

Faith & Reason

Evidence for God
& Christianity

*The Skeptics Guide to Faith
for the Heart & Mind*

A Journey for the Truth



D. Palmer

Beliefs in almost everything are either shaken or strengthened by the lack of or the support of evidence. At a young age, we become disillusioned when we learn that fairy tales don't exist. It often rocks our belief in almost everything supernatural. For me, it was a growing skepticism that led me to research the evidence for God and Christianity. What I discovered is that there is overwhelming support for both faith and reason.

On November 1, 1885 Pope Leo 13th wrote about the evidence for God and the Christian faith:

"It cannot be difficult to find out which is the true religion, if only it be sought with an earnest and **unbiased mind; for proofs are abundant and striking.** We have, for example, the fulfillment of prophecies, miracles in great numbers, the rapid spread of the faith in the midst of enemies and in the face of overwhelming obstacles, the witness of the martyrs, and the like. From all these it is evident that the only true religion is the one established by Jesus Christ Himself and which He committed to His church to protect and to propagate."

After discovering that the proof is beyond any doubt I had to conclude that it's true and we are all given free will to believe for ourselves. For some, after learning the truth about something they may continue to deny it, even at their own peril. Like a student that is told that there will be an exam at the end of the semester, he or she can deny that there will be one, but whether they like it or not they're going to face it. So, what if Christianity is true and there is an exam or an accountability for our lives. Will we pass or fail?

Many of us take our future for granted not knowing whether it will be given to us or not, living as if there are no consequences. Imagine this: Every night you go to bed and wake up in the morning, night after night, you go to

sleep and wake up. What if one night you went to bed, and when you woke up you were not in your bed, but standing before God. Would you plead ignorance, tremble in fear, or would you be excited to hear "well done!"

C.S. Lewis was an intellectual giant of the twentieth century and arguably one of the most influential writers of his day. His most popular accomplishment and universally acknowledged classic is *The Chronicles of Narnia* which has sold more than 100 million copies. Lewis was a committed atheist. After finally admitting God existed, Lewis gave in and knelt in prayer to become what he described later as "the most dejected and reluctant convert in all of England." His conversion to a robust Christianity required years of intellectual struggle and came only after being convinced that faith was reasonable. He summed it up best: "If Christianity is not true, it's of no relevance, but if it is, it's of infinite importance!"

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C.S. Lewis

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Survey says...The World wants Proof!



D. Palmer

We live in an increasingly skeptical culture where evidence is required to prove nearly every claim and extraordinary claims require extraordinary proof. Today's culture is constantly attacking Christianity, questioning everything and casting doubts. This constant undermining of the faith has had a significant impact on our society which has developed the **“Doubting Thomas Syndrome,”** where indisputable proof is required for the simplest of claims. For some, a belief in Christianity is based on a blind leap of faith, for others tangible evidence is required. Based upon recent survey results our society needs hard-core proof.

- ◆ A UK poll, found that the proportion of people who say that they believe in God has “slumped” from 50 per cent in 1991 to 28 per cent in December 2016.
- ◆ The Pew Research Center recently surveyed Americans who have left the church. They found that 49 per cent of respondents gave a lack of belief for their reason and cited that a “lack of evidence” led them to move away from religion.
- ◆ The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University released survey findings in December 2016 stating young Catholics are leaving the faith earlier than ever before, two-thirds between ten and seventeen. Their reasons are deeper than being bored at Mass, in their own words they “need evidence and Proof.”

To say that this is a crisis in faith is an understatement. This is a generation that is struggling with faith in ways that we have never witnessed. They say that “religion is not compatible with what they are learning in high school or university”. Only 13 per cent said they would ever consider returning to the Church. The secular world has

declared that due to a lack of evidence, believing in Christianity is like believing in the Easter Bunny or the Tooth Fairy.

If a business conducted surveys and focus groups for feedback for why their business was failing and the findings repeatedly concluded the same response, would they ignore the most glaring factor harming their business? Any credible organization would respond with a strategy and action plan. The church needs to respond similarly to the major root for its decline - a lack of belief. If we ignore the research, the Church in North America will face a diminishment similar to Europe.



The good news is that the strategy is not complex. We have a template to follow: Simply present the evidence, inspire and teach the faith just as the first Christians did. When there is an overwhelming plethora of evidence for God and Christianity, why keep it a secret especially when so much is at stake?

Whether it's the proof of the New Testament's authenticity, prophecies Jesus fulfilled, His resurrection, science proving creation and a supreme being, or archaeology proving that the Bible is a historical document, after reviewing the diversity of evidence you can only come to one conclusion: It's true! There is a God, creation is His greatest miracle, Jesus did exist and He was who He said He was. For the atheist, it will take more faith to continue doubting or to live in denial than it will to believe.

St. Peter said it best about providing evidence: “Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an account of the hope that is in you.” (1 Peter 3:15) It is the prayer of this publication to provide rational examples of evidence, so you can share that defence. In addition, the publication aims to inspire you to discover or deepen your belief that God exists, and Christianity is true and encourage you to learn more about the God who created you, His love and His mercy.

Source; <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/08/24/why-americas-nones-left-religion-behind/>
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/belief-in-god-slumps-after-turbulent-year-mqz9j7mlh>
<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/why-catholics-are-leaving-the-faith-by-age-10-and-what-parents-can-do-about-it-48918/>

It's Atheism that Requires Faith!

D. Palmer

Is it reasonable to believe in things we can't see or touch? Are faith and reason opposites like oil and water? We develop trust in what we can't see only when we are convinced it's verifiable. We can't see gravity, magnetism, love, radio and sound waves, ultraviolet light, the entire universe, air and oxygen, yet because of the evidence, their existence is undeniable.

Peter Kreeft, PhD., Professor of Philosophy Boston College and church scholar says that "belief in God is far more rational than atheism. Logic can show that there is a God. If you look at the universe with common sense and an open mind, you'll find that it's full of God's fingerprints." He adds "there must be an unmoved mover to begin all the motion in the universe, a first domino to start the whole chain moving. Since mere matter never moves itself, everything that begins must have a cause. Nothing can come from nothing. Yet some atheists find the existence of an infinite number of other universes more rational



than the existence of a Creator. How far will some go to avoid having to conclude that God created the universe?"

Scientists agree that the universe had a beginning in the big bang. Peter Kreeft adds to this premise, "the conclusion that since there was a big bang, there must be a Big Banger, so, who exactly are the close-minded ones in this debate?" St. Thomas Aquinas, the 13th century philosopher and theologian, observed that "things move but nothing moves for no reason, something must cause that movement and whatever caused that must be caused by something else." Kreeft adds that "Sir Isaac Newton, the father of modern physics, believed fervently in God, was he not a real scientist?"

Kreeft adds, "the conclusion that God exists does not require faith, atheism requires faith. It takes faith to believe in everything coming from nothing. It takes only reason to believe in everything coming from God."



Does the Church Oppose Science?

The Myth of Catholic Irrationality

Christopher Kaczor Catholic Education Resource Center (Edited for space)



Many people believe that faith and reason or religion and science are locked in an irreconcilable war of attrition against one another, that one must choose to be a person of learning, science, and reason, or choose to embrace religion, dogma, and faith alone. In this view, the church opposes science, and if one embraces science, then one ought to reject the church.

The scientific method looks to evidence to settle questions, so perhaps it would be fair to look at evidence to answer the question of whether the Catholic church is opposed to science and reason. If the Catholic Church were opposed to science, we would expect to find no or very few Catholic scientists, no sponsorship for scientific research by Catholic institutions, and an explicit distrust of reason. In fact, we find none of these.

Historically, Catholics are numbered among the most important scientists of all time. Including; Rene Descartes, discovered analytic geometry and the laws of refraction. Blaise Pascal invented the adding machine, hydraulic press, and the mathematical theories of probability. Augustinian priest, Gregor Mendel, founded modern genetics. Alexander Fleming, invented penicillin. Louis Pasteur, founded microbiology and created the first vaccine for rabies and Anthrax. Cleric Nicolaus Copernicus first developed the view that the earth rotated around the sun.

Jesuit priests have a long history of scientific achievement. They contributed to the development of pendulum clocks, pantographs, barometers, reflecting telescopes and microscopes, scientific fields as varied as magnetism, optics and electricity. They observed, in some cases before anyone else, the colored bands on Jupiter's surface, the Andromeda nebula and Saturn's rings. They theorized about the circulation of the blood, the theoretical possibility of flight, the way the moon affected the tides, and the wave-like nature of light. Star maps of the Southern Hemisphere, symbolic logic, flood control measures on the Po and Adige Rivers, the introduction of plus and minus signs into Italian mathematics all were typical Jesuit achievements. Scientists as influential as Fermat, Huygens, Leibniz and Newton were not alone in counting Jesuits among their most prized correspondents.

The scientist credited with proposing in the 1930s what came to be known as the “Big Bang” theory of the origin of the universe was Georges Lemaître, a Belgian physicist and Roman Catholic priest.



More recently, Catholics constitute a good number of Nobel Laureates in physics, medicine, and physiology, including Erwin Schrodinger, John Eccles, and Alexis Carrel. How can the achievements of so many Catholics in science be reconciled with the idea that the Catholic Church opposes scientific knowledge and progress?

One might try to explain such distinguished Catholic scientists as rare individuals who dared to rebel against the institutional Church, which opposes science. However, the Catholic Church as an institution funds, sponsors, and supports scientific research in the Pontifical Academy of Science and in the departments of science found in every Catholic university across the world, including those governed by Roman Catholic bishops, such as the Catholic University of America.

This financial and institutional support of science by the church began at the very birth of science in seventeenth-century Europe and continues today. Church buildings were not only used for religious purposes but designed in part to foster scientific knowledge. As Thomas Woods notes, “cathedrals in Bologna, Florence, Paris, and Rome were designed in the seventeenth and eighteenth century to function as world-class solar observatories.” Nowhere in the world were there more precise instruments for the study of the sun.

In the words of J.L. Heilbron of the University of California, Berkeley, “the Roman Catholic Church gave more financial aid and support to the study of astronomy over six centuries. From the recovery of ancient learning during the late middle ages into the Enlightenment, than any other, and probably, all other institutions.” This financial and social support extended also to other branches of scientific inquiry. Such support is not only consistent with official Catholic teaching but is enthusiastically endorsed. In the church’s view, science and faith are complementary to each other and mutually beneficial. In 1988, Pope John Paul II addressed a letter to the director of the Vatican Astronomical Observatory noting, “science can purify religion from error and superstition: religion can purify science from idolatry and false absolutes. Each can draw the other into a wider world, a world in which both can flourish.”

“Science can purify religion from error and superstition. Religion can purify science from idolatry and false absolutes. Each can draw the other into a wider world. A world in which both can flourish.”

Pope John Paul II

People often view faith and reason as in opposition to one another. Our culture often pits faith against reason, as if the more faith-filled you are, the less reasonable you are. Faith and reason in the minds of so many people are “polar opposites,” never to be combined and never to be reconciled. In this way, our culture often offers us false alternatives: live either by faith or by reason. To be religious is to reject reason; to be reasonable is to reject religion. But like other false alternatives, such thinking artificially limits our freedom. Rather than choosing between faith and reason the church invites us to harmonize our faith and our reason because both are vitally important to human well-being.

It is a commonly held view that one must choose between science and faith. Why is this? There are several core issues that drive this misunderstanding. Genesis claims that God created the world in seven days, but science indicates that the universe, including the earth, developed over billions of years. Secondly, Genesis talks about the first man, Adam, and the first woman, Eve, being created by God, as well as all animals being created by God. Science indicates that all life, including human life, evolved over millions of years. Dr. Scott Hahn has pointed out that we might misunderstand the point of the seven days spoken about in Genesis if we do not understand that the ancient Hebrew word for seven is the same word used for “making a covenant.” So, when it is said that God created the world in seven days, the text is communicating to its original readers that God created the world in a covenantal relationship with the divine. It was this idea, that the world is an orderly creation from an intelligent God, that led to the beginnings of science. For if the world is not intelligible and orderly, there would be no point in trying to understand its laws of operation, the laws of nature which scientific investigation seeks to discover.

At this point, we are in a position to come to a judgement about the question of whether the church opposes science. We have the many Catholic scientists of distinction, from the beginning of the use of the scientific method until now, who argue that there is no conflict between their faith and their pursuit of science. We have the institutional Church sponsoring scientific endeavors of all kinds, at Catholic universities around the world, in the construction of cathedrals, and at the Vatican itself. We also have the explicit Catholic teaching that faith and reason are not opposed but rather complementary, and that scientific reasoning and faith are mutually enriching.

Evidence for God Intelligent Design?

D. Palmer



Has science discovered God? Creation is the greatest of all miracles and science is now confirming it. After several decades of study, many scientists have gone from being atheists to becoming believers in a higher intelligence, admitting that the universe and life itself appear to be part of a grand design pointing to a creator. George Smoot, the Nobel Prize winning scientist said, “there is no doubt that a parallel exists between the big bang as an event and the Christian notion of creation from nothing.” Scientists who used to scoff at the Bible’s account of creation, are now admitting that the biblical concept for creation from nothing has been right all along even using terms like “Super-intellect”, “Creator”, and even “Supreme Being” to describe this designer.

Consider for a moment that for life to exist, the conditions in our solar system and our own planet need to be perfect. There are numerous fundamental principles that must be in place for life to occur. Gravity, light, precise planet mass, magnetic field, a planet protected by gas, an oxygen rich atmosphere, water, continental land masses, temperature, orbital path, a moon to stabilize the earth’s axis, distance from the sun and many, many more. Scientists agree that to eliminate just one of those principles would make earth uninhabitable.

If there is a super intelligent Creator, is he just some cosmic force or is he a personal being like us? Many scientists like Arthur L. Schawlow, professor of physics at Stanford University and winner of the Nobel Prize in physics believed these new discoveries provide compelling evidence for a personal God. He wrote, “it seems to me that when confronted with the marvels of life and universe, one must ask why and not just how. The only possible answers are religious... I find a need for God in the universe and in my own life.”

If the Bible was right about creation from nothing, might it also be trustworthy regarding God, life and purpose? With an understanding of how miraculous human life is in our universe, agnostic astronomer George Greenstein was led to ask “is it possible that suddenly, without intending to, we have stumbled upon the scientific proof of the existence of a supreme being?” Michael Faraday was a founder of electromagnetism, discoverer of two laws of electrolysis and of numerous chemical compounds. In all he published nearly 400 scientific publications. When asked about his Christian faith he replied, “the book of nature is written by the finger of God.” He further stated that “our hope is founded on the faith that is in Christ.”

Werner Arber, a Swiss microbiologist and geneticist, shared the 1978 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. Pope Benedict XVI appointed him as President of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences in January 2011. Arber says, “I know that the concept of God helped me to master many questions in life; it guides me in critical situations, and I see it confirmed in many deep insights into the beauty of the functioning of the world.”

Alan Sandage, cosmologist (winner of the Crawford prize in Astronomy), said: “I find it quite improbable that such order came out of chaos. There has to be some organizing principle. God to me is a mystery, but is the explanation for the miracle of existence. Why there is something instead of nothing.”

Francis Collins, MD, PhD, Director of the Human Genome Project led a consortium of scientists who read over three billion letters of the human genome, the human DNA. He has received The National Medal of Science, The Presidential Medal of freedom, America’s highest civilian honour, and has been recognized by three U.S. Presidents. He writes, “I am a scientist and a believer, and I find no conflict between those world views.” As a Christian, Collins sees DNA as “God’s language and the elegance and complexity of our own bodies and nature as a reflection of God’s plan.” As a former atheist, Collins found that it was impossible to go on living in such a state of uncertainty and thus became a Christian.



Dr. Francis Collins

Collins asks, “Can you pursue both an understanding of how life works using the tools of genetics and molecular biology, and worship a creator? Aren’t evolution and faith in God incompatible? Can a scientist believe in miracles like the resurrection?” He says he finds no conflict here. Collins writes “that long before Darwin, there were many thoughtful interpreters like St. Augustine, who found it impossible to be exactly sure what the meaning of that amazing creation story was supposed to be. I have found there is a wonderful harmony in the complementary truths of science and faith. The God of the Bible is also the God of the genome. God can be found in the cathedral or in the laboratory. By investigating God’s majestic and awesome creation, science can actually be a means of worship.”

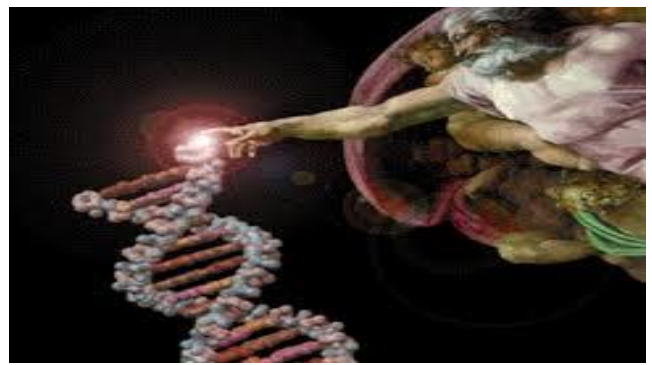
Dr. John Lennox is a Professor of Mathematics at the University of Oxford and Fellow in Mathematics and the Philosophy of Science at Green Templeton College, Oxford. He says:

“The beauty of the scientific laws reinforces my faith in an intelligent divine creator. The more I understand science, the more my faith in God is confirmed, because of my wonder at the breadth and sophistication of His design.”



Robert Jastrow, in his book, “God and The Astronomers,” describes the discoveries of recent years and the theological implications of the new insights afforded by science into mankind’s place in the cosmos. Jastrow had no Christian agenda behind his conclusions, however, he freely acknowledges the compelling case for a Creator. He writes of the shock and despair experienced by scientists who thought they had squeezed God out of their world. He said, “for the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance and as he is about to conquer the highest peak, he pulls himself over the final rock and is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.”

In 2001, 600 scientists from around the world collectively wrote a document called “*A scientific dissent from Darwinism.*” They wrote, “we are skeptical of claims for the ability of random mutation and natural selection to account for the complexity of Life. Careful examination of the evidence for the Darwinism Theory should be encouraged.” Scientists eligible to sign this statement include leading biologists, geneticists, quantum chemists & physicists, who must either hold a Ph.D. in a scientific field such as biology, chemistry, mathematics, engineering, computer science: Or, they must hold an M.D. and serve as a professor of medicine.



Winning a Nobel Prize is unquestionably the highest possible recognition of intellectual achievement. In 2002, Baruch Shalev produced a publication titled, “*100 Years of Nobel Prizes,*” a statistical analysis of Nobel prizes given in the fields of chemistry, physics, medicine, economics, peace, and literature between 1901 and 2000. The research considers whether there are any common factors among Nobel winners. A striking fact is that 86.2 percent of Nobel Prize laureates identified as believers in a creator, 65.4 percent identified as Christians. Only 10.5% of total winners identified as being either atheist, agnostics, or freethinkers. Dr. John Lennox sums it up, “Look at the Nobel prize winners, the idea that there is an essential conflict between science and religion is demonstrably false...The real conflict is between atheism and theism.”

All of this leads us to one question: The universe, accident or miracle? Science points to a creator, an intelligent designer that created and designed the universe.

Below is a sampling of Famous Christian scientists

Nicholas Copernicus	(Planets going around the sun)
Isaac Newton	(Optics, mechanics, & mathematics)
Blaise Pascal	(The theory of probability)
Johannes Kepler	(Planetary motion about the sun)
Galileo Galilei	(Work on the solar system)
Rene Descartes	(Father of modern philosophy)
Gregor Mendel	(Math foundations of genetics)
Guglielmo Marconi	(Physicist wireless telegraphy)
Louis Pasteur	(Founded microbiology)
Francis Collins	(Director Human Genome project)
Sir Francis Bacon	(Established the scientific method)
Georges Lemaître	(Proposed the Big Bang theory)

Source; <http://www.pewforum.org/2009/11/05/scientists-and-belief>
<http://www.godandscience.org/apologetics/quotes.html> <http://www.dissentfromdarwin.org/>
<http://y-jesus.com/more/scc-science-christianity-compatible/7>
[CNN.com/ why this scientist believes in God](http://CNN.com/why-this-scientist-believes-in-God)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEkWz6DAAOU
<https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/science/catholic-contributions/the-church-opposes-science-the-myth-of-catholic-irrationality.html>
100 Years of Nobel Prizes

Biblical Archaeology

D. Palmer



What did Jesus say about archaeology? He said during His entry into Jerusalem that ***“The stones would shout out!”*** (Luke 19:1-39) *As He approached the city, His disciples “with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, said, blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven! Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, ‘Teacher, order your disciples to stop.’ Jesus answered, ‘I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.’”*

Can we trust the Bible? The answer is an overwhelming YES! If the names, places and events in the Bible are true, wouldn't it be reasonable and logical to find physical evidence for their existence? So, what archaeological proof is there? You don't have to look very far because there is plenty!

During the past century, there have been numerous discoveries, small and large, of ancient civilizations that authenticate the biblical scriptures. In addition, there is an abundance of archaeological evidence that validates that the Bible is not a list of legends or myths, but a historical document. There is now a vast collection of attested archaeological evidence of the Hittite civilization from the mid-second millennium BC, and excavated sites of Jericho, Samaria, Shiloh, and Gezer. These are a few of the discovered ancient cities cited in the Bible.

The significance of archaeology to corroborate the biblical text cannot be overstated. Whether it's inscriptions on discovered tablets or slabs with hieroglyphics, to the skeptic this evidence provides real value that biblical events did in fact happen, authenticating and substantiating the biblical texts. The following examples are only a glimpse into some of the biblical facts archaeology has corroborated. **(Biblical texts are in bold)**

The Pilate Inscription

In 1961, the archaeological world was taken back to the first century Roman province of Judea. A group of archaeologists were excavating an ancient Roman theater near Caesarea which was a leading city in the first century located on the Mediterranean Sea. A limestone block was found there with an inscription.



The inscription is believed to be part of a larger inscription dedicating a temple in Caesarea to the emperor Tiberius. The inscription clearly states, “Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judea.” The Roman prefect usually lived in Caesarea and only went to Jerusalem for special purposes. An inscription of Pilate found in Caesarea, fits what is described in the Bible. The dating of the inscription relating to Tiberius (42 BC-37AD) places the governor Pontius Pilate at the same place and time as the Bible's information about Jesus. The significance of the Pilate Inscription corroborates the significance of the crucifixion of Jesus. The inscription supports the historical reliability of the cross by supporting the existence of one of its central characters. The Pilate Inscription offers remarkable archaeological testimony that a man named Pontius Pilate once governed Judea. **(John 18:38; 19:4,6) (Luke 13:1)**

Crucifixion

Throughout history, crucifixion has been one of the most painful and shameful ways to die. In 1968, Greek archaeologist Vassilios Tzaferis, found the first indisputable remains of a crucifixion victim.



From an analysis of the skeletal remains of the victim, medical professionals from the Hadassah Medical School in Jerusalem were able to determine that the victim was a male. The most significant piece of the victim skeleton was his right heel bone. A large spike had been hammered through the right heel. Between the head of the nail and the heel bone, several fragments of olive wood were found lodged. Finding a heel bone with a several inch-long spike intact, along with the fragments of olive wood, is indicative of the fact that the feet of crucifixion victims were attached to the Cross using nails. **(John 19:16-30)**

Paulus Boundary Stone

Paulus was the Proconsul of Cyprus under Claudius (1st century AD). Paulus is mentioned in (**Acts 13:7**) as residing in Paphos, a city in Cyprus. This is where Paul, accompanied by Barnabas and other companions, overcame the attempts to turn the proconsul away from the faith and converted Paulus Sergius to Christianity. The boundary stone of Claudius mentioning Sergius was discovered in 1887.



The Pool of Siloam

In (**John 9**), Jesus encountered a man born blind. Jesus spat on the ground, made mud, placed it on the man's eyes, and told him to go "wash in the pool of Siloam." The Siloam Pool has long been considered a sacred Christian site. Traditionally, the Christian site of the Siloam Pool was the pool built by the Byzantine empress Eudocia (c. 400–460 A.D.) to commemorate the miracle recounted in the New Testament. However, the exact location of the original pool as it existed during the time of Jesus remained a mystery until June 2004. During construction work to repair a large water pipe south of Jerusalem's Temple Mount, at the southern end of the ridge known as the City of David, archaeologists Ronny Reich and Eli Shukron identified two ancient stone steps. Further excavation revealed that they were part of a monumental pool from the Second Temple period, the period in which Jesus lived. The structure discovered was 225 feet long, with corners that are slightly greater than 90 degrees with the widening end oriented toward Tyropoeon valley. The Siloam Pool is adjacent to the area in the ancient City of David (Jerusalem) known as the King's Garden and is just southeast of the remains of the fifth-century church and pool traditionally believed to be the sacred Christian site.



"I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out." Jesus Christ (**Luke 19**)

Source: <http://www.equip.org/article/biblical-archaeology-factual-evidence-to-support-the-historicity-of-the-bible/> <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/http://apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=13&article=1420>
<http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-sites-places/biblical-archaeology-sites/the-siloam-pool-where-jesus-healed-the-blind-man/>
<http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/> (Israel Antiquities Authority)

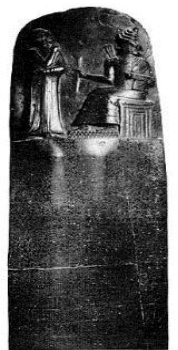
Evidence to Support the History in the Bible

Paul L. Maier, Christian Research Journal (Edited for space)

Ever since scientific archaeology started a century and a half ago, the consistent pattern has been this: the hard evidence from the ground has borne out the biblical record again and again — and again. The Bible has nothing to fear from the spade. There are many more examples that corroborate biblical evidence. The following short list provides only a few of the significant discoveries:

The Code of Hammurabi

This seven-foot black diorite stele, presently located in the Louvre museum, contains 282 engraved laws of Babylonian King Hammurabi (fl. 1750 BC). The common basis for this law was a common Semitic law of retribution in the ancient Near East, which is clearly reflected in the Pentateuch. (**Exodus 21:23–25**)



The Nuzi Tablets

20,000 clay tablets datable to 1500 BC, reveal institutions, practices, and customs remarkably congruent to those found in **Genesis**. These tablets include treaties, marriage arrangements, rules regarding inheritance, adoption, and the like.



The Merneptah Stele

A seven-foot slab engraved with hieroglyphics, also called the Israel Stele, boasts of the Egyptian pharaoh's conquest of Libyans and peoples in Palestine, including the Israelites: "Israel — his seed is not." This is the earliest reference to Israel in nonbiblical sources and demonstrates that, as of 1230 BC, the Hebrews were already living in the Promised Land.



The Moabite Stone

A three-foot stone slab, also called the Mesha Stele, confirms the revolt against Ahab's family, 850 BC, and that Israel had "perished forever." (**2 Kings 3**) reports that Mesha, the king of Moab, rebelled against the king of Israel following the death of Ahab.



Obelisk of Shalmaneser III

In (**2 Kings 9–10**), Jehu is mentioned as King of Israel (841–814 BC) that the growing power of Assyria was already encroaching on the northern kings prior to their ultimate conquest in 722 BC, is demonstrated by a six-and-a-half-foot obelisk discovered in the ruins of the palace at Nimrud in 1846. On it, Jehu is shown kneeling before Shalmaneser III and offering tribute to the Assyrian king, the only relief we have to date of a Hebrew monarch.



Burial Plaque of King Uzziah

In Judah, King Uzziah ruled from 792 to 740 BC, a contemporary of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah. Like Solomon, he began well and ended badly. In (**2 Chronicles 26**) his sin is recorded, which resulted in his being struck with leprosy later in life. When Uzziah died, he was interred in a "field of burial that belonged to the kings." His stone burial plaque has been discovered on the Mount of Olives.



The Sennacherib Prism

The Prism of Sennacherib is dated to approximately 689 B.C. and contains in its text the annals of King Sennacherib, son of Sargon II, one of the kings of Assyria who reigned from 701–681 B.C. The Prism is believed to have been excavated from the mound at Kuyunjik, at the modern location of Mosul, Iraq. The inscriptions on the object contain the following: On inscribed sides of this clay



prism, King Sennacherib recorded eight military campaigns undertaken against various peoples who refused to submit to Assyrian domination. In all instances, he claims to have been victorious. As part of the third campaign, he besieged Jerusalem and imposed heavy tribute on Hezekiah, King of Judah — a story also related in the Bible, where Sennacherib is said to have been defeated by "the angel of the Lord" who slew 185,000 Assyrian soldiers (**2 Kings 19**) The Prism corroborates the biblical account of Assyria's invasion of Judah, and subsequent siege of the city of Jerusalem. This event is recorded in the Old Testament in (**2 Kings, chapters 18 and 19**). This siege took place during the reign of King Hezekiah, who reigned in Judah from approximately 728 to 699 B.C.

The Cylinder of Cyrus the Great

(**2 Chronicles 36:23 and Ezra 1**)

Reports that Cyrus the King of Persia, after conquering Babylon, permitted Jews in the



Babylonian Captivity to return to their homeland. Isaiah had even prophesied this (**Isa. 44:28**). This tolerant policy of the founder of the Persian Empire is borne out by the discovery of a nine-inch clay cylinder found at Babylon from the time of its conquest, 539 BC, which reports Cyrus's victory and his subsequent policy of permitting Babylonian captives to return to their homes and even rebuild their temples.

Right: a section of the digitally unwrapped Ein Gedi scroll, bearing text from **Leviticus**.



Right: Tel Dan inscription—writing on a ninth-century B.C. stone slab (or stela) that furnished the first historical evidence of the **biblical King David**.



Right: Seal bearing the inscription to Shema, servant of Jeroboam, from Megiddo (**1 Kings 11:29-40**)



Right; "Western Wall." A small segment of a retaining wall originally erected as part of the **Second Jewish Temple erected by Herod the Great 19 BCE**



Evidence for Jesus Christ

Secular evidence for the Existence of Jesus

D. Palmer



Christianity is based upon the historically documented life of Jesus. His story has been told for more than 2,000 years and was prophesied for hundreds more. Churches

honoring Jesus have been built in every corner of the world in remembrance of His crucifixion and love for humanity. If you travelled the world and asked the question, “Who is Jesus?” Most people would reply by saying that Jesus was a man, a prophet and some may even say, He was the Son of God. Modern and early historians are unanimous in their account that a man known as Jesus lived in the first century. He is referred to as a teacher, a man of wonderful works, a person with abundant radical followers. His crucifixion and his resurrection are documented by these very historians. These individuals were mostly pagan and hostile towards Christianity. They discuss mystical occurrences credited to Jesus and often attribute the miracles and wonders to sorcery.

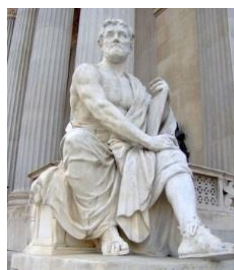
There is an abundance of non-biblical, historical evidence that supports the existence of Jesus. Following are ten examples of non-Christian sources documenting the existence of Jesus and His group of believers known as Christians. Modern scholars, secular and non, universally acknowledge the authenticity of these references, thus proving without doubt, the historical evidence of the existence of Jesus.

1. Emperor Nero AD 15-68.

Nero blamed the Christians (the name given to the followers for their belief in Jesus Christ) for the fire that destroyed Rome in 64 AD.

2. Tacitus (a Roman senator) 55-120 AD.

Scholars consider Tacitus’s references of the execution of Jesus by Pontius Pilate to be both authentic and of historical value as an independent Roman source. His writings refer to the Christians’ superstitions, their punishments and subsequent torture.



Tacitus Vienna Parliament

3. Suetonius (a Roman court official) 49 AD.

He recorded that there were Christians in Rome less than 20 years after Jesus’s execution. He reported that they were suffering and dying for their faith and conviction that Jesus lived, died, and rose from the dead.

4. Pliny the Younger (the Roman governor) 112 AD.

He wrote to Emperor Trajan, seeking advice as to how to treat the Christians. He recounts that he had killed Christian men, women and children. He explained his concern that Christians chose death over bowing to a statue of the emperor or cursing Jesus.

5. Thallus (a secular historian) AD 52.

He was quoted by other historians of the time as saying the darkness enveloped the land during the late afternoon hours when Jesus died by crucifixion.

6. Phlegon (a secular historian) AD 80.

He comments in his chronicles on the darkness at the time of Christ’s crucifixion.

7. Mara Bar-Serapion (a Syrian philosopher) 70 AD.

He compared Jesus to the philosophers Socrates and Pythagoras.

8. Lucian of Samosate (a Greek satirist) AD 120-180.

He spoke scornfully of Jesus and the Christians. He said, “the Christians worship a man to this day...the person who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account.”

9. The Babylonian Talmud – (A vast collection of Jewish laws and traditions (non-Christian)) Written

between the 2nd-5th century. Traditions taught that Jesus was accused of practicing sorcery and that he was hanged on the eve of the Passover (hanged was another term for crucifixion).

10. Josephus (a Jewish priest & historian) AD 37-100.

He refers to Jesus’s works, followers, and His crucifixion. Josephus wrote: “Now there was a man about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call Him a man, for He was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of men as to receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to Him both many of the Jews and Gentiles. He was the Christ, and when Pilate at the suggestion of the principal men among us had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him, and the tribe of Christians so named from him are not extinct at this day.”

The New Testament

Where did it come from and is it Authentic?

How do we know that the content in the “New Testament” is what the original authors wrote nearly 2,000 years ago?

D. Palmer

There is a technique scholars use to authenticate historical documents or ancient manuscripts. It is a scientific methodology called **“textual criticism.”** This science proves or disproves the accuracy of historical documents by:

- Comparing them to other archived documents from the same time.
- Comparing the accuracy of the ancient copies and possible variances.
- Comparing their context to other copies.
- Comparing the number of ancient copies made.
- Comparing the time lapse from when the copies were written and the original events.



The chart of ancient writings below compares their authenticity proving without doubt that the authenticity of the New Testament is far more reliable than any other historical document. Secular scholars and historians do not dispute any of these comparisons.

Written Works	When Written	Earliest Copy	Time Lapse	Copies
Greek Historian Herodotus	488-428 BC	900 AD	1300 Years	8
Thucydides	499-460 BC	900 AD	1300 Years	8
Tacitus (Roman Senator)	100 AD	1100 AD	1000 Years	20
Caesar's Gallic Wars	58-50 BC	900 AD	950 Years	9
Livy's Roman History	59 BC-17 AD	900 AD	900 Years	20
New Testament	40-100 AD	130 AD	30 Years	5309

The four Gospels and Paul's Epistles were written not long after the crucifixion: Mark AD70, Matthew AD80, Luke AD85, John AD95, Paul AD55. Even the best critics and skeptics trust this data within a small window plus or minus. These testimonies were written thousands of miles apart with little discrepancy or inconsistency and with no means of communication among the authors to corroborate their testimonies. These eye witness testimonies are the most legitimate of all ancient writings, especially if we compare these writings to the likes of what we know and accept about others such as Alexander the Great 330AD. The earliest geographic sources of Alexander are 300 to 400 years after his death and yet no one doubts what we know about his life.

“The authenticity of the New Testament manuscripts dramatically stands alone as the best preserved literary works of all antiquity.”

Nicky Gumbel
Developer of The Alpha Course



Source: Who is Jesus/ Alpha Studies/ <http://www.catholic.com/>
The Resurrection Evidence that Changed a Generation
of Scholars - Professor Gary Habermas

Odds of One Person Fulfilling 8 Prophecies?

1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000

D. Palmer:

Having predictions about a person and events come true requires more than hunches or inklings. The Old Testament prophets foretold over 300 prophecies of a coming Messiah. These prophecies were written hundreds of years before Jesus was born, and His fulfillment of them was recorded by eye witnesses. Below are just a few examples of prophecies Jesus fulfilled.

- ◆ How does one predict the specific date of the appearance of a great future leader who will be betrayed and rejected by His own people, then be silent before His accusers?
- ◆ How does one predict Jesus being born in a specified city? (Bethlehem) This is what the prophet Micah did 700 years before Jesus was born.
- ◆ How does one predict the death of Jesus by Crucifixion? A manner of death unknown for hundreds of years and foresee the executioners gambling for His clothing? This is what David did in 1000 BC.
- ◆ How does one predict hundreds of years in advance that Jesus would be crucified with two others who would have their legs broken?
- ◆ How does one predict that Jesus would visit the second Jewish Temple and be killed before its destruction which occurred in AD 70?
- ◆ How does one predict that Jesus would be born of a virgin, be a prophet and speak in parables?
- ◆ How does one predict that Jesus would be buried in a rich man's tomb?
- ◆ How does one predict that a messenger would live in the wilderness and prepare the way for Jesus? This was fulfilled by John the Baptist.

What are the odds that one person could fulfil so many predictions? The “science of probability” attempts to determine the chance that a given event will occur. The accuracy of the science of probability has been well established without doubt. For example, insurance rates are fixed according to statistical probabilities.

Professor Emeritus of science at Westmont College, Peter Stoner and his students calculated the probability of one man fulfilling eight prophecies (predictions) made concerning Jesus. The estimates were worked out by twelve different classes representing some 600 university students. The students carefully weighed all of the factors,

discussed each prophecy at length, and examined the various circumstances. They made their estimates conservative enough so that there was unanimous agreement even among the most skeptical students. Stoner also encouraged other skeptics or scientists to make their own estimates to see if his conclusions were correct. He then submitted his figures for review to a committee of the American Scientific Affiliation. Upon examination, they verified that his calculations were dependable and accurate.

For example, concerning Micah 5:2, where it states the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, Stoner and his students determined the average population of Bethlehem from the time of Micah to the present, then they divided it by the average population of the earth during the same period. They concluded that the chance of one man being born in Bethlehem was one in 300,000. After examining only eight different prophecies, they conservatively estimated that the chance of one man fulfilling all eight different prophecies was one in 100,000,000,000,000,000!

To attempt to understand this number, Stoner says, imagine filling the state of Texas knee-deep in silver dollars. Include one silver dollar with a black check mark on it. Then, turn a blindfolded person loose in this sea of silver dollars. The odds that the first coin they would pick up would be the one with the black check mark, are the same odds as eight prophecies being fulfilled accidentally in the life of Jesus.



In another calculation, Stoner used 48 prophecies and arrived at the extremely conservative estimate that the probability of 48 prophecies being fulfilled by one man was 1 with 157 zeros. The probability for over 300 historically documented prophecies being fulfilled by one man is impossible, unless you're Jesus! Stoner concludes, “Any man who rejects Jesus Christ as the son of God, is rejecting a fact, proved perhaps more absolutely than any other fact in the world.” Even mathematicians and statisticians who were atheists had to acknowledge that it is scientifically impossible to deny that Jesus is the Messiah.

Sources; Mathematician David Williams / Professor Peter W. Stoner, Chairman, Mathematics and Astronomy. Pasadena City, Pasadena, California, Science Speaks The American Scientific Affiliation <http://www1.cbn.com/biblestudy/biblical-prophecies-fulfilled-by-jesus> <http://www.biblebelievers.org.au/radio034.htm>

How did Jesus refer to Himself?

D. Palmer

Scholars agree that Jesus was a religious teacher and some even say a prophet, but is Jesus God? For some, this may be pushing it. Jesus said, “your sins are forgiven.” Who can forgive sins except God? Jesus claimed to be God and accepted being called God by His disciples. Thomas said to Jesus, “my Lord and my God” (John 20:28). Below are just a few examples of how Jesus referred to Himself.

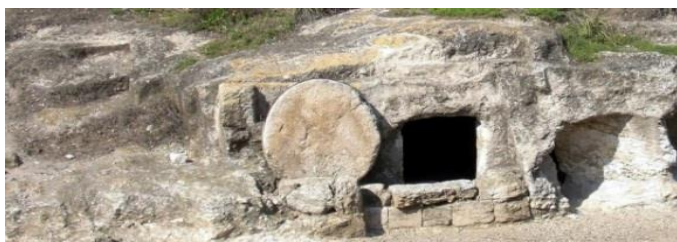
“If you come to me, I will set you free”
“If you welcome me, you welcome God”
“If you receive me, you receive God”
“Anyone who has seen me, has seen God”
“I am the way, the truth, and the life”
“If you believe in me, you will never die”
“I am the light of the world”
“I am the bread of life”

Was Jesus who He Claimed to be?

There are only three options to consider:

1. He wasn't God, but He thought He was, which would make Him delusional.
2. He wasn't God, and went around deceiving everyone, which would make him a liar.
3. He was who He said He was, the Son of God.

Eye witnesses testify that Jesus healed the sick, raised the dead and performed numerous miracles which are documented inside and outside of the Bible. He had a series of books written about Him before He was born. He fulfilled over 300 prophecies, including the place (Bethlehem) of his birth, the manner of His death and His resurrection. Perhaps the single most significant piece of evidence is found in Jesus's resurrection, beginning with the absence of His body from the tomb. To prevent anyone from stealing the body, which might validate Jesus's claim to rise from the dead, a Roman guard was placed outside Jesus's tomb. When the tomb was discovered open, it was only His body that was missing. His burial cloths were still present.



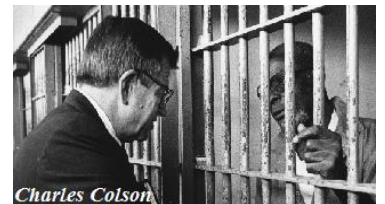
Evidence for His Resurrection

The celebration and witness of Jesus's followers is one of the most significant pieces of evidence of His resurrection. They said, “we've seen Him, we spoke with Him, we saw His wounds.” On numerous occasions, many witnesses said they saw Jesus after his death. On one occasion there were 500 witnesses. The Apostles also performed signs and wonders in Jesus's name.

There was an explosion of evangelization as the early Christians shared the stories of miracles that Jesus performed, His fulfillment of prophecies and His teachings. They were prepared to accept any punishment before denying Him. If they had not witnessed Jesus risen from the dead, they would have been disillusioned or gone into hiding after His crucifixion. Instead they went to their deaths as courageous witnesses proclaiming that He rose from the dead. They only had to deny His resurrection to have their lives spared.

Charles Colson served as Special Council to President Richard Nixon. Colson gained notoriety at the height of the Watergate scandal in 1972, and pleaded guilty to obstruction of justice.

While in prison, he became a Christian and founded a non-profit ministry “Prison Fellowship.” Colson says it best about the resurrection:



“I know the resurrection is a fact, and Watergate proved it to me. How? Because 12 men testified, they had seen Jesus raised from the dead, then they proclaimed that truth for 40 years, never once denying it. Every one was beaten, tortured, stoned and put in prison, all but one, had a martyr's death. They would not have endured that if it weren't true. Watergate embroiled 12 of the most powerful men in the world-and they couldn't keep a lie for three weeks. You're telling me 12 apostles could keep a lie for 40 years? Absolutely impossible! People will give their lives to what they believe to be true, but they will never give their lives for what they know is a lie.”

The evidence is overwhelming that the first Christians believed that Jesus was the prophesied Messiah. They shared His words of repentance, love and mercy as the Christian message spread throughout the Roman empire and beyond, where today, there are over 2 billion Christians worldwide. This could never have happened without the resurrection of Jesus. It is beyond any reasonable doubt that Christianity is true, it then becomes a leap of faith to remain a disbeliever.

Current Reality

Doubts are a part of the human condition. Even the martyred apostles St. Peter and St. Thomas had doubts: (Matthew 14:29-33) Jesus said, 'Come.' So, Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came towards Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened and began to sink. He cried out, 'Lord, save me!' Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, 'You of little faith, why did you doubt?' When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.'

In (John 20:24-31) Thomas refused to believe that the other disciples had witnessed seeing Jesus after His resurrection. They told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.'

Our modern secular society has developed the "doubting Thomas" syndrome resulting in the number of religiously unaffiliated growing significantly. Referred to as "nones," they are the second largest group in North America and are currently the largest group in Europe. In the United States, "nones" make up almost a quarter of the population and, in the past decade, American "nones" have overtaken Catholics, Protestants, and all followers of non-Christian faiths.

There are prophecies that religion would fade from relevancy as the world modernized and surveys are finding that it's happening at a startling pace. Soon France will have a majority secular population, so will the Netherlands and New Zealand. In addition, the United Kingdom and Australia will soon lose their Christian majorities. Religion is rapidly becoming less compatible with western society.



We are witnessing an apostasy (abandonment of religious belief) faster than has ever been seen and the consequences for those leaving may be dire. This is especially true for young adults and particularly millennials who need to be adequately prepared when facing atheistic university professors and a growing secular world. The need to share the truth is more urgent today than at any other time and as C.S. Lewis said, "it's of infinite importance."

Turning the Tide



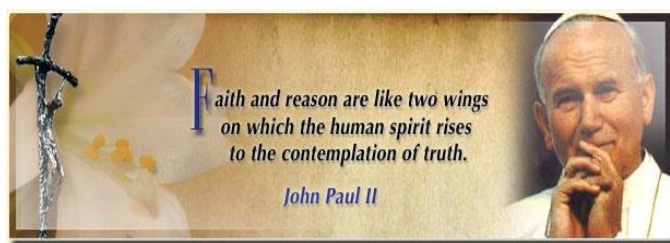
With every tide, there are ebbs and flows and our society is currently at a spiritual low. To turn the tide, we need only listen to what every poll has revealed. Regardless of age, almost fifty per cent of those who have walked away from the church have stated they want to see some evidence.

Those remaining in the pews are there on faith, many of whom want to help evangelize. They just want to know how. The great news is the fix is not complicated and we have a multitude of answers for them! They need tools and we have plenty: This publication is just one. So, let's start sharing the evidence with family and friends.

The case for God and Christianity is true and is an open-and-shut case. We get to see our invisible God in many ways especially through His visible Son, Jesus. The facts are compelling and overwhelming. We have the support of science, archaeology, fulfilled prophecies, evidence of Jesus's life and resurrection and plenty more.

Christianity is a religion of faith and reason, of the heart and mind, and we have been given the gift of "free will" to draw our own conclusions. Peter Kreeft Ph.D., professor of philosophy at Boston College says it best: "The conclusion that God exists doesn't require faith, atheism requires faith. It takes faith to believe in everything coming from nothing. It only takes reason to believe in everything coming from God."

So, when asked, why are you a Christian? Answer, because it's true, the evidence is beyond any reasonable doubt!



Source:
www.google.ca/amp/relay.nationalgeographic.com/proxy/distribution/public/amp/2016/04/160422-atheism-agnostic-secular-nones-rising-religion



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