on historical facts/claims.

- a. “The facts backing the Christian claim are not a special kind of religious fact. They are the cognitive, informational facts upon which all historical, legal, and ordinary decisions are based” (Clark Pinnock, *Set Forth Your Case*, Nutley; Craig Press, 1967).
- b. Jesus was an historical figure. Those who reject Him as God’s Son must explain away his claims, unique lifestyle, and miracles.
- c. The resurrection was an historical event. Those who reject the resurrection must refute the eyewitness accounts of Christ’s appearances, as well as the integrity of the biblical accounts of those appearances.
- d. The changed lives of the apostles was an historical fact. Those who reject Christ’s claims must explain how his fearful disciples were transformed into fearless, persecuted, martyred apostles (including James, His brother, who, prior to His resurrection, thought Him mentally disturbed - John 7:1-5).

2. It is based on objective evidence.

- a. God created man with intelligence.

He knows what we require as a basis for decision-making. He doesn’t ask us to commit intellectual suicide in becoming Christians.

Example: Acts 18 - The noble Bereans

- b. God came to earth in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

In doing so, He made the gospel vulnerable:

- Refute the *virgin birth* and you refute Christianity.
 - Refute the *cross* and you refute Christianity.
 - Refute the *Resurrection* and you refute Christianity.
- c. Christianity is open to attack from all sides because it makes absolute claims. Yet it still stands unrefuted after 2,000 years.
- d. Not only is it unrefuted, but it is continually being reaffirmed through archaeology, the transformed lives of believers, etc.

Christian Apologetics Series:
THE RELIABILITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT DOCUMENTS
Compiled by Dennis McBride

I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- A. Not inspiration, inerrancy, or infallibility**
- B. Unbelievers can't understand spiritual truth**
- C. Reliability is the issue**
- D. Question unbelief**

II. HOW CAN WE TEST HISTORICAL LITERATURE?

- A. Consistency is important**
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Appendix 1 - "Manuscript Evidence of the New Testament Compared with Other Authors and Works of Antiquity"

Appendix 2 - "Chronology of New Testament Manuscript Authority"

Christian Apologetics Series:
THE RELIABILITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT DOCUMENTS

I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

A. NOT INSPIRATION, INERRANCY, OR INFALLIBILITY

This lesson is not concerned with the inspiration, inerrancy, or infallibility of the New Testament, but with its historical accuracy and reliability.

B. UNBELIEVERS CAN'T UNDERSTAND SPIRITUAL TRUTH

Inspiration, inerrancy, and infallibility aren't topics we should discuss or debate with a prospective convert in a witnessing situation. If someone doesn't believe in a personal God, they certainly won't accept the concept of a God-breathed Bible. An understanding and appreciation of God's work in that area usually comes after one knows Christ (1 Cor. 2:14).

C. RELIABILITY IS THE ISSUE

However, when discussing the *reliability* of Scripture, we have all of literary research with which to present and confirm our position.

D. QUESTION UNBELIEF

1. *If someone rejects the Bible outright without giving it thoughtful consideration, we can and should question their reasons for doing so--especially in light of the Bible's unique place among ancient literature (as outlined below).*
2. *We should never let a unbeliever reject the Bible on a purely emotional or prejudicial basis (e.g., "I don't believe in miracles, therefore I reject the Bible because it claims the miraculous").*

II. HOW CAN WE TEST HISTORICAL LITERATURE?

A. CONSISTENCY IS IMPORTANT

1. *We don't want a double standard.*
2. *We must test the New Testament's reliability using the same tests used for any ancient document.*

B. THREE TESTS

These three principles of historiography are given by C. Sanders, a non-Christian military historian, in his book, *Introduction to Research in English Literary History*, New York, Macmillan Co., 1952, p. 143ff.

1. ***The Bibliographical Test***
 - a. A study of manuscript transmission (How they came down to us).
 - b. Answers the question: Is what we have what they wrote?
2. ***The Internal Evidence Test***
 - a. Are there internal discrepancies?
 - b. Answers the question: Is what they wrote right?
3. ***The External Evidence Test***
 - a. Explores sources outside the document itself that corroborate or refute its contents.
 - b. Answers the question: What sources apart from the Bible confirm its accuracy and reliability?

III. APPLYING THE TESTS

A. THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL (MANUSCRIPT) TEST

1. ***We do not have any original documents (manuscripts) of the New Testament.***
2. ***They were written on perishable materials such as Papyrus, Parchment, and Vellum***
3. ***How reliable are the copies we have. How do we know they weren't corrupted in the transmission process?***
4. ***Answering that question involves two considerations***
 - a. The number of manuscripts (hand-written copies) available.

The more manuscripts we have, the easier it is to compare writings and to recreate the original autograph. (That's why NASB is more accurate than KJV.)
 - b. The time interval between the original autograph and the extant (existing) copy or copies.
5. ***See Appendix 1, "Manuscript Evidence of the New Testament Compared with Other Authors and Works of Antiquity" (p. 44)***
6. ***See Appendix 2, "Chronology of New Testament Manuscript Authority" (p. 45)***

7. *What the Scholars say*

- a. **Frederic Kenyon**, in *The Bible and Archaeology*, Harper & Row, 1940, states that:

“The interval then between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established.”

- b. **John Warwick Montgomery** states in his *History and Christianity*, InterVarsity Press, 1971:

“To be skeptical of the resultant text of the New Testament books is to allow all of classical antiquity to slip into obscurity, for *no documents of the ancient period are as well attested bibliographically as the New Testament*” (emphasis added).

8. *What about variations in readings?*

- a. With thousands of manuscripts available, there are bound to be differences of readings from time to time.

- b. Referring to those differences, *Norman Geisler and William Nix* observe that:

“Only about one-eighth of all the variants had any weight, as most of them are merely mechanical matters such as spelling or style.

“Of the whole, then, only about one-sixtieth rise above ‘trivialities,’ or can in any sense be called ‘substantial variations.’ Mathematically this would compute to a text that is 98.33 percent pure” (*A General Introduction to the Bible*, p. 365).

They go on to say (p.367) that only 400 words of the New Testament are in doubt as to their original meaning. This amounts to only one-half of one percent of the total text.

- c. **Sir Frederic Kenyon** (one of the great authorities in the field of N.T. textual criticism) adds:

“One word of warning, already referred to, must be emphasized in conclusion. No fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith rests on a disputed reading. Constant references to mistakes and divergences of reading, such as the plan of this book necessitates, might give rise to the doubt whether the substance, as well as the language, of the Bible is not open to question.

“It cannot be too strongly asserted that in substance the text of the Bible is certain: Especially is this the case with the New Testament. The number of manuscripts of the New Testament, of early translations from it, and of quotations from it in the oldest writers of the Church, is so large that it is practically certain that the true reading of every doubtful passage is preserved in some one or other of these ancient authorities. This can be said of no other book in the world.

“Scholars are satisfied that they possess substantially the true text of the principal Greek and Roman writers whose works have come down to us, of Sophocles, of Thucydides, of Cicero, of Virgil; yet our knowledge of their writings depends on a mere handful of manuscripts, whereas the manuscripts of the New Testament are counted by hundreds, and even thousands” (*Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, p. 23).

- d. **Benjamin Warfield** (*Introduction to Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, Seventh edition, London: Hodder and Stroughton, 1907, p. 12f) says this:

“If we compare the present state of the New Testament text with that of any other ancient writing, we must . . . declare it to be marvelously correct. Such has been the care with which the New Testament has been copied--a care which has doubtless grown out of true reverence for its holy words--such has been the providence of God in preserving for His Church in each and every age a competently exact text of the Scriptures, that not only is the New Testament unrivaled among ancient writings in the purity of its text as actually transmitted and kept in use, but also in the abundance of testimony which has come down to us for castigating its comparatively infrequent blemishes.”

9. ***Other bibliographical evidence to substantiate the accuracy of the New Testament text***

- a. The writings of the early Church Fathers

If all Bibles and manuscripts were to be destroyed, we could still reconstruct all except eleven verses of the New Testament from the writings of the early Church Fathers.

These verses are documented on page 53 of *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*.

- b. Lectionaries

“Following the custom of the synagogue, according to which portions of the Law and the Prophets were read at divine service each Sabbath day, the Christian Church adopted the practice of reading passages from the N.T. books at services of worship.

“A regular system of lessons from the Gospels and Epistles was developed, and the custom arose of arranging these according to a fixed order of Sundays and other hold days of the Christian year” (Bruce Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, Oxford University Press, 1968, p. 30).

Metzger goes on to say: The lectionaries usually were rather conservative and used older texts and this makes them very valuable in textual criticism.

He reports that 2,135 have been catalogued but the majority still await critical analysis.

10. *Conclusions*

- a. John Warwick Montgomery (quoted earlier).
- b. Howard Vos, *Can I Trust My Bible*, Moody Press, 1963, p. 176:

“From the standpoint of literary evidence the only logical conclusion is that the case for the reliability of the New Testament is infinitely stronger than that for any other record of antiquity.”

B. INTERNAL EVIDENCE TEST

1. *Aristotle’s Dictum (official opinion, statement, or pronouncement)* - “The benefit of the doubt is to be given to the document itself, not arrogated by the critic to himself.” John Warwick Montgomery, *History and Christianity*, Inter-Varsity Press, 1971, p. 29.

This principle is still followed by literary critics today.

The following principles emerge from an application of Aristotle’s Dictum:

- a. “One must listen to the claims of the document under analysis and not assume fraud or error unless the author disqualified himself by contradictions or know factual inaccuracies” (John Warwick Montgomery, *Ibid.*).
- b. “Difficulties do not constitute objections, unsolved problems are not of necessity errors” (Robert M. Horn, *The Book That Speaks for Itself*, Inter-Varsity Press, 1970, p. 86).
- c. “Countless ‘objections’ have been fully resolved since this century began.”

“Think for a moment about what needs to be demonstrated concerning a ‘difficulty’ in order to transfer it into the category of a valid argument against doctrine.

“Certainly much more is required than the mere appearance of a contradiction.

“First, we must be certain that we have correctly understood the passage, the sense in which it uses words or numbers.

“Second, that we possess all available knowledge in this matter.

“Third, that no further light can possibly be thrown on it by advancing knowledge, textual research, archaeology, etc.”

2. ***Primary Source Value - The New Testament authors wrote as eyewitnesses or from first-hand information.***

a. Examples:

- 1) ***Luke 1:1-3*** - “Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the Word have handed them down to us, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus.”
- 2) ***John 19:35*** - “And he who has seen has borne witness, and his witness is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe.”
- 3) ***2 Pet. 1:16*** - “For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.”
- 4) ***1 John 1:3*** - “What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

b. They not only appealed to friendly eyewitnesses, but also appealed to unfriendly witnesses.

- 1) ***Acts 2:22*** - “Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know”

- 2) **Acts 26:24-26** - “And while Paul was saying this in his defense, Festus said in a loud voice, ‘Paul, you are out of your mind! Your great learning is driving you mad.’

“But Paul said, ‘I am not out of my mind, most excellent Fetus, but I utter words of sober truth. For the king knows about these matters, and I speak to him also with confidence, since I am persuaded that none of these things escape his notice; for this has not been done in a corner.’”

- c. One value of primary source lies in the fact that people were still alive who knew Jesus and the events of His life. They would have refuted the Gospel if it were untrue.

- 1) Competent primary source:

Biblical research and archaeology have established the following approximate dates for the New Testament documents:

Paul’s Letters -	A.D. 51-62
Mark	A.D. 64-70
Matthew	A.D. 80-85
Luke	A.D. 80-85
Acts	A.D. 85 plus
John	Before 100 A.D

Source: John Warwick Montgomery, *History and Christianity*, Inter-Varsity Press, 1971, pp. 34-35.

Note: Most other conservative sources date the Gospels and Acts up to 20 years earlier that Montgomery, thus increasing their primary source value.

“We can already say emphatically that there is no longer any solid basis for dating any book of the New Testament after about A.D. 80, two full generations before the date between 130 and 150 given by the more radical New Testament critics of today” (Nelson Glueck, cited by William Albright, *Recent Discoveries in Bible Lands*, New York, Fund and Wagnalls, 1955, p.136).

Note: Most conservative scholars date John’s writings at A.D. 90-100.

- 2) Paul Little, in his book, *Know Why You Believe*, Victor Books, p. 35, gives an argument against the possibility of Christ having been a legend. His argument would also apply in underscoring the importance of the appeal to eyewitnesses (especially unfriendly witnesses) on the part of the N.T. authors.

“For a mere legend about Christ, in the form of the Gospel, to have gained the circulation and to have had the impact it had, without one shred of basis in fact, is incredible. For this to have happened would be as fantastic as for someone in our own time to write a biography of the late Franklin Delano Roosevelt and in it say he claimed to be God, to forgive people’s sins, and to have risen from the dead.

“Such a story is so wild it would never get off the ground because there are still too many people around who know Roosevelt!

“The legend theory [that Jesus was a legend because the N.T. documents had been corrupted] does not hold water in the light of the early date of the Gospel manuscripts.”

d. A comparison

Many falsehoods have gained wide acceptance (i.e. Mormonism), however, Christianity is historical, objective truth that has never been refuted, and those who embraced it in its early days did so at the risk of their lives.

Mormonism is faith that rejects reason (tests for a prophet, subjective test of truth [burning bosom], etc.).

3. ***Prophecy***

Prophecy (God disclosing future events through his chosen spokesmen) is a major factor in determining Scripture’s accuracy and reliability.

Isaiah challenged the heathen gods of his day, saying, “Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods” (Isa. 41:23).

“In the Old Testament there are 20 consecutive chapters of prophecy in Isaiah, 17 chapters in Jeremiah, 9 in Ezekiel, 2 in Amos, to name a few. Doom was predicted for Ammon, Moab, Edom, Tyre, Sidon, Babylon and others” (Mac Arthur).

God’s standard for prophecy is always 100% accuracy (Deut. 13, 18).

a. With regard to Israel:

Robert Saucy, *The Bible: Breathed from God*, p. 38:

“Illustrative of the prophetic themes of the Bible are the prophecies relating to the nation of Israel.

“A few of these, predicted in some cases hundreds of years before the fact, include oppression in another land (Egypt) for 400 years (Gen. 15:13-16), Kings from Judah (Gen. 49:10), distinction from other peoples (Num. 23:9), dispersion and suffering because of unbelief (Deut. 28:64-67; Luke 21:20-24), continued preservation and final restoration (Amos 9:9-15; Rom. 11:25-29).

“These latter prophecies have yet to be completely fulfilled. But the absolutely unique historical event of 1948, the re-establishment of a nation after its people had been dispersed for centuries, points to the perfect fulfillment of all prophecies.

b. With regard to Tyre:

Ezekiel 26:3-16 (written 590 B.C.)

(Source: Peter Stoner, *Science Speaks*, pp. 72-79).

“This prophecy predicts the destruction of Tyre and states seven definite things which shall take place:

- 1) Nebuchadnezzar shall take the city of Tyre.
 - 2) Other nations are to participate in the fulfillment of the prophecy.
 - 3) The city is to be made flat like the top of a rock.
 - 4) It is to become a place for spreading of nets.
 - 5) Its stones and timber are to be laid in the sea.
 - 6) Other cities are to fear greatly at the fall of Tyre.
 - 7) The old city of Tyre shall never be rebuilt.
- “Tyre was a city on the northern coast of Palestine inhabited by the Phoenicians, a strong maritime people, greatly feared by their enemies. (The king of Tyre supplied timbers for Solomon in the building of the temple.)
 - “In 586 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, laid siege to the city of Tyre. The siege lasted for thirteen years; and when Nebuchadnezzar took the city in 573 B.C., he found that the Phoenicians had moved everything of value to an island, about one-half mile off the coast.
 - “Though the city was taken, Nebuchadnezzar profited nothing, and the Phoenicians were not conquered. Nebuchadnezzar

could not pursue them to their island position, so he returned to Babylon.

- “Thus the first item of the prophecy was fulfilled: (1) Nebuchadnezzar shall take the city of Tyre.
- “For 241 years the mainland city of Tyre remained very much as Nebuchadnezzar left it. Later, Alexander the Great started his great conquest. His field of campaign lay to the east, but he feared that the fleet of Tyre might be used against his homeland, so he moved south to take the city of Tyre.
- “In 322 B.C.. Alexander reached Tyre, but he was unable to take the city at once. So he captured other coastal cities and took over their fleets, but with these combined fleets he was still unable to take Tyre.
- “Alexander finally built a causeway from the mainland to the island. In building the causeway he used all the building materials of old Tyre, and that was not enough.
- “He scraped up all of the soil in and around the old city, and with it completed the causeway.
- “After seven months, by a combined attack of land forces marching in over the causeway, and the fleets of conquered cities, he took Tyre.
- “Thus items 2, 3, and 5 of the prophecy were fulfilled: (2) Other nations are to participate in the fulfillment of the prophecy. (3) The city is to be made flat like the top of a rock. (5) Its stones and timber are to be laid in the sea.
- “Other neighboring cities were so frightened by the conquest of Tyre that they opened their gates to Alexander without opposition and fulfilled another item: (6) Other cities are to fear greatly at the fall of Tyre.
- “Today visitors at the city of Tyre find that it is a very popular place for fishermen; they are spreading their nets on this very spot. Thus prediction 4 has been completely fulfilled: (4) It is to become a place for spreading of nets.
- “The great freshwater springs of Raselain are at the site of the mainland city of Tyre, and no doubt supplied the city with an abundance of fresh water. These springs are still there and still flow, but their water runs into the sea. The flow of these springs was measured by an engineer, and found to be about 10,000,000 gallons daily. It is still an excellent site for a city

and would have free water enough for a large modern city, yet it has never been rebuilt. Thus item 7 of the prophecy has stood true for more than 2,500 years: (7) The old city of Tyre shall never be rebuilt.

- “This prophecy by Ezekiel has been fulfilled to the last item. Let us try to evaluate the evidence of inspiration as supplied by the fulfillment of this prophecy.
- “History shows that while many of the cities in the vicinity of Tyre were often captured and recaptured by various forces, Tyre usually withstood these attacks and reined a free city. Tyre and Babylon represented two very different military power--Tyre, naval, and Babylon, a land force. Each has left the other strictly alone. My groups of college students were asked to imagine that Ezekiel was writing from his own human knowledge, and then to give an estimate of the following:

Probability factors:

- 1) Ezekiel had one chance in how many of knowing, or being able to predict, that Nebuchadnezzar would take the city of Tyre?

“Since Nebuchadnezzar was conquering many cities, and since Tyre was besieged four years after the prophecy was made, it must have been a reasonable thing to predict.

Nebuchadnezzar might have tried to take Tyre and failed, or he might have succeeded, or he might have never tried. An estimate of one in three seems reasonable.

- 2) What chance did Ezekiel have of knowing that Nebuchadnezzar would, in his conquering of Tyre, not completely fulfill the prophecy of destruction, but other nations would later come in and complete the fulfillment?

“The indications in the time of Ezekiel certainly were that when Nebuchadnezzar took a city he was quite capable of completing the destruction himself, so the estimate is placed at one in five.

- 3) What chance did Ezekiel have of knowing that Tyre would be made flat like the top of a rock, after it was conquered?

“How many cities have been made flat like the top of a rock after being conquered? The sites of nearly all ancient cities are marked by mounds of accumulated debris. I do not know of any other city where the ruins have been so completely cleared away, so the estimate of one in five hundred seems reasonable.

- 4) What chance did Ezekiel have of knowing that after the city had been completely cleared away it would become a popular place for fisherman?

“There is really no basis on which to make an estimate. However, taking this site merely as a little stretch of coast, and considering all sections of coasts that size, an estimate of one in ten seems reasonable.

- 5) What chance did Ezekiel have of knowing that when Tyre was made flat its building material, and even its dust, was to be laid in the sea?

“Since the site was to be cleared, the debris had to be disposed of, but it would have been far more likely to have used this material in constructing the buildings of nearby cities, so the estimate is given as one in ten.

- 6) What chance was there of other cities opening their gates to the conqueror of Tyre without resistance? The estimate is given as one in five.

- 7) What was the chance that Tyre, after being made flat, should never be rebuilt?”

“Nearly all old cities which had great natural advantages were at some time rebuilt. Tyre is in an excellent location and has an abundant supply of fresh water, so valuable in this land. The estimate chosen for this part of the prophecy is one in twenty.

- “Having given estimates for the probability of the fulfillment of each part of the prophecy, we shall get an estimate of the probability of the fulfillment of the whole prophecy by multiplying all of the estimates together.
- “The chance then of Ezekiel writing this prophecy from his own knowledge, and having it all come true, is 1 in $3 \times 5 \times 500 \times 10 \times 10 \times 5 \times 20$. This is 1 in 75,000,000.
- “This can be abbreviated as 1 in 7.5×10^7 . The exponent 7 indicates the number of ciphers that are to follow the 7.5.
- “If Ezekiel had looked at Tyre in his day and had made these seven predictions in human wisdom, these estimates mean that there would have been only one chance in 75,000,000 of their all coming true. They all came true in the minutest detail.

- c. With regard to other prophecies:

Was Tyre unique or along in prophetic importance? Not at all! Similar prophecies were given regarding:

Samaria	1 in 4×10^4
Gaza and Ashkelon	1 in 1.2×10^4
Jericho	1 in 2×10^5
The Golden Gate (of Jerusalem)	1 in 10^3
Zion Plowed	1 in 10^2
Jerusalem Enlarged	1 in 8×10^{10}
Palestine	1 in 2×10^5
Moab and Ammon	1 in 10^3
Edom	1 in 10^4
Babylon	1 in 5×10^9

“The probability of these eleven prophecies coming true, if written in human wisdom, is now found by multiplying all of these probabilities together, and the result is 1 in 5.76×10^{59} .”

“Let us try to visualize our probability of 1 in 5.76×10^{59} . Let us round this off to 5×10^{59} .

“Let us suppose that we had that number of silver dollars. What kind of a pile would this be?

“The volume of the sun is more than 1,000,000 times that of the earth, yet out of 5×10^{59} silver dollars we could make 10^{28} solid silver balls the size of the sun.

“Our group of stars, called our galaxy, comprises all of the stars which stay together in this one group. It is an extremely large group of at least 100,000,000,000 stars, each star averaging as large as our sun. At great distances from our galaxy are other galaxies similar to ours, containing about the same number of stars. If you were to count the 100,000,000,000 stars, counting 250 a minute, it would take you 750 years, counting day and night, and you would only have counted the stars in a single galaxy.

“It has been estimated that the whole universe contains about two trillion galaxies, each containing about 100 billion stars. From our 5×10^{59} dollars we could make all of the stars, in all of these galaxies, 2×10^5 times.

“Suppose we had marked one of these silver dollars, and had stirred it into the whole pile before we had made them into balls the size of the sun. Then suppose we had blindfolded a man and told him to go over all of these great balls and pick up the dollar which he thinks is the right one. What chance would he have of finding the right one?

“It would be a very great task to look over this mass of dollars. If our blindfolded man were to travel sixty miles per hour, day and night, it would take him five years to go once around a star. This would give him a very poor chance to select what might be the marked dollar from that star, but this amount of time per star would take 500 billion years for each galaxy.

“Let us suppose our man were extremely speedy, able to look over all of the dollars contained in 100 billion stars each second (instead of 500 billion years), it would still take him about 3×10^9 years to look over the whole mass. It is absurd to think that he would have any conceivable chance of picking up the right dollar.

“The chance of these eleven prophecies being written in human wisdom, and all coming true, is a similar chance to that which the blindfolded man had of finding the right dollar.

“But these prophecies, and many more, all came true. We can then draw only one conclusion, and that is that God inspired the writing of every one of these prophecies. What stronger proof can any man ask for the inspiration of the Bible?” (Stoner, pp. 97-98).

d. With regard to Jesus:

- 1) Refer to handout: Prophecies fulfilled in Christ
- 2) An overview:

Robert Saucy, *The Bible: Breathed from God*, p. 38:

“Even more than the prophecies of Israel are the predictions related to Christ, which are incredible apart from divine inspiration.

“From the details of the place of His birth in insignificant Bethlehem (Micah 5:2) to the casting of lots for His clothing at the foot of the cross (Ps. 22:14-18; Matt. 27:35), the events of His life were foretold hundreds of years prior to their occurrence.

“Some scholars conclude that a total of 333 prophecies concerning Christ have been fulfilled.

“The probability of that number of predictions concerning one single individual coming true by chance has been calculated as 1 out of 83 billion.

“With such odds, clearly these prophecies are not the product of human authorship alone. The God who knows the future and directs the course of history is the ultimate source.

“Not only do the Bible’s prophecies stand alone in their vastness and accuracy of fulfillment, but their purpose is also different than the divinations of men. Curiosity and the desire for power are the mainsprings of fortune-telling. But God discloses the future of nations and people for the purpose of revealing Himself and His will.

“Biblical prophecy is not designed to help God’s people set dates, but to understand God and His plan for history that they might align their lives with Him and His purposes. Thus, prophecy marks the Bible as a unique writing.”

3) Christ: the center of Old Testament Prophecy

- a) The Holy Spirit inspired the prophets of old to prophesy of Christ

1 Peter 1:10-12 - “As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful search and inquiry, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.

“It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--things into which angels long to look.”

Rev. 19:10 (cf. Eph. 1:9-10) - “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

- b) Some prophecies have been fulfilled already.
- c) Some prophecies have yet to be fulfilled (Eschatology).
- d) The New Testament is the key that unlocks some of the more obscure Old Testament prophecies.

4) Christ’s perspective on O.T. Prophecy

- a) **Matt. 5:17-19** - Jesus declared that He had come to fulfill all that the law and the prophets had prophesied of Him.

- b) **John 5:39-40** - “You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life.”
- c) **Luke 4:16-21** (cf. Isaiah 61:1-2) - Jesus stood in the Jewish synagogue and read from the book of Isaiah: “‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.’”

“And He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Him. And He began to say to them, ‘Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’”

- d) **Luke 24:25-27, 44-45** - Jesus encountered two despondent disciples on the road to Emmaus, and said to them: “‘O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!

“‘Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?’

“And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. . . .

“Now He said to them, ‘These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.’ Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.”

5) Evaluating Messianic prophecies

(From *Science Speaks*, Peter Stoner, Moody Press, 1969.)

We will now evaluate eight Messianic prophecies according to the science of mathematical probability.

“The Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship at Pasadena City College sponsored a class in Christian evidences. One section of the work of this class was to consider the evidence produced by the fulfilled prophecies referring to the first advent of Christ.

“The students were asked to be very conservative in their probability estimates. They discussed each prophecy at length, bringing out various conditions which might affect the probability of any man fulfilling it.

[Their goal was to answer this question regarding each prophecy:

“After discussion, the students agreed unanimously on a definite estimate as being both reasonable and conservative. At the end of the evaluations the students expressed their feelings thus: If any one were able to enter into the discussion and help in placing the estimates, as they had done, that person would certainly agree that the estimates were conservative.”

The final estimates reflected here represent twelve different classes of college students, representing more than 600 students. Dr. Stoner carefully weighed the estimates and changed some to make them more conservative.

“If the reader does not agree with the estimates given, he may make his own estimates and then carry them through to their logical conclusions.”

The students considered the following eight prophecies:

1. ***Micah 5:2*** - “As for you, Bethlehem, Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity” (cf. Matt. 2:6).
 - a. This prophecy predicts that the Christ was to be born in Bethlehem.
 - b. Our question is: One man in how many, the world over, has been born in Bethlehem?
 - c. The best estimate the students could make of this came from their attempt to find out the average population of Bethlehem, from Micah down to the present time, and divide it by the average population of the earth during the same period.
 - d. One member of the class was an assistant in the library so he was assigned to get this information. He reported that the best determination of the ration that he could determine was one to 280,000.
 - e. Since the probable population of the earth has averaged less than two billion, the population of Bethlehem has averaged less than 7,150, our answer may be expressed in the form that one man in 7,150/2,000,000,000, or one man in 2.8×10^5 was born in Bethlehem.

2. **Malachi 3:1** - “Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me” (cf. Matt. 11:10).
 - a. Our question here is: Of the men who have been born in Bethlehem, one man in how many has had a forerunner to prepare his way?
 - b. John the Baptist, of course, was the forerunner of Christ. But since there appears to be no material difference between the people born in Bethlehem and those born any other place in the world, the question can just as well be general: One man in how many, the world over, has had a forerunner to prepare his way?
 - c. The students said that the prophecy apparently referred to a special messenger of God, whose one duty was to prepare the way for the work of Christ, so there is a further restriction added.
 - d. The students finally agreed on one in 1,0-00 as being extremely conservative. Most of the members thought the estimate should be much larger. We will use the estimate as 1 in 10^3 .

3. **Zechariah 9:9** - “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (cf. Matt. 21:5; John 12:15).
 - a. Our question is: One man in how many, who was born in Bethlehem and had a forerunner, did enter Jerusalem as a king riding on a colt the foal of a donkey?
 - b. This becomes so restrictive that we should consider an equivalent question: One man in how many, who has entered Jerusalem as a ruler, has entered riding on a colt the foal of a donkey?
 - c. The students said that this was a very hard thing to place an estimate on. They knew of no one but Christ who had so entered. The students thought that at least in more modern times any one entering Jerusalem as a king would use a more dignified means of transportation.
 - d. They agreed to place an estimate of 1 in 10^4 . We will use 1 in 10^2 .

4. **Zechariah 13:6** - “And one will say to him, ‘What are these wounds between your arms [KJV “in thine hands”] ?’ Then he will say, ‘Those with which I was sounded in the house of my friends’” (Disputed re: Messianic reference).
 - a. This text is disputed as to whether it refers to Messiah or not. We’ll keep it in just to keep with Stoner’s calculations. Other prophecies could be substituted to keep the calculations on track if we desired.
 - b. Christ was betrayed by Judas, one of His disciples, causing Him to be put to death, wounds being made in His hands.

- c. There seems to be no relation between the fulfillment of this prophecy and those which we have previously considered.
- d. We may then ask the question: One man in how many, the world over, has been betrayed by a friend, and that betrayal has resulted in his being wounded in his hands?
- e. The students said that it was very rare to be betrayed by a friend, and still rarer for the betrayal to involve wounding in the hands. One in 1,000 was finally agreed upon, through most of the students would have preferred a larger number.
- f. So we will use the 1 in 10^3 .
5. ***Zechariah 11:12*** - "I said to them, 'If it is good in your sight, give me my wages; but if not, never mind!' So they weighed out thirty shekels of silver as my wages" (cf. Matt. 27:9).
- a. The question here is very simple: Of the people who have been betrayed, one in how many has been betrayed for exactly thirty pieces of silver?
- b. The students thought this would be extremely rare and set their estimate as one in 10,000, or 1 in 10^4 . We will use 1 in 10^3 .
6. ***Zechariah 11:13*** - "Then the Lord said to me, 'Throw it to the potter, that magnificent price at which I was valued by them.' So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the Lord" (cf. Matt. 27:9 - see Ryrie's note re: why Jeremiah is credited with this quote).
- a. This is extremely specific.
- All thirty pieces of silver are not to be returned.
 - They are to be cast down in the house of the Lord
 - And they are to go to the potter.
- b. You will recall that Judas in remorse tried to return the thirty pieces of silver, but the chief priest would not accept them.
- c. So Judas threw them down on the floor of the temple and went and hanged himself.
- d. The chief priest then took the money and bought a field of the potter to bury strangers in.
- e. Our question is: One man in how many, after receiving a bribe for the betrayal of a friend, had returned the money, had it refused, had thrown it on the floor in the house of the Lord, and then had it used to purchase a field from the potter?
- f. The students said they doubted if there had ever been another incident involving all of these items. but they agreed on an estimate of one in 100,000. They were very sure that this was conservative.
- g. So we use the estimate as 1 in 10^5 .

7. **Isaiah 53:7** - “He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth” (Acts 8:32-33).
- One man in how many, after fulfilling the above prophecies, when he is oppressed and afflicted and is on trial for his life, though innocent, will make no defense for himself?
 - Again my students said they did not know that this had ever happened in any case other than Christ’s. At least it is extremely rare, so they placed their estimate as one in 10,000 or 1 in 10^4 .
 - We will use 1 in 10^3 .
8. **Psalms 22:16** - “Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evildoers has encompassed me; they pierced my hands and my feet” (cf. Matt. 27:35; John 20:25).
- The Jews are still looking for the coming of Christ; in fact, He might have come any time after these prophecies were written up to the present time, or even on into the future.
 - So our question is: One man in how many, from the time of David on, has been crucified?
 - After studying the methods of execution down through the ages and their frequency, the students agreed to estimate this probability at one in 10,000 or 1 in 10^4 , which we will use.

Summary conclusions:

- If these estimates are considered fair, one man in how many men, the world over, will fulfill all eight prophecies?
- This question can be answered by applying our principles of probability.
- In other words, by multiplying all of our estimates together, or 1 in $2.8 \times 10^5 \times 10^3 \times 10^2 \times 10^3 \times 10^3 \times 10^5 \times 10^3 \times 10^4$.

(Remember that the 2.8×10^5 represents 1 in 280,000--the ratio of average world population to the average population of Bethlehem [prophecy #1]).
- Let us simplify and reduce the number by calling it 1 in 10^{28} .
- Written out, this number is 1 in 10,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000.
- This is the answer to the question: One man in how many men has fulfilled these eight prophecies?

7. But we are really concerned with the answer to the question: What is the chance that any man might have lived from the day of these prophecies down to the present time and have fulfilled all of the eight prophecies?
8. We can answer this question by dividing our 10^{28} by the total number of people who have lived since the time of these prophecies. The best information available (when Stoner wrote in 1969) indicates the number to be about 88 billion or 8.8×10^{10} . To simplify the computation let us call the number 10^{11} .
9. By dividing these two numbers we find that the chance that any man might have lived down to the present time and fulfilled all eight prophecies is 1 in 10^{17} . (You subtract exponential numbers when dividing [$28 - 11=17$]).
10. Let us try to visualize this chance.

If you mark one of ten tickets, and place all of the tickets in a hat, and thoroughly stir them, and then ask a blindfolded man to draw one, his chance of getting the right ticket is one in ten.

Suppose that we take 10^{17} silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one.

What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time, providing they wrote them in their own wisdom.

Now these prophecies were either given by inspiration of God or the prophets just wrote them as they thought they should be.

In such a case the prophets had just one chance in 10^{17} of having them come true in any man, but they all came true in Christ.

This means that the fulfillment of these eight prophecies alone proves that God inspired the writing of those prophecies to a definiteness which lacks only one chance in 10^{17} of being absolute.

Sometimes we weight our chances in the business world, and say if an investment has nine chances in ten of being profitable, and only one chance in ten of being a failure, it is safe enough for us to make the investment.

Whoever heard of an investment that had only one chance in 10^{17} of failure? The business world has no conception of such an investment. Yet we are offered this investment by God. By the acceptance of Jesus Christ as our Saviour we know, from only these eight prophecies which lack only 1 chance in 10^{17} of being an absolute proof, that that investment will yield the wonderful dividend of eternal life with Christ

Can anyone be so unreasonable as to reject Jesus Christ and pin his hope of eternal life on such a slim chance as finding the right silver dollar among this great mass, covering the whole state of Texas two feet deep? It does not seem possible, yet every man who rejects Christ is doing just that.

- 11. How about just 16 prophecies fulfilled in Christ?
 - a. There are more than 300 prophecies fulfilled in Christ’s first coming.
 - b. Let’s consider just 16 of them, at the same probability factor as the first eight. That would be 1 in $10^{28} \times 10^{17}$ or 1 in 10^{45} .
 - c. Take this number of silver dollars. If you make these into a solid ball, you will have a great sphere with a center at the earth, and extending in all direction more than 30 times as far as from the earth to the sun.

If a train had started from the earth at the time the Declaration of Independence was signed, and had traveled steadily toward the sun at the rate of sixty miles per hour, day and night, it would be about reaching its destination today [in 1969].

But remember that our ball of silver dollars extends thirty times that far in all directions.

If you can imagine the marking of one silver dollar, and then thoroughly stirring it into this great ball, and blindfolding a man and telling him to pick out one dollar, and expect it to be the marked one, you have somewhat of a picture of how absolutely the fulfillment of sixteen prophecies referring to Jesus Christ proves both that He is the Son of God and that our Bible is inspired. Certainly God directed the writing of His Word.

C. EXTERNAL EVIDENCE TEST

What sources apart from the Bible substantiate its reliability?

- 1. *The martyrdom of the disciples*
 - a. Although some of the twelve disciples wrote portions the New Testament, their willingness to die for their faith demonstrated their unyielding conviction that Scripture was true.
 - b. While it’s true that many people have died for a lie, they died because they thought it was the truth.
 - c. If Jesus were a hoax, or their writings untrue, they knew it to be so. Yet they willingly died anyway.
 - d. The distinguished lawyer, Simon Greenleaf, comments:

“The great truths which the apostles declared, were, that Christ had risen from the dead, and that only through repentance from sin, and faith in Him, could men hope for salvation.

“This doctrine they asserted with one voice, everywhere, not only under the greatest discouragements, but in the face of the most appalling errors that can be presented to the mind of man.

“Their master had recently perished as a malefactor, by the sentence of a public tribunal. His religion sought to overthrow the religions of the whole world. The laws of every country were against the teachings of His disciples. The interests and passions of all the leaders and great men in the world were against them. The fashion of the world was against them.

“Propagating this new faith, even in the most inoffensive and peaceful manner, they could expect nothing but contempt, opposition, revellings, bitter persecutions, stripes, imprisonments, torments, and cruel deaths. Yet this faith they zealously did propagate; and all these miseries they endured undismayed, nay, rejoicing. As one after another was put to a miserable death, the survivors only prosecuted their work with increased vigor and resolution.

“The annals of military warfare afford scarcely an example of the like heroic constancy, patience, and unblenching courage. They had every possible motive to review carefully the grounds of their faith, and the evidences of the great facts and truths which they asserted; and these motives were pressed upon their attention with the most melancholy and terrific frequency.

“It was therefore impossible that they could have persisted in affirming the truths they have narrated, had not Jesus actually risen from the dead, and had they not known this fact as certainly as they knew any other fact.

“If it were morally possible for them to have been deceived in this matter, every human motive operated to lead them to discover and avow their error. To have persisted in so gross a falsehood, after it was known to them, was not only to encounter, for life all the evils which man could inflict from without, but to endure also the pangs of inward and conscious guilt; with no hope of future peace, no testimony of a good conscience, no expectation of honor or esteem among men, no hope of happiness in this life, or in the world to come.

“Such conduct in the apostles would moreover have been utterly irreconcilable with the fact that they possessed the ordinary constitution of our common nature. Yet their lives do show them to have been men take all others of our race; swayed by the same motives, animated by the same hopes, affected by the same joys, subdued by the same sorrows, agitated by the same fears, and subject to the same passions, temptations, and

infirmities, as ourselves. And their writings show them to have been men of vigorous understandings.

“If then their testimony was not true, there was no possible motive for its fabrication” (*An Examination of the Testimony of the Four Evangelists*, Baker Book House, 1965 reprint of 1847 edition, pp. 28-30).

- e. They were willing to die for their faith--and most of them did.

2. *Extra-biblical authors*

The writings of the early church fathers (the first and second generation disciples of the apostles) bear witness to their unshakable trust in the inspiration and reliability of the New Testament.

- a. Eusebius

In his *Ecclesiastical History III.39*, he records the writings of Papias, the bishop of Hierapolis (130 A.D.), which Papias got from the Elder (Apostle John):

Papias said, “The Elder [John] used to say this also: ‘Mark, having been the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately all that he (Peter) mentioned, whether sayings or doings of Christ, not, however, in order. For he was neither a hearer nor a companion of the Lord; but afterwards, as I said, he accompanied Peter, who adapted his teachings as necessity required, not as though he were making a compilation of the sayings of the Lord.

“So then Mark made no mistake, writing down in this way some things as he (Peter) mentioned them; for he paid attention to this one thing, not to omit anything that he had heard, not to include any false statement among them” (cited in McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, p. 66).

- b. Polycarp (A.D. 70-156)

Was a disciple of the apostle John and succumbed to martyrdom at 86 years of age because of his relentless devotion to Christ and the Scriptures.

Polycarp’s death demonstrated his trust in the accuracy of Scripture:

“About 155, in the reign of Antoninus Pius, when a local persecution was taking place in Smyrna, and several of his members had been martyred, he was singled out as the leader of the Church, and marked for martyrdom.

“When asked to recant and live, he is reputed to have said, ‘Eighty and six years have I served [Christ], and He hath done me no wrong. How can I speak evil of my King who saved me?’

“He was burned at the stake, dying a heroic martyr for his faith.” He certainly had ample contacts to know the truth (Elgin S. Moyer, *Who Was Who in Church History*, Moody Press, 1968, p. 337).

c. Ignatius (A.D. 70-110)

He was Bishop of Antioch and was martyred for his faith in Christ. He knew all the apostles [that were still alive in his day] and was a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of the apostle John (Moyer, p. 209).

3. *Archaeology*

a. Merrill Unger summarizes:

“Old Testament archaeology has rediscovered whole nations, resurrected important peoples, and in a most astonishing manner filled in historical gaps, adding immeasurably to the knowledge of biblical backgrounds” (*Archaeology and the New Testament*, Zondervan, 1962, p 15).

b. Yale archaeologist Millar Burrows says:

“Archaeological work has unquestionably strengthened confidence in the reliability of the Scriptural record. More than one archaeologist has found his respect for the Bible increased by the experience of excavation in Palestine.” (*What Mean These Stones?*, Meridian Books, 1956, p. 1).

He goes on to expose the cause of much excessive unbelief:

“The excessive skepticism of many liberal theologians stems not from a careful evaluation of the available data, but from an enormous predisposition against the supernatural” (cited in Howard Vos, *Can I Trust My Bible?*, Moody Press, 1963, p. 176).

c. Sir Frederic Kenyon says:

“It is therefore legitimate to say that, in respect of that part of the Old Testament against which the disintegrating criticism of the last half of the nineteenth century was chiefly directed, the evidence of archaeology has been to re-establish its authority, and likewise to augment its value by rendering it more intelligible through a fuller knowledge of its background and setting.

“Archaeology has not yet said its last word; but the results already achieved confirm what faith would suggest, that the Bible can do nothing

but gain from an increase of knowledge” (*The Bible and Archaeology*, Harper & Row, 1940, p. 279).

- d. During the excavations of Jericho (1930-1936) Archaeologist John Garstang found something so startling that a statement of what they found was prepared and signed by himself and two other members of the team.

In reference to these findings Garstang says: “As to the main fact, then, there remains no doubt: the walls fell outwards so completely that the attackers would be able to clamber up and over their ruins into the city.”

Why is that so unusual? Because the walls of cities do not fall outwards, they fall inwards.

And yet in Joshua 6:20 we read, “The wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight ahead, and they took the city.” The walls were made to fall outward (*Joshua Judges*, Constable, 1931, p. 146).

- e. Scientist and Christian apologist Henry M. Morris (*The Bible and Modern Science*, Moody Press, 1956) observes:

“Problems still exist, of course, in the complete harmonization of archaeological material with the Bible, but none so serious as not to bear real promise of imminent solution through further investigation.

“It must be extremely significant that, in view of the great mass of corroborative evidence regarding the Biblical history of these periods, there exists today not one unquestionable find of archaeology that proves the Bible to be in error at any point” (*The Bible and Modern Science*, Moody Press, 1956, p. 95).

- f. Accuracy of Luke’s writings

Josh McDowell reports that:

- It was at one time conceded that Luke had entirely missed the boat in the events he portrayed as surrounding the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:13).

They argued that there was no census, that Quirinius was not governor of Syria at that time, and that everyone did not have to return to his ancestral home (Elder, pp. 159-160; Free, p. 285).

- However, archaeological discoveries prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Romans had a regular enrollment of taxpayers and also held censuses every 14 years. This procedure was indeed begun under Augustus and the first took place in either 23-22 B.C. or in 9-8 B.C. The latter would be the one to which Luke refers.

- Secondly, we find evidence that Quirinius was governor of Syria around 7 B.C. This assumption is based on an inscription found in Antioch ascribing to Quirinius this post.

As a result of this finding, it is now supposed that he was governor twice. Once in 7 B.C. and the other time in 6 A.D. (the date ascribed by Jewish historian Josephus) (Elder, p. 160).

- Lastly, in regard to the practices of enrollment, a papyrus found in Egypt gives directions for the conduct of a census.

It reads: “Because of the approaching census it is necessary that all those residing for any cause away from their homes should at once prepare to return to their own governments in order that they may complete the family registration of the enrollment and that the tilled lands may retain those belonging to them” John Elder, *Prophets, Idols and Diggers*, Bobbs-Merrill, 1960, pp. 159-160; Joseph Free, *Archaeology and Bible History*, Scripture Press Publications, 1969, p. 285).

- Again Luke is verified, and Scripture’s reliability is upheld.
- For more complete information regarding archaeology and Scripture, see Merrill F. Unger’s *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, and *Archaeology and the New Testament*. Also, Josh McDowell’s *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*.

Appendix #1

MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT
(Compared with other authors and works of antiquity)

<i>Author</i>	<i>When Written</i>	<i>Earliest Copy</i>	<i>Time Span</i>	<i>Copies</i>
Caesar 100-44 BC	900 AD	1,000 years	10	
Livy	59 BC-17 AD			20
Plato (Tetralogies)	427-347 BC	900 AD	1,200 years	7
Tacitus (Annals)	100 AD	1,100 AD	1,000 years	20
Also minor works	100 AD	1,100 AD	900 years	1
Pliny the Younger (History)	61-113 AD	850 AD	750 years	7
Thucydides (History)	460-400 BC	900 AD	1,300 years	8
Herodotus (History)	480-425 BC	900 AD	1,300 years	8
Sophocles	496-406 BC	1,000 AD	1,400 years	100
Lucretius	Died 55 or 53 BC		1,100 years	2
Catullus	54 BC	1,550 AD	1,600 years	3
Euripedes	480-406 BC	1,100 AD	1,500 years	9
Demonsthenes	383-322 BC	1,100 AD	1,300 years	200*
Aristotle (Poetics)	384-322 BC	1,100 AD	1,400 years	5**
Aristophanes	450-385 BC	900 AD	1,200 years	10

*All from one copy

**Of any one work

Above information is taken from F.W. Hall, "MS Authorities for the Text of the Chief Classical Writers", *Companion to Classical Text*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1913.

Appendix #2

CHRONOLOGY OF NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPT AUTHORITY

1. *John Ryland MMS - 130 AD*

- Oldest fragment of the New Testament
- Located in the John Ryland Library of Manchester, England.
- This manuscript helps to confirm the dating of John's Gospel as being at the end of the first century rather than the year 160 AD as some past critics had believed. It was discovered in Egypt, some distance from Asia Minor, the traditional place of composition. Therefore, it must have been in common circulation to have reached that distance.

2. *Chester Beatty Papyri - 200 AD*

- Contains major portions of the New Testament
- Located in the Chester Beatty Museum in Dublin.
- "The net result of this discovery . . . is, in fact, to reduce the gap between the earlier manuscripts and the traditional dates of the New Testament books so far that it becomes negligible in any discussion of their authenticity. No other ancient book has anything like such early and plentiful testimony to its text, and no unbiased scholar would deny that the text that has come down to us is substantially sound" (Sir Frederic Kenyon, *The Bible and Modern Scholarship*).

3. *Bodmer Papyrus II - 150-200 AD*

- Contains most of John's Gospel
- Located in the Bodmer Library of World Literature.

4. *Codex Sinaiticus - 350 AD*

- Contains almost all of the New Testament and over half of the Old Testament.
- Located in the British Museum.

5. *Codex Alexandrinus - 400 AD*

- Contains almost the entire Bible
- Located in the British Museum.

There are many more major manuscripts in existence, however, those listed here are the most important from the standpoint of our discussion.

Concerning the number of manuscripts extant today, A.T. Robertson, author of *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, states that “There are some 10,000 manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate and at least 9,000 for the other early versions. Add over 5,309 Greek manuscripts and we have over 24,633 copies of portions of the New Testament. Besides all this, most of the New Testament can be reproduced from the quotations of the early Christian writers” (*Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*).

***Christian Apologetics Series:
IS JESUS REALLY GOD?***

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Some key questions**
- B. A three-fold answer**

II. CHRIST’S CLAIMS TO DEITY

- A. Did He really claim to be God?**
- B. Looking at some key passages**
 - 1. The implications of His Trial
 - 2. Equality with the Father
 - 3. Other deity claims by Jesus
- C. Conclusion: Jesus claimed to be God!**

III. ALTERNATIVES TO CHRIST’S CLAIMS

- A. The central issue: Christology**
- B. Only four alternatives**
 - 1. Jesus is Lord (the Deliverer)
 - 2. Jesus was a Legend (a Delusion)
 - 3. Jesus was a Liar (a Deceiver)
 - 4. Jesus was a Lunatic (Self-Deluded)

*Christian Apologetics Series:
IS JESUS REALLY GOD?*

I. INTRODUCTION

A. SOME KEY QUESTIONS

1. *In the introductory chapter of this study we saw that faith is only as valid as its object.*
2. *It follows that we should address the question: Is Jesus a valid object of our faith?*
3. *Why should an unbeliever consider take Jesus seriously, and how can believers present Christ to them in a thought-provoking way?*
4. *How can we break through the myth that Jesus was merely a great man, prophet, or moral teacher.*

B. A THREE-FOLD ANSWER

This chapter answers those questions by examining:

1. *Christ's claims to deity.*
2. *An unbeliever's alternatives in responding to His claims.*
3. *Some of Christ's credentials that support His claims.*

II. CHRIST'S CLAIMS TO DEITY

A. DID CHRIST REALLY CLAIM TO BE GOD?

1. *Some people take the position that Jesus never really claimed to be God, and that we have "misunderstood" what he was really saying to the people of his day.*
2. *What did Jesus claim about himself? (Bulk of material taken from Josh McDowell, Evidence that Demands a Verdict, Chapter 6).*

B. LOOKING AT SOME KEY PASSAGES

1. *The implications of His trial*
 - a. *Mark 14:60-64*

“The high priest stood up and came forward and questioned Jesus, saying, ‘Do You make no answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You?’

“But He kept silent, and made no answer. Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, ‘Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?’

“And Jesus said, ‘I am; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.’

“And tearing his clothes, the high priest said, ‘What further need do we have of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy; how does it seem to you?’ And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.

“And some began to spit at Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him with their fists, and to say to Him, ‘Prophecy!’ And the officers received Him with slaps in the face.”

b. Christ’s trial was unique

1) Jesus was condemned for *who he was*, not for what he did. (cf. John 18:33-19:16).

2) Irwin H. Linton comments:

“Unique among criminal trials is this one in which not the actions but the identity of the accused is the issue.

“The criminal charge laid against Christ, the confession or testimony or, rather, act in presence of the court, on which He was convicted, the interrogation by the Roman governor and the inscription and proclamation on His cross at the time of execution all are concerned with the one question of Christ’s real identity and dignity.

‘What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?’” (*The Sanhedrin Verdict*, N.T., Loizeaux Bros., Bible Truth Depot, 1943, p. 7).

c. Christ’s Answer

1) Krishna Girl I met who claimed that Jesus was *denying* his deity by saying “You have said it yourself” (Matt. 26:64).

In other words, “**You** say that about me, I don’t!”

2) However, although worded differently, the substance and meaning of Christ’s response is the same throughout the gospels.

- Matt. 26:64 - “Ye say that I am” (KJV); “You have said it yourself” (NASB)
- Mark 14:62 - “I am” (KJV & NASB)
- Luke 22:70 - “Ye sayest” (KJV); “Yes, I am.” (NASB)

“These answers are really identical. The formula [in the KJV] ‘Thou has said’ or ‘Ye say that I am,’ (Luke 22:70 & 23:3) which to modern ears sound evasive, had no such connotation to the contemporary Jewish mind.

“‘Thou sayest’ was the traditional form in which a cultivated Jew replied to a question of grave or sad import. Courtesy forbade a direct ‘yes’ or ‘no’” (Frank Morison, *Who Moved the Stone?* London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1958, p.26).

d. The High Priest’s response

- 1) High Priest rent (tore) his garments.
- 2) An explanation:

“The law forbade the High Priest to rend his garment in private troubles (Lev. x 6, xxi 10), but when acting as a judge, he was required by custom to express in this way his horror of any blasphemy uttered in his presence.

“The relief of the embarrassed judge is manifest. If trustworthy evidence was not forthcoming, the necessity for it had now been superseded: the Prisoner had incriminated Himself” (Henry Barclay Swete, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1898, p. 339).

e. The Jews knew exactly what Jesus was claiming.

- 1) **Paul Little comments:** “As a result of our study, we may then safely conclude that Jesus claimed deity for Himself in a way that all could recognize. These claims were regarded as blasphemous by the religious leaders and resulted in His crucifixion because ‘He made Himself out to be the Son of God!’” (John 19:7) (*Know What You Believe*, Wheaton: Scripture Press Pub. Inc., copyright 1970, p.45).
- 2) **Robert Anderson adds** that “no confirmatory evidence is more convincing than that of hostile witnesses, and the fact that the Lord laid claim to Deity is incontestably established by the action of His enemies.

“We must remember that the Jews were not a tribe of ignorant savages, but a highly cultured and intensely religious people; and it was upon this very charge that, without a dissentient voice, His death was decreed by the Sanhedrin--their great national Council, composed of the most eminent of their religious leaders, including men of the type of Gamaliel and his great pupil, Saul of Tarsus” (*The Lord from Heaven*, London: James Nisbet & Co., Ltd., 1910, p. 5).

2. *His claim to equality with the Father*

a. *John 10:30-33 (Note context of vv. 22-33)*

“‘I and my Father are one’ Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, ‘I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?’

“The Jews answered him, ‘For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, *make Yourself out to be God.*’”

1) A word study of “one” (v. 30)

“One” = Greek “*hen*” = One essence or nature

“One” person would be the masculine “*heis*”, as in Gal. 3:28:

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one (*Heis*) in Christ Jesus.” NASB (Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol. IV, Nashville: Broadman Press 1866, pp. 186-187).

2) Once again, the Jews understood exactly what Jesus was saying.

John McDowell comments:

“Their reply rejects any chance that Jesus is threatened with stoning for His good works. Rather, it is the ‘blasphemy’. They definitely understood His teaching but, one may ask, did they stop to consider whether His claims were true or not?” (*Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, p. 95).

b. *John 5:16-18 (Note context of vv. 1-16)*

“For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath.

“But He answered them, ‘My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.’

“For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, *making Himself equal with God.*”

1) The Jewish context

“The Jews did not refer to God as ‘My Father.’ If they did, they would qualify the statement with ‘in heaven.’” (Leon Morris, *New International Commentary, the Gospel According to John*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1971, p. 309).

2) What was Jesus really saying?

A. T. Robertson comments:

“Jesus distinctly says, ‘My Father.’ Not ‘our Father.’ [His was a] claim to peculiar relation to the Father.

“Worketh even until now” - Jesus put himself on par with God’s activity and thus justifies his healing on the Sabbath” (pp. 82-83).

3) Not the expanded context of verses 19-26

4) Note Jesus’ comment in John 14:9

“Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? *He who has seen Me has seen the Father*; how do you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

5) Again, the Jews understood what Jesus was saying, and sought to kill Him for claiming to be God.

c. “I AM”

1) **John 8:58**

“Jesus said unto them, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you. Before Abraham was born, I am.’”

2) Jesus said to them, “Verily, verily, I say unto you.” His claim is prefaced by a double “amen”, which is the strongest oath. By it our Lord claimed the incommunicable name of the Divine Being. The Jews recognize His meaning, and, horrified, they sought to stone Him. (Frederick C. Spurr, *Jesus is God*, London: A. H. Stockwell & Co., 1899, p. 54).

3) Old Testament context

Ex. 3:13-15 - “Then Moses said to God, ‘Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I shall say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you.’ Now they may say to me, ‘What is His name?’ What shall I say to them?’”

“And God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM’; and He said, ‘Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

4) What was Jesus really saying?

a) “I AM” Defined

“Marvin Vincent in his *Word Studies of the New Testament* writes that Jesus’ statement is ‘the formula for absolute, timeless ‘I AM’ (*eimi*)” (Josh McDowell, *Evidence*, p. 96).

b) Jesus didn’t offer an explanation

“That we must also understand the expression ‘I AM’ (*eimi*) as intended to declare the full deity of Christ is clear from the fact that Jesus did not attempt an explanation. He did not try to convince the Jews that they had misunderstood Him, but rather He repeated the statement several times on various occasions” (Glen A. Campbell, *The Greek Terminology for the Deity of Christ*, Unpublished Th.M. Thesis: Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas Tex., Jan., 1948, pp. 12-13).

5) Again the Jews understood exactly what He was claiming. John 4:25, 26.

3. *Other claims to deity by Jesus*

- a. John 4:25-26 - I am the Messiah
- b. John 5:23-24 - Honor the Son as you honor the Father
- c. John 8:19 - To Know Me is to know the Father
- d. John 14:1 - Believe in Me, believe in the Father
- e. John 14:9 - Who has seen Me has seen the Father
- f. He spoke with authority greater than the prophets - Matt. 5:20, 22, 26, 28, etc. - “Verily, verily, I say unto you.”
- g. Heb. 1:5-8 - God the Father declares Jesus to be God.

C. CONCLUSION

1. There are many other Scripture references relating to the deity claims of Christ, however, these are sufficient to establish beyond a doubt that **JESUS CLAIMED TO BE GOD!**

2. Obviously, claiming to be God doesn't make someone God. But what options do unbelievers have regarding His claims?

III. ALTERNATIVES TO CHRIST'S CLAIMS

A. CENTRAL ISSUE: CHRISTOLOGY

1. *Christology = A study of the person, nature and work of Jesus.*
2. *Stated practically:*

When dealing with the claims of Christ, the central issue is always Mark 8:29: "Who do ye say that I am?"
3. *If Christ is who He claimed to be, then He indeed does have an authoritative claim upon our lives.*

B. WE HAVE ONLY FOUR ALTERNATIVES FOR HIS CLAIMS

1. *Jesus is Lord (the Deliverer)*
2. *Jesus was a Legend (a delusion)*
3. *Jesus was a Liar (a deceiver)*
4. *Jesus was a Lunatic (self-deluded)*

Note: Primary sources = *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, Josh McDowell; Paul Little, *How To Give Away Your Faith*, Tape Series, and other material by Mr. Little; Walter Martin, *To Every Man An Answer*, Tape Series.

C. CHRISTIANS AFFIRM THAT JESUS IS LORD (THE DELIVERER)

To deny this alternative is to automatically affirm one of the other three, and we need to seek an answer as to which one is affirmed by the people to whom we are witnessing.

D. WAS JESUS A LEGEND (DELUSION)?

1. *Objection: "We don't know if he really ever lived. The whole thing could be a fabrication."*
2. *Support for Christian position:*
 - a. Christian references to the historical Jesus.
 - 1) New Testament Documents - Most reliable historical documents available to man (See Handout)

2) Writings of the Church Fathers: Polycarp, Eusebius, Justin, etc.

b. Non-Biblical sources

- Cornelius Tacitus (Roman historian)
- Flavius Josephus (Jewish historian)
- Suetonius (Roman historian)
- Justin Martyr
- Many others, both non-Christian and Christian
- Also Encyclopedia Britannica

c. Helpful works:

- *Jesus & Christian Origins Outside the New Testament*, F.F. Bruce, Eerdmans.
- *Ancient Evidence for the Life of Jesus: Historical Records of His Death and Resurrection*, Gary R. Habermas, Nelson.

d. Conclusion

“No serious scholar has ventured to postulate the non-historicity of Jesus” (Otto Betz, *What We Know About Jesus*, SCM Press, 1968, p. 9). **JESUS LIVED**

3. *Objection:*

“Yes, Jesus lived, however His followers have distorted the record of His life & words to the extent that Jesus Himself would be shocked to hear if He were to come back today.”

4. *Support for the Christian position:*

a. What evidence can be introduced in support of a claim of fraud or misrepresentation on the part of the disciples?

(One who takes this position, if he is to be intellectually honest, must be prepared to give a reason for his disbelief, other than mere opinion.)

b. The New Testament Gospels were written within the lifetime of contemporaries of Christ.

1) Archaeology confirms this statement:

“We can already say emphatically that there is no longer any solid basis for dating any book of the New Testament after about A.D. 80, two full generations before the date between 130 and 150 given by the more radical New Testament critics of today.” Nelson Glueck (Was the world’s foremost biblical archaeologist).

“In my opinion, every book of the new Testament was written by a baptized Jew between the forties and the eighties of the first century A.D. (very probably sometime between about A.D. 50 & 75).” Nelson Glueck, cited by: John Warwick Montgomery, *History and Christianity*, Downers Grove, Ill., Inter-Varsity Press, 1971, p. 35.

- 2) Primary Source Value - The Gospels (as well as the rest of the New Testament) appeal to eyewitness or first-hand information.

Examples:

- a) Luke 1:1-4
- b) 2 Peter 1:16
- c) 1 John 1:3
- d) Acts 2:22
- e) John 19:35
- f) Luke 3:1
- g) Acts 26:24-26
- h) 1 Cor. 15

“The earliest preachers of the gospel knew the value of . . . first-hand testimony, and appealed to it time and again. ‘We are witnesses of these things,’ was their constant and confident assertion.

“And it can have been by no means so easy as some writers seem to think to invent words and deeds of Jesus in those early years, when so many of His disciples were about, who could remember what had and had not happened.

“And it was not only friendly eye witnesses that the early preachers had to reckon with; there were others less well disposed who were also conversant with the main facts of the ministry and death of Jesus.

“The disciples could not afford to risk inaccuracies (not to speak of willful manipulation of the facts), which would at once be exposed by those who would be only too glad to do so. On the contrary, one of the strong points in the original apostolic preaching is the confident appeal to the knowledge of the hearers; they not only said, ‘We are witnesses of these things’ but also, ‘As you yourselves also know’ (Acts 2:22).

“Had there been any tendency to depart from the facts in any material respect, the possible presence of hostile witnesses in the audience would have served as a further corrective” (F.F. Bruce, the Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis at the

University of Manchester, *The New Testament Documents; Are They Reliable?*, Downers Grove, Ill, Inter-Varsity Press, 1964, pp. 33, 44-46).

3) The logical implications:

“For a mere legend about Christ, in the form of the Gospel, to have gained the circulation and to have had the impact it had, without one shred of basis in fact, is incredible. For this to have happened would be as fantastic as for someone in our own time to write a biography of the late Franklin Delano Roosevelt and in it way he claimed to be God, to forgive people’s sins, and to have risen from the dead. Such a story is so wild it would never get off the ground because there are still too many people around who knew Roosevelt!

“The legend theory does not hold water in the light of the early date of the Gospel manuscripts” (Paul Little, *Know Why You Believe*, Inter-Varsity Press., p. 35).

c. If Christ’s followers did distort the truth we must still explain:

- 1) The historical fact of an empty tomb
- 2) The changed lives of the Apostles
- 3) The conversion of Saul of Tarsus
- 4) The prophecies fulfilled in Christ’s life.

Objection:

- “But the O.T. record was also distorted.”
- Not so. The Septuagint (250 BC) is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, which even the Jews of Christ’s day accepted as accurate.
- Those prophecies weren’t added after the fact.
- They were at least 250 years prior to their fulfillment.

5. *Conclusion:*

JESUS DID LIVE, AND THE EVIDENCE SUPPORTS THE GOSPEL ACCOUNTS OF HIS LIFE AND WORK.

E. WAS JESUS A LIAR (A DECEIVER)?

1. *Objection: “Jesus made claims relative to Himself that he knew to be false.”*
2. *Support for the Christian position:*

- a. Watch for the condescending logical contradiction.

“One possibility is that Jesus Christ lied when He said He as God--that He knew He was not God, but deliberately deceived His hearers to lend authority to His teaching.

“Few, if any seriously hold this position. Even those who deny His deity affirm that they think Jesus was a great moral teacher. They fail to realize those two statements are a contradiction. Jesus could hardly be a great moral teacher if, on the most crucial point of His teaching, i.e., His identity, He was a deliberate liar” (Paul Little, *Know Why You Believe*, Inter-Varsity Press, p. 34).

“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 up 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*, The Macmillian Co., 1952, pp. 40-41).

- b. We cannot divorce His words from His claims and character (John 10:37-38).

“It is not his teachings [alone] which make Jesus so remarkable, although these would be enough to give him distinction. It is a combination of the teachings with the man himself. The two cannot be separated” (Kenneth Scott Latourette, Historian of Christianity at Yale University, *The History of Christianity*, Harper and Row, p. 44).

- c. To say that He was a liar, one must support such a position by indicating examples in Christ’s life which are contrary to truth. This has not been done.

1) What evidence exists to support the claim that Jesus lied?

2) What evidence is there against that claim:

- a) The empty tomb
- b) The changed lives of his followers
- c) His appearances following the resurrection
- d) His prophecies that came to pass
- e) His lifestyle and teachings
- f) Paul’s conversion
- g) Many other problem areas

- d. It would be more “unreasonable” to claim that Christ was a liar than to accept Him as Lord.

“This testimony, if not true, must be downright blasphemy or madness. The former hypothesis cannot stand a moment before the moral purity and dignity of Jesus, revealed in his every work and work, and acknowledged by universal consent.

“Self-deception in a matter so momentous, and with an intellect in all respects so clear and so sound, is equally out of the question. How could he be an enthusiast or a madman who never lost the even balance of his mind, who sailed serenely over all the troubles and persecutions, as the sun above the clouds, who always returned the wisest answer to tempting questions, who calmly and deliberately predicted his death on the cross, his resurrection on the third day, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the founding of his Church, the destruction of Jerusalem--predictions which have been literally fulfilled?

“A character so original, so complete, so uniformly consistent, so perfect, so human and yet so high above all human greatness, can be neither a fraud nor a fiction. The poet, as has been well said, would in this case be greater than the hero. It would take more than a Jesus to invent a Jesus” (Philip Schaff, Christian Historian; *The History of the Christian Church*, W.B. Eerdmans, 1962, p. 109).

F. WAS JESUS A LUNATIC (SELF-DELUDED)?

1. ***Objection: “Jesus sincerely thought that He was the Son of God. However, He was sincerely wrong, not unlike many in institutions today who think that they are God, or Napoleon, etc.”***

2. ***Cultural implications are severe:***

“We must remember that for someone to think that He is God, especially in a culture that is fiercely monotheistic, and then to tell others that their eternal destiny depends on believing in Him is not slight flight of fantasy but the thoughts of a lunatic in the fullest sense. Was Jesus Christ such a person?” (Josh McDowell, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, Campus Crusade, 1972, p. 110).

3. ***Support for the Christian position:***

a. Again, one who takes this position has the burden of proof. What evidence can be given to support the theory?

“The charge of an extravagant, self-deluding enthusiasm is the last to be fastened on Jesus. Where can we find the traces of it in history? Do we detect them in the calm authority of his precepts? In the mild, practical and beneficent spirit of his religion; in the unlabored simplicity of the language with which he unfolds his high powers and the sublime truths of religion; or in the good sense, the knowledge of human nature, which he always discovers in his estimate and treatment of the different classes of men with whom he interacted?

“Do we discover this enthusiasm in the singular fact, that whilst he claimed power in the future world, and always turned men’s minds to heaven, he never indulged his own imagination, or stimulated that of his disciples, by giving vivid pictures or any minute description of that unseen state?

“The truth is, that, remarkable as was the character of Jesus, it was distinguished by nothing more than by calmness and self-possession. This trait pervades his other excellencies. How calm was his piety!

“Point me, if you can, to one vehement, passionate expression of his religious feelings. Does the Lord’s Prayer breathe a feverish enthusiasm? . . . His benevolence, too, though singularly earnest and deep, was composed and serene. He never lost the possession of himself in his sympathy with others; was never hurried into the impatient and rash enterprises of an enthusiastic philanthropy, but did good with the tranquillity and consistency which marked the providence of God” (Channing, cited by P. Schaff in *The Person of Christ*, American Tract Society, 1913, pp. 98, 99).

- b. Although an option, this position has never been supported. On the contrary, the inconsistency is just too great to warrant serious consideration.

“The historical difficulty of giving for the life, saying and influence of Jesus any explanation that is not harder than the Christian explanation is very great.

“The discrepancy between the depth and sanity of His moral teaching and the rampant megalomania which must lie behind His theological teaching unless He is indeed God has never been satisfactorily explained. Hence the non-Christian hypotheses succeed one another with the restless fertility of bewilderment” (C.S. Lewis, *Miracles, A preliminary Study*, Macmillan Co., p. 113).

- c. As with the Legend and Liar theories, those holding to the Lunatic theory are faced with the problem of explaining:

The Resurrection, etc., etc.

4. *Conclusion:*

DUE TO AN ABSENCE OF SYMPTOMS, THE CONSISTENCY OF HIS CHARACTER AND ACTIONS, AND THE ADDITIONAL OBJECTIVE EVIDENCE, WE CONCLUDE THAT JESUS WAS NOT A SELF-DECEIVED LUNATIC.

G. LIMITATIONS OF THIS PRESENTATION

1. ***It must be kept in mind that this study is designed to help us to break through some of the superficial objections and uninformed opinions of people concerning Jesus Christ.***

It cannot transform an unbelieving heart. That is the Holy Spirit's role. Our role is to prayerfully present the gospel and its evidence.

2. ***People will reject the clear evidence for several reasons:***

- a. Ignorance
 - 1) Often self-imposed
 - 2) This material may be of help to them
- b. Pride
- c. A moral problem