

10/11/2012 EVIDENCEONLINE.ORG EVIDENCE THAT THE BIBLE IS TRUE

Evidence is presented here that the Bible is true and a reliable document and therefore Christianity is true. Evidence can be collected from observations in Science History and Experience. The most important area is History because the Bible claims that God has revealed Himself in History in the Person of Jesus.

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REASONS WHY WE CAN TRUST THE BIBLE ACCOUNT-NEW TESTAMENT

The Gospel accounts do not stand alone. They receive heavy support from both the writers of the New Testament letters and from the Old Testament prophets, who wrote about the life of Jesus while his coming was still in the future.

Only letters or gospels from apostles [who were eyewitnesses of the ministry and resurrection of Jesus] were accepted or from those closely associated with them.

[What we have seen and heard we announce to you also.1 John 1.3](#)

[We have not depended on made up stories in making known to you the mighty coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. With our own eyes we saw his greatness. 2 peter 1.16](#)

[So then, our brothers, stand firm and hold onto those truths which we taught you, both in our preaching and in our letter... With my own hand I write this: GREETINGS FROM PAUL. This is the way I sign every letter; this is how I write. 2 Thessalonians 2.15 and 3.17](#)

[Jesus promised that all the apostles' teaching would be directed by the Holy Spirit.](#)

[The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and make you remember all that I have told you. John 14.26](#)

Paul's letters appeared first. They can be accurately dated by comparing the details in them with the accounts of Paul's travels in Acts and by references to Paul's letters in the writings of the apostles' immediate successors. Some had been written by 60AD [Paul's first imprisonment at Rome] and the rest by 65AD [Paul's second imprisonment and death]. Written while many still lived who could remember what Jesus said and did, they give an outline of the Gospel which agrees with the accounts given in the Gospels. Also in agreement is the Gospel outline found in Acts and in the other New Testament letters written by Peter, James, John, Jude and the writer to the Hebrews.

[I passed on to you what I received, which is of the greatest importance: that Christ died for our sins, as written in the Scriptures \[the writings of the Old Testament Prophets\]; that he was buried and that he was raised to life three days later, as written in the Scriptures; that he appeared to Peter and then to all twelve apostles. Then he appeared to more than five hundred of his followers at once, most of whom are still alive, although some have died. Then he appeared to James, and afterwards to all the apostles. Last of all he appeared also to me \[Paul\]. 1 Corinthians 15.3-8](#)

The Gospels themselves appeared from about 60AD onwards. Mark, who is mentioned in Acts and in the letters, wrote down Peter's preaching. We also have two of Peter's letters. Matthew wrote a list of Jesus' sayings which he later expanded with further material and with material from Mark. Luke who was Paul's companion, did careful research collecting material into which he inserted Matthew's sayings and Mark's account. He also wrote Acts and is mentioned in the letters. John wrote last to provide additional information. We also have his three letters and the revelation given to him. We get a considerable knowledge of Jesus from the selections given, which Jesus said the Holy Spirit would make sure to happen. The Gospels were immediately accepted as accurate accounts of the apostles' teaching at a time when many people could still remember Jesus.

[Many people have done their best to write a report of the things that have taken place among us. They wrote what we have been told by those who saw these things from the beginning and who proclaimed the message. And so, your Excellency, because I have carefully studied all these matters from their beginning, I thought it would be good to write an orderly account for you. I do this so that you will know the full truth about everything which you have been taught. Luke 1.1-4](#)

The writings were copied and circulated. The New Testament writers read each others' writings and the letters were read in several places. By 100AD two collections of the books had appeared, the Gospel and the Apostle [Gospels and Acts-letters].

[The Scripture says, A worker should be given his pay. 1 Timothy 5.18 quoting Luke 10.7](#)

[As you wait for that Day \[the return of Jesus\], do your best to be pure and faultless in God's sight and to be at peace with him. Look on our Lord's patience \[his delay in coming\] as the opportunity he is giving you to be saved, just as our dear brother Paul wrote to you, using the wisdom that God gave him. This is what he says in all his letters when he writes on the subject. 2 Peter 3.14-16 referring to Paul's letters.](#)

[After you have read this letter, make sure that it is read also in the church at Laodicea. Colossians 4.16](#)

[Write down what you see, and send the book to the churches in these seven cities; Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Revelation 1.11](#)

The Early Church Fathers [immediate successors to the apostles] writing from 100AD onwards quote extensively from the New Testament with comments about contacts with the apostles and about the authors of the Gospels. We have copies of many of their writings. There are also scanty references in Roman and Jewish writings of this time from which a brief outline of Jesus can be gathered.

Then we have early manuscripts [handwritten copies] of the New testament. They can be dated by the form of the handwriting and by the material written upon. We have fragments from as early as 150AD e.g. the John Rylands fragment of John's Gospel. We have the Chester Beattie and Bodmer manuscripts written between 200 and 300AD containing most of the New Testament. There are the Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus from 350AD containing most of the whole Bible, and several others from the following century. We also have portions from 400AD onwards of the Syriac and Latin translations that were made from the Greek around 150AD. By comparing these and many others we are able to ascertain the original New Testament text extremely exactly.

Archaeology gives further confirmation. The Gospels and Acts show a very exact knowledge of details about people and places of the first century AD which strongly proves that they were based on eyewitness accounts.

The New Testament is written in the form of Greek spoken in the first century. Also in many places the Greek of the Gospels, including Jesus' words and the apostles' speeches in Acts, is a word for word translation from Aramaic, the language of Jesus and his disciples.

The Old Testament books were written by prophets-people who gave a message from God.

Men were under the control of the Holy Spirit as they spoke the message that came from God. 2 Peter 1.21

The true prophet spoke about obeying God and accurately foretold the future. Thus identified, the books of the prophets were added to the previous books, building up the Old Testament until the last prophet Malachi in 400BC.

I was studying the sacred books and thinking about...what the Lord had told the prophet Jeremiah. Daniel 9.2

We can date the writing of Bible books by their references to current events, persons and places and by references to the books by later writers, e.g. in later Bible books. From this we can see the amazingly accurate fulfilment of the Bible's many detailed prophecies of the future. Those about the coming of Jesus were all fulfilled in his lifetime. Many of those about Israel and the surrounding nations have been fulfilled exactly, often many centuries after they were written. Others still await fulfilment as do those about the return of Jesus. No book except the Bible foretells the future with consistent accuracy.

I alone am God and there is no one else like me. From the beginning I predicted the outcome; long ago I foretold what would happen. Isaiah 46.9-10

All the prophets spoke about Jesus, saying that everyone who believes in him will have his sins forgiven through the power of his name. Acts 10.43

Archaeology has shown the extreme accuracy of historical and geographical references all the way through the Old Testament. Very many references to current events, persons, towns, nations, customs and words then in use have been confirmed by archaeological finds, which strongly proves that the events described in the Old Testament have been accurately recorded.

The Old Testament's claim to be the Word of God is endorsed by Jesus himself:

Do not think that I have come to do away with the Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets. I have not come to do away with them, but to make their teachings come true. Matthew 5.17

From the time of Ezra in the Bible [450BC] the Old Testament has been very carefully copied by the Jews. We have Jewish manuscripts of the Old Testament from 900-1000AD which agree extremely closely with the Dead Sea Scrolls [Jewish manuscripts from the first century BC] and with Samaritan manuscripts from about 1000AD whose text has been handed down separately by the Samaritans from 400BC. There is also the Greek translation made around 250BC handed down by Jews and then by Christians, of which we possess manuscripts from 350AD, which also agrees with the Jewish text. The great similarity found on comparing these manuscripts proves that our present text is a high quality copy of the original.

The above evidence is adequate to show that the Bible gives us an accurate picture of Jesus.

Maybe you believe that Science contradicts the Bible. Then consider this: The Bible contains over 100 scientific statements, most of them in the fields of Astronomy, Biology, Geology, Physical Geography and Public Health. The accuracy of all these statements has been demonstrated.

Of the vast number of historical statements in the Bible, many have been verified by archaeological finds, and not one has been proved wrong. Some things are disputed and we await further clarification of events such as the Exodus and Conquest of Palestine.

There are many detailed prophecies in the Bible including those about towns and countries all over the Middle East as well as predictions made by Jesus. Many have been fulfilled exactly, often many centuries after they were written. Others still await fulfilment. Not once has the Bible been wrong. No book except the Bible foretells the future with consistent accuracy.

The Old Testament contains hundreds of prophecies about the coming of the Messiah [God's chosen One]. They speak of a Person who is divine, a Person who is to suffer for the sins of others, and a Person who is to rule the world and turn the whole world to God. The predictions are of a Messiah personally distinct from God and yet also the Saviour of men, the Lord and Ruler of all, the Judge of the nations. Almighty, Everlasting-One whom prophecy designates as God. No other book in the world foretells a Person like this.

The witness of the Old Testament is of the greatest value because it has been transmitted by the Jews who were hostile to Christianity. They did not understand how their Messiah could both suffer and rule, so failed to realise that their Messiah was Jesus, the Son of God, who is to come twice-once to suffer and a second time to rule. Thus there is no possibility of the Old Testament text being changed to make it back up Christianity.

We can check the accuracy with which the Jews transmitted the Old Testament text. We know the history of how it was passed down from the time of Ezra the scribe [copyist] in 450BC. We have Jewish manuscripts [hand written copies] from 100BC [The Dead Sea Scrolls] and from 900-1000AD to compare with our present text. We can get another check on the text because a Greek translation was made in 200BC and passed down first by Jews and then by Christians. Also the Samaritans passed down part of the Old Testament [the first five books] independently from the Jews from 400BC.



We don't have any manuscripts for the period before 450BC, but we have some idea of how the Old Testament was written down and collected together from references within it to the writing of parts of it. We are also able to say that the books were written at or soon after the events or prophecies contained in them because the references to historical events, geographical features, customs and current issues are very accurate and correspond with the stated time and place of writing of the book. Also the old words used in the books are the ones expected from the date given. Books of Old Testament Introduction look at these things and the Old Testament books pass their exams with ease!

EVIDENCE THAT CHRISTIANITY IS TRUE

We can be sure that the New Testament has come down to us as it was originally written because we have many manuscripts going back to 150-200AD with fragments from before then, such as a fragment of

John's Gospel dated around 130AD, whose value is to show that the New Testament was written in the first century. We even have non-biblical Greek papyri from which we can show that the New Testament was written in first century Greek. We also have copies of the writings of early Christians from 100AD onwards containing quotations from the New Testament. Practically all the New Testament can be recovered from their writings as quotations. We also have a very valuable check on the text as it was in 150-175AD in the form of translations made at that time, which have survived as later copies. Sir Frederick Kenyon, a leading authority on the reliability of ancient manuscripts, wrote: Any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established.

We have more assurance from Archaeology [inscriptions on stones] and written history [copies of ancient writings]. The writings of Luke, his Gospel and the Book of Acts, are full of detail about persons and places. Archaeology has shown an accuracy only possible for an eyewitness or first century writer. Archaeologists consider Luke to be a historian of the first class.

From the Roman historians who wrote on the first century AD we have references to the crucifixion and the early spread of Christianity to Asia Minor and Rome. Although Josephus the Jew wrote a history of the Jews when he was living in Rome at the end of the first century, and which contains references to Jesus and His brother James as well as useful background material on many New Testament events, we won't count his evidence as his writings were transmitted by Christians.

The Jews collected comments on Old Testament laws and passed them down orally from the fall of Jerusalem in 70AD and committed them to writing in 200AD. Of great value because they were transmitted independently of the Christians by hostile witnesses are the remarks about Jesus with references to his unusual birth, his disciples, his miracles, his crucifixion, his claims to be divine, and his promise to return at the end of the age. Incidentally various Jewish writings serve to illuminate words and actions of Jesus in the Gospels by indicating current attitudes and beliefs which Jesus took into account in His answers and actions.

We have the many writings of early Christians from 100AD onwards in which they eagerly discuss all about Christianity as they sought to find out all they could. It is of remarkable significance that the authority of the Gospels is never questioned nor is the fact of the Resurrection disputed, so certain were those things to these writers.

We even have some old manuscripts from 140AD written by a strange sect called the Gnostics which quote from the New Testament books and regard them as authoritative sources on Christianity.

We can also study the Gospels and New Testament in the way lawyers study documents to prove they are authentic.

Jesus is unique in all history. No one else has had the perfectly balanced behaviour he had. No one else has taught all the good things and no nonsense, not only morally perfect teaching but also relevant to daily life. Jesus taught all the things that really matter-about what God is like, about relating to God, and about how to live. No one else has claimed to be divine, to be the Saviour and Judge of all, and that the proof of it was to be his rising again from the dead. The religious, history and wisdom books of the world [apart from the Bible] know of no one like this. Christianity is based on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus-God's self revelation.

Accuracy in collecting the New Testament data is shown by complete agreement everywhere between the multitude of checkable details in the incidents described and what we have been able to find out from other sources. All the historical, geographical and cultural [customs and behaviour] details are correctly represented. Also, the accounts behave like those of really observed events by being full of detail, not easy to exactly harmonise with each other, and yet containing many hidden agreements that are not obvious on first reading them.

We have further confirmation in that the new Testament writers in several places say that either they were eyewitnesses or that they included only the statements of eyewitnesses in their accounts. Their accounts were written down mostly between 50 and 75AD and were the summaries of what they had preached continuously since 30AD. Some of the people who had seen Jesus in 30AD would still be alive in 60AD and many they told would live to 100AD. Living memory is reliable for 50 years at least. The time is too short for much change to occur in the memory of the life and teaching of so famous a founder as Jesus. Also his sayings are recorded in a poetic style which would improve memory retention. We have six main authors each contributing his own account and two others contributing a small portion of the New Testament. A remark here on Jesus' miracles may be of interest. Although they are better attested than legendary miracles [done publicly and recorded by people who can be shown to be reliable] miracles are not used as proof of Jesus' deity-they are just as would be expected of God. The proof of Jesus' deity is the Resurrection.



We can check the honesty of the New Testament writers. There is no motive possible for inventing a story about a man who had been crucified rising from death and thus being shown to be divine, then going on to preach that along with demands to live a life of complete honesty in word and deed.

The Apostles started preaching in Jerusalem-the last place on Earth to begin unless the story was true-within a mile of where the Easter events took place. No one was able to disprove the Apostles' claim that Jesus' tomb was empty because he had been raised from the dead and had appeared to them. Their preaching met with great success because everyone in Jerusalem knew that the tomb had been found empty and no-one knew why. The Jews or the Romans did not move the body, they would have spoken out if they had. The disciples did not move the body. We know this because they stood up to the severest persecution possible-torture and execution-to take their story all the way from Jerusalem to Rome, so much did they believe it. We know that no one else moved the body [they would have told if they had] because not only were the empty grave clothes left behind forming a body shape with no body inside [also the guard], but He was seen again alive by His followers in ways that allowed of no doubt-He could be seen, touched, heard and could even eat to prove He actually had a body, yet He was also different, he could disappear and was not immediately recognised-in other words He had a new "spiritual" body into which His dead human body had been transformed at the moment of the Resurrection. [As for Jesus not being really dead on the cross, well, four Roman executioners, a spear thrust through His side, the observations of friends who buried Him, the tightly wound grave wrappings and the one and a half ton stone closing the tomb I think puts paid to any idea of His reviving in the tomb and emerging two days later full of life!]. What convinced Paul when Jesus appeared to him was that suddenly he understood why the tomb was empty-that Jesus really had risen from the dead and therefore His claim to be the divine Son of God and the Messiah was true.

During the early years of preaching the presence of hostile witnesses guaranteed that any significant departure from the facts of Jesus' life and ministry would be immediately detected. By the time we get to the writing of the new Testament documents not only were there people around who saw Jesus and heard the early preaching, but the writings themselves bear the marks of amazing self control and soberness-full of honest admissions of failures, and lacking spectacular descriptions of things like the Resurrection itself or the world beyond death, and containing true to life events like two women being the first [after the guard!] to discover the resurrection. Furthermore, the first century was a time of great activity in travel, communication by letter and writing of books, with many intelligent, enquiring people in Jerusalem, Rome and all over the Eastern Mediterranean. It was the worst time in history to pass off as true public events which did not really happen.



We have circumstantial evidence in the shape of Baptism, the Lord's Supper, the change in the day of rest from Saturday [the Jewish Sabbath] to Sunday [The Lord's Day-Easter Morning] and the existence of the first century Church. It is impossible to invent these things and then get people to believe that their predecessors a generation or more before did or knew these things-they can only result from an event that causes them and whose story is then passed on. The Church says it all started from Jesus rising from the dead. We can also believe that all the Pauline letters are genuine [they are the earliest New Testament documents dated from 50AD to Paul's death in about 65AD] because forgeries would be detected during the lifetime of Paul and his associates, while later, say in 100AD, the Church would question the sudden appearance of a new letter. All the Pauline letters were accepted by the early Christian writers. Incidentally, Paul signed his letters, sent them by the hand of a reliable messenger, and had them read out in the church to which they were sent.

We have looked at evidence that the New Testament writers were truthful, had personally witnessed what they were writing about and that what they wrote has come down to us practically unchanged.

The New Testament says: **The Good News was promised long ago by God through his prophets, as written in the Holy Scriptures. It is about his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: as to his humanity, he was born a descendant of David; as to his divine holiness, he was shown with great power to be the Son of God by being raised from death. Through him God gave me the privilege of being an apostle for the sake of Christ, in order to lead people of all nations to believe and obey-Romans 1.2-5**

NOTES ON THE RESURRECTION

Difficulties in harmonising appearances but basic facts:

Tomb empty.

Jesus appeared to various individuals and groups in Judaea and Galilee.

Jews could not disprove the disciples' claim that Jesus had risen from the dead.

Chief argument that Jesus was Messiah and Son of God was the Resurrection-"We saw Him" also 1 Corinthians 15.

If all we have is a document, comparing its parts with each other and with other facts is decisive.

Multiplicity of details is offered, just like a truthful witness not attempting to deceive. Honest, telling everything, no attempt to explain away-just like true documents are.

Many living who saw the Risen Lord, also those who saw Jesus' ministry or who were healed by Him. Jews' vital evidence [independent, hostile]-nothing regarding falsity of Gospel records.

Other agreements from later history showing that certain events like sweating blood do occasionally occur. Also the human reactions are well documented.

The Resurrection accounts-Differences add together to correlate together in a plausible way to give a picture while agreement occurs on the main points. The four authors do not include everything in their own account.

Historical facts:

Disciples from panic to absolute certitude.

Seven weeks' gap.

Extraordinarily rapid accumulation of converts in Jerusalem.

Absence of administrative vigour on part of the authorities.

Steady growth of the Church from Jerusalem along to Rome. No trace of controversy as to whether tomb really were empty.

Testimony of Paul to back the Gospels.

Conviction of the Resurrection unique in history.

Withstood severe persecution.

Caused one of the biggest event explosions in history, only accountable by a spectacular event.

No trace of hesitation in accepting the Gospel records.

Christianity started in Jerusalem 10 minutes walk from the empty tomb.

Empty tomb linked with appearances=proof.

Several sources in NT for Gospel story not just one as in many other ancient historical events. [The Gospels, Acts, Paul and Peter].

Preaching in the Temple seven weeks later yards from the Tomb.

Reaction of persecution-Knew tomb was empty, could only say disciples stole body.

Incidentally resurrection can only mean the body rising again. The Jews considered nothing else=resurrection.

Early Jewish writings. Josephus agrees with the Gospel in outline. His books were available to the early opponents of Christianity. They would have known if the text had been changed. Does not deny that tomb was empty. Later writings continue to say disciples stole the body. Justyn Martyr records this. Fifth century compilation [frankly rubbish] about finding the body and dragging it through the streets of Jerusalem [Toledoth Jesu]. The Talmud. The historian Josippon.

Roman remains. Nazareth inscription forbidding removal of corpses from tombs is suggestive. Style of lettering suggests first century.

No attempt by authorities to say that the body of Jesus was still in the tomb-everyone knew it was not.

Canons of historical research-justifiable to conclude tomb empty on Easter Morning. No written, inscriptional or archaeological evidence ever found to deny this.

Also the evidence of the change in the disciples and Paul and James. Withstood persecution to the death, never wavering in their belief in the Resurrection. No trace of dispute about this central fact. They were completely convinced. Myths do not make martyrs.

Also many priests believed.

Change in the Sabbath. The Sacraments. Expansion of early Church across Mediterranean world. Celebration of Easter.

Earliest writings only 17 years later [Paul].

Resurrection the one miracle that authenticates Christianity over all other claims.

Witnesses agree on main points while differing in details as eyewitnesses do.

Plenty of witnesses-the Twelve disciples, the women, the 500, Peter and James and on several occasions. Many points to check what they were seeing e.g. He ate, could be touched.

Good character, not telling lies-Highest moral standards advocated by Gospel writers. Held leadership positions in the Church.. No one ever in the first century proved them to be frauds. No trace has ever reached us in Jewish or Pagan writings. resisted but never refuted. Were persecuted-to death.

Not deceived-did not believe at first, also Paul and James were unbelievers.

Crucifixion and Resurrection were public in middle of a cultured, educated city, and recorded by highly intelligent men [Paul and Luke for example and people like Gamaliel]. Also the disciples lived with Him for three and a half years. Also other miracle doers do not claim to be God, then predict and accomplish their resurrection.

Each NT writer says Jesus was crucified around 30AD under Pontius Pilate in Jerusalem. He was confirmed to be dead and buried and yet 3 days later the tomb was empty. Furthermore Jesus appeared to many groups of people on many occasions over the next month or so. He proved His reality to them so convincingly that these sceptical men boldly preached the Resurrection a little over a month later in the same city, whereupon thousands of Jews converted to Christianity.

Ancient history is based on documents and witnesses. As a historical document the NT is of superior quality. There are more manuscript copies of better quality and an earlier date than of many other books from antiquity. Here too the miracles and resurrection of Jesus have more honest and capable witnesses than any other events of the ancient world.

Paul's testimony. He includes the appearance to the 500, many of whom were still alive when he wrote. He refers to the Resurrection all through his letters and says this was the message of the other apostles too.

This is confirmed by the three synoptic Gospel writers with independent sources and John's Gospel. It is the very heart of Peter's sermon in Acts, repeated in his letter 1 Peter.

Paul's testimony already was a tradition when it was passed on to him by Ananias or by Peter and James at his visit to Jerusalem in 35AD. By 60AD many eyewitnesses were still alive and many that they had spoken to.

NON CHRISTIAN ATTEMPTS to explain away the Resurrection include: Body stolen by disciples-Jesus did not really die-Wrong grave visited-Jews removed body-Disciples saw things-Invention.

Invention?

Number of witnesses. Quality of the ethical teaching which they gave to the world and which, even on the testimony of their enemies, they lived out in their lives; no one admitted even under torture that the story was made up. The absurdity of suggesting that a crowd of demoralised men would change into a company of witnesses no one could silence to spread a lie they made up about an executed man being God, preached to the most rigidly monotheistic people on Earth, unless the Resurrection were true!

Legends?

Records too early. Resurrection story traceable to within 10 years of the event. Pointless to talk about legends when the stories were spread while the authors were still alive to correct them. Also they don't have the exaggerations of legends e.g. no description of the Resurrection, the first appearance being to Mary Magdalene, the restrained sober descriptions of the appearances, and the lack of appearances to the Romans or the Sanhedrin.

Failure of other explanations to take into account both the empty tomb and the appearances. Critics make a clear cut distinction between the records of the empty tomb on the one hand, and of the Resurrection on the other. First the empty tomb is explained away by a number of ingenious hypotheses; and then the Resurrection appearances are dismissed as some form of hallucination or psychological experience which convinces the disciples but had no objective reality.

THE EMPTY TOMB.

Matthew-Jews say disciples stole the body.

Imagine the disciples raiding the tomb by night, stealing the body, burying it furtively in some other place, and the proceeding to foist this miserable fraud upon the world. This would run totally counter to all we know of them: their ethical teaching, the quality of their lives, their steadfastness in suffering and persecution. Nor would it begin to explain their dramatic transformation from dejected and dispirited escapists into witnesses whom no opposition could muzzle.

Moved by Jews or Romans?

In seven weeks apostles were proclaiming the Resurrection all over Jerusalem accusing the chief priests of killing the Holy and Righteous One. Why did they not say they moved the body, call as witnesses those who carried it, or even point to a tomb or produce a body? Because they did not know where the body was. The Romans would have been disturbed by a proclamation that a criminal executed because he claimed to be a king had risen from the dead, and would have announced it if they had moved the body.

Joseph of Arimathea?

Fantastic to suppose that he would not have told the apostles, also he had to have helpers who would have known.

Wrong tomb?

Disciples checked it on hearing the women's story. Also the body would have been there for any other person to check the tomb e.g. Joseph of Arimathea.

Someone else took body?

No point in taking and leaving graveclothes. Also tomb robbers would want the valuable spices, and not leave the clothes. Also they would need helpers and it is unlikely that no one would not somehow tell.

Not dead?

Well, a spear thrust through the heart, four Roman executioners to certify death, a stone weighing a ton and a half blocking the entrance to the tomb, and then appearing strong and well?

So the empty tomb stands a veritable rock, as an essential part in the evidence for the Resurrection. To suggest that it was in fact not empty at all, as some have done, seems to me ridiculous. It is a matter of history that the apostles from the very start made many converts in Jerusalem, hostile as it was, proclaiming the glad news that Jesus had risen from the dead-and they did it within a short walk from the grave. Their message could not have been maintained in Jerusalem for a single day, for a single hour, if the emptiness of the tomb had not been established as a fact for all concerned. How could they succeed if the body were still in the tomb? How would the converted priests and Pharisees be impressed with just talk of spiritual survival? References to the empty tomb in the Gospels are for Christians who wanted to know the details. But in the earliest preaching the tomb is not mentioned because everyone knew it. The only point was why it was empty.

Also, the Jews never said such a thing. They could only say the disciples stole the body. [Early Jewish polemic-Matthew 28].

The empty grave clothes-the body took itself out of the tomb! By passing through the clothes leaving a body shape behind in the empty graveclothes!

The total lack of any pilgrimages to the tomb. Even if the Christian community believed the tomb to be empty and ignored it, what about the people who heard Jesus preach and saw Him heal-they must have been convinced as well that His body was not there.

All the apocryphal literature agrees that the disciples were accused of stealing the body-no one ever doubted that the body had gone. This accusation was the best thing that the Jews could do.

Accounts for the women's' visit to the tomb not being used in the early preaching-the guards had already preached the vacancy of the tomb! The guards must have found the stone in place when they were set there. Then the stone moved and the guards fled into Jerusalem.

The vacancy of the tomb was common knowledge so that no argument was needed, none is ever hinted at in everything extant of literature.

THE APPEARANCES.

Hallucinations tend to occur in certain ways.

Certain types of person-all types saw Jesus. Recipients not schizophrenic or epileptic.

Different with different person-groups saw Jesus.

Expected or hoped for-not expected.

Certain places and recurring-All sorts of places. Stopped after 40 days.

Not just a spirit-could be touched, and even could eat. Yet different in that He could disappear, pass through grave clothes, and be not immediately recognised.

Again there are things that would not be invented because they cast doubt e.g. difficulty in recognition. Also the seven weeks delay, a thing that is pointless to invent.

I am convinced that Jesus' deathless spirit returned to His mutilated human body and that this was transformed into what Paul calls a spiritual body. The empty tomb proves the reality of the appearances, that He really rose, and showed Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs.

Also the Church, traced back to early in the first century. Its documents of association state it owes its inception to the resurrection of its Founder from the dead. Formed for no other reason but to bear witness to the Resurrection.

The one really distinct thing that the Church stood for was their declaration that Jesus had been raised from the dead according to God's design, and the consequent estimation of Him as in a unique sense the Son of God and Representative of Man, and the resulting conception of the way to reconciliation.

The Resurrection and its consequences were the Gospel or Good News which the Christians brought; what we call the Gospels, the narratives of our Lord's life and death, were composed for the benefit of those who already had accepted the Gospel. They were in no sense the basis of Christianity: they were written for the converted. The miracle of the Resurrection comes first [C.S. Lewis-Miracles].

Sunday-traceable to the same date and place. The first Christians were Jews. It must have taken an event of supreme importance to change their Sabbath to another day. The same is said for the festival of Easter and the Sacraments that celebrate His atoning death.

What changed the apostles? Peter? James-to speak of his brother as the Lord of glory?

Paul? What the vision showed him was why the tomb was empty.

Jesus staked His credibility on the Resurrection and quoted the Old Testament prophecies of it including Isaiah 53.

Also the character of Jesus.

Discrepancies are explained as being due to eyewitness accounts. Discrepancies are expected from genuine eyewitnesses.

The stories complement each other but are not exactly in agreement on the details.

Suggested order of appearances-Jerusalem [Passover], then Galilee, then Jerusalem again [Pentecost].

Disciples pointed to the Resurrection and to fulfilled prophecy in their preaching.

Earliest Church-Everything started from the Resurrection.

The above material is taken from books by J.N.D. Anderson.

Books.

Evidence for the Resurrection and Jesus The Witness of History. J.N.D. Anderson.

Resurrection Factor. Josh McDowell.

Your Verdict. Val Grieve.

Who Moved the Stone? Frank Morrison.

Easter Enigma. John Wenham.

Trial of Jesus. Val Grieve.

See also books of NEW TESTAMENT Introduction e.g. Introduction to the New Testament. Robert H. Gundry, Introduction to the New Testament. D. Edmond Hiebert.

See Web Sites Below, for Trial of Jesus and Testimony of the Four Evangelists.

NOTES ON JESUS' DEITY

NT: Jesus was the Godhead visible to human eyes.

His humanity.

He was born a helpless baby; He grew in wisdom and stature; and He experienced hunger, thirst, weariness, pain and death. He could be both angry and deeply grieved; He could be moved with compassion; He asked questions because He wanted to know the answers, and on occasion frankly admitted that there were limits to His knowledge; and He could feel a natural affinity with particular individuals. It is true that we never hear of Him as laughing, and that the picture we get is of one so deeply conscious of the sins and sorrows of humanity, and so absorbed in doing His Father's will, that He had little time for the lighter side of life. Yet He loved children; He was the friend of publicans and sinners; He prayed that His disciples might share the joy He knew; and it seems unescapable to me that some of the statements He is recorded as having made must have been accompanied by a smile and a flash of humour. And while the title by which He most frequently, as it seems, referred to Himself-Son of Man-may have a Messianic content, I feel sure He intended it also to emphasize His identification with those whose nature He shared.

His miracles.

Miracles so connected with the teaching of Jesus that it is impossible to say that much of Jesus is not supernatural. Miracles of certain types only-compassion or to help people be sure Who Jesus was. Refused for amusement. No destructive miracles or silly ones. Miracles as expected from One who really was divine. [The works that I do show that the Father has sent Me]. He claims the power to be His as well as God's.

His sinlessness.

Followers with whom He lived claim it [1 Peter 2.22 and 1 John 3.5]. He challenged His enemies [John 8.46]. He told His friends [John 14.30] Never expressed any consciousness of being wrong while telling everyone else to ask forgiveness because they were sinners. He told His disciples to pray to be forgiven when they prayed. From time to time He would say He was holy and meek. No self deprecation which is normally seen in those who want to live well. Even His anger was not accompanied with feelings of having overdone it as it is with us. Failure of enemies to bring any moral accusation even at His trial. Consider case of Syro-phoenician woman [Mark 7.25]. He really did have sympathy for the Gentiles-Good Samaritan [Luke 10.29]; Centurion's servant [Matthew 8.5]; Many will come from East and West [Matthew 8.11];

Other sheep [John 10.16] and Go to every creature [Mark 16.15]. His actual words to her were "little dogs, household pets". I think He made the remark about the children's bread and the little dogs with a smile-His intention was to draw out the woman's faith which He then commended and rewarded. Also the cleansing of the Temple. Compare His patience when insulted. The Temple cleansing was similar to His denunciation of other hypocrites. Whip not used on people, nor were the bird cages overturned. Also cursing of the fig tree. Tree ought to have had the pre-figs that come out with the leaves. It was a demonstration of Israel's show of religion without the good deeds to go with it. Jesus came to serve and to give His life to redeem many. The Father loved Him because He was willing to give up His life, in order that He might receive it back again. Jesus was sinless because He was selfless. Unselfishness is love. God is love.

His character features.

Jesus believed that God loved people but hated sin. Was light. Utter moral purity as well as love. Willing to go to incredible lengths to save people from their sin but Who was the righteous Judge Who could not ignore evil. He was concerned about His disciples being salt and light of secular society. Endorsed the OT prophets' demand for social justice. Helped the poor and weak and social outcasts. Came not to be served but to serve with a basic mission to all who were "lost". He was primarily concerned to change man as man rather than the political regime under which they lived, to transform their attitudes rather than their circumstances, to treat the sickness of their hearts rather than the problem of their environment. His perfect balance of traits or temperament tendencies. He had a perfect balance-a sympathy which is never weak, a strength which is never insensitive, a benevolence which is never indulgent and a drive which is never ruthless. He appeals equally to men and women of every race. They all find Him all they would like to be. Example from Prof. Moule: Jesus' attitude and behaviour towards women. It is difficult enough for anyone, even a consummate master of imaginative writing to create a picture of a deeply pure, good person moving about in an impure environment, without making him a prig or a prude or a sort of "plaster saint". How comes it that, through all the Gospel traditions without exception, there comes a remarkably firmly drawn portrait of an attractive young man moving freely about women of all sorts, including the decidedly disreputable, without a trace of sentimentality, unnaturalness, or prudery, and yet, at every point, maintaining a simple integrity of character? Is this because the environments in which the traditions were preserved and through which they were transmitted were particularly favourable to such a portrait? On the contrary, it seems that they were rather hostile to it.

His deity.

His teaching. The authority [certainty] of the way He spoke about God, man, heaven and Earth. "I say". No saying has become outdated. His daring-He denounced hypocrites and pitied the weak and erring. He demanded high standards in thought and desire as well as in word and act. He ignored the traditions of others [the elders with their ceremonial rather than moral emphasis]. He made Himself the centre- He who loves anyone more than Me, He who loses his life for Me, He who comes to Me [Matthew 10.37 and 11.28] and taught that their eternal destiny depended on their attitude to Him. I am the light of the world [John 8.12]. I am the bread of life [John 6.35]. I am the Way [John 14.6]. Heaven and Earth would pass away but His words would remain [Mark 13.31]. Yet His actions were perfect-the meekness and humility of Christ [2 Corinthians 10.1].

He said, God was His Father. Only He knew God [Matthew 11.27]. His use of Abba when addressing God. The only Son [John 3]. My Father works, and I work [John 5.17]. He who sees Me sees God [John 14.8]. I am One with God [John 10.30]. Claimed to have existed before Abraham [John 8.52]. It won't do to say these sayings were made up by the disciples. The whole tradition is full of this basic attitude on the part of Jesus, that He had a unique relationship with God. How else do we explain the rage of the Jews, the accusation of blasphemy and attempts to stone Him? Even the Talmud says Jesus claimed to be God.

He claimed what belongs to God-to give life, to accept worship, to forgive sin and to judge the world. I am the Resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me will never die [John 11.25]. Just as the Father is Himself the source of life, in the same way He has made His Son to be the Source of Life [John 5.26]. Eternal life means knowing You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom You sent [John 17.1]. Accepted worship [Matthew 4.10, Matthew 28.9, John 20.28 and Matthew 21.15]. Direct statement in Mark 12 regarding Psalm 110. Persistent use of I AM [the Name of God given to Moses] culminating at His trial where He is condemned for blasphemy-claiming to be equal with God [Mark 14.61]. Lord of the Sabbath [Mark 2.28]. Confession of Peter and of the disciples [Matthew 16.16 and Matthew 14.33]. Right to forgive sins [Mark 2.2, Mark 9.2, Luke 5.20 and Luke 7.48]. He claimed He would judge the world [Mark 8.38, Luke 12.8 and Matthew 7.22]. Nor does the Father judge anyone. He has given His Son the full right to judge [John 5.22]. For the Son of Man is about to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will repay everyone according to his deeds [Matthew 16.27].

C.S. Lewis in Miracles: The historical difficulty of giving for the life, sayings and influence of Jesus any explanation that is not harder than the Christian explanation, is very great. The discrepancy between the depth and sanity and let me add shrewdness of His moral teaching and the rampant megalomania which must lie behind His theological teaching unless He is indeed God, has never been satisfactorily got over. Hence the non Christian hypotheses succeed one another with the restless fertility of bewilderment.

Only Jesus has convinced people that He was God. There is no one else in history like Jesus. His qualities. Calmness and self possession.. His wonderful mind. If God became man we would expect: unusual entrance, sinlessness, do miracles, know He was different, speak greatest words, have lasting influence, satisfy spiritual hunger, have power over death, finest moral teachings. No other has produced all the good things and no rubbish. Authority-dealt with the big issues-relation to God. No new ethical ideas. Instead Jesus calls for repentance, trust and love. Unusual relevance and attractiveness. Teaching about our need for God. Forgiveness, friendship, encouragement. All based on devotion to Himself. He demands and gets it.

Material from Jesus The witness of history. J.N.D. Anderson.

NOTE ON NEW TESTAMENT AUTHORS

Written within living memory-used earlier sources. Acts written at time of Paul's 2 year detention in Rome [to 62 AD]. Paul's letters dated by comparing with Acts. Pastorals presumed to date to a second imprisonment followed by execution.

Oral stage of making little summaries just like other Jewish and Gentile teaching. This stereotyping [like court and newspaper stories] preserves essential accuracy with only loss of variety.

Mark is filled with incidents from Jesus' life of the kind that would be used in preaching e.g. by Peter in Acts. The pronouns used with the stories about Peter suggest Peter's own memories. Also references to Mark-the naked man and Mark's house. Also the Greek preserves the original Aramaic idiom quite clearly.

Matthew wrote his Logia in Aramaic and everybody translated them as best he could. This probably was an earlier version of the Gospel. The sayings show in translation to Aramaic a poetic style like the Old Testament e.g. parallel statements and regular rhythms, making for easy memorising. Likely to be the original words of Jesus. Probably meant for Jewish Christians in the Jerusalem Church.

Luke from Antioch knew the Antioch leaders [Acts 11.19]. May have met Peter [Galatians 2.11]. Knew the Herod family [Manaen was foster brother of Herod Antipas. He was teacher in the Antioch Church Acts 13.1]. He knew Paul who knew Peter [Galatians 1.18-the fortnight in Jerusalem]. He would be in Palestine during Paul's detention in Caesarea [Acts 24-27]. He met James the brother of Jesus. He would also meet Philip in Caesarea [Acts 21.8]. Eusebius says Papias wrote that Philip's four daughters were authorities on the history of the earliest days. He went to Rome with Paul. He was with Paul along with Mark in 60AD [Colossians 4.10 and Philemon 24]. Luke says he followed everything from the beginning by consulting all the above and then arranging his material as a historian would. Luke's arrival in Rome with Paul appealing to Caesar for a fair hearing concerning the character and claims of Christianity was a fitting time to prepare a defence for the official and cultured classes.

Synoptic Gospels were completed not later than 50 years after the Resurrection, using earlier material collected from various sources. The written sources are not later than 60AD and they go back to oral sources going back to Jesus Himself.

The earliest preachers knew the value of eye witness testimony and they appealed to it again and again-"We are witnesses of these things".

It is very difficult to invent sayings and actions of Jesus when so many still lived who could remember Jesus. Also the early Christians distinguished their own words from the words of Jesus [e.g. Paul in 1 Corinthians 7]. Also the presence of hostile witnesses prevent any significant inaccuracies since they would quickly point this out. In fact the disciples say, We are witnesses of these things as you yourselves well know [Acts 2.22].

John's words are too great to invent. Claims to be written by an eyewitness [John 21.24]. The disciple whom Jesus loved is mentioned in John 21, at the Last Supper [John 13.3], at the Crucifixion [John 19.26] and as an eyewitness of the empty tomb [John 20.2]. From Mark 14.7 we know that the Lord was accompanied by the Twelve disciples at the Last Supper, and no one else was stated to be present. Therefore the beloved is one of the Twelve. Three were more close to Jesus, Peter James and John. They kept watch with Him in Gethsemane. The beloved must be one of these. He is distinguished from Peter in John 8.24, John 20.2 and John 21.20, which leaves James and John who were among the seven in John 21, but James was martyred in 44AD [Acts 12.2] so he could not give rise to a saying that he would not die, leaving John. Also the author does not distinguish John the Baptist from John the Apostle even though he must have known of both while he distinguishes Judas Iscariot from Judas not Iscariot. An author is likely to be careless in distinguishing himself from a character of the same name. John's is the only Gospel claiming to be the direct report of an eyewitness. The lively stories are full of circumstantial material e.g. the narrative of Lazarus' raising and the narrative of the empty tomb in John 20-full of life and lacking any detail to which the sceptic might take justifiable exception.

The author evidently a Palestinian because of his accurate knowledge of places and distances in Palestine, including of places in Jerusalem, showing knowledge of pre 70AD Jerusalem. He was a Jew because he knew Jewish customs well: their purification rites [John 2.6] and their manner of burial [John 19.40] and their feasts [Passover, Tabernacles, Dedication-held in winter-and an unnamed feast probably New Year in John 5.1]. He knows the OT passages which the Palestine Jewish Lectionary prescribes at feasts and in the synagogues. He knows the Jewish law of evidence [John 8.17] and is familiar with the contempt felt by the trained Rabbis for the untrained people [These people who know not the Law are cursed-John 7.49] which even the liberal Rabbi Hillel felt [No ignorant person is pious]. When referring to Caiaphas as High Priest that year he meant the year of Jesus' death, not that the priest held office for only one year. He is also familiar with Jewish methods of argument.

The words of Jesus and other speakers have an Aramaic style as would be expected.

For events and times the Fourth Gospel agrees with and supplements the synoptics. Although John places most of Jesus' activity in Judaea and Jerusalem, he knows of the Galilean ministry [John 7.1] and the synoptics show the existence of the Jerusalem ministry. According to them He is known by the owner of an ass in a village near Jerusalem [Mark 11.3]. He is expected for the Passover by the proprietor of a room in Jerusalem. He says, "How often would I have gathered your children together" [Matthew 23.37 and Luke 13.34]. John possibly knew the other Gospels and for the most part he does not overlap them but supplements them.

The Galilean ministry in the synoptics lasted one year but John goes back further to an earlier southern ministry of Christ before the imprisonment of John the Baptist. It fits between John 5 and John 7.2 [Feast of Tabernacles]. This explains the call of Peter Andrew James and John when we understand from John 1.37 that they had met Jesus before in the company of John the Baptist. The dispute about baptizing is illuminated by discovering that the Qumran sect people also baptised. For the events following the Galilean ministry, comparing John with the other three Gospels [especially Luke] makes the synoptic narrative more intelligible if we follow John in believing that the Galilean ministry ended 29AD. Jesus then went to Jerusalem to the Feast of Tabernacles, stayed there until the Feast of Dedication in December [John 10.24], that He then spent some months in retirement in the Jordan valley [John 10.40] returning to Jerusalem about a week before the Passover of 30AD [John 12.1].

John's Gospel with its festivals provides a chronology framework for the synoptics which are lacking in chronology indications from Jesus' baptism to the last visit to Jerusalem. Mark mentions green grass [Mark 6.34] which accords with the statement of John 6.4 that this occurred shortly before Passover [17 April 29AD]. The difference between John and the synoptics for Passion Week would be solved if we assume Jesus and His disciples used a different calendar from the Temple. This would mean that when the Temple priests ate the Passover on Friday evening Jesus was already dead. He and His disciples had eaten it earlier in the week.

Style. Although the Gospel has a distinct style that colours the words of Jesus, John the Baptist and the author's own thoughts it is also true that the sayings of Jesus and of John the Baptist are translated from Aramaic and it is also possible that John was influenced by the style of Jesus. In the synoptics Jesus is speaking to the country people, in John to the Jewish leaders or to His disciples. The poetic pattern in the synoptic discourses also occurs in the Johannine discourses. Also in the synoptics occur some Johannine sentences e.g. All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, no one knows the Son but the Father, nor does anyone know the Father except the Son and any to whom the Son is willing to reveal Him [Matthew 11.27 and Luke 10.22].

The phraseology opposing light to darkness, truth to error occurs in the Qumran writings along with certain forms of Messianic expectation showing that these things found in John were current in Jewish thought.

John's portrait of Jesus is the same as the synoptists'. With them he views Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God [John 20.31] . His purpose in writing was that his readers might believe that Jesus is the Messiah and Son of God [John 20.31]. Mark writes similarly [Mark 1.1].

John views Jesus as preexistent Word of God, the Eternal Father's agent in creation, revelation and redemption but does not emphasise His deity at the expense of His humanity. Jesus gets tired [John 4.6], weeps [John 11.29], thirsts [John 19.28] and takes pains to refute a current fancy that our Lord's humanity was only apparent and not real. "The Word made flesh" [John 1.4] and eyewitness to Jesus' death [John 19.30].

In the synoptics Jesus is realised to be the Messiah at the end of the Galilean ministry, and the disciples were told to remain silent about it, then He speaks of His forthcoming death. In John He is recognised early as the Messiah and this is acknowledged by Himself and He hints early about His death. John had learned to see even the earliest references. Jesus may have had to keep quiet in revolutionary Galilee [John 6.15] but could be more open in Jerusalem, although even there they complained He kept them in suspense [John 10.24].

John does not take the story out of its Jewish context and preserves the original preaching so that readers of the Fourth Gospel see no discrepancy between Jesus as portrayed there and as portrayed in the synoptics.

John shows the mind of Christ as the synoptics show the words. There is the self authenticating testimony which characterises eternal truth. "We know that His witness is true".

The Gospels are compiled from oral tradition and memory. The oral stage is little summaries, in poetic style for sayings. The Gospels were accepted as authoritative from the start. Everyone knew they agreed with the preaching.

We get a considerable knowledge of Jesus from the selections given, which Jesus said the Holy Spirit would make happen.

Paul's letters all before 67AD. Well within living memory. Addressed to Christians who already knew the Gospel story. Many references to the life, teachings and death of Jesus. All accepted at once as authoritative. Signed, sent by a reliable hand, read publicly in churches and then copied.

The writings were copied and circulated. The NT writers read each others' writings and the letters were read in several places. By 100AD two collections of the books had appeared, the Gospel and the Apostle [Gospels and Acts-Letters].

The scripture says .A worker should be given his pay. 1 Timothy 5.18 quoting Luke 10.7

As you wait for that day [the return of Jesus], do your best to be pure and faultless in God's sight and to be at peace with Him. Look on our Lord's patience [His delay in coming] as the opportunity He is giving you to be saved, just as our dear brother Paul wrote to you, using the wisdom that God gave him. This is what he says in all his letters when he writes on the subject. 2 Peter 3.14-16 referring to Paul's letters.

After you have read this letter, make sure that it is read also in the church at Laodicea.. Colossians 4.16

Write down what you see, and send the book to the churches in these seven cities: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. Revelation 1.11

REFERENCES IN OTHER LITERATURE TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

Fathers from 95AD. E.g. Clement[95AD], Ignatius[115AD], Polycarp [120AD-To the Philippians]. They quote from many NT books. Also the Didache, the Epistle of Barnabas and Shepherd of Hermas. Some of these are found in Codex Vaticanus [letters of Clement] and Codex Sinaiticus [Epistle of Barnabas, Shepherd]. This shows that the early Fathers were transmitted as Scripture was transmitted.

From 175 Old Syriac and Old Latin Versions [They tap the NT text at that point in time].

Even 100AD is good-only 2 generations [one passing on]. Also soon enough for books written in first generation to still exist. Paul's letters said to be preserved at certain churches.

Gospels, like Resurrection never disputed. Fathers are good evidence because they wanted to know the truth just like us.

Canon lists. Marcion[140AD]. Muratorian Fragment[200 AD] lists many NT books and mentions the rejection of letters falsely attributed to Paul.

Fathers suggest 2 collections by 100AD, Gospel and Apostle [Paul's letters, Acts and the others]. 2 Peter 3.15 mentions a collection of Paul's letters.

Ignatius[115AD] mentions the "Gospel". Polycarp[120AD] knew Paul's writings. Justyn Martyr[150AD] mentions the reading of the Memoirs of the Apostles and the Prophets in churches [Apol 1.67]

Later Fathers Origen[185-254AD] and Eusebius[265-340AD] mention most of NT as accepted by all. In 367AD Athanasius listed all our NT books.

Compare NT with the Fathers and the Apocryphal NT [compiled by M. James] to see that Fathers and early Christians made the right choice.

John. Ignatius mentions[115AD]. Polycarp quotes from 1 John. The Gnostic Basilides around 130AD quotes John 1.9. Justyn Martyr around 150AD quoted from the Nicodemus story in John 3. His disciple Tatian around 170AD included the Fourth Gospel in his Diatesseron. At that time Melito Bishop of Sardis shows dependence on this Gospel in his Easter Homily.

Ireneus [of Asia Minor and Gaul] says John, the disciple of the Lord, the same who reclined on His breast, himself also published his Gospel, when he was living in Ephesus in Asia. In his letter to Florinus he reminds them of their early days when they had sat at the feet of Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna [who was martyred in 156AD when he had been a Christian for 86 years]. Polycarp in his turn had been a disciple of John, and Ireneus and Florinus had often heard him speak of what John and other eyewitnesses told him about Christ. Also at that time, Clement of Alexandria, Theophilus of Antioch, Tertullion of Carthage and the Gnostic heretic Heracleon in Italy held belief that the author was John. The Muratorian Fragment says John, one of the disciples composed the Fourth Gospel along with associates including Andrew. The Anti-Marcionite Prologue says that Papias wrote in his book that John published and gave his Gospel to the churches. Papias also wrote that John opposed Marcion.

From 95AD onwards there are abundant references in the Fathers to the Gospels and the Epistles, how they were written, with many quotes from them-the whole NT less 11 verses! Also heretics agreed [their manuscripts have been found]. Also the Jews did not deny [Talmud]. Also scattered references in heathen writers and the Jewish writer Josephus.

NT mentions tradition of the Elders which the Pharisees started to write down after 70AD. Yohanan and Rabbi Aquiba [killed 135AD]. Work reused by his pupil Rabbi Meir. Rabbi Juda rearranged it all around 200AD as the Mishna. Commentaries were added in 300AD [Jerusalem] and 500AD [Babylonian].

Contains hostile references to Jesus, saying He was a transgressor, who practised magic, scorned the words of the wise, led the people astray, and said He had not come to destroy the Law [of Moses] but to add to it. He was hanged on Passover eve for heresy and misleading the people. His disciples of whom five are named, healed the sick in His name.

This proves the historicity of Jesus, since hostile witnesses admit these things. The early Rabbis made insulting puns on the word Gospel [probably Matthew's]. In the NT many priests believed so probably some contact with the Pharisees [Acts 15.5 and 21.20]. This contact would have lasted to 70AD or later [Alas, after the fall of Jerusalem all contact with Gentile Christians was lost and Jewish Christianity died out].

Josephus in his 2 books of Jewish history[93AD] mentions emperors, Herods, procurators, priests, John the Baptist, James and Jesus.

The Church Fathers are available in several editions.

<http://www.iclnet.org> Early Christian Writings available on line

Roman Authors.

Tacitus born 52-54AD wrote in 112-114AD and refers to Nero's persecution. Also refers to the charge of "atheism" against Pomponia Graecina.

Suetonius mentions persecution of Christians, the expulsion of Jews from Rome [Acts 18.1 and the famine [Acts 11.28]. He also mentions Flavius Clemens [Domitian's time].

Dio Cassius repeats the story of Flavius Clemens.

Sulpicus Severus refers to Christianity at the time of the burning of the Jerusalem Temple in 70AD.

Pliny's letter [112AD] about the Christians in Asia Minor.

Serapion's letter [after 73AD]

Qumran Community [Authors of Dead Sea Scrolls].

They looked for a Messiah who would throw off the Roman yoke, not a suffering Servant. A human Messiah, descendant of David, but not a divine One although this is taught in the OT. They tended to stress the remoteness and transcendence of God. Their writings have the dualism style of writing seen in John's Gospel [light vs darkness statements], which indicates that this style seen in John was familiar to Jews of the time.

Gospel sources: Statements of authorship are less important than fact of Gospels being accepted without question as authentic from the earliest writings [Clement in 95AD onwards]. Thus Fathers+ Manuscripts [hand written copies of NT books] + Versions [early translations] adequately authenticates the Gospels.

Gospels attributed to obscure persons. Enquiry led to concurrence on which books to accept, no controversy.

Gospels and Acts quoted by a series of Christian writers beginning with those contemporary with the Apostles or those who immediately followed them and proceeding in close and regular succession from then to the present.

Quoted as exclusively authoritative, bindingly authoritative.

Collected early into one volume, read publicly in Christian assemblies.

Commentaries written, harmonies formed, copies compared, translations made.

All sects, many heretics appealed to them during controversies.

Pauline letters referred to in early Church Fathers, refuted by none.

Even Marcion [Gnostic heretic] only refutes 3 of the letters. Ebionites rejected them because they were Paul's!

Contending sects all quote without questioning their authority.

"No one even questions the Paulines"-Eusebius. Authenticity is checked by looking at the testimony of those near to the Apostles.

Copiously quoted [unlike apocryphal and forged writings]. Received from the beginning with greatest respect. read, translated, commentaries made. [compare total lack of references to forged letters in the early centuries AD].

The Gospels, Acts, the 13 Paulines, 1 Peter and 1 John accepted by all, even by those who doubted the other books of the NT. The fact that some books were doubted shows that the Christians did examine and discuss all the books.

Attacked by early opponents of Christianity as containing the account of the religion's founding.

No spurious books of Christian writing can pass these tests.

NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS

Fragments 130AD Rylands Fragment of John's Gospel.

150AD Gospel Paraphrase.

Substantial 200AD Chester Beattie and Bodmer Papyri.

Whole Bible 350AD Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus.

Syriac and Latin translations 175AD give a check on the text at that time [from later surviving copies].

Quotations in Church Fathers from 95AD. The whole NT less 11 verses can be recovered from the Church Fathers as quotations.

Later manuscripts

Revisions Jerome's revision of earlier texts-many writers were able to access documents not available to us.

No variation affects any teaching. NT is 99.9% exactly known.

Books.

General Introduction to the Bible. Giesler and Nix.

The Books and the Parchments. F. F. Bruce.

NEW TESTAMENT ARCHAEOLOGY TAKEN WITH SECULAR [ROMAN AND JEWISH] HISTORY

There are abundant examples in Luke's Gospel and Acts. There is agreement with all the extant historical and archaeological material.

Luke names Augustus, Tiberius and Claudius. Nero is just "Caesar" to whom Paul appealed.

Jesus' birth fixed in Augustus' time, when Herod the Great was king of Judaea and during a census.

John Baptist's ministry with which the Kerygma begins is dated by synchronisms like the Greeks do.

Roman governors Quirinius, Pilate, Sergius Paullus, Gallio, Felix, Festus.

The Herods. The Great, Antipas, Agrippa 1 and 2, Berenice and Drusilla.

Priests Annas, Caiaphas, Ananias, Gamaliel.

Great familiarity with proper titles of all the officials. Also the titles could change at short notice e.g. senator [proconsul] becomes legate [emperor ruled]. Examples follow-
Sergius Paullus-Proconsul.

Gallio-Delphi inscription. Claudius made Gallio Proconsul in July 51AD.

Achaia senatorial from 27BC-15AD and from 44AD. Luke called countries by their own name and not by a Roman name except when giving a title [Proconsul of Achaia]. Thus he shows local knowledge.

Ephesus-Proconsuls [note plural] says town clerk. Roman history-Just before the riot the Proconsul of Asia [Silanus] was murdered by Helius and Celer at the instigation of Agrippa the mother of Nero who became emperor then.[54AD]. His successor had not yet arrived.

Asiarchs were reps for the emperor cult who were attending the Diana festival.

Ephesus called the temple warden of Artemis-an inscription saying this has been found. No silver images but clay ones found.

Philippi [Roman colony-Duumvirs]. Praetors attended by lictors because they preferred to be called Praetors like the magistrates at another Roman colony Capua.

Thessalonica. Politarchs-found on inscriptions.

Athens' Areopagus was a court to hear and licence public lecturers, meeting in the Royal Colonnade at the Market Place.

Malta-First Man of the Island found on inscriptions. Is name for Roman Governor of Malta.

Rome-Paul given to Stratopedarch-Commander of the imperial couriers of whom centurion Julius seems to have been one.

Antipas had courtesy title of king but unlike his father Herod the Great or his nephew Agrippa 1 he had to be content with the lesser title tetrarch. Luke calls him tetrarch.

Birth of Jesus. Now admitted that Quirinius who became imperial legate of Syria in 6AD [Time of Judas of Galilee Acts 5], probably was in Syria before, and that there was probably an empire wide census in the time of Herod the Great involving the return of families to the family home. [Inscription shows Quirinius had been imperial legate before, but where is not known].

Egypt-Papyri for enrolment about 11-8BC also a papyrus of 104AD saying that whole households must return home for enrolment.

Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene in 15th year of Tiberias[27-28AD]. Inscription recording dedication of a temple for the salvation of the Lords Imperial and their whole household by Nymphaeus a freedmen of Lysanias the Tetrarch. Must be 14-29AD since title Lords Imperial given to Tiberias and his mother Livia, the widow of Augustus.

Coins. New coin in Nero's fifth year [59AD] probably coincided with Festus replacing Felix.

Accurate also for local colour. Jerusalem with intolerant excitable crowds. Syrian Antioch where different creeds and nationalities are tolerant to the point of Jews and Gentiles in the same church. Philippi with its pride in being Roman. Athens with its philosophical arguments. Ephesus with its temple and its reputation for magic.

The last voyage [voyage to Rome]-extreme accuracy noted. Able to fix exact spot on Malta where shipwreck occurred.

The historical atmosphere of Acts is not that of the 95-135AD era since the Jews are the persecutors [the Romans were not hostile to Christianity at first, the Jews were].

Commonly spoken Greek on papyrus scraps or bits of pottery from Egypt shows that NT is written in first century Greek, not second century Greek.

This material from the NT Documents, Are they Reliable? by F.F. Bruce [available on line] shows that the authors were familiar with events of the mid first century. The archaeology plus the history reveals this.

<http://www.davidcox.com.mx/library/B/Bruce,%20FF%20-%20NT%20Documents%20Are%20they%20Reliable.pdf>

Books.

The New Testament Documents-Are They Reliable? F.F. Bruce.

Archaeology And the New Testament. John McRay.

Archaeology of the Jerusalem Area. W.Harold Mare. Includes Old Testament.

New Bible Dictionary. Intersivarsity Press.

NOTES ON EVIDENCES OF HONESTY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS

No Jew, brought up in rigid Monotheism, would quickly believe that a man he had known was God. Disciples "slow to believe".

There is no point in inventing a story about a man being God and then exhorting people to the highest morality and self sacrifice. All the inventors could expect is persecution from both Jews and Romans, and ridicule from the Greeks. If the followers of Jesus had wanted to invent anything, they would have presented Jesus as Son of God in a kingly sense-the Messiah. But the crucifixion killed that idea off stone dead. It literally killed their hopes in their Messiah in the sense of a king.

There is no denial in Jewish or pagan literature of the basic facts of Jesus' ministry and death or of His claims to divinity.

The Apostles started preaching in Jerusalem, within 10 minutes' walk of where the Easter events took place and where part of Jesus' ministry took place. The worst place on Earth to start false claims about His ministry, death and resurrection.

The accounts are amazingly sober, describing the details of Jesus' ministry with minimal comment, and lacking sensational descriptions of the Resurrection or of the afterlife and lacking any bitterness or vilification of Pilate or the Jewish leaders. There is also the honest inclusion of failures on behalf of the disciples at several places and also details about Jesus that would seem unfavourable to include e.g. His inability to do many miracles in Nazareth, His apparent uncertainty about His mission during His 40 days in the desert, the accusations about being insane, His admitted ignorance of the future regarding the timing of His return and His moments of depression and anguish.

The accounts also behave like real ones by being full of incidental colour and asides, the characters are absolutely true to real life, and there are multitudes of checkable details in the references to places, people and customs that a reader could verify. The accounts lack exact harmony which is just like real newspaper or court stories from actual witnesses yet abound in undesigned coincidences which only show up on careful comparison of passage with passage. Only real accounts have this hidden harmony. Examples: The characters of people, put together from the various references scattered through the NT all emerge as real. The movements of people traced from their mentions all through the NT are correctly described-their movements all agree as to time and place with each other. The narratives of Jesus' death and resurrection can be harmonised [see Who Moved the Stone and Easter Enigma]. The letters as well as containing distant agreements chapters, even whole Epistles apart [e.g. the movements of people] also have features like personal reminiscences pointless to invent [as do the Gospels], obscure references to things the readers are expected to know and references to letters they are expected to have read, reference to public reading [people will remember this occurring], and often contain subject matter of no interest to an inventor.

The story stood up to severe persecution. First they were demoralised, then utterly bold. No one ever denied his belief in the Resurrection even when faced with death. Highest moral standards advocated by the Gospel writers. Held leadership positions in the Church. No one ever in the first century proved them to be frauds. No trace has ever reached us in Jewish or pagan writings. Resisted but never refuted. Were persecuted to death.

An impossible story to invent-compare the NT story with all other history. A unique story. A unique character. Unique words. The perfect character is portrayed. Unheard of in history poetry or sacred books. His teachings are exalted and morally perfect yet plain and relevant to everyday life. His personality, gathered piece by piece from all the details shows a consistent portrait of one incredibly pure, balanced benign Person and whose teaching forms a coherent theme. Jesus did not behave like the Messiah expected. An imposter would have done so, or an enthusiast e.g. to deliver Israel from the Romans. The morality of the NT is too good for a human effort. The early Church did not invent this-look at their writings. Nor did the Jews-look at the Talmud.

NOTE ON EVIDENCES OF ACCURACY OF NEW TESTAMENT AUTHORS

NT in the form of Greek spoken in the first century. Also in many places the Greek of the Gospels, including Jesus' words and the Apostles' speeches in Acts, is a word for word translation from Aramaic, the language of Jesus and His disciples. The poetic style of the sayings [like the Rabbinic method of memorising] and the parables [not used before or since] indicate that we are going back to an original source of teaching.

NT published within living memory. Many still lived who saw Jesus' ministry or who were healed by Him, and those who saw Him after He rose again. Also His enemies.

NT stated to be by eyewitnesses or their immediate followers. Only their accounts were included.

Challenge to enemies to ask the witnesses e.g. Acts.

Several authors in different places at different times.

Details of geography, persons, etc of Jews and Gentiles correct-shows that author knew his subject well.

A lot of Gospel material is about the concerns of people in AD 30 rather than those of AD 60 as is seen in some of the letters-the Gospel writers took care to preserve the memory of the events around AD 30.

Also in the letters Paul takes care to distinguish between his own words and what he had been taught about the words of Jesus.

The Gospel authors are ascribed to minor characters. Although knowing the author is not as important as knowing how the book was received by his readers, it is unlikely that authorship would be ascribed to minor characters without factual reason.

NOTE ON THE REPUTATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS

Accepted as accurate from the start everywhere. From 95AD [within living memory of the Gospel authors], abundant references in the Fathers to the Gospels and Epistles and how they were written, with many quotes from the whole NT [whole NT less 11 verses can be recovered from the Fathers]. Even accepted by the heretics and used to support their heresies. Their manuscripts have been found [Gnostic papyri]. Fathers gave details about some of the heretics e.g. Valentius and Marcion.

No trace of denial that Jesus claimed deity in any contemporary literature. Jews would have said plenty if it were so. Jews did not deny [Talmud]. Also scattered references to Jesus in Roman writers and the Jewish writer Josephus.

The first century was a time of travel, letter writing, orators, poets and intellectuals all over the Eastern Mediterranean. Jerusalem was a centre of culture and intellect. The worst place on Earth to be selected for a fictitious story with so many contemporary authors to scrutinise the account.

It is impossible to invent a public life and public events and get people of the time to believe they saw them when they did not, and it is impossible if the events led to the setting up of rituals or anniversaries to get people to believe that their ancestors did these things or saw them when they did not ,since the rituals or anniversaries would not exist among them at the time the invented account was produced. The Gospel led to the Church, Baptism, Communion and Easter, and the change of the day of rest from Saturday [the Sabbath] to Sunday [the Lord's Day].

There was never any dispute about the accuracy of the Gospels or the truth of the Resurrection in any of the Fathers. They searched for truth just like us, with quotes, comments on the authors of the writings and contacts with them. Discourses, controversies, apologies [defences of the Faith], and letters are among their writings. There was a tunnel period from 70-95AD with no writings that have reached us other than those of the NT authors, then some writings for the period 95-140AD, then an abundance of writings, by which time the NT books have been abundantly studied. Also the NT books were regarded as Scripture, so were copied with care.

The original would be sent to one church and copies sent to churches around. Many would want Paul's letters or the Gospels having already heard of the authors.

Paul sent his letters with reputable men who were named in the letter. Also he signed them [1 Corinthians, Galatians, Colossians and Thessalonians].

Tertullian says-Letters of apostles are at the churches to which they were addressed ? the autographs of Paul. After all we have manuscripts that are 1800 years old.

Apocryphal books denounced as spurious by early Christian writers.

Canonical authority-Catalogues-Origen, Eusebius, Athanasius, Cyril, Epiphanius, Gregory Nazianzen, Philastrus, Jerome, Rufin, Augustine, Dionysius the Areopagite, Councils of Laodicea and Carthage. All these had studied well.

Read in churches-Colossians 4.6 and Revelation 1.11.

Paul's letters were addressed to the people at large. They could in no way be so conveniently communicated to those to whom they were sent, as by the public reading of them when the church assembled on the first day of the week.

Justyn Martyr-Memoirs of the Apostles and writings of the prophets read.

Tertullian-Assembled to read the Scriptures and offer up prayers.

Cyprian Lyonisius-Some of the companions of the Apostles were read, not as scripture, but as good reading-the Shepherd and the letter of Clement.

NT books quoted as of decisive authority by the Christian writers living in all parts of the world.

Eusebius reminds us that the Fathers never quoted apocryphal books as Scripture and carefully noted whether or not a book was accepted by all.

HISTORICAL TESTIMONY TO THE BIBLE

Historical testimony is reliable because there are good people in every generation who will tell the truth or research and pass on honestly what they are given. Impossible to invent public lives and major public events and get people of the time to believe they took place or to get people of later times to believe that they occurred in the past when they did not. Especially if the stories involve setting up commemorative events-Sunday, Communion and the existence of the Church. Hence we can rely on historical testimony since we can be sure that the truth is what has been passed on, lack of dispute being very compelling-never any dispute about the Resurrection or the accuracy of the Gospels. This cumulative historical testimony to the NT is overwhelming. Nothing has ever been found to disagree with the NT's accuracy and reputation.

NOTE ON MESSIANIC EXPECTATION

Jews yearned for the promised deliverer of the house of David who would free them from the yoke of the hated foreign usurper, would put an end to the impious Roman rule, and would establish his own reign of peace and justice in its place.

The disciples shared this view and could not see Jesus as being correct when He spoke of death. they thought He was being pessimistic.

The Gospels reflect this current view, as expected in a first century document.

The resulting total demoralisation was expected as the disciples thought that Jesus could not be the Messiah. Then came the Resurrection-with its many proofs, after which they went out to suffer and to die for

Jesus.

Paul persecuted Christianity because Jesus made the Law unnecessary for salvation.

He did not proclaim the Gospel from choice but from compulsion due to the overwhelming evidence of the Damascus road. It was totally unexpected.

It resulted in a drastic character change-from proud and intolerant to patient and self-sacrificing.

It made him join with the Christians.

It changed his message to proclaim Jesus as the Way, the Messiah, the Son of God.

Paul's preaching was explaining and giving evidence that the Christ [Messiah] had to suffer and rise again from the dead. "This Jesus Whom I am proclaiming is the Christ" Acts 17.3.

Paul had passionately denied that a crucified man could be the Messiah, and came to believe that Jesus was the Messiah, and thus rethought all his Messianic ideas.

It changed his attitude to Gentiles from hater to missionary. Paul saw Jesus as the Saviour for all people.

Such a change caused people to be amazed and to say, "Is not this the one who killed the Christians in Jerusalem and who came here to arrest more?"

Jesus fulfilled OT prophecies which neither the Jews nor the disciples understood.

Hints of plurality in the Godhead e.g. Angel of the Lord not clearly distinguished from the Lord Himself. Personification of wisdom in Proverbs.

More than a conquering King and suffering Servant. His sway was to be universal, endless, utterly righteous and even divine; it would secure judgement, salvation, deliverance and redemption for His subjects, while the needy, the afflicted and the friendless would be His special concern .He is described by the Psalmist as my Lord, Who sits as Eternal Priest at God's right hand. Even kings would come and worship Him. He would bear the sins of others and His death would be the condition of His victory. Micah speaks of His eternal preexistence; Jeremiah describes Him as the Lord our Righteousness; and Isaiah as the Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts Who is also the Everlasting Father and the Mighty God. All the more remarkable in the light of the rigid Monotheism which characterises the OT revelation of God. These predictions are of a Messiah personally distinct from Jehovah, yet also the Saviour of men, the Lord and Ruler of all, the Judge of the nations, Almighty, Everlasting-One Whom prophecy designates as God. See Psalm 2, Jeremiah 23, Isaiah 11, Psalm 45, Psalm 72, Psalm 110, Isaiah 49, Isaiah 53, Micah 5, Isaiah 44, Isaiah 9.

The Jewish leaders totally failed to understand these prophecies as did the disciples, so that Jesus had to open the disciples' eyes and interpret all the Scriptures concerning Himself.

The Church seems very early to have referred to the OT prophets.

The Resurrection proves Jesus to be God because not only did He predict it, but He claimed to be God. He frequently made claims that would have sounded blasphemous and outrageous to Jewish ears even from the lips of the greatest prophets. He said that He was in existence before Abraham and that He was the Lord of the Sabbath; He claimed to forgive sins; He continually identified Himself, in His work, His Person and His glory with the One He termed His heavenly Father. He accepted men's worship; and He said that He was to be the Judge of men at the last Day, and that their eternal destiny would depend on their attitude to Him. And God vindicated that by raising Him from death!

It also vindicates His claim to be the ransom for our sins, which was along with His claim to divinity. "Raised for our justification" means proof of His death being the way for our sins to be forgiven, and the way by which sinners are accepted as righteous by God. Otherwise the Crucifixion would have looked like the denial of all His claims-under God's curse.

It is nonsense to suggest that the Apostles somehow came to realise the divine meaning of the Crucifixion and that gradually belief in the Resurrection developed, helped maybe by a few "visions". No Jew would accept a mere vision without an empty tomb as a resurrection. They were demoralised and despairing at the Crucifixion...then the empty tomb, the appearances, the growth of the Church.

NOTE ON THE VIRGIN BIRTH

The Virgin Birth is not offered as evidence that Christianity is true. The Resurrection is. There is no attempt in the Bible to prove the Virgin Birth. The Bible indicates that following the miraculous conception and birth of Jesus Mary and Joseph had sons and daughters in the usual way, whose names are given in the Gospels. That His birth was unusual was known to the Jews [Mark 6.3 and John 8.41]. The reason for the need for a virginal conception is explained in Luke 1.35.

NOTE ON MIRACLES

Not offered as the major proof of Christianity, the Resurrection is. The miracles are simply as would be expected if Jesus were God. They were public, witnessed by enemies and over a lengthy period of time. The type of miracles-out of compassion, no silly miracles. Compare Apocryphal Gospels, those attributed to Mohammed, the legends produced by the Church in the Middle Ages. Finally no one ever contradicted the testimony to the miracles. No Roman or Jewish writer tried to deny them [Celsus, Porphyry, Hierocles, Julian, Josephus, Talmud]. Apostles said that their audience knew as well as them that the miracles occurred. Also the early apologists [Quadratus] say they are events that opponents to Christianity cannot deny. Miracles attributed to sorcery, so many and so well attested. Because of this the Church Fathers relied more on OT prophecy when preaching.

Example of a false miracle story.

Story of Apolonius of Tyana written by Philostratus on request of wife of Septimus Severus. Not supported by any documents of credit. Throughout sound like a compete invention, an extravagant fiction. Is said to imitate the miracles and resurrection of Jesus. Note the difference between fictions and a real Resurrection and the difference in the followers created! To be believable miracles have to be real, and examined by people who are impartial. Testimony has to go back to the time [e.g. false miracles attributed to Apolonius, Mohammed and Ignatius Loyola] and the place [e.g. false miracles attributed to Francis Xavier by people in Britain].

THE EVIDENCE OF HISTORY: OLD TESTAMENT

OLD TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS:

History of the text.

References to OT books in Later OT books e.g. Jeremiah in Daniel 9.2.

Ezra the copyist 450BC.

Samaritan Pentateuch 400BC.

Septuagint Greek translation 250BC.

References in OT Apocrypha e.g. 1 Maccabees.

Dead Sea Scrolls 125BC.

References in NT, Josephus.

Talmudist translation and comments in Talmud about Canon and copyists[100AD-400AD].

Massorettes. Copyists from 500AD-900AD.

Manuscripts available.

Dead Sea Scrolls. Show great accuracy of later manuscripts. Very careful copying. Methods known to us.

Copies of Septuagint from 350AD.

Copies of Samaritan Pentateuch.

Copies of Massorettes from 900AD.

BOOKS:

As for NT manuscripts.

NOTES ON OLD TESTAMENT AND ARCHAEOLOGY/HISTORY

Great fidelity of OT. It is a microcosm of ancient Near East. Archaeology shows that Patriarchal narratives fit with customs and political conditions of 2nd millennium BC. References to kings in ancient Near East from 2000BC onwards correct. Towns mentioned are in existence at the times given in early OT. Forms of covenant in Pentateuch and ancient songs of conquest are like those of the ancient Near East of that time.

Word of God always made relevant to its first readers, the people living at the time. Early Genesis in style of current documents of ancient Near East possibly to displace them and give a commentary on the current world view.

One problem area-the Conquest. Archaeology points to some burned cities and the culture change. Also settlement of new cities in the hill country of Judaea. Hard to say who to link with what. Israelites in 13th century BC and Philistines in 12th century BC are suggested. Some difficulties e.g. lack of 13th century BC strata at Jericho [erosion?] and Ai [wrong site? Also Ai means "ruin"-unoccupied site, so no remains?]. At Sinai there is no archaeological evidence of the Israelites but the site is not certain. Other sites have been suggested but no excavations have been done. There will be exciting finds in the future as new digs in Israel throw more light on this early period up to the time of David and Solomon. Recently artifacts illustrating the rule of David have been found. There are many unexcavated sites particularly around Jerusalem. It is still possible that the Exodus occurred in the 15th Century BC and not the 13th as most archaeologists currently think. A recent Egyptian inscription suggests Israel was in their land earlier than currently thought.

Prof Kenneth Kitchen and Prof Alan Millard [School of Archaeology, The University of Liverpool] very kindly between them provided me with a convincing argument as to why archaeological remains of the Israelites' sojourn in Sinai would be hard to find. As well as uncertainty about the site of Mount Sinai, the Israelites used tents of skins; they did not have coins in those days; they would have preferred to use bottles of skins rather than clumsy pottery and if even the pyramids have been extensively weathered how much more the mere remains of camp sites.

References to sources in the books of Kings and Chronicles makes accuracy likely. Confirmed by large numbers of inscriptions from both Assyria and from Israel and its neighbours, and Babylonian inscriptions. Also the books of the prophets contain many historical references that tie in with inscriptions.

Books of the prophets were kept because they came true. Nonsense to say that Daniel was a 2nd century BC forgery when it is mentioned in the OT Apocrypha as being the work of an ancient prophet. Surely the Jews knew their own history!

The post exilic books receive confirmations from Persian inscriptions, and even some papyri.

Regarding the idea that the Pentateuch was put together from several variant documents at a late date-No other ancient writers did this. Duplicate narratives occurred in other ancient narratives as the style of the

time. Jews made no reference to this merging of documents either in the OT or in later writings e.g. the Apocrypha.

Books:

New Bible Commentary Inter-Varsity Press.

New Bible Dictionary. Inter-Varsity Press.

The Archaeology of the Jerusalem Area. W Harold Mare.

Archaeology of the Old Testament. Alfred J. Hoerth.

Bible Archaeology. Alfred Hoerth and John McRay.

OLD TESTAMENT -SOME LEGAL POINTS REGARDING AUTHENTICITY

Some people say the OT books were written long after the events. They say the Pentateuch was put together from four different accounts after the Exile in Babylon, and that the prophetic books were written after the events e.g. Daniel and Isaiah 40-66. Since there is not a shred of evidence for this we should listen to what the books themselves say about their origin. Start with the document-benefit of doubt to the document, not to the modern critic as author had access to sources not now available to us. Also interpret archaeology against the document, not the other way round.

Pentateuch-some points.

If later than Moses Jews would have known. In fact Bible books were kept during the Exile-Daniel quotes Jeremiah and the other prophets. Ezra quotes the Law of Moses [Pentateuch]. The book of Joshua is mentioned as being kept with the Law beside the Ark of the Covenant [?lost in Manassah's time]. References in later books to Moses. Ridiculous to assert that Moses trained in Egypt could not write. Internal evidence of books helps to confirm-references to historical events, issues current, geography, flora and fauna, customs and beliefs current, philology [old words used], and undesigned coincidences. Also statements about source of material- e.g. whether eyewitness or just a report from somewhere else. Some more points-Jews would not have invented such a burdensome Law. Not praised at all, but heavily criticised. Moses, rejection of riches, yet not praised, failures detailed. Moses' sons of no account, allocating best jobs to other tribes. Pentateuch viewed from outside the land of Israel, living in tents, futurity of the religious threat from the Canaanites, structure of the Tabernacle for standing on sand, divided kingdom not mentioned. Also the impossibility of inventing stories that have anniversaries e.g. Passover and getting people to believe they happened when they did not.

Prophets-some points.

Unity of Isaiah.

Differences in style do not prove different author [compare modern writings e.g. those of the Christian writer C.S. Lewis as a test]. Predictions of named people occur in other books [compare Cyrus with Josiah]. Flora and fauna of 40-66 is Palestinian. Dead Sea Scrolls show Isaiah as one book. Jesus regarded the later chapters as Isaiah when quoting Isaiah 61.

Date of Daniel.

History of Daniel is very accurate-too accurate for a later writer. Fragments among the Dead Sea Scrolls from 120BC, yet Daniel prophesies of times beyond that-Roman empire, Messiah's death and destruction of the Temple. Maccabees differs from Daniel in Antiochus' death. They would not have venerated Daniel if it had been a recent forgery. They would have known, and would have entered the details into it. [In fact the details in Daniel probably refer to a figure like Antiochus to come in the End Times]. Daniel is in the Septuagint 250BC. Jews considered Daniel authentic while rejecting all 2nd century BC and later books. Daniel was accepted because many of his prophecies had come true by that time. Daniel became the model for a large amount of Apocryphal literature. We know something about the leaders of the 2nd century BC so surely they would know the history of the 5th and 6th century BC and of its prophets.

Note on Apocrypha.

Post Malachi. Not accepted by Jews at time of Jesus-not quoted in Josephus or Philo. Not in Talmud. Not quoted in NT. Not accepted by Church Fathers. The OT Apocryphal books do not claim inspiration except one-Wisdom of Solomon.

PROPHECY [OLD TESTAMENT, ALSO NEW TESTAMENT]

There are three large groups of prophecies in the Bible.

Prophecies about towns and nations in the Near and Middle East and North Africa.

Messianic prophecy.

End Times prophecy.

There are many detailed prophecies about towns and nations in the Israel region including prophecies made by Jesus. Many of these have been fulfilled with astonishing accuracy. Others await fulfilment. Not once has the Bible been wrong. No book apart from the Bible can tell the future with consistent accuracy. An excellent section in Evidence that Demands a Verdict by Josh McDowell details the most impressive examples, so I will only give a few examples here.

Babylon's desolation: The nobles moved to 2 new cities nearby. Babylon was made the hunting ground for a king. The cellars filled with tigers, lions, hyenas and wolves-shepherds cannot come near. Scorpions and snakes prevent camping-Bedouin cannot approach. Euphrates changed course and flooded part of Babylon-Pools of water full of Bitterns. Stones not taken for building-even though there is very little stone in Iraq, only the mud bricks are salvaged. Many more things including those fulfilled in OT times.

Edom's desolation: Exactly fulfilled including the startling statement-I will make it desolate from Teman. Today Maan in Jordan is the last inhabited part of Edom. From there south it is totally desolate.

Jerusalem: For your sakes Zion shall be ploughed like a field [Micah 3]. The only part of Jerusalem that has ever reverted to agriculture is the part called Zion, in the 1500s. Prophecy of enlargement of Jerusalem [Jeremiah 31] describes nine places that will be built on in the future and gives the order. This has been exactly fulfilled during the 20th century.

There are many more large parts of which have been fulfilled long after the completion of the OT-long into NT times.

Messianic Prophecy.

The OT contains hundreds of prophecies about the coming of the Messiah [God's chosen One]. They speak of a Person Who is divine, a Person Who is to suffer for the sins of others, and a Person Who is to rule the world and turn the whole world to God. The prophecies are of a Messiah personally distinct from God and yet the Saviour of men, the Lord and Ruler of all ,the Judge of the nations, Almighty, Everlasting-One Whom prophecy designates as God. No other book in the world foretells a Person like this. The witness of the OT is if the greatest value because it has been transmitted by the Jews who were hostile to Christianity. They did not understand how their Messiah could both suffer and rule, so failed to realise that their Messiah was Jesus, the Son of God, Who is to come twice-once to suffer and a second time to rule. Thus there is no possibility of the OT text being changed to make it back up Christianity. Here is an outline list:

1 Intimations of the coming of a remarkable Person. Even the surrounding nations knew of the Jewish expectation.

Seed of the woman.

Seed of Abraham.

Shiloh of Judah, before Judah's dominion departs.

Prophet like Moses.

King Whom the Lord would set on His holy hill.

Priest after Melchizedek.

The Anointed One

The Righteous Branch.

The Corner Stone.

The Desire of all Nations.

The Shepherd of Israel.

2 Time-before the sceptre [rule] departs from Israel [Judah] at the end of 70 prophetic weeks [490 years] from the command to rebuild Jerusalem, and while the second temple was still standing.

3 Place of birth, and family line.

4 Apparently contradictory material. A King and Conqueror Whose dominion would cover the whole Earth and Who would flourish in righteousness and peace forever; and One despised and rejected, a Man of sorrow and grief, as wounded and bruised, as cut off out of the land of the living and as pouring out His soul unto death. This led to Jews to wonder if two Messiahs were predicted, but Jesus fulfills both roles.

5 Light of the Gentiles-fulfilled in Jesus.

6 His Ministry.

His forerunner.

His ministry in Galilee.

His miracles.

7 His death to atone for our sins. Isaiah 53.

His riding on an ass and a colt.

His being sold.

His being pierced.

His clothes being gambled for, His being given vinegar to drink, and His words of agony.

No bone broken.

Buried with rich and wicked men.

8 His resurrection. Isaiah 53 and Psalm 16, Psalm 22.

"The Law, Psalms and Prophets all testify" Luke 24.

End Times Prophecy.

Many passages tell of the Day of the Lord, and of the Return of Jesus to rule and about the glorious time of righteousness and justice and peace.

See Joel, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah 12-14 [long sections] and references in Jeremiah and elsewhere [shorter references].

Daniel and Revelation contain hard to interpret material which possibly refers to the course of history up to the End, although there are varying interpretations as to what means what.

The prophecies of Jesus about the End in three of the Gospels and His post Resurrection prophecies in Revelation describe the same events.

It is very interesting for me to point out that I think the prophecies of Jesus in the Gospels describe two disasters in the one passage, namely the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD and the third world war in the Near and Middle East. This style is just like the style used by the prophets in the OT [double or near and remote fulfilments].

Note on prophecies of Jesus about specific towns.

Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum [Matthew 11]. Judgement pronounced against them. All three are now deserted, yet all the surrounding towns have survived or been rebuilt.

Seven Churches of Revelation. Philadelphia survives. Smyrna had 10 years of persecution in Diocletian's time. Ephesus was extinguished in 1312AD. Of Laodicea, nothing remains.

Destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD. Account is vague, unlike invented predictions. Unlikely that prediction to depart when surrounded by armies would be put in if it had not really been made since people would have known if such a prophecy had really been made or not. In fact Titus surrounded Jerusalem and then temporarily withdrew, allowing the Church to act on this prophecy and flee to Pella in Trans-Jordan.

Note on Millennium. ?Literal rule of Jesus on Earth.

It seems to me reasonable to let the many passages that suggest this view interpret and qualify the few that don't [e.g. Peter's remarks], and place them in time after the Millennial reign in Revelation, where fire came down from Heaven on the rebels and then the end of the world came.

NOTES:

Armageddon [WW 3].

Russia will become a dictatorship again and attack the Near East.

Ezekiel 38-39.

Israel will be invincible up to this time.

Zechariah 12-14.

Jesus' prophecies seem obscure because they refer to two invasions of Israel, one in 70AD and the other at the end of the age at the time of Jesus' return.

Mark 13 and Luke 21.

Another view of Armageddon.

Revelation 19-20.

Revelation. A vision for all ages-Roman, Medieval, Modern. Hence vague, more than one possible meaning. All four traditional methods of interpreting Revelation are correct, I think.

Suggested historical correlations:

Early[4-6] Roman.

Middle[8-13] Medieval. 8-10 Papacy and Islam

11 Church in Near East, + End Times.

12 Devil.

13 Church in the West + End Times.

14 End Times.

Late[15-18] Modern and yet future.

BOOKS:

Evidence that Demands a Verdict. Josh McDowell.

Web Site <http://www.100prophecies.com>

THE LIFE OF JESUS-WHAT THE PROPHETS SAID

It was concerning this salvation that the prophets made careful search and investigation, and they prophesied about this gift that God would give you. They tried to find out when the time would be and how it would come. This was the time to which Christ's Spirit in them was pointing, in predicting the sufferings that Christ would have to endure and the glory that would follow. God revealed to these prophets that their work was not for their own benefit, but for yours, as they spoke about those things which you have now heard from the messengers who announced the Good News by the power of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. 1 Peter 1.10-12.

HIS BIRTH.

A child is born to us! A son is given to us! And he will be our ruler. He will be called, "Wonderful Counsellor," "Mighty God," "Eternal Father," "Prince of Peace." His royal power will continue to grow; his kingdom will always be at peace. He will rule as King David's successor, basing his power on right and justice, from now until the end of time. The Lord Almighty is determined to do this. Isaiah 9.6-7

The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary; God has been gracious to you. You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God. The Lord God will make him a king, as his ancestor David was, and he will be king of the descendants of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end!" Mary said to the angel, "I am a virgin. How, then, can this be?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and God's power will rest upon you. For this reason the holy child will be called the Son of God. Luke 1.30-35

The place...

The Lord says, "Bethlehem Ephrathah, you are one of the smallest towns in Judah, but out of you I will bring a ruler for Israel, whose family line goes back to ancient times...When he comes, he will rule his people with the strength that comes from the Lord and with the majesty of the Lord God himself. Micah 5.2 and 4.

At that time the Emperor Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Roman Empire. When this first census took place, Quirinius was the governor of Syria. Everyone, then, went to register himself, each to his own town. Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to the town of Bethlehem in Judaea, the birthplace of King David. He went there because he was a descendant of David. He went to register with Mary, who was promised in marriage to him. She was pregnant, and while they were at Bethlehem, the time came for her to have her baby. She gave birth to her first son, wrapped him in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger—there was no room for them to stay in the inn. There were some shepherds in that part of the country who were spending the night in the fields, taking care of their flocks. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone over them. They were terribly afraid, but the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people. This very day in David's town your Saviour was born—Christ the Lord! And this is what will prove it to you: you will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger." Luke 2.1-12.

The time of his adult coming...

Seven times seventy years is the time God has set for freeing your people and your holy city from sin and evil. Sin will be forgiven and eternal justice established, so that the vision and the prophecy will come true, and the holy temple will be rededicated. Note this and understand it: From the time the command is given to rebuild Jerusalem [around 450BC] until God's chosen leader comes, seven times seven years shall pass [Rebuilding of Jerusalem 49 years]. Jerusalem will be rebuilt with streets and strong defences, and will stand for seven times sixty two years, but this will be a time of troubles [Struggle with Greeks and Romans 434 years]. And at the end of that time God's chosen leader will be killed unjustly. The city and the Temple will be destroyed by the invading army of a powerful ruler. The end will come like a flood, bringing the war and destruction which God has prepared [The Romans destroyed Jerusalem in 70AD]. Daniel 9.24-26.

The humble circumstances of Israel's King...

It was the will of the Lord that his servant should grow like a plant taking root in dry ground. He had no dignity or beauty to make us take notice of him. There was nothing attractive about him, nothing that would draw us to him. Isaiah 53.1-2

When Jesus finished telling these parables, he left that place and went back to his home town. He taught in the synagogue, and those who heard him were amazed, "Where did he get such wisdom?" they asked. "And what about his miracles? Isn't he the carpenter's son? Isn't Mary his mother, and aren't James, Joseph, Simon and Judas his brothers? Aren't all his sisters living here? Where did he get all this? And so they rejected him. Jesus said the them, "A prophet is respected everywhere except in his home town and by his own family." Matthew 13-53-57

HIS LIFE OF LOVE.

You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, proclaiming the Good News of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. You know of the great event that took place throughout the land of Israel, beginning in Galilee after John preached his message of baptism. You know about Jesus of Nazareth and how God poured out on him the Holy Spirit and power. He went everywhere, doing good and healing all who were under the power of the Devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses of everything that he did in the land of Israel and in Jerusalem. Acts 10.36-39

His introduction to Israel by a forerunner...

A voice cries out, "Prepare in the wilderness a road for the Lord! Clear the way in the desert for our God! Fill every valley; level every mountain.. The hills will become a plain, and the rough country will be made smooth. Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind will see it. The Lord himself has promised this. "Jerusalem, go up on a high mountain and proclaim the good news! Call out with a loud voice, Zion; announce the good news! Speak out and do not be afraid. Tell the towns of Judah that their God is coming! Isaiah 40.3-5 and 9

The Lord Almighty answers, "I will send my messenger to proclaim the way for me. Then the Lord you are looking for will suddenly come to his Temple. The messenger you long to see will come and proclaim my covenant." Malachi 3.1

It was the fifteenth year of the rule of the Emperor Tiberius; Pontius Pilate was governor of Judaea, Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip was ruler of the territory of Iturea and Trachonitis; Lysanias was ruler of Abilene, and Annas and Caiaphas were high priests. At that time the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert. So John went throughout the whole territory of the river Jordan, preaching, "Turn away from your sins and be baptized, and God will forgive your sins." Luke 3.1-3

People's hopes began to rise, and they began to wonder whether John perhaps might be the Messiah. So John said to all of them, "I baptize you with water, but someone is coming who is much greater than I am. I am not good enough even to untie his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. In many different ways John preached the Good News to the people and urged them to change their ways. Luke 3.15-18

His anointing with the Holy Spirit...

The Lord says, Here is my servant, whom I strengthen-the one I have chosen, with whom I am pleased. I have filled him with my spirit, and he will bring justice to every nation. Isaiah 42

A new king will arise from among David's descendants. The spirit of the Lord will give him wisdom, and the knowledge and skill to rule his people. He will know the Lord's will and honour him, and find pleasure in obeying him. Isaiah 11

At that time Jesus arrived from Galilee and came to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. But John tried to make him change his mind. "I ought to be baptized by you," John said, "and yet you have come to me!" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so for now. For in this way we shall do all that God requires." So John agreed. As soon as Jesus was baptized, he came up out of the water. Then heaven was opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove and alighting on him. Then a voice said from heaven, "This is my own dear Son, with whom I am pleased." Matthew 3.13-17

Then Jesus returned to Galilee, and the power of the Holy Spirit was with him. The news about him spread throughout all that territory. He taught in the synagogues and was praised by everyone. Then Jesus went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath he went as usual to the synagogue. He stood up to read the Scriptures and was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind; to set free the oppressed and announce that the time has come when the Lord will save his people. "Jesus rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. All the people in the synagogue had their eyes fixed on him, as he said to them, "This passage of scripture has come true today, as you heard it being read." Luke 4.14-21

His Ministry...

He will not shout or raise his voice or make loud speeches in the streets. He will not break off a bent reed or put out a flickering lamp. He will bring lasting justice to all. He will not lose hope or courage; he will establish justice in the earth. Distant lands eagerly wait for his teaching."..."I, the Lord, have called you and given you power to see that justice is done on earth. Through you I will make a covenant with all peoples; through you I will bring light to the nations. You will open the eyes of the blind and set free those who sit in dark prisons. Isaiah 42.2-4,6-7.

After John had been put in prison, Jesus went to Galilee and preached the Good News from God. "the right time has come," he said, "and the Kingdom of God is near! Turn away from your sins and believe the Good News!" Mark 1.14-15

Jesus went round visiting all the towns and villages. He taught in the synagogues, preached the Good News about the kingdom, and healed people with every kind of disease and sickness. As he saw the crowds, his heart was filled with pity for them, because they were worried and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.. So he said to his disciples, "The harvest is large, but there are few workers to gather it in. Pray to the owner of the harvest that he will send out workers to gather in his harvest." Matthew 9.35-38

As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd was following. Two blind men who were sitting by the road heard that Jesus was passing by, so they began to shout, "Son of David! Take pity on us!" The crowd scolded them and told them to be quiet. But they shouted even more loudly, "Son of David! Take pity on us!" Jesus stopped and called them. "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked them. "Sir," they answered, "we want you to give us our sight!" Jesus had pity on them and touched their eyes; at once they were able to see, and they followed him. Matthew 20.29-34

At daybreak Jesus left the town and went off to a lonely place. The people started looking for him, and when they found him, they tried to keep him from leaving. But he said to them, "I must preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God in other towns also, because that is what God sent me to do." So he preached in the synagogues throughout the country. Luke 4.42-44

HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION.

Then they put him to death by nailing him to a cross. But God raised him from death three days later and caused him to appear, not to everyone, but only to the witnesses that God had already chosen, that is, to us who ate and drank with him after he rose from death. Acts 10.39-41

He is rejected by Israel. The Jews did not understand that their Messiah had to come as the Suffering Servant before He could return as Conquering King, and failed to recognise His Deity.

We despised him and rejected him; he endured suffering and pain. No one would even look at him-we ignored him as if he were nothing. Isaiah 53.3

I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, he will live for ever. The bread that I will give him is my flesh, which I give so that the world may live." This started an angry argument among them. "How can this man give up his flesh to eat?" they asked...Many of his followers heard this and said, "This teaching is too hard. Who can listen to it?" ...Because of this, many of Jesus' followers turned back and would not go with him any more. So he asked the twelve disciples, "And you-would you also like to leave?" Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. And now we believe and know that you are the Holy One who has come from God." John 6.51-69

Then the man left and told the Jewish authorities that it was Jesus who had healed him. So they began to persecute Jesus, because he had done this healing on a Sabbath. Jesus answered them, "My Father is always working, and I too must work." This saying made the Jewish authorities all the more determined to kill him; not only had he broken the Sabbath law, but he had said that God was his own Father and in this way had made himself equal with God. John 5.15-18

Even though he had performed all these miracles in their presence, they did not believe in him, so that what the prophet Isaiah had said might come true: "Lord, who believed the message we told? To whom did the Lord reveal his power?" John 12.37-38

Jesus took the twelve disciples aside and said to them, "Listen. We are going up to Jerusalem where everything the prophets wrote about the Son of Man will come true. He will be handed over to the Gentiles, who will mock him, insult him, and spit on him. They will whip him and kill him, but three days later he will rise to life." But the disciples did not understand any of these things; the meaning of the words was hidden from them, and they did not know what Jesus was talking about. Luke 18.31-34

His triumphal entry to Jerusalem...

"Rejoice, rejoice, people of Zion! Shout for joy you people of Jerusalem! Look, your king is coming to you! He comes triumphant and victorious, but humble and riding on a donkey-on a colt, the foal of a donkey. Your king will make peace among the nations; he will rule from sea to sea, from the River Euphrates to the ends of the earth." Zechariah 9.9-10

As he came near Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, he sent two disciples ahead with these instructions: "Go to the village there ahead of you; as you go in, you will find a colt tied up that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If someone asks you why you are untying it, tell him that the Master needs it." They went on their way and found everything just as Jesus had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying it?" "The Master needs it," they answered, and they took the colt to Jesus. Then they threw their cloaks over the animal and helped Jesus get on. As he rode on, people spread their cloaks on the road. When he came near Jerusalem, at the place where the road went down the Mount of Olives, the large crowd of his disciples began to thank God and praise him in loud voices for all the great things that they had seen: "God bless the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory to God!" Then some of the Pharisees in the crowd spoke to Jesus, "Teacher," they said, "command your disciples to be quiet!" Jesus answered, "I tell you that if they keep quiet, the stones themselves will start shouting." Luke 19.29-40

He came closer to the city, and when he saw it, he wept over it, saying, "If you only knew today what is needed for peace" But now you cannot see it! The time will come when your enemies will surround you with barricades, blockade you, and close in on you from every side. They will completely destroy you and the people within your walls; not a single stone will they leave in its place, because you did not recognise the time when God came to save you!" Luke 19.41-44

He is betrayed...

I said to them, "If you are willing, give me my wages. But if not, keep them." So they paid me thirty pieces of silver as my wages. The lord said to me, "Put them in the temple treasury." So I took the thirty pieces of silver-the magnificent sum they thought I was worth-and put them in the temple treasury. Zechariah 11.12-13

The Lord Almighty says, "Wake up, sword, and attack the shepherd who works for me! Kill him, and the sheep will be scattered! Zechariah 13.7

Then one of the twelve disciples-the one named Judas Iscariot-went to the chief priests and asked, "What will you give me if I betray Jesus to you?" They counted out thirty silver coins and gave them to him. From then on Judas was looking for a good chance to hand Jesus over to them. Matthew 26.14-16

Then Jesus said to them, "This very night all of you will run away and leave me, for the scripture says, 'God will kill the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But after I am raised to life, I will go to Galilee ahead of you." Matthew 26.31-32

Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee. Grief and anguish came over him, and he said to them, "The sorrow in my heart is so great that it almost crushes me. Stay here and keep watch with me." He went a little farther on, threw himself face downwards on the ground, and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, take this cup of suffering from me! Yet not what I want, but what you want!" Then he returned to the three disciples and found them asleep; and he said to Peter, "How is it that you three were not able to keep watch with me even for one hour? Keep watch and pray that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. "Once more Jesus went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cup of suffering cannot be taken away unless I drink it, your will be done." He returned once more and found the disciples asleep; they could not keep their eyes open. Again Jesus left them, went away, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then he returned to the disciples and said, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look! The hour has come for the Son of Man to be handed over to the power of sinful men. Get up, let us go. Look, here is the man who is betraying me! Matthew 26.36-46

Jesus was still speaking when Judas, one of the twelve disciples, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs and sent by the chief priests and the elders...Then they came up, arrested Jesus, and held him tight. One of those who were with Jesus drew his sword and struck at the high priest's slave, cutting off his ear. "Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him." All who take the sword will die by the sword. Don't you know that I could call on my Father for help, and at once he would send me more than twelve armies of angels? But in that case, how could the Scriptures come true which say that this is what must happen? Then Jesus spoke to the crowd, "Did you have to come with swords and clubs to capture me, as though I were an outlaw? Every day I sat down and taught in the Temple, and you did not arrest me. But all this has happened in order to make what the prophets wrote in the Scriptures come true." Then all the disciples left him and ran away. Matthew 26.47-56

His trial...

He was treated harshly, but endured it humbly; he never said a word. Like a lamb about to be slaughtered, like a sheep about to be sheared, he never said a word. He was arrested and sentenced and led off to die, and no one cared about his fate. Isaiah 53.7-8

I bared my back to those who beat me. I did not stop them when they insulted me, when they pulled out the hairs of my beard and spat in my face. but their insults cannot hurt me because the Sovereign Lord gives me help. I brace myself to endure them. I know that I will not be disgraced, for God is near, and he will prove me innocent. Isaiah 50.6-8

before the high priest...

Then Jesus was taken to the high priest's house, where all the chief priests, the elders, and the teachers of the Law were gathering. Peter followed from a distance and went into the courtyard of the high priest's house. There he sat down with the guards, keeping himself warm by the fire. The chief priests and the whole council tried to find some evidence against Jesus in order to put him to death, but they could not find any. Many witnesses told lies against Jesus, but their stories did not agree. Then some men stood up and told this lie against Jesus: "We heard him say, 'I will tear down this Temple which men have made, and after three days I will build one that is not made by men.' Not even they, however, could make their stories agree. The High Priest stood up in front of them all and questioned Jesus, "Have you no answer to the accusation they bring against you?" But Jesus kept quiet and would not say a word. Again the High Priest questioned him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed God?" "I am," answered Jesus, "and you will all see the Son of Man seated on the right of the Almighty and coming with the clouds of heaven!" The High Priest tore his robes and said, "We don't need any more witnesses! You heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?" They all voted against him: he was guilty and should be put to death. Mark 14.53-64

Early in the morning the chief priests met hurriedly with the elders, the teachers of the Law, and the whole Council, and made their plans. They put Jesus in chains, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Mark 15.1

And before Pilate...

Early in the morning Jesus was taken from Caiaphas' house to the governor's palace. The Jewish authorities did not go inside the palace, for they wanted to keep themselves ritually clean, in order to be able to eat the Passover meal. So Pilate went outside to them and asked, "What do you accuse this man of?" Their answer was, "We would not have brought him to you if he had not committed a crime." Pilate said to them, "Then you yourselves take him and try him according to your own law." They replied, "We are not allowed to put anyone to death." [This happened in order to make the words of Jesus come true, the words he used when he indicated the kind of death he would die.] John 18.28-32

they began to accuse him: "We caught this man misleading our people, telling them not to pay taxes to the Emperor and claiming that he himself is the Messiah, a king. Luke 23.2

Pilate went back into the Palace and called Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?" he asked him. Jesus answered, "Does this question come from you or have others told you about me?" Pilate replied, "Do you think I am a Jew? It was your own people and the chief priests who handed you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus said, "My kingdom does not belong to this world; if my kingdom belonged to this world, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish authorities. No, my kingdom does not belong here!" So Pilate asked him, "Are you a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. I was born and came into the world for this one purpose, to speak about the truth. Whoever belongs to the truth listens to me." John 18.33-37

But he said nothing in response to the accusations of the chief priests and elders. So Pilate said to him, "Don't you hear all these things they accuse you of?" But Jesus refused to answer a single word, with the result that the Governor was greatly surprised. Matthew 27.12-14

Pilate is unwilling to condemn him...

At every Passover festival Pilate was in the habit of setting free any one prisoner the people asked for. At that time a man named Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder in the riot. When the crowd gathered and began to ask Pilate for the usual favour, he asked them, "Do you want me to set free for you the King of the Jews?" He knew very well that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him because they were jealous. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to ask, instead, for Pilate to set free Barabbas for them. Pilate spoke again to the crowd, "What, then, do you want me to do with the one whom you call the king of the Jews?" Mark 15.6-12

When the chief priests and the temple guards saw him, they shouted, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, You take him, then, and crucify him. I find no reason to condemn him. "The crowd answered back," We have a law that says he ought to die, because he claimed to be the Son of God." When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid. He went back into the palace and asked Jesus, "Where do you come from?" But Jesus did not answer. Pilate said to him, "You will not speak to me? Remember, I have the authority to set you free and also to have you crucified." Jesus answered, "You have authority over me only because it was given to you by God. So the man who handed me over to you is guilty of a worse sin." When Pilate heard this, he tried to find a way to set Jesus free. But the crowd shouted back, "If you set this man free, that means you are not the Emperor's friend! Anyone who claims to be a king is a rebel against the Emperor!" John 19.6-12

But gives in to the crowd...

Pilate wanted to please the crowd, so he set Barabbas free for them. Then he had Jesus whipped and handed him over to be crucified. The soldiers took Jesus inside to the courtyard of the governor's palace and called together the rest of the company. They put a purple robe on Jesus, made a crown out of thorny branches, and put it on his head. Then they began to salute him: "Long live the King of the Jews!" They beat him over the head with a stick, spat on him, fell on their knees, and bowed down to him. When they had finished mocking him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes back on him. Then they led him out to crucify him. Mark 15.15-20

His crucifixion...

The Lord says, "My servant will succeed in his task; he will be highly honoured. Many people were shocked when they saw him; he was so disfigured that he hardly looked human. But now many nations will marvel at him, and kings will be speechless with amazement. They will see and understand something they had never known." Isaiah 52.13-15

But he endured the suffering that should have been ours, the pain that we should have borne. All the while we thought that his suffering was punishment sent by God. Isaiah 53.4

A gang of evil men is round me; like a pack of dogs they close in on me; they tear at my hands and feet. All my bones can be seen. My enemies look at me and stare. Psalm 22.16-17

So they took charge of Jesus. He went out, carrying his cross, and came to "The place of the Skull," as it was called. [In Hebrew it is called "Golgotha."] There they crucified him; and they also crucified two other men, one on each side ,with Jesus between them. John 19.17-18

He is mocked...

But I am no longer a man; I am a worm, despised and scorned by everyone! All who see me jeer at me; they stick out their tongues and shake their heads. "You relied on the Lord," they say. "Why doesn't he save you? If the Lord likes you, why doesn't he help you?" Psalm 22.6-8

People passing by shook their heads and hurled insults at Jesus: "You who were going to tear down the Temple and build it up again in three days! Save yourself if you are God's Son! Come on down from the cross!" In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the Law and the elders jeered at him: "He saved others, but he cannot save himself! Isn't he the king of Israel? If he comes down off the cross now, we will believe in him! He trusts in God and claims to be God's Son. Well, then, let us see if God wants to save him now!" Matthew 27.39-43

His clothes are gambled for...

They gamble for my clothes and divide them among themselves. Psalm 22.18

After the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier. They also took the robe, which was made of one piece of woven cloth without any seams in it. The soldiers said to one another, "Let's not tear it; let's throw dice to see who will get it." This happened in order to make the scripture come true: They divided my clothes among themselves and gambled for my robe." And this is what the soldiers did. John 19.23-24

He dies like a criminal...

He was placed in a grave with evil men, he was buried with the rich, even though he had never committed a crime or ever told a lie"...And so I will give him a place of honour, a place among great and powerful men. He willingly gave his life and shared the fate of evil men. Isaiah 53.9 and 11

Two other men, both of them criminals, were also led out to be put to death with Jesus. when they came to the place called "The Skull," they crucified Jesus there, and the two criminals, one on his right and the other on his left. Jesus said, "Forgive them, Father! They don't know what they are doing." Luke 23.32-34

His agony as he suffered the penalty of our sin...

My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? I have cried desperately for help, but still it does not come. Psalm 22.1

At noon the whole country was covered with darkness, which lasted for three hours. At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud shout, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why did you abandon me?" Mark 15.33-34

His death was to atone for our sins...

But because of our sins he was wounded, beaten because of the evil we did. We are healed by the punishment he suffered, made whole by the blows he received. All of us were like sheep that were lost, each of us going his own way. But the Lord made the punishment fall on him, the punishment all of us deserved...He was put to death for the sins of our people. Isaiah 53.5-6 and 8

The Lord says, "It was my will that he should suffer; his death was a sacrifice to bring forgiveness. And so he will see his descendants; he will live a long life, and through him my purpose will succeed. After a life of suffering, he will again have joy; he will know that he did not suffer in vain. My devoted servant, with whom I am pleased, will bear the punishment of many and for his sake I will forgive them. Isaiah 53.10-11

like the Son of Man, who did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life to redeem many people." Matthew 20.28

Jesus knew that by now everything had been completed; and in order to make the scripture come true, he said, "I am thirsty." A bowl was there, full of cheap wine; so a sponge was soaked in the wine, put on a stalk of hyssop, and lifted up to his lips. Jesus drank the wine and said, "It is finished!" Then he bowed his head and died. John 19.28-30

Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father! In your hands I place my spirit!" He said this and died. Luke 23.46

The curtain hanging in the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The army officer who was standing there in front of the cross saw how Jesus had died. "This man was really the Son of God!" he said. Mark 15.38-39

His burial by a rich man...

He was placed in a grave with evil men, he was buried with the rich, even though he had never committed a crime or ever told a lie. Isaiah 53.9

When it was evening, a rich man from Arimathea arrived; his name was Joseph, and he also was a disciple of Jesus. He went into the presence of Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Matthew 27.57-58

Nicodemus, who at first had gone to see Jesus at night, went with Joseph, taking with him about thirty kilograms of spices, a mixture of myrrh and aloes. John 19.39

Pilate gave orders for the body to be given to Joseph. So Joseph took it, wrapped it in a new linen sheet, and placed it in his own tomb, which he had just recently dug out of solid rock. Then he rolled a large stone across the entrance to the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there, facing the tomb. Matthew 27.58-61

His Resurrection...

The Lord says, "It was my will that he should suffer; his death was a sacrifice to bring forgiveness. And so he will see his descendants; he will live a long life, and through him my purpose will succeed". Isaiah 53.10

I will tell my people what you have done; I will praise you in their assembly: "Praise him, you servants of the Lord "Honour him, you descendants of Jacob! Worship him, you people of Israel! He does not neglect the poor or ignore their suffering; he does not turn away from them, but answers when they call for help." In the full assembly I will praise you for what you have done; in the presence of those who worship you I will offer the sacrifices I promised. The poor will eat as much as they want; those who come to the Lord will praise him. May they prosper for ever! All nations will remember the Lord. From every part of the world they will turn to him; all races will worship him. The Lord is king, and he rules the nations. All proud men will bow down to him; all mortal men will bow down before him. Future generations will serve him; men will speak of the Lord to the coming generation. People not yet born will be told: "The Lord saved his people." Psalm 22.22-24,27-28,and 30-31

Jesus answered, "Tear down this Temple, and in three days I will build it again." "Are you going to build it again in three days?" they asked him, "It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple!" But the temple Jesus was speaking about was his body. So when he was raised from death, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and what Jesus had said. John 2.19-22

Then some teachers of the Law and some Pharisees spoke up. "Teacher," they said, "we want to see you perform a miracle." "How evil and godless are the people of this day!" Jesus exclaimed. "You ask me for a miracle? No! The only miracle you will be given is the miracle of the prophet Jonah. In the same way that Jonah spent three days and nights in the big fish, so will the Son of Man spend three days and nights in the depths of the earth. Matthew 12.38-40

Jesus and his disciples were now on the road going up to Jerusalem. Jesus was going ahead of the disciples, who were filled with alarm; the people who followed behind were afraid. Once again Jesus took the twelve disciples aside and spoke of the things that were going to happen to him. "Listen," he told them, "we are going up to Jerusalem where the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the teachers of the Law. They will condemn him to death and then hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him, spit on him, whip him, and kill him; but three days later he will rise to life." Mark 10.32-34

Then he said to them, "These are the very things I told you about while I was still with you: everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the writings of the prophets, and the Psalms had to come true." Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, "This is what is written: the Messiah must suffer and must rise from death three days later, and in his name the message about repentance and the forgiveness of sins must be preached to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And I myself will send upon you what my Father has promised. But you must wait in the city until the Power from above comes down upon you." Luke 24.44-49

HIS ASCENSION AND PROMISE OF RETURN AS KING:

And he commanded us to preach the gospel to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God has appointed judge of the living and the dead. Acts 10.42

The Lord said to my Lord, the king, "Sit here at my right until I put your enemies under your feet." Psalm 110.1

In days to come the mountain where the Temple stands will be the highest one of all, towering above all the hills. Many nations will come streaming to it, and their people will say, "Let us go up to the hill of the

Lord, to the Temple of Israel's God. He will teach us what he wants us to do; we will walk in the paths he has chosen. For the Lord's teaching comes from Jerusalem; from Zion he speaks to his people." Isaiah 2.2-3

Before I was born, the Lord appointed me; he made me his servant to bring back his people, to bring back the scattered people of Israel .The Lord gives me honour; he is the source of my strength. The Lord said to me, "I have a greater task for you, my servant. Not only will you restore to greatness the people of Israel who have survived, but I will also make you a light to the nations-so that all the world may be saved." Isaiah 49.5-6

When the apostles met together with Jesus they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time give the kingdom back to Israel?" Jesus said to them, "The times and occasions are set by my Father's own authority, and it is not for you to know when they will be. But when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all Judaea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." After saying this, he was taken up to heaven as they watched him, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They still had their eyes fixed on the sky as he went away, when two men dressed in white suddenly stood beside them and said, "Galileans, why are you standing there looking up at the sky? This Jesus, who was taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way that you saw him go to heaven." Acts 1.6-11

When the day of Pentecost came; all the believers were gathered together in one place. Suddenly there was a noise from the sky which sounded like a strong wind blowing, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then they saw what looked like tongues of fire which spread out and touched every person there. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to talk in other languages, as the Spirit enabled them to speak. There were Jews living in Jerusalem, religious men who had come from every country in the world. When they heard this noise, a large crowd gathered. they were all excited, because each of them heard the believers speaking in his own language. In amazement and wonder they exclaimed, "These people who are talking like this are Galileans! How is it, then, that all of us hear them speaking in our own native languages? Amazed and confused, they kept asking each other, "What does this mean?" Then Peter stood up with the other eleven apostles and in a loud voice began to speak to the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, listen to me and let me tell you what this means. Listen to these words, fellow Israelites! Jesus of Nazareth was a man whose divine authority was clearly proven to you by all the miracles and wonders which God performed through him. You yourselves know this, for it happened here among you. In accordance with his own plan God had already decided that Jesus would be handed over to you; and you killed him by letting sinful men crucify him. But God raised him from death, setting him free from its power, because it was impossible that death should hold him prisoner. God has raised this very Jesus from death, and we are all witnesses to this fact. He has been raised to the right hand side of God ,his Father, and has received from him the Holy Spirit, as he has promised. What you now see and hear is his gift that he has poured out on us. For it was not David that went up to heaven; rather he said, 'The Lord said to my Lord; sit here at my right until I put your enemies as a footstool under your feet.' "All the people of Israel, then, are to know for sure that this Jesus, whom you crucified, is the one that God has made Lord and Messiah!" When the people heard this, they were deeply troubled and said to Peter and the other apostles, "What shall we do, brothers?" Peter said to them, "Each one of you must turn away from his sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins will be forgiven; and you will receive God's gift, the Holy Spirit. For God's promise was made to you and your children, and to all who are far away-all whom the Lord our God calls to himself." Many of them believed his message and were baptized, and about three thousand people were added to the group that day. They spent their time in learning from the apostles, taking part in the fellowship, and sharing in the fellowship meals and the prayers. Acts 2.1-42

THE FUTURE-JESUS IS COMING BACK:

Until Jesus returns, suffering and injustice will continue in the world. Only his coming will put an end to it all. But before he comes, the whole world must hear the Gospel message, and this is the work he has commanded his followers to finish.

And this Good News about the kingdom will be preached through all the world for a witness to all mankind; and then the end will come. Matthew 24.4

But before the end comes, the Gospel must be preached to all peoples. Mark 13.10

For God has fixed a day in which he will judge the whole world with justice by means of a man he has chosen. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising that man from death!" Acts 17.31

May the Lord make your love for one another and for all people grow more and more and become as great as our love for you. In this way he will strengthen you, and you will be perfect and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all who belong to him.1 Thessalonians 3.12-13

Yes, my children, remain in union with him, so that when he appears we may be full of courage and need not hide in shame from him on the Day he comes.1 John 2.28

The world at the time of his coming-An unprepared world. Even though many people will become followers of Jesus through hearing the Good News, many more will not.

For you yourselves know very well that the Day of the Lord will come as a thief comes at night .When people say, "Everything is quiet and safe," then suddenly destruction will hit them! It will come as suddenly as the pains that come upon a woman in labour, and people will not escape. But you, brothers, are not in the darkness, and the Day should not take you by surprise like a thief. All of you are people who belong to the light, who belong to the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, we should not be sleeping like the others; we should be awake and sober. It is at night that people sleep; It is at night that they get drunk. But we belong to the day, and we should be sober. We must wear faith and love as a breastplate, and our hope of salvation as a helmet. God did not choose us to suffer his anger, but to possess salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us in order that we might live together with him, whether we are alive or dead when he comes. And so encourage one another and help one another, just as you are now doing.1 Thessalonians 5.2-11

No slave is greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you too; if they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours too. John 15.20

But will the Son of Man find faith on the earth when he comes? Luke 18.8

Israel, God's clock. The Bible foretells the return of the Jews to Israel and its rise again as a nation.

Some of the disciples were talking about the Temple, how beautiful it looked with the fine stones and the gifts offered to God. Jesus said, "All this you see-the time will come when not a single stone here will be left in its place; every one will be thrown down."..."When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you will know that she will soon be destroyed. Then those who are in Judaea must run away to the hills; those who are in the city must leave, and those who are out in the country must not go into the city. For these will be 'The Days of Punishment' to make all that the Scriptures say come true. How terrible it will be in those days for women who are pregnant and for mothers with little babies! Terrible distress will come upon this land, and God's punishment will fall on this people. Some will be killed with the sword, and others will be taken as prisoners to all countries; and the heathen will trample over Jerusalem until their time is up. Luke 21.5-5 and 20-24

When that day comes, the Lord will once again use his power and bring back home those of his people who are left in Assyria and Egypt, in the lands of Pathros, Sudan, Elam, Babylonia, and Hamath, and in the coast lands and on the islands of the sea. The Lord will raise a signal flag to show that nations that he is gathering together again the scattered people of Israel and Judah and bringing them back from the

four corners of the earth. Isaiah 11.11-12

These things are foretold...

But when that time comes, I will make Jerusalem like a heavy stone-any nation that tries to lift it will be hurt. All the nations of the world will join forces to attack her. Zechariah 12.3

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You kill the prophets and stone the messengers God has sent you! How many times have I wanted to put my arms round all your people, just as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would not let me! And so your temple will be abandoned and empty. From now on, I tell you, you will never see me again until you say, 'God bless him who comes in the name of the Lord.'" Matthew 23.37-39

I will fill the descendants of David and the other people of Jerusalem with the spirit of mercy and the spirit of prayer. They will look at the one whom they stabbed to death, and they will mourn for him like those who mourn for an only child. They will mourn bitterly, like those who have lost their first-born son. Zechariah 12.10

The day when the Lord will sit in judgement is near. Then Jerusalem will be looted, and the loot will be divided up before your eyes. The Lord will bring all the nations together to make war on Jerusalem. The city will be taken, the houses looted, and the women raped. Half the people will go into exile, but the rest of them will not be taken away from the city. Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations, as he has fought in times past. At that time he will stand on the Mount of Olives, to the east of Jerusalem. Then the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west by a large valley. Half the mountain will move northwards and half of it southwards. You will escape through this valley that divides the mountain in two. You will flee as your ancestors did when the earthquake struck in the time of King Uzziah of Judah. The Lord my God will come, bringing all the angels with him. When that time comes, there will no longer be cold or frost, nor any darkness. There will always be daylight, even at night-time. When this will happen is known only to the Lord. When that day comes, fresh water will flow from Jerusalem, half of it to the Dead Sea and the other half to the Mediterranean. It will flow all the year round, in the dry season as well as the wet. Then the Lord will be king over all the earth; everyone will worship him as God and know him by the same name. Zechariah 14.2-9

There is a fault running from east to west across the Mount of Olives, discovered 100 years ago. Under it is a large water table.

When he comes...

"There will be strange things happening to the sun, the moon, and the stars. On earth whole countries will be in despair, afraid of the roar of the sea and the raging tides. People will faint from fear as they wait for what is coming over the whole earth, for the powers in space will be driven from their courses. Then the Son of Man will appear, coming in a cloud with great power and glory. When these things begin to happen, stand up and raise your heads, because your salvation is near." Luke 21.25-28

The Son of Man will come like the lightning which flashes across the whole sky from the east to the west. Matthew 24.27

He will come for his people...

What we are teaching you now is the Lord's teaching: we who are alive on the day the Lord comes will not go ahead of those who have died. There will be the shout of command, the archangel's voice, the sound of God's trumpet, and the Lord himself will come down from heaven. Those who have died believing in Christ will rise to life first; then we who are living at that time will be gathered up along with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord. 1Thessalonians 4.15-17

He will come to judge...

For the Son of Man is about to come in the glory of his Father with the holy angels, and then he will repay everyone according to his deeds. Matthew 16.27

For God will reward every person according to what he has done. Some people keep on doing good, and seek glory, honour and immortal life; to them God will give eternal life. Other people are selfish and reject what is right, in order to follow what is wrong; on them God will pour out his anger and fury...And so, according to the Good News I preach, this is how it will be on that Day when God through Jesus Christ will judge the secret thoughts of all. Romans 2.6-8 and 16

Then I saw heaven open, and there was a white horse. Its rider is called Faithful and True; it is with justice that he judges and fights his battles. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and he wore many crowns on his head. He had a name written on him, but no one except himself knows what it is. The robe he wore was covered with blood. His name is "The Word of God." The armies of heaven followed him, riding on white horses and dressed in clean white linen. Out of his mouth came a sharp sword, with which he will defeat the nations. He will rule over them with a rod of iron, and he will trample out the wine in the winepress of the furious anger of the Almighty God. On his robe and on his thigh was written the name: "King of kings and Lord of lords." Revelation 19.11-16

He will come to rule...

The attitude you should have is the one that Christ Jesus had: He always had the nature of God, but he did not think that by force he should try to become equal with God. Instead of this, of his own free will he gave up all he had, and took the nature of a servant. He became like man and appeared in human likeness. He was humble and walked the path of obedience all the way to death-his death on the cross. For this reason God raised him to the highest place above and gave him the name that is greater than any other name. And so, in honour of the name of Jesus all beings in heaven, on earth, and in the world below will fall on their knees, and all will openly proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2.8-11

The Lord says, "The time is coming when I will choose as king a righteous descendant of David. That king will rule wisely and do what is right and just throughout the land. When he is king, the people of Judah will be safe, and the people of Israel will live in peace. He will be called, 'The Lord Our Salvation.' Jeremiah 23.5-6

When that time comes, Jerusalem will be called 'The Throne of the Lord,' and all nations will gather there to worship me. They will no longer do what their stubborn and evil hearts tell them. Jeremiah 3.17

Your king will make peace among the nations; he will rule from sea to sea, from the River Euphrates to the ends of the earth." Zechariah 9.10

But the earth will be as full of the knowledge of the Lord's glory as the seas are full of water. Habakkuk 2.14

Until the end of time...

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key of the abyss and a heavy chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent-that is, the Devil, or Satan-and chained him up for a thousand years. The angel threw him into the abyss, locked it, and sealed it, so that he could not deceive the nations any more until the thousand years were over. After that he must be let loose for a little while.

Then I saw thrones, and those who sat on them were given the power to judge. I also saw the souls of those who had been executed because they had proclaimed the truth that Jesus revealed and the word of God. They had not worshipped the beast or its image, nor had they received the mark of the beast on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and ruled as kings with Christ for a thousand years. [The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were over.] This is the first raising of the dead. Happy and greatly blessed are those who are included in this first raising of the dead. The second death has no power over them; they shall be priests of God and Christ, and they will rule with him for a thousand years. After the thousand years are over, Satan will be let loose from his prison, and he will go out to deceive the nations scattered over the whole world, that is, Gog and Magog. Satan will bring them all together for battle, as many as the grains of sand on the sea-shore. They spread out over the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people and the city that he loves. But fire came down from heaven and destroyed them. Then the Devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet had already been thrown; and they will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. Then I saw a great white throne and the one who sits on it. Earth and heaven fled from his presence and were seen no more. And I saw the dead, great and small alike, standing before the throne. Books were opened, and then another book was opened, the book of the living. The dead were judged according to what they had done, as recorded in the books. Then the sea gave up its dead. Death and the world of the dead also gave up the dead they held. And all were judged according to what they had done. Then death and the world of the dead were thrown into the lake of fire. [This lake of fire is the second death.] Whoever did not have his name written in the book of the living was thrown into the lake of fire. Revelation 20.1-15

Then the end will come; Christ will overcome all spiritual rulers, authorities, and powers, and will hand over the kingdom to God the Father. For Christ must rule until God defeats all enemies and puts them under his feet. The last enemy to be defeated will be death. For the Scripture says, "God put all things under his feet." It is clear, of course, that the words "all things" do not include God himself, who puts all things under Christ. But when all things have been placed under Christ's rule, then he himself, the Son, will place himself under God, who placed all things under him; and God will rule completely over all. 1 Corinthians 15.24-28

The final heavenly state...

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth disappeared, and the sea vanished. And I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven from God, prepared and ready, like a bride for her husband. I heard a loud voice speaking from the throne: "Now God's home is with mankind! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them, and he will be their God. He will wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will be no more death or crying or pain. The old things have disappeared." Then the one who sits on the throne said, "And now I make all things new!" He also said to me, "Write this, because these words are true and can be trusted." And he said, "It is done! I am the first and the last, the beginning and the end. To anyone who is thirsty I will give the right to drink from the spring of the water of life, without paying for it. Whoever wins the victory will receive this from me; I will be his God, and he will be my son. But cowards, traitors, perverts, murderers, the immoral, those who practice magic, those who worship idols, and all liars-the place for them is the lake burning with fire and sulphur, which is the second death." Revelation 21.1-8

The angel also showed me the river of the water of life, sparkling like crystal, and coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb and flowing down the middle of the city's street. On each side of the river was the tree of life, which bears fruit twelve times a year, once each month; and its leaves are for the healing of the nations. Nothing that is under God's curse will be found in the city. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be written on their foreheads. There shall be no more night, and they will not need lamps or sunlight, because the Lord God will be their light, and they will rule as kings for ever and ever. Revelation 22.1-5

There are many rooms in my Father's house, and I am going to prepare a place for you. I would not tell you this if it were not so. And after I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to myself, so that you will be where I am. John 14.2-3

Hell...

God in his love has done everything necessary to deliver us from eternal punishment. His justice requires that he punish sin, but his love has provided salvation for all who will accept it. We are not told what happens to those who have never heard of Jesus, because that is God's business, not ours, but we are very clearly told that for those who have, their eternal destiny depends on whether they accept or ignore Jesus.

God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to be its judge, but to be its Saviour. Whoever believes in the Son is not judged; but whoever does not believe has already been judged, because he has not believed in God's only Son. This is how the judgement works: the light has come into the world, but people love the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds are evil. Anyone who does evil things hates the light and will not come to the light, because he does not want his evil deeds to be shown up. But whoever does what is true comes to the light in order that the light may show that what he did was in obedience to God. John 3.16-21

I have come into the world as light, so that everyone who believes in me should not remain in the darkness. If anyone hears my message and does not obey it, I will not judge him. I came, not to judge the world, but to save it. Whoever rejects me and does not accept my message has one who will judge him. The words I have spoken will be his judge on the last day! John 12.46-48

EVIDENCE THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD

The Christian faith rests secure upon an unshakeable rock-the fact that Jesus is the Son of God. As well as the Old Testament prophecies of his deity [Godhood] we have the combined evidence of his claims, his character, and that greatest sign of all-his resurrection [coming alive again] from the dead.

ALONE AMONG THE RELIGIOUS TEACHERS OF THE WORLD, JESUS CLAIMED TO BE THE SON OF GOD, AND MADE HIMSELF EQUAL TO GOD.

He said, God is my Father.

They said to Jesus...Abraham died, and the prophets died, yet you say that whoever obeys your teaching will never die. Our father Abraham died; you do not claim to be greater than Abraham, do you? And the prophets also died. Who do you think you are? Jesus answered, If I were to honour myself, that honour would be worth nothing. The one who honours me is my Father-the very one you say is your God...Your father Abraham rejoiced that he was to see the time of my coming; he saw it and was glad. They said to him, You are not even fifty years old-and you have seen Abraham? I am telling you the truth, Jesus replied. Before Abraham was born, I AM [I AM is God's name]. Then they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and left the temple. John 8.52-59

How long are you going to keep us in suspense? Tell us the plain truth: are you the Messiah [the One the prophets foretold was coming]? Jesus answered, I have already told you, but you would not believe me. The things I do by my Father's authority speak on my behalf...The Father and I are one. Then the people again picked up stones to throw at him. Jesus said to them, I have done many good deeds in your presence which the Father gave me to do; for which one of these do you want to stone me? They replied, We do not want to stone you because of any good deeds, but because of your blasphemy! You are only a man, but you are trying to make yourself God! Jesus answered...as for me, the Father chose me and sent me into the world. How, then, can you say that I blaspheme because I said that I am the Son of God? Do

not believe me, then, if I am not doing the things my Father wants me to do. But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, you should at least believe my deeds, in order that you may know once and for all that the Father is in me and that I am in the Father. Once more they tried to seize Jesus, but he slipped out of their hands. John 10.24-39

The High Priest questioned him, Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed God? I am, answered Jesus, and you will all see the Son of Man seated on the right of the Almighty and coming with the clouds of heaven! Mark 14.61-62

His teaching centred on himself.

I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will have the light of life and will never walk in darkness. John 8.12

I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one goes to the Father except by me. John 14.6

If anyone wants to come with me, he must forget self, take up his cross every day, and follow me. For whoever wants to save his own life will lose it, but whoever loses [spends] his life for my sake will save it. Will a person gain anything if he wins the whole world but is himself lost or defeated? Of course not! If a person is ashamed of me and of my teaching, then the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. Luke 9.23-26

When I am lifted up from the earth [crucified], I will draw everyone to me. John 12.32

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. Mark 13.31

He claimed what belongs to God- to give life, to accept worship, to forgive sin and to judge the world.

I am the bread of life, Jesus told them. He who comes to me will never be hungry; he who believes in me will never be thirsty. John 6.35

I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. John 11.25-26

Jesus looked up to heaven and said, Father, the hour has come. Give glory to your Son, so that the Son may give glory to you. For you gave him authority over all mankind, so that he might give eternal life to all those you gave him. And eternal life means knowing you, the only true God, and knowing Jesus Christ, whom you sent. John 17.1-3

Just as the Father is himself the source of life, in the same way he has made his Son to be the source of life. John 5.26

Jesus said to Simon, Push the boat out further to the deep water, and you and your partners let down your nets for a catch. Master, Simon answered, we worked hard all night long and caught nothing. But if you say so, I will let down the nets. They let them down, and caught such a large number of fish that the nets were about to break...When Simon Peter saw what had happened, he fell on his knees before Jesus and said, Go away from me Lord! I am a sinful man!...Jesus said to Simon, Don't be afraid; from now on you will be catching men. Luke 5.4-10

Jesus said to Thomas, Put your finger here, and look at my hands; then stretch out your hand and put it in my side. Stop your doubting, and believe! Thomas answered him, My Lord and my God! Jesus said to him, Do you believe because you see me? How happy are those who believe without seeing me! John 20.27-29

Jesus said to the paralysed man, My son, your sins are forgiven. Some teachers of the Law who were sitting there thought to themselves, How does he dare to talk like this? This is blasphemy! God is the only one who can forgive sins! At once Jesus knew what they were thinking, so he said to them, Why do you think such things? Is it easier to say to this paralysed man, Your sins are forgiven, or to say, Get up, pick up your mat, and walk? I will prove to you, then, that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. So he said to the paralysed man, I tell you, get up, pick up your mat, and go home! While they all watched, the man got up, picked up his mat, and hurried away. They were all completely amazed and praised God, saying, We have never seen anything like this! Mark 2.5-12

Nor does the Father himself judge anyone. He has given his Son the full right to judge, so that all will honour the Son in the same way that they honour the Father. Whoever does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him...And he has given the Son the right to judge, because he is the Son of Man. Do not be surprised at this; the time is coming when all the dead will hear his voice and come out of their graves: those who have done good will rise and live, and those who have done evil will rise and be condemned. John 5.22-29

For the Son of Man is about to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will repay everyone according to his deeds. Matthew 16.27

His miracles, done out of compassion for others and to convince them about himself, are as would be expected from God.

A man suffering from a dreaded skin disease came to Jesus, knelt down, and begged him for help. If you want to, he said, you can make me clean. Jesus was filled with pity, and stretched out his hand and touched him. I do want to, he answered. Be clean! At once the disease left the man, and he was clean. Mark 1.40-42

What I do, that is, the deeds my Father gave me to do, these speak on my behalf and show that the Father has sent me. John 5.36

Jesus saw her weeping, and he saw how the people who were with her were weeping also; his heart was touched, and he was deeply moved. Where have you buried him? He asked them. Come and see, Lord, they answered. Jesus wept. Deeply moved once more, Jesus went to the tomb, which was a cave with a stone placed at the entrance. Take the stone away! Jesus ordered. Martha, the dead man's sister answered, There will be a bad smell, Lord. He has been buried four days! Jesus said to her, Didn't I tell you that you would see God's glory if you believed? They took the stone away. Jesus looked up and said, I thank you, Father, that you listen to me. I know that you always listen to me, but I say this for the sake of the people here, so that they will believe that you sent me. After he had said this, he called out in a loud voice, Lazarus, come out! He came out, his hands and feet wrapped in grave clothes, and with a cloth round his face. Untie him, Jesus told them, and let him go. John 11.33-44

ALONE AMONG THE RELIGIOUS TEACHERS OF THE WORLD, JESUS WAS MORALLY PERFECT.

The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life to redeem many people. Matthew 20.28

The Father loves me because I am willing to give up my life, in order that I may receive it back again. No one takes away my life from me. I give it up of my own free will. I have the right to give it up, and I have the right to take it back. This is what my Father has commanded me to do. John 10.17-18

Jesus answered, What I teach is not my own teaching, but it comes from God, who sent me. Whoever is willing to do what God wants will know whether what I teach comes from God or whether I speak on my

own authority. A person who speaks on his own authority is trying to gain glory for himself. But he who wants glory for the one who sent him is honest and there is nothing false in him. John 7.16-18

I have come down from heaven to do not my own will but the will of him who sent me...What my Father wants is that all who see the Son and believe in him should have eternal life. And I will raise them to life on the last day. John 6.38-40

He who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, because I always do what pleases him. John 8.29

Which one of you can prove that I am guilty of sin? John 8.46

Jesus committed no sin, and no one ever heard a lie come from his lips. When he was insulted, he did not answer back with an insult; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but placed his hopes in God, the righteous judge. 1 Peter 2.22-23

You know that Christ appeared in order to take away sins [to pay for our sins] and that there is no sin in him. 1 John 3.5

Our High Priest is not one who cannot feel sympathy for our weaknesses. On the contrary, we have a High Priest who was tempted in every way that we are, but did not sin. Hebrews 4.15

Jesus was sinless because he was selfless. Unselfishness is love. God is love.

ALONE AMONG THE RELIGIOUS TEACHERS OF THE WORLD, JESUS OVERCAME DEATH.

1. Jesus was dead.

It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. Mark 15.25

At noon the whole country was covered in darkness, which lasted for three hours. At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud shout, Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani? Which means, My God, my God, why did you abandon me? Mark 15.33-34

Jesus cried out in a loud voice, Father! In your hands I place my spirit! He said this and died. Luke 23.46

He looked dead.

The army officer saw what had happened, and he praised God, saying, certainly he was a good man! When the people who had gathered there to watch the spectacle saw what happened, they all went back home, beating their breasts in sorrow. All those who knew Jesus personally, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance to watch. Luke 23.47-49

A soldier made sure.

Then the Jewish authorities asked Pilate to allow them to break the legs of the men who had been crucified, and to take the bodies down from the crosses. They requested this because it was Friday, and they did not want the bodies to stay on the crosses on the Sabbath, since the coming Sabbath was especially holy. So the soldiers went and broke the legs of the first man and then of the other man who had been crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so they did not break his legs. One of the soldiers, however, plunged his spear into Jesus' side, and at once blood and water poured out. John 19.31-34

Those who buried him had no doubt.

It was towards evening when Joseph of Arimathea arrived. He was a respected member of the Council, who was waiting for the coming of the Kingdom of God. It was Preparation day [that is, the day before the Sabbath], so Joseph went boldly into the presence of Pilate and asked him for the body of Jesus. Pilate was surprised to hear that Jesus was already dead. He called the army officer and asked him if Jesus had been dead a long time. After hearing the officer's report, Pilate told Joseph he could have the body. Joseph bought a linen sheet, took the body down, wrapped it in the sheet, and placed it in a tomb which had been dug out of solid rock. Then he rolled a large stone across the entrance to the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph were watching and saw where the body of Jesus was placed. Mark 15.42-47

2. His tomb was found empty. The grave clothes were lying there empty.

The women who had followed Jesus from Galilee went with Joseph and saw the tomb and how Jesus' body was placed in it. Then they went back home and prepared the spices and perfumes for the body. On the Sabbath day they rested, as the Law commanded. Very early on Sunday morning the women went to the tomb carrying the spices they had prepared. Luke 23.55-24.1

Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been taken away from the entrance. She went running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and told them, They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him! Then Peter and the other disciple went to the tomb. The two of them were running, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and saw the linen wrappings, but he did not go in. Behind him came Simon Peter, and he went straight into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there and the cloth which had been round Jesus' head. It was not lying with the linen wrappings but was rolled up by itself. Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in; he saw and believed. [They still did not understand the Old Testament scripture which said that he must rise from death.] Then the disciples went back home. John 20.1-10

His enemies did not know where the body was.

The next day, which was a Sabbath, the chief priests and the Pharisees met with Pilate and said, Sir, we remember that while that liar was still alive he said, I will be raised to life three days later. Give orders, then, for his tomb to be carefully guarded until the third day, so that his disciples will not be able to go and steal the body, and then tell the people that he was raised from death. This last lie would be even worse than the first one. Take a guard, Pilate told them; go and make the tomb as secure as you can. So they made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and leaving the guard on watch...Suddenly there was a violent earthquake; an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled the stone away, and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid that they trembled and became like dead men...some of the guards guarding the tomb went back to the city and told the chief priests everything that had happened. The chief priests met with the elders and made their plan; they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers and said, You are to say that his disciples came during the night and stole his body while you were asleep. And if the Governor should hear of this, we will convince him that you are innocent, and that you will have nothing to worry about. The guards took the money and did what they were told to do. Matthew 27.62-28.15

The disciples did not know where the body was.

On that same day two of Jesus' followers were going to a village named Emmaus, about eleven kilometres from Jerusalem, and they were talking to each other about all the things that had happened. As they talked and discussed, Jesus himself drew near and walked along with them; they saw him, but somehow did not recognise him. Jesus said to them, What are you talking about to each other, as you walk along? They stood still, with sad faces. One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem who doesn't know the things that have been happening here these last few days? What things? He asked. The things that happened to Jesus of Nazareth, they answered. This man was a prophet and was considered by God and by all the people to be powerful in everything he said and did. Our chief priests and rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and he was crucified. And we had hoped that he would be the one who was going to set Israel free [from the Romans]! Besides all that, this is now the third day since it happened. Some of the women of our group surprised us; they went at dawn to the tomb, but could not find his body. They came back saying they had seen a vision of angels who told them that he is alive. Some of our group went to the tomb and found it exactly as the women had said, but they did not see him. Luke 24.13-24

We know that no one took the body because...

3.He was seen again alive.

For forty days after his death Jesus appeared to his apostles many times in ways that proved beyond doubt that he was alive. They saw him, and he talked with them about the Kingdom of God. Acts 1.3

Mary stood crying outside the tomb. While she was still crying, she bent over and looked in the tomb and saw two angels dressed in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head and the other at the feet. Woman, why are you crying? They asked her. She answered, they have taken my Lord away, and I do not know where they have put him! Then she turned round and saw Jesus standing there; but she did not know that it was Jesus. Woman, why are you crying? Jesus asked her. Who is it that you are looking for? She thought he was the gardener, so she said to him, If you took him away, sir, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him. Jesus said to her, Mary! She turned towards him and said in Hebrew, Rabboni! [this means Teacher]. Do not hold on to me, Jesus told her, because I have not yet gone back up to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them that I am returning to him who is my Father and their Father, my God and their God. So Mary Magdalene went and told the disciples that she had seen the lord and related to them what he had told her. John 20.11-18

Then Jesus said to them, How foolish you are, how slow you are to believe everything the prophets said! Was it not necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and then to enter his glory? And Jesus explained to them what was said about himself in all the Scriptures, beginning with the books of Moses and the writings of all the prophets. As they came near the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going further; but they held him back, saying, Stay with us; the day is almost over and it is getting dark. So he went in to stay with them. He sat down to eat with them, took the bread, and said the blessing; then he broke the bread and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognised him, but he disappeared from their sight. They said to each other, Wasn't it like a fire burning in us when he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us? They got up at once and went back to Jerusalem, where they found the eleven disciples gathered together with the others and saying, The Lord is risen indeed! He has appeared to Simon! The two then explained to them what had happened on the road, and how they had recognised the Lord when he broke the bread. Luke 24.25-35

There is no question of hallucination...

While the two were telling them this, suddenly the Lord himself stood among them and said to them, Peace be with you. They were terrified, thinking that they were seeing a ghost. But he said to them, Why are you alarmed? Why are these doubts coming up in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet, and see that it is I myself. Feel me, and you will know, for a ghost doesn't have flesh and bones, as you can see I have. He said this and showed them his hands and his feet. They still could not believe, they were so full of joy and wonder; so he asked them, Have you anything here to eat? They gave him a piece of cooked fish, which he took and ate in their presence. Luke 24.36-43

Jesus returned to his mutilated human body and instantly it was changed into his deathless spiritual body, never to age or die again. It was real [he could prove it by eating] but different [he could disappear]. Because of this he was not immediately recognised, but was known by his talk and manner [his ways]. His followers will someday have a body like his.

In his disciples' presence Jesus performed many other miracles which are not written down in this book. But these have been written in order that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through your faith in him you may have life. John 20.30-31

What convinced the apostles and Paul beyond any shadow of doubt was the empty tomb followed by seeing Jesus alive. History traces the Church to around 30AD and its earliest documents, contemporary [written within living memory of Jesus] and unembroidered [unexaggerated], say it started from its Founder rising from the dead. There is no question about the truthfulness of the disciples' accounts because they stood up to severe persecution. They were demoralised by Jesus' death and then were joyous, risking death to say that he was alive again.

God has raised this very Jesus from death, and we are all witnesses to this fact...we cannot stop speaking of what we ourselves have seen and heard. Acts 2.32 and 4.20

They called the apostles in, had them whipped, and ordered them never again to speak in the name of Jesus; and then they set them free. As the apostles left the Council, they were happy, because God had considered them worthy to suffer disgrace for the sake of Jesus. And every day in the Temple and in people's homes they continued to teach and preach the Good News about Jesus the messiah. Acts 5.40-42

They kept on stoning Stephen as he called out to the Lord, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit! He knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, Lord! Do not remember this sin against them! He said this and died. And Saul approved of his murder. That very day the church in Jerusalem began to suffer cruel persecution. All the believers, except the apostles, were scattered throughout the provinces of Judaea and Samaria. Some devout men buried Stephen, mourning for him with loud cries. But Saul tried to destroy the church; going from house to house, he dragged out the believers, both men and women, and threw them into Jail. The believers who were scattered went everywhere, preaching the message. Acts 7.59-8.4

We had been there for several days when a prophet named Agabus arrived from Judaea. He came to us, took Paul's belt, tied up his own feet and hands with it, and said, This is what the Holy Spirit says: The owner of this belt will be tied up in this way by the Jews in Jerusalem, and they will hand him over to the Gentiles. When we heard this, we and the others there begged Paul not to go to Jerusalem. But he answered, What are you doing, crying like this and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be tied up in Jerusalem but even to die there for the sake of the Lord Jesus. Acts 21.10-13

How Jesus appeared to Saul, who afterwards was called Paul:

I persecuted to the death the people who followed this Way. I arrested men and women and threw them into prison. The High Priest and the whole Council can prove that I am telling the truth. I received from them letters written to fellow Jews in Damascus, so I went there to arrest these people and bring them back in chains to Jerusalem to be punished. As I was travelling and coming near Damascus, about midday a bright light from the sky flashed suddenly round me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, Saul, Saul! Why do you persecute me? Who are you, Lord? I asked. I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you persecute, he said to me. The men with me saw the light, but did not hear the voice of the one who was speaking to me. I asked, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said to me, Get up and go into Damascus, and there you will be told everything that God has determined for you to do...I have appeared to you to appoint you as my servant. You are to tell others what you have seen of me today and what I will show

you in the future. I will rescue you from the people of Israel and from the Gentiles to whom I will send you. You are to open their eyes and turn them from the darkness to the light and from the power of Satan to God, so that through their faith in me they will have their sins forgiven and receive their place among God's chosen people. Acts 22.4-10 and 26.16-18

The Good News was promised long ago by God through his prophets, as written in the Holy Scriptures. It is about his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: as to his humanity, he was born a descendant of David: as to his divine holiness, he was shown with great power to be the Son of God by being raised from death. Through him God gave me the privilege of being an apostle for the sake of Christ, in order to lead people of all nations to believe and obey. Paul in Romans 1.2-5

REASONS WHY WE CAN TRUST THE BIBLE ACCOUNT.

The Gospel accounts do not stand alone. They receive heavy support from both the writers of the New Testament letters and from the Old Testament prophets, who wrote about the life of Jesus while his coming was still in the future.

Only letters or gospels from apostles [who were eyewitnesses of the ministry and resurrection of Jesus] were accepted or from those closely associated with them.

What we have seen and heard we announce to you also. 1 John 1.3

We have not depended on made up stories in making known to you the mighty coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. With our own eyes we saw his greatness. 2 Peter 1.16

So then, our brothers, stand firm and hold onto those truths which we taught you, both in our preaching and in our letter... With my own hand I write this: GREETINGS FROM PAUL. This is the way I sign every letter; this is how I write. 2 Thessalonians 2.15 and 3.17

Jesus promised that all the apostles' teaching would be directed by the holy Spirit.

The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and make you remember all that I have told you. John 14.26

Paul's letters appeared first. They can be accurately dated by comparing the details in them with the accounts of Paul's travels in Acts and by references to Paul's letters in the writings of the apostles' immediate successors. Some had been written by 60AD [Paul's first imprisonment at Rome] and the rest by 65AD [Paul's second imprisonment and death]. Written while many still lived who could remember what Jesus said and did, they give an outline of the Gospel which agrees with the accounts given in the Gospels. Also in agreement is the Gospel outline found in Acts and in the other New Testament letters written by Peter, James, John, Jude and the writer to the Hebrews.

I passed on to you what I received, which is of the greatest importance: that Christ died for our sins, as written in the Scriptures [the writings of the Old Testament Prophets]; that he was buried and that he was raised to life three days later, as written in the Scriptures; that he appeared to Peter and then to all twelve apostles. Then he appeared to more than five hundred of his followers at once, most of whom are still alive, although some have died. Then he appeared to James, and afterwards to all the apostles. Last of all he appeared also to me [Paul]. 1 Corinthians 15.3-8

The Gospels themselves appeared from about 60AD onwards. Mark, who is mentioned in Acts and in the letters, wrote down Peter's preaching. We also have two of Peter's letters. Matthew wrote a list of Jesus' sayings which he later expanded with further material and with material from Mark. Luke who was Paul's companion, did careful research collecting material into which he inserted Matthew's sayings and Mark's account. He also wrote Acts and is mentioned in the letters. John wrote last to provide additional information. We also have his three letters and the revelation given to him. We get a considerable knowledge of Jesus from the selections given, which Jesus said the Holy Spirit would make sure to happen. The Gospels were immediately accepted as accurate accounts of the apostles' teaching at a time when many people could still remember Jesus.

Many people have done their best to write a report of the things that have taken place among us. They wrote what we have been told by those who saw these things from the beginning and who proclaimed the message. And so, your Excellency, because I have carefully studied all these matters from their beginning, I thought it would be good to write an orderly account for you. I do this so that you will know the full truth about everything which you have been taught. Luke 1.1-4

The writings were copied and circulated. The New Testament writers read each others' writings and the letters were read in several places. By 100AD two collections of the books had appeared, the Gospel and the Apostle [Gospels and Acts-letters].

The Scripture says, A worker should be given his pay. 1 Timothy 5.18 quoting Luke 10.7

As you wait for that Day [the return of Jesus], do your best to be pure and faultless in God's sight and to be at peace with him. Look on our Lord's patience [his delay in coming] as the opportunity he is giving you to be saved, just as our dear brother Paul wrote to you, using the wisdom that God gave him. This is what he says in all his letters when he writes on the subject. 2 Peter 3.14-16 referring to Paul's letters.

After you have read this letter, make sure that it is read also in the church at Laodicea. Colossians 4.16

Write down what you see, and send the book to the churches in these seven cities; Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Revelation 1.11

The Early Church Fathers [immediate successors to the apostles] writing from 100AD onwards quote extensively from the New Testament with comments about contacts with the apostles and about the authors of the Gospels. We have copies of many of their writings. There are also scanty references in Roman and Jewish writings of this time from which a brief outline of Jesus can be gathered.

Then we have early manuscripts [handwritten copies] of the New Testament. They can be dated by the form of the handwriting and by the material written upon. We have fragments from as early as 150AD e.g. the John Rylands fragment of John's Gospel. We have the Chester Beattie and Bodmer manuscripts written between 200 and 300AD containing most of the New Testament. There are the Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus from 350AD containing most of the whole Bible, and several others from the following century. We also have portions from 400AD onwards of the Syriac and Latin translations that were made from the Greek around 150AD. By comparing these and many others we are able to ascertain the original New Testament text extremely exactly.

Archaeology gives further confirmation. The Gospels and Acts show a very exact knowledge of details about people and places of the first century AD which strongly proves that they were based on eyewitness accounts.

The New Testament is written in the form of Greek spoken in the first century. Also in many places the Greek of the Gospels, including Jesus' words and the apostles' speeches in Acts, is a word for word translation from Aramaic, the language of Jesus and his disciples.

The Old Testament books were written by prophets-people who gave a message from God.

Men were under the control of the Holy Spirit as they spoke the message that came from God. 2 Peter 1.21

The true prophet spoke about obeying God and accurately foretold the future. Thus identified, the books of the prophets were added to the previous books, building up the Old Testament until the last prophet Malachi in 400BC.

I was studying the sacred books and thinking about...what the Lord had told the prophet Jeremiah. Daniel 9.2

We can date the writing of Bible books by their references to current events, persons and places and by references to the books by later writers, e.g. in later Bible books. From this we can see the amazingly accurate fulfillment of the Bible's many detailed prophecies of the future. Those about the coming of Jesus were all fulfilled in his lifetime. Many of those about Israel and the surrounding nations have been fulfilled exactly, often many centuries after they were written. Others still await fulfilment as do those about the return of Jesus. No book except the Bible foretells the future with consistent accuracy.

I alone am God and there is no one else like me. From the beginning I predicted the outcome; long ago I foretold what would happen. Isaiah 46.9-10

All the prophets spoke about Jesus, saying that everyone who believes in him will have his sins forgiven through the power of his name. Acts 10.43

Archaeology has shown the extreme accuracy of historical and geographical references all the way through the Old Testament. Very many references to current events, persons, towns, nations, customs and words then in use have been confirmed by archaeological finds, which strongly proves that the events described in the Old Testament have been accurately recorded.

The Old Testament's claim to be the Word of God is endorsed by Jesus himself:

Do not think that I have come to do away with the Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets. I have not come to do away with them, but to make their teachings come true. Matthew 5.17

From the time of Ezra in the Bible [450BC] the Old Testament has been very carefully copied by the Jews. We have Jewish manuscripts of the Old Testament from 900-1000AD which agree extremely closely with the Dead Sea Scrolls [Jewish manuscripts from the first century BC] and with Samaritan manuscripts from about 1000AD whose text has been handed down separately by the Samaritans from 400BC. There is also the Greek translation made around 250BC handed down by Jews and then by Christians, of which we possess manuscripts from 350AD, which also agrees with the Jewish text. The great similarity found on comparing these manuscripts proves that our present text is a high quality copy of the original.

The above evidence is adequate to show that the Bible gives us an accurate picture of Jesus.

NOTES ON OTHER RELIGIONS

There are only four possible choices.

No God at all-Atheistic materialism.

A God who is an impersonal force-as in the reincarnation religions.

A God who is a person but did not become a human being-Islam.

A God who is a person and who became a human being-Jesus. Christianity.

Now the purpose of a religion is to get you to God, so examine what each offers here.

Also a religion is supposed to reveal what God is like. So examine what each teaches about the nature and character of God.

Try studying the love of God as described in each. Then the holiness of God.

Extract from Christianity and comparative religion-J.N.D. Anderson.

Dying and rising gods-they were mythical, Jesus was a recent historical person.

Christianity unique, depends on resurrection of a historical person as proof of His deity and of the efficacy of the atonement for our sins.

Crucified Messiah no Messiah at all. Resurrection proved Him to be Son of God and Messiah. No other founder of a religion claimed to be God and that the proof was that he would rise again from the dead.

Holiness of God unique to Judaeo-Christian revelation. Also His love, supremely shown in Jesus' death.

Other religions depend on mystical, moral or philosophical things.

Bible does not say why God allows evil, only that He does not wish it and shows His concern in Jesus.

OT-Failure to keep moral law...repentance and faith...Ceremonial law...forgiven.

NT-Failure to keep moral law...repentance and faith...Jesus...forgiven.

Law of Moses was a way to be forgiven, not a way to become righteous.

God's self disclosure was in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

If there was any other way to be saved, God would not have arranged the crucifixion.

God, like Jesus, comes to us to serve, to give, to be involved, to suffer-this makes us kneel and worship. He hates sin because of the evil it does and solved the problem of His justice conflicting with His love at the Cross.

NOTES:

The Cross cuts across our ideas about God. It shows 1. The Holiness of God 2. The Love of God.

World is a mixture of good and evil. This is an observable fact. Evil does not stay alone, it spreads to affect others causing much undeserved suffering.

Why does sin remain in the Christian? Why are we not made sinless? Love is a thing that you have to choose to do. Without choice it is no longer love but something less. Sin remains to make us practice loving [By practice distinguish between good and evil. Hebrews 5.14]

BOOKS:

Understanding non Christian religions. Josh McDowell.

JESUS-THE JEWISH MESSIAH?

What does the Hebrew Old Testament say about the Messiah? It speaks of a divine Person and of a suffering Servant. It says that the Messiah is to come of the line of David, while the Temple was still standing, after seventy [70x7] weeks of years following the decree to rebuild Jerusalem in the time of Nehemiah.

Jesus said that he had to come twice-once as suffering Servant and a second time to save the Jewish people [who will be under attack from an invasion from the far north] and to take up his rule of the world.

WHAT DID JESUS MEAN BY THE SUFFERING SERVANT?

Jesus said that he had not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life to redeem many people. He said he was the suffering Servant of Isaiah who **was wounded because of our sins, beaten because of the evil we did...Of whom the Lord says, "It was my will that he should suffer; his death was a sacrifice to bring forgiveness...My devoted servant, with whom I am pleased, will bear the punishment of many and for his sake I will forgive them"**.

Jesus did not have to die, he volunteered to die so that our sins could be forgiven. He said, **"The Father loves me because I am willing to give up my life, in order that I may receive it back again. No one takes my life away from me. I give it up of my own free will. I have to right to give it up, and I have the right to take it back. This is what my Father has commanded me to do"**.

Jesus claimed a unique relationship to G-d. He said that G-d was his father. He assumed divine authority-to forgive sins, to give life and to judge the world. This is what led to his crucifixion-for a man to claim divine honours was to the Jewish leaders blasphemy. They did not understand their scriptures with all their hints of the coming of a divine Person, because he came as a servant and not in the way he will return as conquering King.

But G-d vindicated his claims and did so by the great sign of his being raised from death. **The Good News was promised long ago by G-d through his prophets, as written in the Holy Scriptures. It is about his Son, our Lord Jesus the Messiah; as to his humanity, he was born a descendant of David; as to his divine holiness, he was shown with great power to be the Son of G-d by being raised from death. Through him G-d gave me [Paul] the privilege of being an apostle for the sake of the Messiah, in order to lead people of all nations to believe [trust in] and obey [him]...Jesus said. " The Messiah must suffer and must rise from death three days later, and in his name the message about repentance and the forgiveness of sins must be preached to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem"**.

G-D'S LOVE FOR THE JEWISH PEOPLE IS SHOWN IN TWO WAYS.

Firstly he sent Jesus to free them from sin-from the condemnation that results from failing to obey the Law with its strict demands. He did this by living a life of perfect obedience and then volunteering to suffer the death and condemnation that disobedience deserves, so that, when a person trusts in Jesus for forgiveness, his sins are forgiven because Jesus has been punished instead of him. Just as Abraham was accepted as righteous by G-d because he trusted G-d and not because he obeyed the Law so a person who trusts in Jesus for forgiveness is accepted as righteous by G-d.

He is trusting in the effectiveness of the sacrifice that G-d has offered on his behalf through the death of his Son Jesus.

He is then expected to follow his Messiah by living a morally good life but without the fear of condemnation that results from trying to be made right with G-d through obeying the Law-because no one [except Jesus] is able to obey the Law perfectly.

The Hebrew-English New Testament says-When G-d promised Abraham and his descendants that the world would belong to them, he did so, not because Abraham obeyed the Law, but because he believed and was accepted as righteous by G-d...**For no one is put right in G-d's sight by doing what the Law requires; what the Law does is to make man know that he has sinned. But now G-d's way of putting people right with himself has been revealed. It has nothing to do with law, even though the Law of Moses and the prophets give their witness to it. G-d puts people right through their faith in Jesus the Messiah. G-d does this to all who believe in the Messiah, because there is no difference at all: everyone has sinned and is far away from G-d's saving presence. But by the free gift of G-d's grace all are put right with him through Jesus the Messiah, who sets them free. G-d offered him, so that by his death he should become the means by which people's sins are forgiven through their faith in him.**

Secondly G-d shows his love by starting to fulfil the promises made long ago through his prophets, that he would regather his people whom he had scattered over the world because of their unfaithfulness to him, and resettle them in their own land again. It is promised that they will not be driven out, and that when finally they are invaded by a huge force from the north, then their Messiah will come to save them and set up his world rule. Just before this happens, Jesus will be recognised as the Jewish Messiah. He will then rule over them forever like King David.

For the sake of any Arab who may read this paper I say that although G-d had willed that the Jewish people return to their land, yet G-d cares very much about everything that happens to the Arab people, and

it is not to be assumed that G-d automatically approves of everything Israel does.

The accuracy of the Bible [which I am asking you to read] can be checked. From the many manuscripts available the text of both the Hebrew Old Testament and the Hebrew-English New Testament can be ascertained extremely exactly. From the very great accuracy of the historical references all through the Bible it is shown that the events were recorded at or near the time of their occurrence by people who must therefore have been knowledgeable. The Bible's scientific statements are accurate and its prophecies are fulfilled exactly [there are many prophecies about towns and nations in the Middle east]. Also the legal rules for evaluating evidence show the Bible in a very favourable light. For example, they show that it is impossible to invent significant history without the fraud being detected.

THE LORD JESUS...WORD OF GOD MADE FLESH?

The Quran speaks very highly of the earlier Holy Books, saying they are words God said and that these Holy Books are in the hands of the Jews and the Christians.

“The Jews changed their Holy Book,” people say but the verses in the Quran on this subject speak differently. When taken together with the verses near to them in the Quran they do not mean that the Jews actually changed their Holy Book.

The Quran says,“The Christians forgot or hid their Holy Books.” The Quran does not say the Christians actually changed their Holy Book.

The early Muslim writers and some modern ones say, “The Jews and the Christians did not change their Holy Books.”

The Quran says,“The earlier Holy Books were in the hands of Jews and Christians at the time of the beginning of Islam.” It is impossible you must agree that all Jews and Christians [including many good people] would decide together later to change all their copies.

Also there is no mention in the Quran of any Holy Books going up to Heaven or being replaced by others.

In the Taurat it says,“A Person like God and a suffering Servant will come [in the future]. Examples of the words in the Taurat on this subject are:

A child is born to us. A son is given to us. And he will be our ruler. He will be called, “Wonderful Counsellor [Guide],” “Mighty [Great] God.” “Eternal [Going on forever] Father,” “Prince of Peace.”

Because of our sins he was wounded, beaten because of the evil we did. We are healed by the punishment he suffered, made whole [healed] by the blows he received....The Lord says, “It was my will that he should suffer; his death was a sacrifice [an offering to God] to bring forgiveness. And so he will see his descendants [children, grand-children and so on]; he will live a long life and through him my purpose [plan] will succeed....My devoted [faithful] servant, with whom I am pleased, will bear the punishment of many and for his sake [because of him] I will forgive them.”

In the Injil Jesus said, **“I come not to be served but to serve and to give my life to redeem [buy forgiveness for] many people.”** Jesus said he was the suffering servant the prophet Isaiah spoke about in the Taurat.

Jesus said, **“This is what is written in the Taurat: The Messiah must suffer and must rise from death three days later, and in his name the message about repentance [obeying God] and the forgiveness of sins must be preached [told] to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem.”**

Jesus did not need to die, he offered to die so that God could forgive our sins. He said, **“The Father loves me because I am willing to give up my life, in order that I may receive [get] it back again. No one takes my life away from me. I give it up of my own free will. I have to right to give it up, and I have the right to take it back. This is what my father has commanded [ordered] me to do.”**

The thing we need to understand here is that through the death of Jesus, God offers us forgiveness for all our wrongdoing. Jesus died as punishment for our sins. The reason why the death of Jesus Christ can obtain for us forgiveness is because of who Jesus is.

In the Injil it says: **Before the world was created [made], the Word already existed; He was with God and he was the same as God....Through him God made all things. The Word was the source [starting place] of life, and this life brought light to mankind....The Word became a human being and full of grace [mercy] and truth, lived among us. We saw his glory, the glory which he received as the Father's only Son.** [Christians do not mean that God has a son by the virgin Mary as a man has a child by a woman. They mean that the Word of God, part of God himself, became a human being and that Jesus was a Person like God].

Jesus said that he was related [connected] to God in a way that no one else was. He said that God was his Father. He claimed the right God possesses to forgive sins, to give us God's Spirit and to judge all men. Jesus Christ lived a sinless life, which only a Person like God could do. He did the kind of miracles [wonderful things], such as healing blind people and raising dead people to life, that only a Person who was more than an ordinary human being could do.

The Jewish leaders thought that Jesus spoke against God because he declared that he was a Person like God. This is why those men killed him. They did not understand their own Holy Book with all the suggestions in it about the coming to this world of a Person like God. Because Jesus came as a Servant they did not recognise him. He will return as King to rule the world. Soon, we know.

But God showed who Jesus Christ was by the great sign of raising him from death to live again. This sign is what started the Christian religion. This sign showed that Jesus really was the Person like God whom God had sent, and whose death really was good enough to pay for all our sins.

So began the message of forgiveness of sins and how we can be made right with God. We know being made right with God also protects the follower of the Lord Jesus from the power of evil spirits.

The Injil says: **The Good News was promised long ago by God through his prophets, as written in the Holy Writings [the Taurat]. It is about his Son [meaning the Person like God whom God sent], our Lord Jesus Christ: as to his humanity [human nature], he was born a descendant of David; as to his divine holiness [being a Person like God], he was shown with great power to be the Son of God by being raised from death. Through him God gave me [Paul] the privilege [honour] of being an apostle for the sake of Christ in order to lead people of all nations to believe [trust in] and obey [him]....Christ was without sin, but for our sake God made him share our sin [be punished for our sins] in order that in union with him [joined to him] we might share the righteousness of God [be made right with God].**

You and I can experience union with Jesus when we trust in the death of Jesus Christ to make us right with God. This is possible because Jesus has already been punished for our sins instead of us. Union with Jesus Christ is only possible however when we obey the commands of Jesus about how to live and behave. These commands are written in the Injil.

Christians do not believe in three Gods. They believe in one God. This one God is three Persons or centres of consciousness. Each of the three Persons is able to know the thoughts, feelings and will of the

others without needing to ask. The three Persons are God, God's Word and God's Spirit.

The Bible [which I suggest you read] can be tested to see if it is true.

We possess many very old hand written copies of the Bible in which the words of the Taurat, Zabur and Injil you can compare with the words in the copies of the Bible we now possess. They are the same.

The stories we find all through the Bible men have compared with other history books and found that they are exactly right. Also things men have dug up from the ground in places where the Bible stories happened show that the Bible stories are true. All this proves that the writers possessed good knowledge of what they were writing about and that they wrote down the stories at or soon after the time they happened.

The Bible's scientific statements are right. The things the Bible says would happen have come true exactly [there are many things said about towns and nations in the Middle East].

Also the legal [lawyer's] rules for testing if stories are true show the Bible is true. For example, no one can invent stories about public teachings and events and get people at the time to believe them because people will say, "We did not see these things happen." Also no one can get people living later to believe that these things happened before they were born, because they will say, "No one has handed this down to us from the people living before us."

Some sayings of the Lord Jesus:

I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never be hungry; he who believes in me will never be thirsty [need drink].

I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will have the light of life and will never walk in darkness.

I am the resurrection [rising from death to live again] and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.

I am the way, the truth and the life; no one goes to the Father, except by me.

Come to me, all you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke [control over you] and put it on you, and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble [kind] in spirit; and you will find rest. For the yoke I will give you is easy, and the load I will put on you is light.

EVIDENCE FROM THE SCIENCES

A NEW CREATION THEORY

1 EVERYTHING IS BASED ON QUANTUM MECHANICS.

This reflects the nature of God [As Trinity/Unity at one and same time]

Allows Mind/body interaction [Spirit/matter interface]

Allows formation of matter [Sustained by His Word-Hebrews]

2 EVERYTHING DECAYS TO DEATH [2nd LAW OF THERMODYNAMICS].

Purpose of God -creation not to last forever

[Heaven and Earth will pass away but My Words will never pass away-Jesus]

Everywhere in living things engines are needed to harness energy to reverse the 2nd Law locally

Note: Time is created, not eternal. Relativity shows time to depend on the existence of space. God lives outside of time, in Eternity where there is no decay or death

3 INFORMATION IS A REALITY JUST AS IS MATTER AND ENERGY.

Information must come from a Mind the Divine Mind

Informs the machinery that creates everything that is made inside cells [The Spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters-Genesis]

4 EVERYTHING EATS EVERYTHING ELSE.

Reflects the self sacrifice of the suffering self sacrificing God Who gave His life that we may live

5 DEATH OF HUMANS RESULTING FROM SIN.

The alternative would have been translation [E.g. Enoch, Elijah]

Compare the Resurrection of Jesus. Because He was sinless death could not hold Him and He "translated" into His Resurrection body similar to ours but different and deathless

6 DISEASE AND MISFORTUNE RESULT OF THE CURSE IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN.

God said Cursed is the ground because of you [Adam]

God could have intervened to prevent disease and misfortune but has chosen not to [See Bible where God says he will prevent disease and misfortune to Israel if they obey Him]

7 EVOLUTION.

God works in other areas by a process [the Universe, the development of revelation in the Bible]

It seems that some form of evolution is required to produce an integrated functioning Biosphere [Let the Earth bring forth-Genesis]

[Thanks to Science and Christian Belief [Vol 23 Article "Good Death"] for the self sacrifice idea in 4]

PHYSICAL SCIENCE

Ten billion galaxies each containing 100 billion stars, all starting from the big bang 15 billion years ago.

Anthropic Principle: Only very small changes in the amount of the four basic forces leads to a Universe that is either a fireball or just fantastically thin gas. The Universe was made to be inhabited.

Logarithmic: What is large to us is not so big to God. To Him 1000 years is as a day. Also thinking logarithmically man is midway in size between an atom and a star.

Entropy : Principle that everything runs down and wears out. The Universe was not meant to last forever, so everything including our lives on this Earth are only for a while. Then comes Eternity, where God is.

Duality: The strange fact that things can be two things at once. E.g., light is waves but also particles. This I think reflects God's own nature in some way. Incidentally, all this talk about time travel and multiple Universes is speculation, not observation.. God can do better. God is in the past, the present and the future all at once. Which is why He can tell the end from the beginning-He is already there.

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCE

Microbes first to create atmosphere. Sea creatures, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals, man. And land plants-mosses, fungi, liverworts, ferns, cone bearing plants, flowering plants.

Molecules to Metabolism: No one has produced a believable explanation of how anything of any use, let alone anything that can reproduce itself, could arise by itself. Information theory states that the Universe does not just contain matter and energy, it also contains information, and that information cannot arise spontaneously, it can only be made by intelligence. In the case of DNA it has to be the Intelligence of God. In cells nothing just happens. Everything is caused by intricate mechanisms at the molecular level. Glib scenarios like RNA life and evolution of organelles from free living organisms are devoid of explanations for the origin of the intricate molecular mechanisms for all the cell components to work as they actually do.

Fossil Record: In spite of arguments to the contrary, the gaps between groups above the level of genera seem to be systematic across the whole fossil record, and this after 100 years of collecting to try to demonstrate evolution. There are a few possible intermediates but they lack soft parts to compare. The theme is sudden appearance and persistence until later extinction. The gaps forced scientists to propose sudden appearance of new types as the method of evolutionary change.

Micro evolution. There is no doubt that some change does occur, but breeding experiments suggest that there is a limit. Examples of change include clines and island flora and fauna. Presumably natural selection operates on the variation available and picks out the most suitable. But what about the origin of the variation, the differences between genes? I question if much change, meaning real novelty, not just changes in shape size or colour, can occur by itself even given gene duplication, split genes, many enzymes sharing exons, one gene affecting many functions and large changes e.g. in shape possible for small changes in genes. I doubt if random changes can conveniently produce all the right changes for serious progress in developing new structures and functions.

Embryology: The idea that embryos show features of ancestral forms, e.g. gill slits in mammals is less sure now that it is known that in different species homologous structures such as the limbs arise from different cells and genes. Early embryos are very different in which cells become what structure. [This was written in 1984. See more recent material in Nature's Destiny by Michael Denton and Mere Creation ed by W. Dembski about Homeotic genes, the role of cytoskeleton and membrane receptors in embryogenesis and redundancy-that is several alternate mechanisms for producing each bit of development and the availability of vast numbers of different transmitter molecules -e.g. in the Central Nervous System as a result of there being multiple genes and parts of genes [introns] for each one giving up to hundreds of thousands of possibilities for use in creating e.g. the brain]. Michael Denton was right [Evolution in Crisis]- the more we go, the more the fantastic complexity.

Comparative Biochemistry: Proteins are compared between species to try to demonstrate evolution. At the present time the data is very incomplete, but the comparisons for proteins like Cytochrome C and Haemoglobin have shown a striking pattern that does not agree with the idea of descent with modification through mutations. [See Denton, Evolution in Crisis]. The impression this pattern gives is that each large group e.g. mammals appeared all at once, or is in a separate "box" from other groups. Also the molecular clock of slow change as a measure of distance in time between ancestor and descendant is only tentative. Many more things about genes await fuller evaluation e.g. new functions for "junk" DNA, transposons, pseudogenes, tandem repeats, genes involved in embryological development, mobility of genes between chromosomes and even between species, the steadily increasing number of complete genome sequences becoming available, and new mechanisms e.g. imprinting [selective preference for genes of one parent over the other], environmental effects that alter heredity by turning on or off certain genes and that can even speed up mutations [in bacteria] to try to produce a new enzyme to try to overcome the disablement of an existing gene.

Observed unique features in every group: Animals and plants are grouped into completely separate groups, no intermediates between the groups e.g. all mammals have hair, mammary glands, sweat glands, four chambered heart, reniform kidney producing urea, six layered cerebral cortex, three ear bones, and the organ of Corti. Every mammal has these no matter how "primitive". Birds have feathers, aerofoil, flow through lung, different cerebral hemispheres with different layers, in every bird. Every group has major features not shared with any other group e.g. jumping apparatus of click beetle, bat's wing, Echinoderm water vascular system...vast numbers of examples exist, some in every group. There are vast gaps between major types e.g. feathers, bird's lung, the whale, reptile egg compared with amphibian egg, various types of insects, parasites with multiple hosts, bacterial flagellum with its rotary motor, pollination mechanisms in plants, carnivorous plants...endless examples of features which cannot be imagined developing bit by bit via functioning intermediates. The adaptations work perfectly, there is overwhelming perfection everywhere, countless examples in every group and at cellular and molecular level also. There is only a handful of less than perfect adaptations.

The tiny number of intermediate forms are in fact mixtures [mosaics] rather than intermediates e.g. lungfish-fins, gills, spiral valve in gut just like a fish and lungs, heart and larval stage just like an amphibian. Platypos-reptilian egg, mammalian hair, mammary glands and ear bones. Peripatus-arthropod circulatory and respiratory system and annelid nervous and excretory system.

The fish to mammal sequence: Heart is suggestive but can be considered as specialisation for the environment of each group.

The moss to fern to conifer to angiosperm [flowering plant] sequence: very little evidence.

Primates: No intermediates between the four legged and the two legged ones.

Physiology: The study of organ function down to cellular and molecular level reveals the many intricate mechanisms underlying function e.g. eye and brain. The eye with its iris, lens with correction for spherical and chromatic aberration and retina with image intensification. The brain, the human brain, the most complex thing in the created Universe, this wonderful computer that can create such a faithful copy of its observed surroundings within itself and then make reasoned responses within the mysterious phenomenon of consciousness. We do not seriously believe that standing long enough on the sea shore will allow us to observe a modern office computer develop all by itself out of sand grains so why do we doubt that the infinitely more complex brain is the product of the Intelligence of God?

NOTES ON BIOLOGICAL SCIENCE

1 A curious mix of continuity and discontinuity [unique features] as well as incredible complexity in living things. Thus animals plants and fungi share similar biochemistry [with a few notable differences mainly in bacteria]. Also cell structures and functions are similar. Yet unique features abound in every group.

2 Excess emphasis by scientists on random processes and rejection of arguments for deliberate design by a Supernatural Intelligence. Here is suggested a new Theory of Everything. The Mind of God creates information. Information structures quantum mechanics leading to physics and chemistry. Information structures DNA leading to biochemistry genetics and biology.

3 Three creation views: Creation by evolution; Ancient creation with waves of creative input; Recent creation of young Earth with appearance of age.

4 Some scientists want us to believe that everything happened by itself and that there is no God, nothing more than the world we see. Most agree on the systematic gaps in the fossil record but some deny this. It is thought that the apes and monkeys are quite similar to us but others are not so sure. For example the human cerebral cortex is much deeper than in the Chimp [New Scientist 25 Jan 97 p14]. Bitter controversy continues between evolutionists and creationists about the possibility of ape-man fossils and of transposons, pseudogenes and gene duplications in us that are "evolutionary leftovers". I can't sort all this out at present but the good news is this-it takes only one spectacular, visible and indisputable miracle to occur in answer to prayer to rubbish the view that we are just animals and that there is no God, and such miracles are happening today all over the world. God is still very much alive!

Recent DNA research [The ENCODE Project 2012] shows most of the human genome that was thought to be junk is in fact doing things. Millions of things. Common sense should have told us that is was incredible that the 21000 or so genes in human DNA could have formed a human body without a bewildering mass of control mechanisms to make it happen! The 98% non- gene DNA supplies this, or only some of this as it is thought that to work there has to be an intact cytoskeleton [the fibrils responsible for all the micro movements in the cell. I am staggered at how they and the thousands of associated proteins manage to reproduce the 23 chromosomes without a hopeless tangle]. Then there are the myriad membrane based transporters [proteins inserted into the membranes surrounding the cell and the intra cellular organelles]. Without these structures in place DNA can't piece together a body.

Then at the larger scales the astonishing array of adaptations in every species from bacteria to elephants ranging from the molecular [e.g. the many biochemical adaptations in plants] to the thousands of visible ones [e.g. birds and animals who change the colour of their plumage or fur in winter] leave awestruck the serious observer. Who formed all this?

Then there is the brain. Fantastic computing power. Who devised this machine that knows what is going on?

5 I suggest you can have it both ways. Some form of evolution is correct but there is massive evidence that everything has come from the Hand of a massively intelligent and may I say benign Creator. Genesis 1 says "let the Earth bring forth" which sounds like evolution! While Genesis 2 emphasises Man as God's special interest.

6 I asked questions of the Lord about Genesis 1-11 and a certain Christian received the following answers;

a The Bible is a plenary account [overview] of history prophecy and theology.

b Allow more time than Genesis seems to take, there are long gaps.

c I created in order, not in chaos. [A current idea is that asteroid impacts drastically altered the appearing of new forms on Earth].

d Evolution of Man from animals? Definitely not!

e What about protein comparisons as evidence of evolutionary relationship? Incorrect interpretations of incomplete data. [It is of interest that "junk" DNA is now regarded as anything but junk.]

f The obscurity of Genesis 1-11 is to test people whether they will search for Me. [I think Gen 1-11 was written in the outline of the current world view but with the spiritual viewpoint, the view from God's side, radically altered, in order to critique and displace the polytheistic world view. So it is permissible to interpret Gen 1-11 by stretching out the account to include modern Science [long gaps with much, very much passed over].

g The difference between Man and animals is that there is a God shaped void in Man. This makes sense to me. It is not just intelligence that distinguishes us, it is our concern about the future and our conscious need of God].

7 I enquired of the Lord about ape-men. A Christian received the following...Wait for My help. Contain your soul in patience.

8 A suggestion of mine: God made Man upright, but they have sought out many inventions [Ecclesiastes]. The spirit in us was originally perfect. Adam's sin damaged his spirit causing loss of contact with God and leading to his sinful tendency. This could explain why we resemble animals with similar desires, yet we are expected to be perfect by God. Originally the spirit controlled the animal nature. We lost this control in the Fall. The Gospel claims to reverse this [but gradually as God's plan is for us to choose Him, not just be controlled by Him].

9 Another suggestion: About death. Could the original plan have been translation [Enoch] prior to body's wearing out?

10 There is abundant evidence that we are dual entities-body and spirit from study of the many miraculous helps given in answer to prayer.

11 Creation in order. Although mass extinctions occurred [due to tectonic plate movements and their effects] the main influence in the development of life was I think the creative introduction of novelty. Extraterrestrial events like asteroid impacts occurred but I don't think they were major influences in the direction that life's development took. I think God had a program of development in mind. I think that natural selection does not create but merely conserves the healthy and eliminates the bad.

12 Diseases and dangerous animals. Bible seems to teach that if we had obeyed God He would have restrained these things and protected us.

13 A suggested synthesis of science and Genesis 1-11

Creation Genesis 1

In Biology there is a continuity through everything giving the impression of evolution while there is discontinuity everywhere [every group has unique features not found in any other group] which strongly points to the Creator's activity. Everywhere there are myriads of adaptations and devices an endless panorama while inside the cell more and more devices and control mechanisms are discovered. The brain is a computer far beyond anything we have yet constructed. I think that some form of evolution is needed to form an integrated functioning Biosphere [e.g. our diet contains myriads of essential molecules which would not be possible if there were not a very close relationship between all the life forms animal and vegetable]. Genesis 1 is arranged topically [light, water, land then heavenly bodies, sea life, land life] yet sounds very modern, to my mind agreeing well with modern science, being a brief overview.

Story of Man. Genesis 2-11

I suggest that Garden of Eden and the rise of civilisation are merged in the Bible and the intervening long hunter gatherer period has been passed over with its neanderthals and denosovans the early wanderers. Thus the Garden of Eden is placed in the Fertile Crescent. The creation of Man could have been elsewhere, even in Ethiopia, and the stories still be accurate because they have been condensed. Then civilisation begins around 10000 BC at the ending of the Ice Age. The change from the peaceful hunter gatherer period [as shown by cave art which shows all animals, presumably the ones hunted] to the warlike civilisation period [as shown from a change in the art from 8000-7000BC to show human beings carrying weapons] corresponds with the Bible's observation of the whole Earth full of violence, resulting in the Flood. This could have been a spectacular inundation of the Fertile Crescent made possible by the rise in sea level over the previous 4000 years as the ice all melted over Europe and North America. [Heavy rain, high tides and strong wind could have produced an impressive Bangladesh type disaster that was never forgotten]. This flood would not need to be world wide, just enough to devastate this early civilisation would be enough. Noah would have lived in the Fertile Crescent and would have needed the boat to survive and also to act as a prophet warning the people [As God always does-see the activities of later prophets]. Then after a long time the pride of Man's religious independence from God is dented in the Tower of Babel incident. This story does not intend to explain the origin of the world's languages as some have supposed, and is again a local event, directed against the pride of the world's first civilisation. While all this is going on, most people abandoned seeking the Creator and preferred witchcraft [manipulation of evil forces to get what they wanted, described in Romans 1] but a few sought the Creator and contact with God was given to them as seen with various people from Adam and Eve on until Abraham, where the quick summary suddenly slows down and we get into detailed history.

This scheme is only tentative

Four rivers of Eden: The other two seem to be now just dried up beds as the Middle East became much drier after 3000BC. The Pishon ran through Arabia and Kuwait to the Persian Gulf, showing on satellite photographs.

A geologist [Mr Cole] has suggested that cometary fragments struck the Earth in 9600BC causing world wide tidal waves. Others suggest less widespread floods e.g. the sudden expansion of the Black Sea from the Mediterranean around 7000BC, which produced a sudden increase of the Sea's area mainly to the North. All speculative.

14 Christians [some, not all] in the following organisations think that evolution has occurred:

American Scientific Affiliation

Christians in Science

[They would propose that Genesis 1=modern science and that Genesis 2-11=critique of current world view. They would accept that there was continuity between living things. They would accept the arguments for intelligent design. A final suggestion, of which I have been reminded by a Christian with both scientific and theological training is this: Similarity is not=fact of continuity; God uses same mechanisms again and again; He stepwise elaborates certain processes. Michael Pitman wrote a book in 1984 about this when he was working at Cambridge University, I think it was called Adam and Evolution. In it he says that God repeatedly used the same "subroutines" such as biochemical mechanisms that He reassembles and adds to at will. At the DNA level this could involve whole block transfers of information. Could cutting and pasting be correct?]

15 The following books show the difficulty to the point of impossibility of the Darwinian theory of random mutations resulting in significant novelty.

The Biotic Message by Walter James ReMaine develops the theme that unity and diversity of life is meant to give a message. The unity means one designer and the diversity-the unique features in every group-means life has not developed unaided, it was created. Also the book shows how evolution by natural selection is such a vague, formless thing that it can be made to explain almost anything. It is therefore untestable, which makes it a useless theory. Also the mathematical calculations of population genetics show that the time required for random mutations to spread to the whole of a population and become fixed is vastly more than the time in which evolution is thought to have occurred. These calculations are looked at in: Limits of Biological Change Ray Bohlin and Not By Chance Lee Spetner

I have to say that the difficulty I mentioned earlier with the genes and fossils pales into insignificance before the staggering impact of the argument for creation that the study of the intricate mechanisms of molecular cell biology reveals, and the calculations of population genetics help greatly to press home the conclusion: created by God.

16 I have not included addresses of young Earth creationist organisations. They include Answers in Genesis and Creation Science Movement. Encouragingly these organisations are joining forces with the ancient creationist organisations and starting to advertise their books. There are no references in the sources I have listed to arguments about the age of the earth or the extent of Noah's Flood. This is because to the average person these things are not an issue. The issue is whether life developed by itself or was created by God.

Books used in this essay:

A brief History of Eternity. Roy Peacock.

The Creator and the Cosmos. Hugh Ross.

Evolution A theory In Crisis. Michael Denton. The Biological Science section above is a summary of what is in this book.

Testing Darwinism. Philip E Johnson. Intelligent design and information theory versus atheism.

Dartwin's Black Box. Michael Behe. Biochemical complexity as evidence of intelligent design

Genesis Today. Ernest Lucas. Genesis 1-11 written to criticize and displace the then current polytheistic world view.

BIBLE REFERENCES TO ASTRONOMY AND EARTH SCIENCES

By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all their host by the breath of His mouth. Psalm 33

At the beginning You existed and laid the foundation of the Earth; the heavens are the work of Your hands. They shall perish, but You shall remain and endure, yes all of them shall wear out and become old like a garment. Like clothing You shall change them, and they shall be changed and pass away. But You remain the same, and Your years shall have no end. Psalm 102

As the host of the stars of the heavens cannot be numbered, nor the sands of the sea be measured, so will I multiply the offspring of David My servant, and the Levites who minister to Me. Jeremiah 33

[The number of stars in the Universe is about the same as the number of sand grains on all the shores of the world]

He it is Who spreads out the Northern skies over emptiness and hangs the Earth on [or over] nothing. Job 26

Where were you when I laid the foundations of the Earth? Declare, if you know and have understanding.

Who determined the measures of the Earth, if you know? Or Who stretched the measuring line upon it?

Upon what were the foundations of it fastened, or Who laid its corner stone, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Or Who shut up the sea with doors ,when it broke forth and issued from the womb? When I made clouds the garment of it, and thick darkness a swaddling band for it, and marked for it My appointed boundary, and set bars and doors, and said, Thus far you shall come and no further, and here shall your proud waves be stayed? Job 38

[The Earth is now thought to have formed from cold matter which then heated up from radioactivity, causing the water content to burst out forming the oceans. Tectonic plate activity with the motion of the continents forms the mountain ranges of the land masses, and anyone can see how well the period of rotation, the axial tilt, the Moon with the tides and stabilising effect on the Earth's axial tilt, the climate regulating effect of the oceans and of Antarctica, and other features give a varied habitat largely suitable for a generalised animal like Man to inhabit. However a competing recent idea is that a Mars sized object hit the early Earth baking it dry and throwing off material that formed the Moon. Water then arrived from cometary impacts to form the oceans. But an equally credible alternative is that the Earth was struck a glancing blow, throwing off the material that formed the Moon, melting but not completely drying the mantle to be. Water then burst out through later volcanic action with maybe some supplementation from cometary impacts to form the oceans. I'm not saying this is the last word on this though!]

I made the Earth, and created Man upon it; I with My hands, stretched out the heavens, and I commanded all their host...Thus says the Lord Who created the heavens, God Himself Who formed the Earth and made it, Who established it and created it not a worthless waste; He formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord, and there is no one else. Isaiah 45

The wind goeth to the South, and circles about to the North; it circles about continually, and in its circlings the wind returns again.

All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; unto the place from which the rivers come, to there and from there they return again. Ecclesiastes 1

BIBLE REFERENCES TO OTHER SCIENCES

The Bible has accurate observations on various aspects of Biology e.g.

Proverbs 6 describes the ant's behaviour.

Job 39 describes the eagle's vision and the ostrich's behaviour.

Genesis 31 explains how spots on cattle are inherited.

The Law of Moses as well as its ceremonial aspects contains excellent public health measures:

Leviticus 11 permitted food list.

Deuteronomy 14 forbidden to eat animal dying by itself.

Leviticus 11 running water is clean.

Deuteronomy 23 use of shovel to bury body waste.

Leviticus 13 quarantine for skin infections.

Leviticus 15 and others. Washing of the body and of clothes.

I get the impression that as well as ceremonial procedures to deal with spiritual dirt [sin] the Lord does not like physical dirt either, so there are a large number of washing and other cleansing procedures.

SUMMARY OF BIBLE AND SCIENCE

Physics: Explains why the Universe has to be so large to produce an inhabitable home for life through the formation of stars and galaxies, planets and sea, land and air. It is a fantastic fact that everything in physics and chemistry [which is really a branch of physics] is both necessary and exactly right to make life possible, and that the smallest change would have ruined everything, making life impossible.

Biology: Recent discovery is revealing the unimaginable, detailed complexity of everything about living things. Overwhelming is the impression that living things simply could never have come by themselves. Utterly overwhelming is the conviction that only intelligent creative input could produce all this. In other words, God.

Alternatives: you can believe that there are an uncountable number of universes so that one would be right for life, but even with 15,000 million years in our universe and all the probable planets around the 100 billion stars in 100 billion galaxies, there isn't the ghost of a chance that life would have developed anywhere by itself! That is how unlikely it is for what we see here on Earth to have developed without any help from an intelligent Creator.

So choose the Christian faith and see where it leads you! Home to God, your Creator!

Ever since the creation of the world His invisible nature and attributes, that is, His eternal power and divinity have been made intelligible and clearly discernible in and through the things which have been made His handiworks, Romans 1.

There is more help to believe! A lot is said about the Bible and Science, but the above reference shows that only a little knowledge about God is obtainable from the study of science. To know God's Personality, to know what He offers and what He expects, we have to go on to history-the Bible. For God is revealed in history.

The Bible says that the Word [the historical account of Jesus' life recorded in the 4 Gospels] is confirmed by the miracles attending its preaching- the signs following. God supports the preaching of the story of Jesus by giving miracles of healing and deliverances from situations of danger and suffering through trusting in Jesus and prayer. Many books available from Christian bookshops and an increasing number of churches testify to this.

A quick review of the Bible, the textbook of the Faith.

1 Genesis. Written for the people of the time, to oppose the current polytheistic [many gods] world view. So takes pains to show that everything was created by God. Then in Genesis 2 and 3 takes pains to show that we are seriously wrong and need a deliverer who will come in the future [Jesus]. Then briefly outlines the rise of civilisation and its evil ways, before starting the real story of the Bible- the coming of a deliverer, promised to Abraham, the founder of Israel.

2 History of Israel. This is the nation to whom the promised deliverer would come. An impressive amount of the historical accounts can be corroborated by records of surrounding nations, found by archaeologists.

3 Prophecies of the Messiah, the deliverer who was to come. Many detailed prophecies about the life of a conquering king and a suffering servant who was to come, along with many statements about his divine nature, and even about his death and resurrection. The Jewish people did not understand that these prophecies were to be fulfilled in Jesus, who was to come twice, a first time to suffer and a second time to rule as divine king for ever!

4 The New Testament: The story of Jesus and the beginning of the Church, contained in what is now called the New Testament.

Jesus said He had not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life to redeem many people. He said He was the suffering Servant [foretold in Isaiah's prophecies] who was wounded because of our sins, beaten because of the evil we did...Of whom the Lord says, It was My will that he should suffer; His death was a sacrifice to bring forgiveness... My devoted Servant, with whom I am pleased, will bear the punishment of many and for His sake I will forgive them.

Jesus did not have to die, He volunteered to die so that our sins could be forgiven. He said, The Father loves Me because I am willing to give up My life, in order that I may receive it back again. No one takes My life away from Me. I give it up of My own free will. I have the right to give it up, and I have the right to take it back. This is what My father has commanded Me to do.

Jesus claimed a unique relationship with God. He said that God was His father. He assumed divine authority- to forgive sins, to give life and to judge the world. This is what led to His crucifixion-for a man to claim divine honours was to the Jewish leaders blasphemy. They did not understand their scriptures with all their hints of the coming of a divine person, because He came as a Servant and not in the way He will return as conquering King.

But God vindicated His claims and did so by the great sign of His being raised from death. The Good News was promised long ago by God through His prophets, as written in the Holy Scriptures. It is about His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: as to His humanity, He was born a descendant of David; as to His divine holiness, He was shown with great power to be the Son of God by being raised from death. Through Him God gave me [Paul] the privilege of being an apostle for the sake of Christ, in order to lead people of all nations to believe [trust in] and obey [him]...Jesus said, The Messiah [Christ= Greek for Messiah] must suffer and must rise from death three days later, and in His name the message about repentance and the forgiveness of sins must be preached to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem.

WHY GOD HAS TO ALLOW SUFFERING

1. God has made it possible, at great cost, to be our Father to take care of us. The cost was his Son's suffering and death on the cross to pay for our sins.

God showed his love for us by sending his only Son into the world, so that we might have life [contact with God] through him. This is what love is: it is not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the means by which our sins are forgiven. I John 4:9-10

2. God is hindered by our refusal to let him be our Father. Before he can help us, we must turn to Jesus and follow [trust and obey] him.

God's way of putting people right with himself has been revealed...God puts people right through their faith in Jesus Christ. Romans 3:21-22

Jesus was not able to perform any miracles there, except that he placed his hands on a few sick people and healed them. He was greatly surprised, because the people did not have faith. [They would not turn to him].

3. God is hindered by the refusal of those who believe in Jesus to obey his command to go to others in need.

This is how we know what love is: Christ gave his life for us. We too, then, ought to give [spend] our lives for our brothers! If a rich man sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against his brother, how can he claim that he loves God? My children, our love should not be just words and talk; it must be true love, which shows itself in action.1 John 3.16-18

4. God is hindered by the refusal of those who believe in Jesus to take seriously his command to go to everyone with the Good News of forgiveness and contact with God through turning to Jesus.

Jesus said to them, Go throughout the whole world and preach the gospel to all mankind. Mark 16.15

Before the end comes, the gospel must be preached to all peoples. Mark 13.10

5. God is hindered by the need to give everyone a chance to hear the gospel and be saved before Jesus comes back to judge the world.

As you wait for that day [the return of Jesus], do your best to be pure and faultless in God's sight and to be at peace with him. Look on our Lord's patience [his delay in coming] as the opportunity he is giving you to be saved, just as our dear brother Paul wrote to you, using the wisdom that God gave him. This is what he says in all his letters when he writes on the subject.2 Peter 3.14-16

For the Son of Man is about to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will repay everyone according to his deeds. Matthew 16.27

He will do this when the Lord Jesus appears from heaven with his mighty angels, with a flaming fire, to punish those who reject God and who do not obey the Good News about our Lord Jesus.2 Thessalonians 1.7-8

6. Only then will suffering and injustice come to an end as Jesus takes over world rule and God's kingdom comes on Earth, as it is in heaven.

He will settle disputes among great nations. They will hammer their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-knives. Nations will never again go to war, never prepare for battle again. Isaiah 2.4

Babies will no longer die in infancy, and all people will live out their life span. Those who live to a hundred will be considered young. Isaiah 65.20

7. Meanwhile, what about those who suffer from disease or die from accident or are persecuted for their faith in Jesus?

Yet we who have this spiritual treasure [the Good News about Jesus] are like common clay pots, in order to show that the supreme power belongs to God, not to us. We are often troubled, but not crushed; sometimes in doubt, but never in despair; there are many enemies, but we are never without a friend; and though badly hurt at times, we are not destroyed...We know that God, who raised the Lord Jesus to life, will also raise us up with Jesus and take us, together with you, into his presence. All this [trouble, harassment and injury] is for your sake; and as God's grace reaches more and more people, they will offer to the glory of God more prayers of thanksgiving. For this reason we never become discouraged. Even though our physical being is gradually decaying, yet our spiritual being is renewed day by day.2 Corinthians 4.7-9 and 14-16

Those who have died believing in Christ will rise to life first; then we who are living at that time will be gathered up along with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord.1 Thessalonians 4.16-17

I endure everything for the sake of God's chosen people, in order that they too may obtain that salvation that comes through Christ Jesus and brings eternal glory. This is a true saying: If we died with him, we shall also live with him. If we continue to endure, we shall also rule with him.2 Timothy 2.10-12

8. Sometimes God does intervene miraculously.

After his arrest Peter was put in Jail ,where he was handed over to be guarded by four groups of four soldiers each. Herod planned to put him on trial in public after Passover. So Peter was kept in jail, but the people of the church were praying earnestly to God for him...Suddenly an angel of the Lord stood there, and a light shone in the cell. The angel shook Peter by the shoulder, woke him up, and said, Hurry! Get up! At once the chains fell off Peter's hands. Then the angel said, Fasten your belt and put on your sandals. Peter did so, and the angel said, Put your cloak round you and come with me. Peter followed him out of the prison, not knowing, however, if what the angel was doing was real; he thought he was seeing a vision.They passed by the first guard post and then the second, and came at last to the iron gate leading into the city. The gate opened for them by itself, and they went out. They walked down a street, and suddenly the angel left Peter. Acts 12.4-5 and 7-10

9. Role of the Church's love [practical action] in revealing God's love. People will be impressed by the visual aid to God of Christians' concern for others.

May the Lord make your love for one another and for all people grow more and more and become as great as our love for you.1 Thessalonians 3.12

He will always make you rich enough to be generous at all times, so that many will thank God for your gifts which they receive from us. For this service you perform not only meets the needs of God's people, but also produces an outpouring of gratitude to God. And because of the proof which this service of yours brings, many will give glory to God for your loyalty to the gospel of Christ, which you profess, and for your generosity in sharing with them and everyone else.2 Corinthians 9.11-13

MORE THOUGHTS ON SUFFERING

1. Broken relationships cause 95% of human suffering. The hurt, heartbreak, and betrayal people suffer from people they have known and liked or trusted has been awful. God is sad, but people will not heed His wish for us all to get on together.
2. Some suffering is inevitable from the fact that all creation runs down and wears out. God did not intend us to stay here for ever, so the illnesses of ageing or the loss of older loved ones is unavoidable.
3. Suffering results from our own bad behaviour, laziness and wilful stupidity. Maybe the only way to get our attention is to allow the painful consequences to occur.
4. No one, however good, will be allowed all the easy times and none of the problems. Otherwise we soon become arrogant and uncaring. God wanted us to be like Himself, utterly generous and giving, even self sacrificing. It is a fact that often the best people are the ones that have suffered the most.
5. God wants to bring everyone to Himself. World problems are God's warning. Only when there is disaster do people in large numbers look to God. God is not being selfish. If we do not turn to Him He cannot let us into Heaven when we die- a far worse disaster.
6. There is another aspect of World problems-the oppression of the poor and the weak by the rich and powerful. Christians were meant by God to work to put an end to this. Often they have let God down. But when everyone has had a chance to turn to God, Jesus will return in power to end the injustice and oppression and set up His Millennial rule. Soon!

7. The Bible is a practical book, so all the reasons why bad things happen to people have not been given. In particular, we don't know what happens to people who have tragic deaths. We don't know how God deals with them. We do know that to God all are alive even though they are dead to [separated from] us.
8. God has participated fully in our suffering. He lived a life of love and self-sacrifice during His earthly ministry and then suffered as no one else has in His death on the cross. Also for those who turn to Him there is the promise of a future in Heaven where there will be no more sin, grief, pain or death-a new creation.
9. Helps. Bible verses make clear : God is interested in your problems

Explaining and facing the problem of suffering. The basic problem is that God won't force people to follow Him, because His Nature is loving, giving, self sacrificing, and this requires Him to give us freedom of choice whether we will serve Him or not. The rebellion against God has become so bad that He has been driven out of involvement in most peoples' lives and has to wait until their problems become bad enough to force them to think again. Even then, only some agree to follow God. This is the major cause of suffering in the world. I am sure that if mankind were true to God He would be able to be closer, with more help given to prevent or repair suffering. As for individual examples of suffering, even Jesus was not excused suffering and pain in His earthly life [as distinct from His sacrifice for us on the Cross], so we can't expect all the good times and none of the bad ones. When it comes to serious suffering, only God knows the exact reason, and it needs to be a revelation [word of knowledge] from Him to explain it.

Christian bookshops have many titles on how God gave answers to suffering people.

Churches: Prayer with Christians particularly helpful. God can give answers to people. Turn to Him. Give the right to run your life to Jesus. Pray to Him and await His help.

Christianity may not bring right away pleasure nor happiness as it is usually measured but it does bring a profound contentment-a profound inner assurance that you are a partner with God in all that is to come and after, in heaven where sin, sadness, grief and pain shall be no more "For the former things are passed away".

What the drug abuser desperately needs is this contentment for in his restless search for pleasure and happiness he has all but destroyed himself. Add on the human propensity for evil and all sorts of wickedness and crime is indulged in.

The Gospel takes people out of that too, by making the person content to rely on God to provide both forgiveness and relief. Sometimes accompanied by an inward glow of assurance, sometimes not. Sometimes help is quickly to hand, sometimes not.

It is not the purpose of God to give us right away all we ask, for we would soon become arrogant and selfish. So we will find that some problems will remain, while to other problems we are given answers.

The Christian Church's Mandate:

To preach the Gospel- Repentance from sin and Trust [Faith] in our Lord Jesus leads to forgiveness of sins and the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit, Who is the source of all help.

To heal the sick- This includes giving "aid "-medical or emotional help but also on occasion includes miraculous healing through prayer.

To cast out demons-On occasion people are encountered who are being disturbed by demonic forces. Through prayer these are driven away.

THE EVIDENCE OF MIRACULOUS EXPERIENCE

["They preached the Word with signs following" Mark 16.](#)

Looking through books in any Christian bookshop will locate stories of miraculous experiences in answer to prayer. Also missionary society magazines, Christian newspapers and denominational magazines report many examples of miracles. Increasingly are miraculous experiences being reported from churches in Western countries where miracles have been much rarer than overseas. Also there are many historical miracles in the accounts of missionaries in past centuries and the great evangelists of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Healing miracles: Increasingly it is possible to hear of actual local people who have been healed of chronic or serious diseases.

Various other miraculous experiences: Change of disposition following prayer and fasting e.g. hate to love; Consciousness that Bible is the Word of God; Answers to improbable requests; Those in prison experiencing God's presence; Words of knowledge that could not have been obtained without Divine help; and miraculous deliverances.

Demonstration of the power of Jesus over demons, also deliverance from uncontrollable habits. No other Name than Jesus has this power.

Local miracles occur. I know a pastor who prayed for a man blinded in an explosion and suddenly he could see. Also the pastor prayed in tongues for a demented old lady Christian too far gone to recognise him and her face lit up as she answered in tongues-evidence for the existence of the human spirit through which God's Spirit spoke. A visiting pastor tells of a man with cancer in the groin being immediately healed after prayer. Many visible miracles have occurred, such as deformed limbs straightening.

More examples of miraculous occurrences:

Very depressed. Felt like lightning passing through me and suddenly not depressed. A Christian speaks out, Why are you down hearted? I am within you.

Weepy and lonely in a street at midnight in a city. I pray, saying, I am so lonely. Suddenly I perceive the words, I am with you.

Words of Scripture being given suddenly, compellingly.

Being given addresses of people to visit who have been in great need or who have been praying for help.

Demons cast out-seen or felt leaving. Subsequent relief from some compulsive behaviour.

Shared vision-Two people independently getting the same message.

The results of praying for people or groups of people.

Reading the Bible and attending a good church will help you find God. The Church is meant to be a visual aid to God. You will hear about miracles and will hear God's message. Though less than perfect, there

will be some love [concern for others] to impress you and help you want to stay.

BOOKS: [Ask Christian bookseller]. Vanya, Hiding Place, Tramp for the Lord, and many others containing accounts of miraculous occurrences.

Faith. The historical evidence plus miraculous events confirming it is adequate to warrant having faith in God and in Jesus' sacrifice for us. We are not asked to believe without any proof, there is ample evidence that the Christian world view is correct, that there is a spiritual Universe outside this one, and that Jesus is the Divine Son of God, and the Way to acceptance with God. We must repent [give up evil], have faith [trust God to accept us because of Jesus' sacrifice for us on the Cross], and express this through praying to God.

NOTES ON PARANORMAL PHENOMENA

Near death experiences: I think some are just brain [temporal lobe] phenomena caused by loss of oxygen at the time of dying, and that others are real e.g. some Christians have been observed when dying to show sudden joy and to say that they are able to see Jesus coming for them, while there are reports of unbelievers having experiences of horror. These experiences have been observed immediately followed by the person dying. Also people whose hearts have stopped report experiences, and I think some are real. They include visions of Heaven, and less commonly, Hell. The Bible does not want us to weary ourselves trying to sort out all this, the Bible points to the immortality available to us through the Resurrection of Jesus, never to die again, and the promise that his followers will also be given an everlasting spiritual body like His.

Reincarnation/former lives: The Resurrection cuts across the idea of repeated human lives [an unprovable supposition], replacing this with the dramatic and joyous offer of one life followed by immortality with Jesus in Heaven. Examples of people who report memories of former lives have been studied and it has been found that these people had been involved in some way with the occult in earlier life, opening themselves to the demonic. In other words, demonic activity lies behind the accounts that people give of what they think is their former life, but the knowledge has been given to them by demons. Demonic activity lies behind some forms of spiritual healing [keep away from offers of spiritual healing that are not sought from God and Jesus-demonic healing brings bondage to demons with it, e.g. inability to believe the Gospel, a disastrous bondage], and I suggest some UFO phenomena. I have read reports of people seeing little green men supposedly from outer space who told them that Jesus was not the Son of God. This is just what you would expect from demons.

Some Christians completed a 21 day time of prayer and fasting. There followed reports of how God was tearing down strongholds. The power that Satan previously displayed in the temples was gone. No more were people seeing the power of their false gods. The requests they made to their idols were not coming true anymore. People who performed the ritual of walking on hot coals to appease a certain god were now being burned.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE

I am not ashamed of the Gospel. Only as we humble ourselves before the Cross and repent and admit our need of forgiveness, trusting Jesus to save us [or trusting God to save us because of the sacrifice of Jesus] can we enter the kingdom of Light and begin to receive God's help.

Jesus was foretold in the Old Testament- many prophecies attest to His coming to this world and to His life, death and resurrection from the dead.

Jesus being God was sinless. Our sin was so serious that the only sacrifice sufficient to pay for it all was the sacrifice of God Himself.

The Bible says, Just as God has life in Himself so He has given Jesus the right to have life in Himself-to be the giver of life-to carry out the functions of God...Jesus said my Father loves Me because I am willing to give up my life for the sheep [His followers]... I have to right then to take it back again. [To come to life again].

We know His sacrifice was effective because He rose to life again-St Paul says, "Proved to be the divine Son of God with power by His rising from the dead"...It was the Resurrection that started the Church, anchoring the Christian message in history. Real events. Unlike "extra-terrestrials" who never leave any artifacts behind, the only real visit from beyond this world ever to have occurred has left artifacts to prove the reality of the event- the Church and the Bible!

We are separated from God's generosity and love by our disobedience, rejection of God, selfishness and evil.

All have sinned and fallen short of God's glorious standards, but are made right with God and forgiven through trusting in Jesus Christ... We beg you as ambassadors speaking for God to be reconciled to God Who to save us made Jesus take the punishment of our sins so that by trusting and obeying Jesus we can receive a share of all that God has for us. Romans 3 and 2 Corinthians 5.

Francis Bacon [17th century] said " They that deny a God destroy man's nobility. For certainly man is of kin to the beast by his body. And, if he be not kin to God by his Spirit, he is a base and ignoble creature."

Now read Genesis 2-3.

In Genesis 2 the Bible affirms that man shares the same origin as the animals, made from "the dust of the Earth", the material chemical elements.

And in Genesis 3 the Bible asserts that man is fallen, and that a rescuer for the human race will come.

"The seed [descendant] of the woman will bruise your [the devil's] head and you shall bruise his heel."

This was fulfilled countless centuries later in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Jesus, God's Son, is the perfect man, man as God intended. Let him lead you to God, through trusting and obeying him.

MONOGAMY

So we are like the animals? And since they are usually not monogamous this means we can do likewise?

Well let's think of a few things...

We have to give birth while our babies are helpless, because of our large brains. So we spend 10 years bringing them up. Good reason for monogamy, you would think. Animals don't have this need.

We are supposed to be at the mercy of our genes, that make us act selfishly to survive. Which means reproducing at all costs, never mind anything else. Do you really see the evidence everywhere that this is true?

I doubt it.

We are equipped with bags and bags of extra oomph that no ape has. Which includes the ability to choose our own way. Which includes the ability to follow what God has chosen for us as being the best way- Monogamy.

We may in the past have wondered why God is so strict in the area of sex. After a generation of doing what we like few people doubt that infidelity has all but destroyed our society, leading to the complete breakdown of responsibility and commitment.

Let us return to our Maker, Whose rules in the Bible are for our good, not for our harm, and Whom to obey leads to freedom [fulfilment] not bondage [misery, despair and regret].

Jesus said: I came that they might have life, and have it to the full. John 10

"Lift up your heads, for your salvation draws near"- Jesus' millennial prophecy in the Bible. Things will get a lot worse from now on around the world, no country will escape unaffected, so let us repent of our self-centred mindless living and choose to follow Jesus, the only real hope of the world and for a future with Him that makes other ways look dim and feeble. He will release all the best of adventure and compassion that we are capable of, and at the end of it all, a great celebration in Heaven for all who chose Him. The choice is yours. God, Who owns everything and has all power, has humbled Himself to wait for you for nothing else but genuine choice will do. For God is Love, not just a powerful Force. And Love asks, rather than demands. Is gentle, rather than rough. Puts up with suffering and abuse, rather than taking all the easy times and lording it over people. Jesus came, not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life to redeem many people. Will you serve Him?

A HEALTHY LIFE STYLE LEADS TO A HEALTHY LIFE

Avoid over eating smoking drinking or sloth.

Eat Your Greens- Follow Mediterranean diet, the most healthy ever devised and live a lot longer.

Go to the Gym/Baths 2-3x a week. Do what you fancy be it running board weights or swim. Take the kids they need exercise too.

No artificial stimulants- cigs booze or drugs. God made the brain well. You cannot improve its function with drugs. Read/watch good stuff not rubbish or smut. Do a course, go to classes. Get a job, any job, even unpaid work. You will meet helpful people at work. Your mental health will improve.

Don't fight with people either verbally or physically it ruins your health. Be kind to others it will do good to your soul. Donate to a charity. Let people off, it will let you off mega stress.

Have proper marriage not casual sex- it ruins all relationships and leads to total unhappiness and stress. The resulting collapse of responsibility and commitment has destroyed our society.

Have faith in God. Read the Bible even if your book is the Koran or Gita or Science. Don't complain and grumble. There are many worse off than you. Make the most of what you have got and move on.

WEIGHT LOSS TIP

Follow Mediterranean Diet see Patient.co.uk [Mediterranean Diet]. This diet is the most healthy ever devised and u should take the time to move into it.

WEB SITES

<http://www.leaderu.com>

<http://www.leaderu.com/everystudent/easter/articles/josh2.html>

<http://www.leaderu.com/everystudent/easter/articles/josh.html>

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<http://wri.leaderu.com> World Religions Compared

<http://www.leaderu.com/offices/billcraig/docs/tomb2.html>

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<http://www.emjc3.com/home.htm> Scroll down for History links

<http://www.thethinkingchristian.org>

<http://www.reasons.org>

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<http://www.insightworld.org> Includes Insight's Archaeology Handbook Ten Key Finds and Why They Matter

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<http://www.apologeticsinfo.org/papers/actsarcheology.html> The Book of Acts and Archaeology Craig H Hawkins

<http://www.apologeticsinfo.org/papers/trustworthinessofthebible.html> Craig H Hawkins

<http://www.bibleteacher.org/sgtestomony.htm>

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Delphi/4027/machenrevelation.html>

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Delphi/4027/machenjesusandhistory.html>

<http://www.greatcom.org/resources/areadydefence/default.htm> Scroll down for Historicity of Jesus-Non Christian Sources

<http://www.worldinvisible.com/library/bookcat.htm> Scroll down for The New Testament Documents-Are They Reliable FF Bruce

<http://home.earthlink.net/~gb111/historical.htm> Historical Apologetics

<http://home.earthlink.net/~ronrhodes/Manuscript.html>

Simon Greenleaf Testimony of the Four Evangelists <http://www.christian-witness.org/active/legaltest.html> and <http://archive.org/details/examinationoftes00greerich>

The Trial of Jesus Walter M Chandler <http://archive.org/details/trialofjesusfrom02chan>

The Resurrection Factor by Josh McDowell has a shorter version of the Trial of Jesus <http://archive.org/details/resurrectionfact00mcdo>

<http://www.iclnet.org> Early Christian Writings available on line

<http://www.BibleArchaeology.org>

<http://www.biblehistory.net>

<http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org>

<http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/BARCompanion>

<http://www.foah-jordan.org>

<http://www.leaderu.com/orgs/probe/docs/arch-ot.html>

<http://www.leaderu.com/orgs/probe/docs/arch-nt.html>

<http://www.rbc.org> 10 Reasons to Believe- Select Drop Down Menu Bible Study

<http://www.questforanswers.com>

<http://www.ibri.org>

<http://www.arn.org>

<http://www.probe.org>

<http://www.leaderu.com>

<http://www.iscid.org>

<http://www.reasons.org>

<http://www.ideacenter.org>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discovery_Institute

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irreducible_complexity Series of articles criticising the organisations and the ideas of Intelligent Design. I think the theory is credible in spite of criticisms.

<http://www.origins.org>

<http://www.Christian-thinktank.com>

<http://www.cis.org.uk>

<http://www.asa3.org>

<http://www.answersingenesis.org>

<http://www.CreationOnTheWeb.org>

<http://www.icr.org>

<http://www.csm.org.uk>

<http://www.creationsciencemovement.com>

<http://www.christiananswers.net>

<http://www.bibleandscience.com>

<http://www.origins.org>

<http://www.godandscience.org/apologetics/authenticity.html>

<http://www.reasonablefaith.org>

<http://www.evidenceforchristianity.org>

<http://www.apologeticsindex.org/764-free-ebook-the-historical-reliability-of-the-new-testament> historical has been spelt historial

<http://www.whyfaith.com/the-historical-reliability-of-the-new-testament> link from above

<http://www.whyfaith.com>

<http://www.apologetics.org>

<http://www.100prophecies.org> Well presented site on Old Testament prophecies about towns and countries

<http://www.signatureinthecell.com> Recent [2009] account of DNA and how it presents evidence for intelligent design.

<http://www.nature.com/humangenome> Read Life is Complicated to see current view of complexity of biochemistry of the cell including evidence for extensive functions for supposed junk dna

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MMrvnZ21sE> The Inner Life of a Cell. Brief but impressive outline of the sort of complexity there is [video show]

<http://www.bib-arch.org/e-books/barcompanion-christmas.asp> Download free e-book containing detailed explanation of Star of Bethlehem based on what astronomers of the time would have made of the astronomical phenomena at the time of Jesus' birth

<http://www.BiblicalArchaeology.org> I like their articles on the Exodus-Conquest by Bryant Wood [on line at this site]

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1557124/Tiny-tablet-provides-proof-for-Old-Testament.html> Shows recent find from British Museum confirming an OT detail in Jeremiah

<http://www.bible-history.com/archaeology/israel/house-of-david-inscription.html> House of David inscription

Also at <http://www.allaboutarchaeology.org/the-house-of-david-inscription-faq.htm>

<http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-artifacts/artifacts-and-the-bible/jeremiah-prophet-of-the-bible-brought-back-to-life/>

Neanderthals R Us! <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/8660940.stm> In addition Donosovans from Central Asia have left their genes with the Papua New Guineans and the Australian Aborigines and it is thought that some Africans have genes from Archaic Homo Sapiens living in Africa.

Wind Can Blow Back the Red Sea <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-11383620>

Tyndale House Evidence For Easter

[http://www.tyndale.cam.ac.uk/Easter?](http://www.tyndale.cam.ac.uk/Easter?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Easter+videos+2012&utm_content=Easter+videos+2012+CID_87969adac8416334e7c36eb88c16d303&utm_source=CampaignMonitor&utm_term=Experts+Evidence+for+Easter)

[utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Easter+videos+2012&utm_content=Easter+videos+2012+CID_87969adac8416334e7c36eb88c16d303&utm_source=CampaignMonitor&utm_term=Experts+Evidence+for+Easter](http://www.tyndale.cam.ac.uk/Easter?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Easter+videos+2012&utm_content=Easter+videos+2012+CID_87969adac8416334e7c36eb88c16d303&utm_source=CampaignMonitor&utm_term=Experts+Evidence+for+Easter)

Recommended Book The Apologetics of Jesus Norman L Geisler and Patrick Zukeran Baker Books ISBN 978-0-8010-7186-7

Recommended DVDs by Tyndale House Cambridge Bible and Church Conference 2009 and The Authentic Gospels New Evidence Bible and Church 2010 Also The Jesus Accounts Fact or Fiction?

ENCODE project http://www.evolutionnews.org/2012/09/junk_no_more_en_1064001.html Among other things functions for the repetitive lengths of DNA in the genome and functions for pseudogenes.

Here a thoughtful article on the difficulties faced by ingested organisms evolving into mitochondria http://www.evolutionnews.org/2012/01/on_the_origin_o054891.html Interesting because it is assumed that this is how mitochondria developed but the difficulties are explored here.

The GULO pseudogene is understandably thought to represent evidence of relatedness by descent between the primate orders. This article looks at various possibilities

http://www.evolutionnews.org/2012/02/gulo_shared_mut056281.html