



An undenominational publication devoted
to the teachings of Jesus and His apostles
and dedicated to those who seek the truth.

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Theme: *Reasons for Faith*

Jesus' Resurrection Is Important!

The resurrection of Jesus is important because it is a witness to the power of God. To believe in the resurrection is to believe in God. God exists and has power to raise the dead. In resurrecting Jesus God reminds us of His absolute sovereignty over life and death.

In 1 Corinthians 15, the Apostle Paul gives six overwhelming consequences if there is no resurrection: 1) preaching Jesus is useless (verse 14); 2) faith is useless (verse 14); 3) all the witnesses of the resurrection are liars (verse 15); 4) sins are not be forgiven (verse 17); 5) deceased Christians have perished (verse 18); and 6) Believers are to be pitied more than all men (verse 19). But the truth is Jesus has been raised from the dead (verse 20). Such hope and assurance result in words of triumph as Paul affirms: "Where, O death, is your victory?" (verse 55).



Jesus' resurrection gives assurance of the resurrection of all humans. Christianity alone has a Founder who transcends death and who promises the same thing to His followers. The resurrection of Jesus guarantees that those who believe in Jesus will not remain dead, but will be resurrected to eternal life. The promise of the resurrection will be the triumphant and glorious victory for every Christian.

— Billy McGuiggan, Minister
Church of Christ, Natick, Massachusetts

Theories About the Empty Tomb

In the Gospels we have four independent accounts of the resurrection of Jesus and the resurrection appearances. These accounts agree in all important particulars and bear all the marks of honesty and reliability which constitute the essential characteristics of trustworthy testimony in a law court. Critics have tried to account for the origin of the belief in the resurrection of Christ by attempting to *explain away the fact*.

That the Friends of Jesus Stole the Body

One theory is that the disciples stole the body. We are asked to believe that the whole group of disciples founded their whole gospel on a fact which they knew to be *false*, a story which they knew to be a *lie*! A person has only to read the New Testament to become certain that such men with the highest ethical standards the world has ever known, could never have spent their lives preaching what they *knew to be a lie*! But as a climax of all, we are asked to believe that such men would *give their lives* for what they knew to be false! Men and women have died for false causes before, but they died believing that they were *true*! However, in the case of the disciples we are asked to believe that James and Stephen and Peter and the rest died as martyrs to a cause which they knew in their hearts to be *founded on a lie*! It is little wonder that few sceptics would claim this today.

That the Enemies of Jesus Stole the Body

Even more impossible is the theory that the body was stolen by the enemies of Jesus. Had they done so, they would have produced the body when the disciples claimed that Jesus had risen. When Christians began to preach the resurrection the officials would have moved heaven and earth to produce the body of Jesus. The fact that they could not do so is convincing refutation of the theory that enemies of Jesus stole His body.

That the Disciples Had a Hallucination

The disordered condition of the mind produces the idea that an object is seen which has no actual existence. Now the great difficulty with this theory is the fact that 500 people all had the same hallucination (1 Corinthians 15:6)! That 500 men in a body should have the *same hallucination* at the *same time*, stretches the law of probability to the breaking point! A whole asylum of insane patients may have hallucinations at the same time but the hallucinations will all be different! Like the other theories we have just considered, this theory collapses on the empty tomb.

The only conclusion possible is that Christ rose from the dead. Nothing but a supernatural Savior is possible. The resurrection establishes the truth of Christianity. It proves that all Christ said was true and this in turn proves the Bible is the Word of God.

— Floyd E. Hamilton,
Basis of Christian Faith, page 286-295



Does the Bible Contradict Itself?

Righteous are You, O Lord, and Your laws are right. The statutes You have laid down are righteous; they are fully trustworthy” (Psalm 119:137-138). Scripture is righteous because it came from a righteous God. His statutes are fully trustworthy. If this is true, the Bible cannot contradict itself.

Norman Geisler stated: “A scientist always assumes that there is an explanation when faced with some unexplained anomaly. In the same way, a Bible student assumes that there is a harmony in the Bible in light of what appears to be contradictions” ([When Skeptics Ask](#) page 163-164). Consider some practical solutions to alleged contradictions in the Bible.

Some people believe that there are two contradictory accounts of creation in Genesis chapters one and two. However, Genesis *chapter one* contains the sweeping over view of how God created all things in six days, while Genesis *chapter two* contains the close-up camera view concerning the creation of mankind. *Chapter two* re-enforces the events of *chapter one* by referring back to the creation of birds and animals (Genesis 1:20-21; Genesis 2:19-20). God created man in His own image (Genesis 1:26) from dust, and created woman from a rib in Adam’s side (Genesis 2:7-24). There is no contradiction in the account of creation.

Does the Bible contradict itself when affirming Eve as the mother of all living (Genesis 3:20), yet people lived in the land of Nod (Genesis 4:16-17)? Not at all. Adam and Eve had other sons and daughters (Genesis 5:4). At that time when genetics were purer than today people married family members. Cain married a member of his family, for all people (including those in the land of Nod) descended from Eve regardless of where they lived. Both passages are true.

“*Contradictory*” or “*Complementary*” testimony? Today witnesses see details of the same events without contradicting one another. One person may say: “I saw a man run out the front door with a television set”; another may say: “I saw a man carrying a computer exit the back door.” One may say, “I heard a car speeding away,” while another adds: “I saw an elderly woman knocked to the ground down as two men made a dash for a get away car.” The eye-witness accounts *complement* one another. So it is with the Bible.

Matthew records that the inscription on the cross: “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews” (Matthew 27:37); Mark reads: “The King of the Jews” (Mark 15:25); Luke says: “This is the King of the Jews” (Luke 23:38). Each is giving his eye-witness account. The full inscription is provided by John: “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews” (John 19:19). All records of the inscription are true. Creative thinking is important for understanding *all literature* — including the Bible.

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Matthew states that two demoniacs confronted Jesus (Matthew 8:28) while Mark focuses on one demoniac (Mark 5:2). This is not a contradiction. Mark simply provides more of the details of this marvellous miracle. In a similar way, Mark recorded that a lad healed by Jesus had been deaf and mute (Mark 9:14-27) while Luke fails to identify a specific diagnosis (Luke 9:37-43). Matthew states that Jesus healed two blind men as he *left* Jericho (Matthew 20:29-34) while Luke said He healed one blind man as He *entered* Jericho (Luke 18:35-43). *Three* blind men were healed — one as Jesus *entered* Jericho and two as He *left* the city. There are no contradictions in the eye-witness accounts of biblical miracles!

In the words of Norman Geisler: “Don’t confuse falsity with perspective. When a biblical writer records a part of an event which he saw and fails to mention some other part that someone else saw, his record is still true. These differences in accounts assure us that the authors did not conspire to ‘get their story straight’”.

The genealogical records of Jesus Christ given by *Matthew* (chapter one) and *Luke* (chapter 3) are frequently cited as examples of Bible contradictions. However, from the very earliest times Christians have affirmed that *Matthew* traces the *legal* descent through Joseph, the *legal father*, and *Luke* traces His descent through Mary, His *biological mother*. *Matthew* wrote for a Hebrew audience and showed the Jewish descent of Jesus from Abraham through Joseph, “the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called the Christ” (Matthew 1:16). *Luke*, on the other hand, traces the fleshly ancestry of Jesus to Adam through his biological mother, Mary. By tracing the lineage of Jesus back to Adam, Luke establishes the fact that Jesus is *the Savior of all humanity*.

Are there doctrinal contradictions in the Bible doctrine of salvation? When the apostle Paul declares that salvation is by “grace through faith” and “not of works” (Ephesians 2:8-9) does he contradict James who affirms: “You see that a person is justified by what he does (works) and not by faith alone” (James 2:24)? Not at all! Paul and James speak of two different kinds of *works*. “Works” which cannot save a person are described by Paul as meritorious works of “boasting” (Romans 4:2), while “works” which do save are described by James as actions of obedience to God’s commands. “Faith” as described by Paul is an active, humble obedient response of love; it is “faith expressing itself through love” (Galatians 5:6). James declares that mere intellectual or emotional “faith” is “useless” and “incomplete”. Even the demons have that kind of “faith” — and shudder (James 2:19). Faith must include obedience, as illustrated by Abraham’s faith which was “made complete” when he obeyed God’s command to offer his son Isaac on the altar (James 2:20-22). It is still true today, “works” of merit have no place in God’s plan of salvation, but “faith” without “works” of humble obedience is dead (James 2:26). The Bible is consistent and harmonious in its teaching about salvation.



Jesus referred to Scripture as the very “word of God” (John

Does the Bible Contradict Itself? (Continued on page 5)

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Does the Bible Contradict Itself? (Continued from page 4)

3:34), the “truth” which makes us free from sin (John 8:32). In the words of Kenneth Kantzer, believers “do not try to prove that the Bible has no mistakes so that they can be sure the Bible is the Word of God. One might prove that a newspaper article is free from all mistakes, but that would not prove that the newspaper article is the Word of God. Christians hold the Bible to be the Word of God because they are convinced that Jesus believed it and taught His disciples to believe it.”

— David Tarbet, Minister of Personal Evangelism
New Milford Church of Christ, New Milford, Connecticut

Why I Believe In A Special Creation

Since I was a child, I have been intrigued by the world that surrounds me. The animals, plants and people are all so unique. I've spent many days backpacking, exploring the woods and seeing how each tree and plant are uniquely made. Now I see my own children amazed by the beauty of the earth that surrounds them. As the Psalmist wrote, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the skies proclaim the work of His hands. Day after day they pour forth speech, and night after night they display knowledge." (Psalm 19:1-2)



A vast majority of today's society views the creation account found in the Bible as being outdated, naive or simply a fairy tale made up. Some scientists have spent countless years and billions of dollars trying to prove that the earth and all that we know around us was part of a cosmic accident millions or billions of years ago. They reason that we should move beyond the simplistic explanation of creation found in the Bible.

It truly takes faith to believe that God spoke the world into existence. We cannot reach out and touch God, but the evidence of His power and creation is all around us. Romans 1:20 tells us, "God's invisible qualities — His eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made." Our bodies, the earth, the animals that surround us all speak to the eternal power and divine nature of God. The vastness of God is simply incomprehensible.

It also requires faith to believe that the universe evolved from a collision that happened billions of years ago when some particles collided with each other. There is no way to explain where the particles came from in the first place.

Lawrence M. Krauss with his text, "[A Universe From Nothing.](#)" Attempts to explain away God through physics. He states, "Forget Jesus, the stars died so you could be born." Krauss sets forth the theory that if nothing (space, empty void) is left alone long enough, it will eventually start spewing out particles. He argues that nothing is simply something waiting to happen. Now, that's something that requires a lot of faith!

Many scientists are convinced that scientific discoveries bear witness to the power and complexity of God and His creation. Christians do not believe in a divinely created world because we are naïve in thought. **Christians believe in creation because they believe in and know the Creator.**

— Jon McKenzie
Former Youth Minister, Mammoth Road Church of Christ
Manchester, New Hampshire

The Blessing of Great Faith

Scripture reveals: “So also Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness” (Galatians 3:6). Later we are told: “By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, ‘It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.’ Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead...” (Hebrews 11:17-19).

Of course God would never allow Abraham to actually sacrifice his son—it was a test of faith. We can learn a great lesson concerning faith from the example of Abraham and Isaac: *the life of faith is a life of great blessing*.

No doubt Abraham could not fathom what possible reason God would have for such a request. Yet Abraham demonstrated an unwavering faith as he proceeded to carry out the act right up to the very last second when God intervened and stopped him. But Abraham had something so special—so precious: the wonderful blessing of great faith! What exactly did Abraham believe?

Abraham “embraced the promises” (Hebrews 11:17)—the promise that through the seed of Isaac all nations would be blessed. How could God bless all nations through Isaac if Isaac was killed before children are born? Abraham “reasoned that God could even raise the dead” (Hebrews 11:19). In short, Abraham believed God would raise Isaac from the dead in order to fulfill the promise that through the seed of Isaac great blessing would come into the world. Abraham’s faith shines forth!

Imagine the faith of Abraham—so strong and wonderful. He was able to see beyond death to the living again. You too can have the blessing of great faith. Jesus states: “*I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me will live, even though he dies*” (John 11:25).

Dear friend, the Bible reveals God’s steps to salvation:

- Believe in Jesus (Mark 16:16)
- Repent of all Past Sins (Luke 24:47)
- Confess Jesus as Lord (Romans 10:10)
- Be Baptized by Immersion (Acts 2:38)
- Live Faithful unto Death (Revelation 2:10)



— Larry Pettingill, Minister
Church of Christ, Montpelier, Vermont



Fulfilled Prophecies

God made Himself known by accurately predicting the future. In the book of Isaiah God repeatedly taunted idol worshipers to bring in their idols so that they might “Tell us what the future holds, so we may know that you are gods” (Isaiah 41:23). It was a challenge they dare not accept!

God presents Himself as One who foretells what He intends to do: “I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do” (Isaiah 46:10-11).

The Bible has an established a track record of reliability in foretelling the future. The prophet Isaiah made several short-term prophecies which were fulfilled in his lifetime:

The kingdoms of Samaria and Damascus would be conquered by the Assyrians. The Northern Kingdom (10 tribes) and much of Judea would be taken into captivity. The Assyrians would overrun Judea but not capture Jerusalem. (*Isaiah 8:3-8 and chapters 36-37*)

Isaiah also prophesied many things that would take place long after his death:

The Babylonians would conquer Jerusalem and Judea [fulfilled about 100 years later] (*Isaiah 39:6*). A Medo-Persian king named *Cyrus* would allow the Jewish exiles to return to rebuild Jerusalem and their temple [fulfilled 170 years later] (*Isaiah 44:28-45:3*). He provides details about the coming Messiah [fulfilled over 700 years later] (*Isaiah 7:14; 9:1-7; 11:1-5; 53:1-12*).

The fulfillment of these prophecies was one of the major reasons the Old Testament was regarded as God’s Word by the Jewish community.

The approximately 300 prophecies of Christ in the Old Testament are a major part of God “making known from ancient times what is to come.” Jesus showed from the Scriptures that what He did on the cross was part of God’s declared purpose: “. . . beginning with Moses and all the prophets, Jesus explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself” (Luke 24:25-27). Because of the fulfilled prophecies, we can be confident that the gospel really is God’s plan for our salvation, and not a collection of man-made stories.

— John Birckholtz, Minister
Oxford Hills Church of Christ, South Paris, Maine

A Good Reason to Believe in God

Trouble was brewing within the complex society of South Africa's wildlife. A particular animal had formed a gang that had striking similarities to the gangs found within our nation's inner cities. This animal happened to be the largest land animal known to man. Juvenile elephants had formed a gang and were on a rampage. When they gathered around the watering holes young elephants



would aggressively chase down their rivals to the point of death. In most cases the deceased victim of the delinquent elephants was the unfortunate and endangered African rhino. What could possibly have caused this problem to occur?

After much study and consideration, the evidence was found in the fact that these young teenage elephants had no limitations. Due to poaching, these elephants had been orphaned at infancy and had not developed the appropriate boundaries typically found within the herd; boundaries that would have been learned from the example of the elder and more experienced fathers of the young elephants.

This African phenomenon represents a similar reflection on the history of society, even to this day. History teaches of human societies that have gone into oblivion because they rejected moral limitations that could have been easily understood with a belief in God. The Old Testament prophet, Jeremiah, understood that unless one had a firm faith and trust in God, his ultimate destiny would end in despair. "I know, O LORD, that a man's life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). Solomon, in his exhortation to young men, wrote "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death" (Proverbs 14:12).

The Bible also tells of many societies that lost all moral direction because of an unbelief in God (All those living in the time of Noah [Genesis 6:5-7], the cities of the plain [Genesis 19:13, 24-29], the corruption of Canaan [Joshua 10:40, 11:20], etc.). Many people believe that morality is the product of evolution developed by humans over the course of time. Nothing could be further from the truth. All morals must come from an ultimate moral source and that source is God. So when one ponders the vast number of reasons to believe in Almighty God, one can begin by asserting that **a strong faith provides us with a clear moral direction.**

— Shane Belanger
Lakes Region Church of Christ, Tilton, New Hampshire

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