

A Scientist Investigates God, the Bible, Jesus, and the Soul

Chapter	Page
Introduction	2
1 Atheist positions and arguments	7
2 The arguments for the existence of God	22
3 The Bible	44
4 Jesus Existence	51
5 Conversions to Christianity	68
6 What it is to be a Christian	81
7 Teachings of Jesus	90
8 Great Commission	97
9 Intrinsic and Extrinsic Christians	101
10 Prayer is a conversation with God	104
11 The Soul and Consciousness	108
12 Near-death experiences	113
13 Hell experiences	127
14 Terminal lucidity	136
15 Ancient evidence of religion	140
16 God speaks to one person	143
17 Other religions	145
18 Ideas for improving worship	148
19 A scientific analysis of the data	151
Summary	154
About the Author	155
Appendix 1 Extraterrestrial life	156
Appendix 2 Beginning of life	160
Appendix 3 Materialism	158
Appendix 4 What is reality	162

Introduction

This book is a personal exposition of my thoughts on theology. I can't help it; I am a scientist, so every investigation is a science problem. I start any inquiry from a mathematical and physics point of view. I am not from the show me State (Missouri), but I did get my master's degree in electrical engineering there. My beliefs are not blind acceptance but are supported by careful analysis. Something as important as my soul led me to devote the time and energy to be comfortable in my position.

I wrote this for those that think. Without thinking, some people will listen to and believe an imam, priest, monk, or guru. This book is for those who think and struggle with God's existence and theology. Writing this book has also helped me with my understanding of God. I pray that it can help others.

In this book, I propose approaching the existence of God and a soul as a scientist. A theologian would look in religious literature. An atheist would dismiss the subject as irrelevant. I will use secular, scientific, and religious literature outside the Hebrew and Christian Bible and the Bible itself.

There is a misconception that scientists are against religion and that Christians do not accept science. The anti-science Churches tell Sunday School students that science conflicts with the Bible, so they should accept all of what is in the King James translation as literally true. The world is 6,000 years old; that evolution is not how plants and animals developed over the years.

Most Christian churches do not take this position. The largest single Christian denomination is the Roman

Catholic Church; this unscientific position of the development of life is not their position. The Roman Catholic Church supports science and has scientists on staff. By telling students to accept that the stories are all history, not parables, or go to hell, given the choice, thoughtful people will abandon Christianity and consider it a stupid fairy tale.

I don't know why some Christian Churches focus on being anti-science. My experience with these groups is one of bewilderment. These anti-science churches do great harm to the Christian Church's reputation. It is, in my opinion, one of the devil's ways of working. These churches make it easy for the dedicated atheist to attack Christianity.

Some scientists believe God does not exist and that Christianity is a myth. They have accepted this position without serious inquiry. As a scientist, I also find this embarrassing.

Some atheist scientists who have done serious research into the existence of God often become a theist. Few take the next step and become Christian. I believe that taking a position on such an important topic as the existence of God and Jesus without serious research is not prudent; I propose that everyone study the subject and take an informed position. Our soul depends on it.

The first step is to investigate the existence of God.

We can't discuss the existence of something without a clear understanding of what is proposed to exist. Explorers were not believed when the first explorers came back from Australia and described the kangaroo and the platypus. Only when the live examples were brought back to England

was their existence accepted. With God, it is not that simple.

First, I need to define my understanding of God. The all-powerful, all-knowing being that brought the world into existence as described in the Christian Bible; the Christian Bible includes the Tanakh (Old Testament) and the New Testament. This being is the God the atheists usually reject. This God is the one I will present the best case against existing; later, I will present the best case for God's existence.

A good scientist is not going to accept a worldview without deep investigation. A thorough study of the subject requires investigating the claims and counterclaims. It requires taking arguments seriously that have been given and considering supporting data for any claim. I do not propose straw men that I can easily defeat; I will provide the best arguments and data available. I am a lifelong Christian; I have studied the Bible and believe in life after death, but I become objective when putting on my scientist hat.

There are three steps to take to arrive at the Christian God. The first is to be a Theist. Someone who recognizes that there is a God who created the universe. Many scientists have concluded that God exists and created the universe but have not taken the next step and believe in a personal God.

The next step is recognizing that the universe was specifically made for our specific existence. This recognition has to do with physical constants, the universe's history, and the earth's history.

The last step is to discover the truth of the Bible and Jesus' existence. Here we use historical documents and the Bible. We also use what Jesus was reported to have said. We can

also compare what he said and what is known about psychology.

I have many quotes in this book. I have decided not to correct these quotes' grammatical, spelling, and punctuation errors. These quotes are what people said or wrote. Fixing mistakes would not be faithful to what they wrote or said.

This book is one of a set of five. The first is *Happy in Intensive Care*. This version has less blatant Christianity so that it could be used as a text in a secular university. The second is *Happy in Intensive Care Christian Edition*. This version integrates ancient wisdom and current studies with Biblical teachings. Both describe how to have a happy life independent of your circumstances.

The third is *Age Successfully*. It is about diet, exercise, and lifestyle to live a long life without infirmities. The object is to take care of ourselves, have an intact brain, and avoid mental and physical problems. Lack of infirmities is particularly important when we get older. I am 82 years old and still ride a bicycle around the neighborhood.

The fourth is *Life401*. It is a graduate course in life. *Life401* is about how to live life without making too many mistakes. This book integrates the wisdom of many people.

My website life401.com has valuable free information and more descriptions of the books and my life.

This book is a journey.

First: God's existence

Second: The Bible, what is it, is it true, and what does it tell us?

Third: Who is Jesus? What has he told and shown us?

Fourth: Accepting Jesus and aspects of Christianity

Last: The soul and personal experiences.

Chapter 1 Atheist positions and arguments

It is hard to find atheists with logical positions. Most dismiss the existence of God as a myth and do not attempt further study. I present the thoughts of atheists who have done at least some analysis of theology and offer their best arguments. I have picked atheists with a variety of bases for their positions. Most of those I chose not only do not believe in God but have been active or are now actively working to convince others that God does not exist.

The best scientists welcome scientists that are working to disprove a theory. This is the forefront of scientific discovery. Isaac Newton discovered the relation between force, mass, acceleration, and gravity. There are circumstances where Newton's equations do not work. Einstein worked on a more comprehensive theory that works in these circumstances.

Current scientists find that Einstein's theory is incompatible with another well-proven theory called quantum mechanics. Scientists see this conflict as an opportunity, not a failure of science. Scientists would like to develop a theory that is more comprehensive than both.

Many atheist pronouncements make the case for God, the Bible, and Jesus stronger.

Lord Kelvin said that if we can not express a phenomenon with a number, our knowledge is weak and insufficient.

David Hume wrote:

"If we take into our hands any volume, of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance, does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No.

Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No.

Commit it then to the flames, for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion. Unless a statement is either a relation of ideas or a matter of fact, it is meaningless. Since statements about the knowledge of God are outside of these two categories, God is essentially unknowable."

The second foundational idea of Hume was that there are no necessary causes. We can never know for certain that something caused anything else. According to Hume, all sensations are unconnected, and any causal connection we make is entirely in our minds. These connections are made only after we experience repeated conjunctions of events. Without understanding the universe's cause, we can never truly know anything about God.

Immanuel Kant:

Hume greatly influenced Kant's philosophy. Kant attempted to merge the ideas of rationalism and empiricism. Rationalism holds that there is specific innate knowledge within everyone. On the contrary, empiricism maintains that we are born as blank slates, and all knowledge is gained by experience. Kant concluded by pulling together the merits of both sides. The content of knowledge came by experience (as the empiricists contended), but the structure or form of knowledge is developed in the mind (as the rationalists held). This "solution" resulted in agnosticism for Kant. If one cannot know anything without experience through the senses, and if that sensed knowledge can only be structured in our minds by innate categories. As a result, we can only know things as they are to us. We can never know reality as it

actually is. Our reference point is always ourselves and not the things themselves. There is a gap between appearance to us and reality. Kant proposed the moral argument for the existence of God.

Christopher Hitchens quotes:

"I suppose that one reason I have always detested religion is its sly tendency to insinuate the idea that the universe is designed with 'you' in mind or, even worse, that there is a divine plan into which one fits whether one knows it or not. This kind of modesty is too arrogant for me."

- Christopher Hitchens, *Hitch 22: A Memoir* (Hitchens, n.d.-b)

"One must state it plainly. Religion comes from the period of human prehistory where nobody—not even the mighty Democritus who concluded that all matter was made from atoms—had the smallest idea what was going on. It comes from the bawling and fearful infancy of our species, and is a babyish attempt to meet our inescapable demand for knowledge (as well as for comfort, reassurance, and other infantile needs). Today the least educated of my children knows much more about the natural order than any of the founders of religion, and one would like to think—though the connection is not a fully demonstrable one—that this is why they seem so uninterested in sending fellow humans to hell."

- Christopher Hitchens, *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (Hitchens, n.d.-a)

"About once or twice every month, I engage in public debates with those who's pressing need it is to woo and to win the approval of supernatural beings. Very often, when I

give my view that there is no supernatural dimension, and certainly not one that is only or especially available to the faithful, and that the natural world is wonderful enough—and even miraculous enough if you insist—I attract pitying looks and anxious questions. How, in that case, I am asked, do I find meaning and purpose in life? How does a mere and gross materialist, with no expectation of a life to come, decide what, if anything, is worth caring about?

“Depending on my mood, I sometimes but not always refrain from pointing out what a breathtakingly insulting and patronizing question this is. (It is on a par with the equally subtle inquiry: Since you don't believe in our God, what stops you from stealing and lying and raping and killing to your heart's content?) Just as the answer to the latter question is: self-respect and the desire for the respect of others—while in the meantime it is precisely those who think they have divine permission who are truly capable of any atrocity—so the answer to the first question falls into two parts.

A life that partakes even a little of friendship, love, irony, humor, parenthood, literature, and music, and the chance to take part in battles for the liberation of others cannot be called 'meaningless' except if the person living it is also an existentialist and elects to call it so. It could be that all existence is a pointless joke, but it is not, in fact, possible to live one's everyday life as if this were so. Whereas if one sought to define meaninglessness and futility, the idea that a human life should be expended in the guilty, fearful, self-obsessed propitiation of supernatural nonentities... but there, there. Enough."

- Christopher Hitchens, *Hitch 22: A Memoir* (Hitchens, n.d.-a)

Daniel Dennett quotes:

"Surely just about everybody has faced a moral dilemma and secretly wished, "If only somebody — somebody I trusted — could just tell me what to do!" Wouldn't this be morally inauthentic? Aren't we responsible for making our own moral decisions? Yes, but the virtues of "do it yourself" moral reasoning have their limits, and if you decide, after conscientious consideration, that your moral decision is to delegate further moral decisions in your life to a trusted expert, then you have made your own moral decision. You have decided to take advantage of the division of labor that civilization makes possible and get the help of expert specialists. We applaud the wisdom of this course in all other important areas of decision-making (don't try to be your own doctor, the lawyer who represents himself has a fool for a client, and so forth). Even in the case of political decisions, like which way to vote, the policy of delegation can be defended. ... Is a dereliction of one's duty as a citizen? I don't think so, but it does depend on my having good grounds for trusting [the delegate's] judgment. ... That why those who have an unquestioning faith in the correctness of the moral teachings of their religion are a problem: if they themselves haven't conscientiously considered, on their own, whether their pastors or priests or rabbis or imams are worthy of this delegated authority over their own lives, then they are in fact taking a personally immoral stand. This is perhaps the most shocking implication of my inquiry, and I do not shrink from it, even though it may offend many who think of themselves as deeply moral. It is commonly supposed that it is entirely exemplary to adopt the moral teachings of one's own religion without question because -- to put it simply — it is the word of God (as interpreted, always, by

the specialists to whom one has delegated authority). I am urging, on the contrary, that anybody who professes that a particular point of moral conviction is not discussable, not debatable, not negotiable, simply because it is the word of God, or because the Bible says so, or because "that is what all Muslims [Hindus, Sikhs...] [sic] believe, and I am a Muslim [Hindu, Sikh...]" [sic], should be seen to be making it impossible for the rest of us to take their views seriously, excusing themselves from the moral conversation, inadvertently acknowledging that their own views are not conscientiously maintained and deserve no further hearing. "— Daniel Dennett, book *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon* (Dennett, n.d.)

Source: <https://quotepark.com/authors/daniel-dennett/quotes-about-religion/>

Richard Dawkins:

Richard Dawkins contends that a supernatural creator, God, almost certainly does not exist, and that belief in a personal god qualifies as a delusion, which he defines as a persistent false belief held in the face of strong contradictory evidence.

He is sympathetic to Robert Pirsig's statement in *Lila* (1991) that "when one person suffers from a delusion it is called insanity. When many people suffer from a delusion it is called religion." With many examples, he explains that one does not need religion to be moral and that the roots of religion and of morality can be explained in non-religious terms.

Faith is the great cop-out, the great excuse to evade the need to think and evaluate evidence. Faith is belief in spite of, even perhaps because of, the lack of evidence. It is often

said, mainly by the 'no contests, that although there is no positive evidence for the existence of God, nor is there evidence against his existence. So it is best to keep an open mind and be agnostic. At first sight that seems an unassailable position, at least in the weak sense of Pascal's wager. But on second thoughts, it seems a cop-out, because the same could be said of Father Christmas and tooth fairies. There may be fairies at the bottom of the garden. There is no evidence for it, but you can't prove that there aren't any, so shouldn't we be agnostic with respect to fairies?

You see, if you say something positive like the whole of life – all living things – is descended from a single common ancestor which lived about 4,000 million years ago and that we are all cousins, well that is an exceedingly important and true thing to say, and that is what I want to say. Some religious people see that as threatening, so I am represented as attacking religion, and I am forced into responding to their reaction. But you do not have to see my main purpose as attacking religion. Certainly, I see the scientific view of the world as incompatible with religion, but that is not what is interesting about it. It is also incompatible with magic, but that also is not worth stressing. What is interesting about the scientific worldview is that it is true, inspiring, remarkable and that it unites a whole lot of phenomena under a single heading. And that is what is so exciting for me.

What worries me about religion is that it teaches people to be satisfied with not understanding the world they live in

"Imagine you are God. You're all-powerful; nothing is beyond you. You're all-loving. So, it is really, really important to you that humans are left in no doubt about

your existence and your loving nature, and exactly what they need to do in order to get to heaven and avoid eternity in the fires of hell. It's really important to you to get that across. So, what do you do? Well, if you're Jehovah, apparently this is what you do. You talk in riddles. You tell stories which on the surface have a different message from the one you apparently want us to understand. You expect us to hear X, and instinctively understand that it needs to be interpreted in the light of Y, which you happen to have said in the course of a completely different story 500-1,000 years earlier. Instead of speaking directly into our heads - which God has presumed the capability of doing so - simply, clearly, and straightforwardly in terms which the particular individual being addressed will immediately understand and respond to positively - you steep your messages in symbols, in metaphors. In fact, you choose to convey the most important message in the history of creation in code, as if you aspired to be Umberto Eco or Dan Brown. Anyone would think your top priority was to keep generation after generation after generation of theologians in meaningless employment, rather than communicate an urgent life-or-death message to the creatures you love more than any other." (Dawkins, n.d.)

Sean Carrol:

"The broader ontology typically associated with atheism is naturalism—there is only one world, the natural world, exhibiting patterns we call the "laws of nature," and which is discoverable by the methods of science and empirical investigation. There is no separate realm of the supernatural, spiritual, or divine; nor is there any cosmic teleology or transcendent purpose inherent in the nature of the universe or in human life. "Life" and "consciousness"

do not denote essences distinct from matter; they are ways of talking about phenomena that emerge from the interplay of extraordinarily complex systems. Purpose and meaning in life arise through fundamentally human acts of creation, rather than being derived from anything outside ourselves. Naturalism is a philosophy of unity and patterns, describing all of reality as a seamless web."

"Poetic naturalism is a philosophy of freedom and responsibility. The raw materials of life are given to us by the natural world, and we must work to understand them and accept the consequences. The move from description to prescription, from saying what happens to passing judgment on what should happen, is a creative one, a fundamentally human act. The world is just the world, unfolding according to the patterns of nature, free of any judgmental attributes. The world exists; beauty and goodness are things that we bring to it."

"The materialist thesis is simply: that's all there is to the world. Once we figure out the correct formal structure, patterns, boundary conditions, and interpretation, we have obtained a complete description of reality. (Of course, we don't yet have the final answers as to what such a description is, but a materialist believes such a description does exist.) In particular, we should emphasize that there is no place in this view for common philosophical concepts such as "cause and effect" or "purpose." From the perspective of modern science, events don't have purposes or causes; they simply conform to the laws of nature. In particular, there is no need to invoke any mechanism to "sustain" a physical system or to keep it going; it would require an additional layer of complexity for a system to cease following its patterns than for it to simply continue to

do so. Believing otherwise is a relic of a certain metaphysical way of thinking; these notions are useful in an informal way for human beings but are not a part of the rigorous scientific description of the world. Of course, scientists do talk about "causality," but this is a description of the relationship between patterns and boundary conditions; it is a derived concept, not a fundamental one. If we know the state of a system at one time and the laws governing its dynamics, we can calculate the state of the system at some later time. You might be tempted to say that the particular state at the first time "caused" the state to be what it was at the second time, but it would be just as correct to say that the second state caused the first. According to the materialist worldview, then, structures and patterns are all there are — we don't need any ancillary notions.

Defining theism is more difficult than defining materialism, for the simple reason that theist belief takes many more forms than materialist belief, and the same words are often taken to mean utterly different things. I will partially avoid this difficulty by not attempting a comprehensive definition of religion, but simply taking belief in the existence of a being called "God" as a necessary component of being religious. (Already, this choice excludes some modes of belief which are sometimes thought of as "religious." For example, one could claim that "the laws of physics, and their working out in the world, are what I hold to be God." I am not sure what the point of doing that would be, but in such a case, nothing that I have to say would apply.")

Sean Carrol (Carroll, n.d.)

Ludwig A. Feuerbach 1804 - 1872

Feuerbach anonymously published his first book, *Thoughts on Death and Immortality*, in which he denied the traditional Christian concept of the immortality of the soul and argued that "if there is life after death, there cannot be life before death." He both denied immortality and affirmed death, which makes the continuity of human beings with our natural environment most evident. Feuerbach argued that recognizing the fact of our eventual death is a prerequisite to a fully lived life. Christianity (especially Protestant Christianity) makes the full life impossible by emphasizing personal immortality.

As far as Feuerbach was concerned, philosophy had settled the question of God's existence. A quote from Feuerbach:

“It is a question today, you say, no longer of the existence or the non-existence of God but of the existence or non-existence of man; not whether God is a creature whose nature is the same as ours but whether we human beings are to be equal among ourselves; not whether and how we can partake of the body of the Lord by eating bread but whether we have enough bread for our own bodies; not whether we render unto God what is God's and unto Caesar what is Caesar's but whether we finally render unto man what is man's; not whether we are Christians or heathens, theists or atheists, but whether we are or can become men, healthy in soul and body, free, active and full of vitality. Concedo, gentlemen! That is what I want, too. He who says no more of me than that I am an atheist says and knows nothing of me.

The question as to the existence or non-existence of God, the opposition between theism and atheism belongs to the

sixteenth and seventeenth centuries but not to the nineteenth. I deny God. But that means for me that I deny the negation of man. In place of the illusory, fantastic, heavenly position of man, which in actual life necessarily leads to the degradation of man, I substitute the tangible, actual, and consequently also the political and social position of mankind. The question concerning the existence or non-existence of God is for me nothing but the question concerning the existence or non-existence of man.”

Sigmond Freud:

Freud was a Jew. His father was a devout practicing Jew who was disappointed that Freud became an atheist. Freud's nanny was a devout Roman Catholic who took Freud to Church each week. Freud was exposed to both religions.

Freud called himself a materialist, an atheist, a godless man, and an unbeliever. He called his worldview scientific. Freud wrote that tales of miracles contradicted everything taught by sober observation. He noted that the doctrines of religion bear the imprint of the times in which they arose, the ignorant times of humanity's childhood. He referred to the teachings of Jesus as psychologically impossible. Freud offered two main arguments against the existence of intelligence above ours: The psychological argument concerning wish fulfillment and the argument of human suffering.

Freud refers to religion as an illusion which he described as: "perhaps the most important item in the psychical inventory of a civilization." In his estimation, religion provides defense against "the crushingly superior force of nature" and "the urge to rectify the shortcomings of civilization which made themselves painfully felt." He

concludes that all religious beliefs are "illusions and unsusceptible of proof." Freud examines the issue of whether, without religion, people will feel "exempt from all obligation to obey the precepts of civilization." He notes that "civilization has little to fear from educated people and brain-workers" in whom secular motives for morality replace religious ones, but he acknowledges the existence of "the great mass of the uneducated and oppressed" who may commit murder if not told that God forbids it, and who must be "held down most severely" unless "the relationship between civilization and religion" undergoes "a fundamental revision."

Freud asserts that dogmatic religious training contributes to the weakness of intellect by foreclosing lines of inquiry. He argues that "in the long run, nothing can withstand reason and experience, and the contradiction which religion offers to both is all too palpable." Freud's hoped that science would go beyond religion in the future, and reason would replace faith in God."

Freud said that the commandment to love one's neighbor was absurd. He asks why should we do it? What good will it do us? There may be a reason that the person in some way, but all of my own people value love as a sign of my preference for them. I do them an injustice if I put a stranger on par with them. He said that his neighbor has no love for him and would harm him if it was to his neighbor's advantage.

Freud observed that the chanting and ritual bowing in the Catholic Church when his nanny would take him to Church was similar to compulsive behavior.

The difficulty of being happy is one of the reasons Freud chose not to believe. Freud said we can experience happiness only for brief periods. The intention that man should be happy is not included in the plan of creation. (Freud, n.d.)

Additional arguments against the existence of God:

The arguments for atheism and against the God we have described can be an argument against the Bible. Theists claim that the stories in the Bible are silly and illogical. Stories like Jonah and the whale or stories like the men surviving the fiery furnace are scientifically impossible.

We have what I call the God of the gaps. Gaps in our understanding of lightning were somewhat closed by the scientific investigation of Benjamin Franklin. As time has gone on, the gaps in our knowledge of how the universe works ascribed to God continue to be closed by scientific investigation. Many believe the God of the gaps is disappearing. The gaps are being filled with physics and evolution. When all of the fundamental questions are answered, God will not be needed and will no longer exist.

Occam's Razor says that the simplest answer is the best answer. William of Occam proposed it in the 14th century as a way to evaluate any explanation of any phenomena. If the entire universe can be explained by evolution and physics, we have no reason to add another entity called God. Therefore, God does not exist.

Evil is one of the arguments against the existence of God. The version below is one of the many versions of the problem of evil:

- 1) Is God willing to prevent evil but not able, then he is not omnipotent
- 2) If he is able but unwilling, he is malevolent.
- 3) If he is both able and willing, why do we have evil.
- 4) If he is neither willing nor able, why do we call him God.

From Epicurus 341-270 BC (Epicurus, n.d.)

When he was an atheist, C.S. Lewis gave pain as the reason he did not believe in a benevolent God. Creatures cause pain by being borne, live by inflicting pain, and in pain, they die. Because man can reason, he can foresee his pain. Human history is a record of crime, war, disease, and terror. Pain points away from the existence of a loving God. (Lewis, n.d.) **Summary**

The atheists have put up a strong argument for God not existing. Several themes seem to reoccur.

- God is not necessary because physics and evolution explain the universe, our solar system, and life.
- The Bible is a fairy tale with implausible stories, and the Bible does not make sense.
- There is pain and suffering that a benevolent god would prevent
- Religion is not necessary for morality.
- God is not needed because there isn't necessarily a cause of anything.
- Jesus telling us that we should love our neighbor and our enemies doesn't make sense.

Chapter 2 The arguments for the existence of God

The atheists put up a strong defense for not believing in the existence of God. Here I will put up the arguments for God's existence. I start with Stephen Charnock's observation:

The fool hath said in his heart; there is no God. He regards him as little as if he had no being. He said in his heart, not with his tongue, nor in his head: he never firmly thought it, nor openly asserted it. Shame put a bar to the first, and natural reason to the second; yet, perhaps, he had sometimes some doubts whether there were a God or no. He wished there were not any, and sometimes hoped there were none at all. He could not raze out the notion of a Deity in his mind, but he neglected the fixing the sense of God in his heart, and made it too much his business to deface and blot out those characters of God in his soul, which had been left under the ruins of original nature. Men may have atheistical (disbelieving) hearts without atheistical heads. Their reasons may defend the notion of a Deity, while their hearts are empty of affection to the Deity. Job's children may curse God in their hearts, though not with their lips. Stephen Charnock (1628–1680) (Charnok, n.d.)

Freud was depressed most of his adult life. He said that he was puzzled by his behavior. Some force within him caused him to act morally; this moral attitude was deeply implanted and seemed part of his original nature. He also stated that his nine children had something fundamental that caused them to be honest and honorable; he said this propensity for good was not logical. He and his children were an excellent example of Charnock's description of God's work above.

Freud also wrote that he envied his clients, who were happy believers in God. Freud's claim that loving your neighbor was illogical was challenged by Lewis, who says the reverse is true; the more we hate, the more cruel and bitter we become.

Freud thought in German; Lewis thought in English. The words of Jesus were spoken in Aramaic and recorded in Greek. Understanding the New Testament requires an understanding of the Greek words for love.

Eros is sexual love or lust.

Philia is the love of a brother. This would be the love of the disciples for each other.

Ludus is playful love. This is children's play, or adults playing like children.

Pragma is longstanding love. This is the love between long-standing couples.

Agape is love for everyone, selfless love. This was a love that you extended to all people, whether family members or distant strangers. It is willing others the best. *Agape* is also love for God.

Agape is the word used to describe what Jesus was recommending as love for neighbor. It wishes the person well physically and economically. Psychologists have found out that wishing others well is good for mental health. Forgiveness, letting go of anger, and *agape* are recommended for a happier life. Details are in *Happy in Intensive Care*. Freud's position is simply wrong. As a psychiatrist, he should know better.

John Calvin was a theologian credited with a belief in predestination. Some theologians say we have free will, so that can't be true. Of course, if God sees all of time, both free will and predestination are true. He has already seen the choices you will make. Watching someone do something is not the same as making someone do something. John Calvin's ideas about God's existence were similar to Charnock's:

"That there exists in the human mind and indeed by instinct, some sense of Deity, we hold to be beyond dispute, since God Himself, to prevent any man from pretending ignorance, has endued all men with some idea of His Godhead, the memory of which He constantly renews and occasionally enlarges, that all to a man is aware that there is a God, and that He is their Maker. ... There is no nation so barbarous, no race so brutish, as not to be imbued with the conviction that there is a God. ... A sense of Deity is inscribed on every heart." John Calvin (Calvin, n.d.)

Despite the best efforts of Socialist governments, John Calvin's words are still true.

The atheist philosophers are always depressed. An example is Cioran, who is sometimes called the most depressing of the philosophers. He is quoted below.

"As far as I am concerned, I resign from humanity. I no longer want to be, nor can still be, a man. What should I do? Work for a social and political system, make a girl miserable? Hunt for weaknesses in philosophical systems, fight for moral and esthetic ideals? It's all too little. I renounce my humanity even though I may find myself

alone. But am I not already alone in this world from which I no longer expect anything?"

"The same feeling of not belonging, of futility, wherever I go: I pretend interest in what matters nothing to me, I bestir myself mechanically or out of charity, without ever being caught up, without ever being somewhere. What attracts me is elsewhere, and I don't know where that elsewhere is."

"How important can it be that I suffer and think? My presence in this world will disturb a few tranquil lives and will unsettle the unconscious and pleasant naiveté of others. Although I feel that my tragedy is the greatest in history—greater than the fall of empires—I am nevertheless aware of my total insignificance. I am absolutely persuaded that I am nothing in this universe, yet I feel that mine is the only real existence."

Emil M. Cioran (Coran, n.d.)

C. S. Lewis was an atheist that tried to prove God did not exist. When he failed to prove God and Jesus did not exist, he became a Christian. Here is what he said: "Conscience reveals to us a moral law whose source cannot be found in the natural world, thus pointing to a supernatural Lawgiver," Lewis argued that accepting the validity of human reason as a given must include accepting the validity of practical reason, which could not be valid without reference to a higher cosmic moral order which could not exist without a God to create and/or establish it. (Lewis, n.d.)

The Lewis conversion started when he was challenged to read the Bible. I will describe this conversion later.

Lewis also wrote that Jesus claimed to forgive sins and be I AM (the words God used to name himself). Claiming to be God ruled out him being simply a good person; he was either God or a fraud. His teachings are revolutionary. His command that we should love (*agape*) our enemies is alien to most even today.

Lewis agrees with Freud that it is not in one's nature to love our neighbor. That is why Lewis believes we need a new nature. While we realize our faults and failures, Lewis says we will ourselves the best. By willing others the best, we will like them more and feel better about ourselves. The reverse is also true; the more we hate, the more cruel and bitter we become.

One of the criticisms of the Bible is the stories are unrealistic and don't make sense. One example is Jonah. A condensed version would go like this: God told Jonah to go to Nineveh and tell them to repent and stop their evil ways or be destroyed. Jonah doesn't like Nineveh and thinks them being destroyed would be a good idea. He takes a boat in another direction. A storm comes up, and he is thrown overboard. A whale then swallows him. After three days, the whale spits him up on a beach. He goes to Nineveh and tells the people to repent and stop their evil ways, or God will destroy them. It works. They repent and stop their evil ways. Jonah is disappointed, builds a shack on a hill overlooking Nineveh, and waits for them to become evil and be destroyed. A vine grows up and provides improved shade. The vine then dies. Jonah complains to God that the vine died. God tells Jonah that Jonah did not make the vine, so he should not complain about the death of the vine. Jona 4:10 You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or

make it grow. It sprang up overnight and withered overnight. And should I not have concern for the great city of Ninevah, in which there are more than 120,000 people who do not know their right hand from their left. – and also many animals.

How does this apply: Jim, a salesman, is in a company where the salesmen cheat on their expenses. Jim knows they will get caught and fired. He feels that he should warn them. He also doesn't like them, so he moves to another company. The new company is in financial trouble and going to let him go. He doesn't have unemployment because he quit the first and has not been with the new company long enough. He is rescued because the original company merged with the new company, and he is back to being a salesman at the original company. Jim now confronts the other salesmen about cheating. He is disappointed when they stop cheating and return the funds they obtained by cheating. None are fired. Jim still doesn't like them, so he stays angry that they are now safe from losing their jobs.

As an exercise, make up a Jonah story in modern times. It should have:

- Feeling a need to confront evil
- Running away rather than confronting
- Being in trouble and then rescued
- Back to the original situation
- Successfully confronting evil
- Evildoers repenting and changing

Being disappointed that the evildoers did not go to hell

There are two pillars of atheism. Physics claims to explain the universe; biology and evolution claim to explain life. If these explain everything, the God of the gaps would lead to God vanishing. However, the gaps are not shrinking, and the fundamental questions are not answered.

1) We do not know what caused the big bang that started the universe; We don't know what came before. Stephen Hawking claims that fluctuations in the vacuum could have caused the big bang. If there was a vacuum before the big bang, what generated it? What caused the vacuum to have fluctuations?

2) We do not understand consciousness. No matter what part of our brain is damaged or even removed, we still have it. Later I show that it is separate from the body.

3) It takes 26 dimensionless constants to describe the universe as simply as possible. We think of the speed of light as a constant, but the number we get is dependent on the units of measure. The speed of light in miles per year is different from the speed of light in meters per second. The dimensionless constant would be the same, independent of the units used. Someone in a distant galaxy would get the same number. One proposal is to transmit the fine structure constant to show any intelligent life that we are an intelligent species. An example of one of the 26 constants is the fine-structure constant: $0.00729735256\dots$. The constants cannot be calculated; they can only be measured. We do not know what caused them or if there are more. They are not nice even numbers, as the above example shows. If they were even numbers or could be

mathematically manipulated to give even numbers, there may be a clue to an underlying structure. The constants appear to be random, but they are precisely what they are, or we would not exist.

4) The atheist answer is there is an infinite number of universes with every possible set of constants. We are in this universe because it is suitable for us. They have no answer as to what started all of these universes. Some scientists have faith that there are an infinite number of universes. This belief would seem to require more faith than the existence of God.

5) Atheists say that God did not make the universe for us. Theists say the earth is unique, and there is little chance it is an accident.

- The sun is a perfect size. Larger would not have lasted long enough for evolution and the suitable disruptive events to create life, evolution to occur, and civilization to develop. Smaller and the zone for a habitable planet would cause an earth-sized planet to become locked like mercury so that only one side would always face the star. Smaller stars are also more disruptive to planets in their habitable zone.
- Our sun is in the outer part of our galaxy. If it were closer, the orbits of the planets would have been disrupted by other stars passing too close.
- The sun has circled the galaxy approximately 20 times without a planet disruption event since life started on earth.

- Early in earth's history, earth collided with a slightly smaller planet. This formed the moon. Without the moon, the earth's axis would not be stable; an unstable axis would cause climate disruptions unsuitable for larger life forms. The collision caused the earth to spin faster, making the day/night better to support larger life forms. The collision also gave the earth a larger and hotter core with a larger magnetic field. Earth's magnetic field keeps our atmosphere intact. Without this magnetic field, the earth would have lost its atmosphere like mars.

6) Before 1927, most scientists believed that the universe was static without a beginning. In 1927 Georges Henri Joseph Edouard Lemaitre, a Belgian monk, worked out the mathematics and showed that the Bible was right. Initially, Einstein said there could not be a beginning even though Lemaitre's mathematics was correct. Einstein later accepted that the universe had a beginning. Other scientists now accept that Lemaitre and the Bible are correct. There was a beginning. This beginning was the beginning of space and time.

7) Scientists' current understanding of the conditions immediately after the big bang should have produced equal amounts of matter and antimatter. Matter and antimatter annihilate each other. Nothing should now exist. The last time I checked, we exist.

8) The matter we see in the universe is not enough to explain how galaxies are held together or how groups of galaxies stay together. There must be something that we cannot see or measure. Scientists have proposed two possible solutions: Axions and Weakly Interacting Massive Particles. Many expensive experiments were done with the

promise that they would either prove the existence of one of these particles or prove that they do not exist. All attempts to discover these particles have failed.

9) The universe is expanding, and the expansion is accelerating. The driving force is not understood. We can measure it but cannot explain it. Psalm 104:2 The Lord wraps himself in light as with a garment; he stretches out the heavens like a tent. Jewish scholars in 800 BC understood this to mean that the universe was expanding.

10) The beginning of life is not understood. Atoms do not have a reason to come together to make life. Even the least complicated life that would have both metabolism and reproduction would not have assembled in the time the universe has existed. Scientists can manipulate but cannot make life even given pure materials and all known chemical processes. Appendix 2 describes the problem in more detail.

Quotes from the great physicist Richard Feynman:

"God was always invented to explain mystery. God is always invented to explain those things that you do not understand. Now, when you finally discover how something works ... you don't need him anymore. But ... you leave him to create the universe because we haven't figured that out yet."

"I often use the analogy of a chess game: one can learn all the rules of chess, but one doesn't know how to play well.... The present situation in physics is as if we know chess, but we don't know one or two rules. But in this part of the board where things are in operation, those one or two rules are not operating much, and we can get along pretty well without understanding those rules. That's the way it is,

I would say, regarding the phenomena of life, consciousness, and so forth."

"If you thought that science was certain well, that is just an error on your part."

Richard Feynman

Quantum Mechanics is a theory about how the universe works at the atomic level. It is based on the statistical behavior of atoms and the particles that make up atoms. Scientists discovered something can be in two places simultaneously; time and space are not constant. There is a simple experiment that shows how our intuition does not work.

If we shine a light on a barrier with two slits, the pattern on the screen will be an interference pattern similar to the pattern formed by waves in water. We speak of light waves, so this is not surprising. If we send atoms instead of light, we also get the same pattern. This result would show that atoms are waves. Even if we send whole molecules, the pattern is the same. This result does not make sense. Even if we send atoms one at a time, we get the same pattern. The only way to get this pattern is if each individual particle of light, atom, or molecule goes through both slits. From a classical physics point of view, this does not make sense.

Richard Feynman told his quantum mechanics class that nobody knows how it can be like that.

Richard won a Nobel prize in physics for his work on quantum mechanics.

Richard Feynman quote: "Do not keep saying to yourself, if you can possibly avoid it, but how can it be like that?"

Because you will get 'down the drain' into a blind alley from which nobody has escaped. Nobody knows how it can be like that."

When I was in graduate school to get my master's degree in Electrical Engineering, I worked on a P-type semiconductor. This material moves positive charges by moving places where a negative charge could be. These are called holes in the crystal that would otherwise contain an electron. The positive charge moves as a wave. The atoms of the crystal do not move. Moving positive charges by moving charges in places that could contain an electron doesn't make sense. We know quantum mechanics is correct; quantum mechanics must be true, or computers and cell phones would not work.

I am a scientist. I describe science as an island; the island's interior is what scientists have discovered and is known well enough for engineers to make things. The shoreline is where scientists are expanding man's knowledge of the universe; the open sea is where scientists do not know where to look. The sea is infinite. If we ask the child's question: why? Often enough, it will stump any scientist.

I find nothing in the Bible that conflicts with science. Jesus never made a statement that we could say conflicts with the current state of the physical sciences or the present state of the psychological sciences.

Christians have faith that God exists. Atheists have faith that science will answer the fundamental questions of the universe and its existence. It is not a question of having faith or not. It is faith in what.

Particle physicists have developed what they call the standard model. Many physicists believe that there must be

an underlying principle that would explain the existence of these particles. The large hadron collider was thought to resolve ideas about the principle. Physicists are now at a dead end. The standard model may be as far as humanity may ever understand the foundations of physical existence.

An arrogance of scientists is displayed whenever they are in the media. They believe that they understand everything about the material universe, and you, as a peasant, should know that they know about the existence of God. They also tell you how you should live your life.

The recent COVID-19 pandemic is a perfect example. There were multiple pronouncements on how people should behave to stop the spread. These pronouncements were made with great expressions of authority only to be contradicted later with similar expressions of authority.

The wrong scientific advice by Ancel Keys (A fish physiologist) has caused our current diabetes, obesity, Alzheimer's disease, and cancer epidemic. He recommended a low-fat diet and replacing butter with margarine. His recommendations and what we should be eating are in *Age Successfully*. People who get a Ph.D. get it by knowing a great deal about a narrow subject. They are often making pronouncements in areas outside of their specialty.

We don't need arrogant scientists, but we do need scientists. Scientists provide the mathematics and data that allow engineers and technicians to make the things we use, and they provide the information that enables us to utilize resources properly.

Blaise Pascal (1623 –1662) argues that a rational person should live as though God exists and seek to believe in

God. If God does not exist, such a person will have only a finite loss (some pleasures, luxury, etc.). In contrast, they stand to receive infinite gains (as represented by eternity in Heaven) and avoid infinite losses (an eternity in Hell). He also believed that persons who believe in God have a better life. Pascal was initially an atheist who converted to Christianity. He was a brilliant mathematician.

Pascal was wrong about giving up pleasure. Persons who believe in God do not need to give up pleasure or luxuries. Believers are less likely to be depressed. The atheist Freud was proof of atheist depression and Christian joy because he experienced depression and observed the joy in his clients. Persons who obtain pleasure and material goods by breaking God's law and man's laws are always concerned about being exposed. This worry causes anxiety and depression. Chasing pleasure reduces happiness.

Some scientists say God is not a good hypothesis. A hypothesis is a scientist's idea of how the world may work. God isn't a good hypothesis for a scientist when looking at natural phenomena; it would be a dead end. In studying how light behaves, saying God does it is not helpful. God does everything. It is how God does it that the scientist attempts to discover.

Einstein was a Jew, but he was not interested in following any Jewish traditions. He did believe that there was a God but did not belong to any Church or Synagogue. Einstein used the term God in describing how the universe worked. When working on a problem, Einstein said he was working to find out how God did it. During World War II, when he learned of the persecution of the Jews, he made public that he was a Jew.

St Thomas Aquinas describes the classical argument for the existence of God:

Aquinas responds to the question of belief by offering the following five proofs:

1. The Argument from Motion: Our senses can perceive motion by seeing that things act on one another. Whatever moves is moved by something else. Consequently, there must be a First Mover that creates this chain reaction of motions. This is God. God sets all things in motion and gives them their potential.
2. The Argument from Efficient Cause: Because nothing can cause itself, everything must have a cause or something that affects another thing. Without a first cause, there would be no others. Therefore, the First Cause is God.
3. The Argument from Necessary Being: Because objects in the world come into existence and pass out of it, it is possible for those objects to exist or not exist at any particular time. However, nothing can come from nothing. This means something must exist at all times. This is God.
4. The Argument from Gradation: There are different degrees of goodness in different things. Following the "Great Chain of Being," which states there is a gradual increase in complexity, created objects move from unformed inorganic matter to biologically complex organisms. Therefore, there

must be a being of the highest form of good. This perfect being is God.

5. The Argument from Design: All things have an order or arrangement that leads them to a particular goal. Because the order of the universe cannot be the result of chance, design and purpose must be at work. The organization and structure in the universe imply divine intelligence in the designer. This is God. There are many variations of this argument, but all use the same there must be something argument. While this supports a god, it doesn't say anything about God being personnel.

The problem of evil

There is a problem with evil for those who believe in God and those who don't. We recognize three types of evil:

- The first is when a person hurts another person physically or mentally. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn in *Gulag Archipelago* tells the story of a fellow inmate. This inmate had been tortured by both the Germans and The Russians. He said that the Germans tortured to get information; the Russian torturer did not seem to have a purpose except to make life miserable for the tortured person.
- The second is where we hurt ourselves. Again, an example is accidents and cases where we injure ourselves, like driving too fast or eating something that is not good for us.

- Acts of God are the third type. There are volcanos, earthquakes, and storms that injure and kill people. It does not matter how we behave; Natural disasters will happen. It is also the existence of disease.

The theist answer to the first two is sin. Without sin, people would not be hurting other people, and without sin, we would be careful. There would still be accidents, but this would be a version of Acts of God.

God gave his answer in the book of Job. Job was a man of wealth when wealth was measured by how many farm animals you have and how many employees you have. Job was blameless and upright. He respected God and always did what was right. God allowed satan to take everything from Job but not kill him. Job lost all of his wealth and his children and ended up with painful sores all over his body, sitting in ashes. His wife said that he should curse God and die. Even with all of that, Job continued to worship God. His friends came to him and offered suggestions that were not helpful and only provided another source of annoyance. Job did complain to God and said that he has been faithful, not committing sins, and asked God to make things right. Even at this point, Job continues to worship God. Then there is a whirlwind, and God speaks:

Job 38:

2 Who is this that obscures my plans
with words without knowledge?

3 Brace yourself like a man;
I will question you,
and you shall answer me.

4 "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation?
Tell me, if you understand.

5 Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know!
Who stretched a measuring line across it?

.....

41 Who prepares for the raven its nourishment
When its young cry to God
And wander about without food?

Job 39:

1 "Do you know the time the mountain goats give birth?
Do you observe the calving of the deer?
2 Can you count the months they fulfill,
Or do you know the time they give birth?

.....

27 Does the eagle soar at your command
and build its nest on high?

28 It dwells on a cliff and stays there at night;
a rocky crag is its stronghold.

29 From there it looks for food;
its eyes detect it from afar.

30 Its young ones feast on blood,
and where the slain are, there it is."...

Job 40 The Lord said to Job:

2 "Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct
him?

Let him who accuses God answer him!"

3 Then Job answered the Lord:

4 "I am unworthy—how can I reply to you?
I put my hand over my mouth.

5 I spoke once, but I have no answer—
twice, but I will say no more."

...

23 If a river rages, he is not alarmed;
He is confident, though the Jordan rushes to his mouth.

24 Can anyone capture him when he is on watch,
With barbs can anyone pierce his nose?

Job 41

1 "Can you draw out Leviathan with a fishhook?
Or press down his tongue with a cord?

2 Can you put a rope in his nose
Or pierce his jaw with a hook?

3 Will he make many supplications to you,
Or will he speak to you soft words?

.....

33 Nothing on earth is like him,
One made without fear.

34 He looks on everything that is high;
He is king over all the sons of pride."

Job 42 Job said:

4 "You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak;
I will question you,
and you shall answer me.'

5 My ears had heard of you
but now my eyes have seen you.

6 Therefore, I despise myself
and repent in dust and ashes."

After that, God cured Job's sores and restored Job's wealth.
God's answer to Job is all we have of disease and natural
disasters. God allows them to happen.

In C. S. Lewis's book *Screwtape Letters*, the senior deivel tells a junior deivel he is wrong, thinking war is good for the devil's side. In war, many see the need for religion. In peace, many see death as far off and do not see the need for religion. Seeing the need for religion is also the case where there is a concern for hurricanes, earthquakes, and other natural disasters.

One unanswered question is the death of someone either at childbirth or soon after birth when they cannot influence events. We will learn the boy's story who had a near-death experience and met his stillborn sister in heaven. This story is described later in the near-death experience section. The bottom line is that God has it under control, and we mortals like Job need to accept that God has all possible situations covered.

Friedrich Nietzsche hated Christianity and believed that Western civilization, by demanding truth, killed the belief in God. He thought that Christianity could not stand up to the truth. His famous statement that God was dead has been published repeatedly. He believed that people would turn to nihilism, ripe for repressive totalitarianism. Nietzsche died at 55 years old in 1900. He was undoubtedly correct about totalitarianism. Totalitarianism was a word used by Mussolini to describe his government in Italy. When Nietzsche wrote his theories, many believed that science could explain everything. As you see, many atheists still think that this is the case. Christianity can stand up to the truth.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn was a Christian who made some of the same predictions about totalitarianism as Nietzsche. He saw how all men could be evil with free will, but we would be robots without free will.

Many atheists claim that religion is not needed for morality. Based on my observations, religion is necessary for morality. Atheists claim physics and evolution are all that is required. At the same time, many atheists believe in universal benevolence and equal human rights, which conflict with evolution. These beliefs come from the

Christian Bible. In this case, atheists are not without faith but have a different faith.

Freud believed that a well-educated society would behave correctly and that, without religion, would not commit organized stealing and killing. The Nazi Socialists were the most well-educated people on earth. Freud died in exile in the United Kingdom in 1939. He had fled from the Nazis who had invaded Austria in 1938. The crimes of the Nazi socialists show that education and intelligence do not prevent society from corruption. China, Nazi Germany, North Korea, Cambodia under Pol Pot, Russia, and Venezuela are only a few examples of what happens when Christian standards are suppressed.

The dedicated vocal atheist wants to give multiple explanations for why God does not exist. The repeated reasons that God does not exist are like in Shakespeare when a character says he is innocent and describes his innocence in some detail. Lady Macbeth said: "He doth protest too much."

Atheists are not only fighting theists. They are fighting their subconscious. Just like C. S. Lewis when he said he was a case of willful ignorance. Sometimes atheists' protests come from wanting to blot out their knowledge of God.

Summary

There are two possibilities:

Nothing; Something random and extremely improbable happened; current science cannot explain how this could have occurred; this event is impossible based on current

understanding of physics; 13.8 billion years happened;
Everything, including us

or

God; Mechanisms and constants established by God; 13.8
billion years happened; Everything, including us

The above reasons for God to exist are more than sufficient
for someone open to believing in God. Nothing would be
enough for the atheist who doesn't want God to exist.

Chapter 3 The Bible

When I speak of the Bible, I am talking about the Christian Bible. It is in two parts; The first part is what Christians call the Old Testament, and the Jews call the Tanakh; The second part is what Christians call the New Testament or new contract. The Old Testament was compiled from about 1200 BC to about 450 BC. Many authors contributed over this vast time. Likely, parts originated as an oral history and were later written down. Some of the stories could be over 5,000 years old. Based on archeological evidence, the Tanakh books were accepted as the official version by the Jews in about 450 BC. It has been well conserved over thousands of years.

The Bible is a collection of wisdom literature, stories, predictions, and historical accounts. Some of the stories are actual events, and some are fictional stories to show principles. The Bible does not always differentiate between the two. The Old Testament ends about 450 BC, and the New Testament starts with the birth of Jesus at about year 4 BC and covers the period 4BC to about 66AD. The New Testament writers did not include anything about the revolt. This lack of references to the revolt indicates that the New Testament was mostly completed before 66AD. The Jewish revolt and the destruction of Jerusalem started about 66AD and ended about 70AD. We have documents written by Greeks and Romans that contain information from before 450 BC to after 70AD.

The Bible is hyperlinked and has the organization of one person. Early texts describe later; later texts reference earlier texts. There are 63,779 cross-references in the Bible.

Not that everything in the Bible is to be taken literally, but everything contained is on purpose. One might have to go to the original languages, understand the cultural context, and the writer's larger context to understand and clarify what might be considered conflicts. I am aware that many areas of the Bible are targets of great scrutiny, such as how the four Gospel books seem to have conflicting statements. The gospels were written by different men from memory or notes made earlier. Their agreement with Jesus' teachings and actions is remarkable. I've been acquainted with men who have spent the better part of their adult lives studying the Bible (college, seminary, ministry positions, etc.) and trying to understand it. These men and women say that they are continually surprised by how the meaning of a passage is related to both earlier passages and later passages.

There is a German fairy tale about a boy who cried wolf. In the story, the boy runs to the edge of the village and cries wolf. The men of the village run to his defense with pitchforks and guns. The women round up the children and get them inside. The boy then laughs at the villagers and says there is no wolf. The boy does it again with a slightly less vigorous response; the boy then laughs at the villagers and says there is no wolf. The boy is later attacked by a wolf and cries wolf. The villagers do not react, and the boy is killed. The story may or may not be an actual event. The Cry Wolf story teaches the children not to alarm without a sufficient cause. The story is a better lesson than if someone said: "do not unnecessarily alarm anyone." The story also describes how men are to react to a threat and women's priority is to the children.

We tend to hear a story and dismiss it if it isn't historically correct. Another good example is the Disney version of

Pinocchio. When the woodworker Geppetto sees a falling star, he wishes that Pinocchio, the puppet he had just finished, could become a real boy. The Blue Fairy grants Geppetto's wish in the night and asks Jiminy Cricket to serve as the wooden boy's conscience. But, the naive and trusting Pinocchio falls into the clutches of the wicked Honest John, who leads him astray to the sinful Pleasure Island. The story continues with Pinocchio making stupid adolescent mistakes. A scientist would dismiss this story because puppets do not come to life, but it is true of life. The story is not about the miracle of a puppet becoming alive but about irresponsible youth and bad results from bad decisions.

Some Bible stories are like the boy who cried wolf and the Pinocchio stories. They are there to show principles. A story is better at providing an understanding than simply stating a principle. They may or may not have been actual events.

The Bible is not a science book and only makes three scientific claims. Some claim more, but these are specific and unambiguous. The first words in the Bible are: In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. These first words are two claims; there was a beginning, and God did the creating. We have covered the part about the origin. The third is in the book of Job, where God says that the earth is hanging in space with nothing. Most ancient religions have the earth sitting on something. This claim in the Bible is also valid. There are several passages where the Bible describes the expansion of the universe. I noted one earlier.

I have studied the Old Testament from a secular perspective using material from Yale; I have studied the

New Testament from a secular perspective from both Yale and the University of North Carolina. I have read through the Bible multiple times. Taking things literally out of context is not productive. The earlier writings are for tent-dwelling nomads from 4,000 and 2,400 years ago. The surprising thing is their relevance today.

The Bible is not a scientific document, but it does get things right. As noted above, God suspends the earth from nothing. The existence of a beginning is now confirmed by science. The six steps to having the earth with all of the plants, animals, and humans are outlined in the bible Genesis Chapter 1 verse 3-26

3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. 4 And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Comment: We started with sunshine.

6 And God said, "Let there be an expanse[a] in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." 7 And God made[b] the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. 8 And God called the expanse Heaven.[c] And there was evening, and there was morning, the second day.

Comment: This was the atmosphere

9 And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. 10 God called the dry land

Earth,[d] and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

Comment: This is plate tectonics.

11 And God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants[e] yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth.” And it was so. 12 The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 13 And there was evening, and there was morning, the third day.

Comment: This has plants on land before sea life. Recent science shows that it would be unlikely that life began underwater. Water would disassemble any life predecessor. I will talk later about the beginning of life. In short, it is a miracle.

14 And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons,[f] and for days and years, 15 and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. 16 And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. 17 And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, 18 to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19 And there was evening, and there was morning, the fourth day.

Comment: This is not in order. It was a simple description to the humans of what they were seeing.

20 And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds[g] fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.” 21 So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 22 And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” 23 And there was evening, and morning, the fifth day.

Comment: Life on land, life in the sea, and after that, birds. This seems to be correct. Scientists will need to verify it.

24 And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so.

25 And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

Comment: Advanced life was next

26 Then God said, “Let us make man[h] in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

Comment: as far as I can tell, this is consciousness. As far as archeologists can tell, there was a point about 70,000 years ago when we humans developed some religions, started technologies, and took over the planet.

27 So God created man in his own image,

in the image of God, he created him;

male and female, he created them.

The Bible's way of explaining it to a nomad more than 2,500 years ago isn't wrong.

I agree with Pastor Peacock, who says that the Bible is the document God wants us to have.

I have now accepted that the Bible is an incredible set of stories spun throughout the Old and New Testaments that told God's love. How through the shedding of blood, a covenant was made to bring salvation to humankind. Seeing the story woven throughout the Bible, with a singular purpose of revealing God's plan to man, was nothing short of miraculous. I was taught that the Bible was not just a book of stories but the Word of God.

Understanding the context of the bible stories was my frame of reference for understanding the Bible and Christianity. One of the Pastors at my Church, holding a Bible, said: I believe that this is the document God would have us read.

The Bible is the foundation document for Western civilization. To understand Western literature, the Bible is a must-read.

If you read the Bible, you will find that it is true; it is either historically true or true like the boy who cried wolf story.

Chapter 4 Jesus Existence

Here I first describe Jesus and his life. Then I will show how we know that this is true.

I am a Christian because I know Jesus was a Palestine Jew; he preached love, repentance, and God's soon coming into a sinful world; he was crucified; died; was buried, rose from the dead, and visited his followers.

Jesus existed. His family was from Nazareth; He was baptized by John the Baptist. He did not travel far. Jesus predicted the end of time when God would intervene in the world. He told parables, gave instructions on living a good life, and did signs and deeds that amazed the people at that time. Jesus called the existing Jewish leadership vipers, hypocrites, and other names. He also claimed to be God and was a threat to the religious powers at the time. The religious leaders took Jesus to Pontus Pilate, who had him crucified. Pilate put a sign on his cross that said he was king of the Jews. The Jewish authorities did not want this sign placed on his cross. His body was wrapped in fine linen provided by a wealthy follower and put in a tomb. His followers saw him after his death. Based on his instructions, his followers met and were given the Holy Spirit, which allowed them to spread his message to Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. Either Jesus is God, or this was the biggest fraud ever. Claiming to be God may have been the thing that most upset the religious authorities.

I recommend that you do not believe me but do research in both the Christian and secular literature and test what I have written; this way, you can know what is true. Jesus forced the leaders to act by calling Jewish leaders

hypocrites and vipers; he also referred to himself as I AM, which was the name for God in the Jewish vocabulary.

We do not have much from Roman documents. But what we do have fits the story of the New Testament.

Flavius Josephus was a general of the Jews that resisted the Romans during the Jewish revolt that ended about 70 AD. He saw he was on the losing side, surrendered to the Romans, and sided with the Romans. After the rebellion was crushed, the Romans gave him the job of writing the history of the Jews and the history of the revolt. His work fills in what happened between the end of the Old Testament and the New Testament. Josephus did not like the Christians, and the Romans did not like the Christians; therefore, they were independent of Christian influence. The full text from Flavius Josephus: (Josephus) (<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2848/2848-h/2848-h.htm#link202HCH0005>)

The following is what Josephus says about Jesus:

"Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it is lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many Jews and many of the Gentiles. Jesus was [the] Messiah (Expected king to make the Jews a great Nation). And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct to this day."

This text was copied by Christian Monks and may have been pumped up a bit. The basic story matches the New Testament. The pumping up may be the difference between this text and the Aramaic version. There are subtle yet critical differences between the Greek manuscripts and these texts. For instance, the Aramaic version does not blame the Jews for the death of Jesus. The crucial phrase "at the suggestion of the principal men among us" reads instead, "Pilate condemned him to be crucified." Instead of "he was the Messiah," the Syriac version has the phrase "he was believed to be the Messiah." Drawing on these textual variations, scholars have suggested that these versions of the Testimonium more closely reflect what a non-Christian Jew might have written.

The following is about a change of priests and only says little about Jesus and the Roman law, which stated only a Roman court could sentence someone to death. The Jewish authorities sent Jesus to pilot both because of the Roman law on executions, and they were afraid to do it themselves.

And now Cesar, upon hearing the death of Festus, sent Albinus into Judea as procurator. But the king deprived Joseph of the high priesthood and bestowed the succession to that dignity on the son of Ananus, who was also himself called Ananus. Now the report goes that this eldest Ananus proved a most fortunate man, for he had five sons who had all performed the office of a high priest to God and had himself enjoyed that dignity a long time formerly, which had never happened to any other of our high priests. But this younger Ananus, who, as we have told you already, took the high priesthood, was a bold man in his temper and very insolent; he was also of the sect of the Sadducees, who are very rigid in judging offenders above all the rest of the

Jews, as we have already observed; when, therefore, Ananus was of this disposition, he thought he had now a proper opportunity [to exercise his authority]. Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so, he assembled the Sanhedrim of judges and brought the brother of Jesus, who was called Messiah, whose name was James, and some others, [or, some of his companions]. When he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned; but as for those who seemed the most equitable of the citizens, and such as were the most uneasy at the breach of the laws, they disliked what was done; they also sent to the king [Agrippa], desiring him to send to Ananus that he should act so no more, for that what he had already done was not to be justified; nay, some of them also went to meet Albinus, as he was upon his journey from Alexandria, and informed him that it was not lawful for Ananus to assemble a Sanhedrin without his consent. Whereupon Albinus complied with what they said, and wrote in anger to Ananus, and threatened that he would bring him to punishment for what he had done; on which king Agrippa took the high priesthood from him, when he had ruled but three months, and made Jesus, the son of Damneus, the high priest.

Josephus also wrote about John the Baptist:

“Now some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John, that was called the Baptist: for Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism; for that the washing [with

water] would be acceptable to God, if they made use of it, not to the putting away [or the remission] of some sins [only], but for the purification of the body; supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness. Now when [many] others came in crowds about him, for they were very greatly moved [or pleased] by hearing his words, Herod, who feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion, [for they seemed ready to do anything he should advise,] thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties, by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it would be too late.

Accordingly, out of Herod's suspicious temper, John was sent a prisoner to Macherus, the castle I before mentioned, and was there put to death. Now the Jews believed that the destruction of this army was sent as a punishment upon Herod and a mark of God's displeasure to him.”

A Roman historian called Cornelius Tacitus is one of the people who mentioned the death of Jesus; he also wrote about the fire of Rome in 64 AD. He says in his writings that Jesus died on the cross – just as is described in the Gospels – during the reign of Caesar Tiberius (14–37 A.D.) when Pontius Pilate was a judge. (26–36 A.D.) He also points out that the Christian faith spread to Rome from Judea – where it started. Tacitus was certainly not a Christian. Here is what he said:

“A popular belief is that Caesar Nero was the one who started the fire. To silence the rumor, he accused a sect called the Christians of this crime. They were commonly shunned because of their customs and services. The name

had been given to them because of a certain Christ, whom the procurator Pontius Pilate condemned and nailed on the cross during the reign of Tiberius. This dangerous sect, whom I have described earlier, has not only been rooted in Judea from where it has come, but also in Rome where all frightening and shameful things gather and find their home.”

The following good reference to Jesus comes from Paul of Tarsus. Paul was writing about Christianity and Jesus when the Apostles were still alive, and many people who had seen Jesus alive and after death were still alive. It was copied and disseminated during Paul’s lifetime. Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, challenged the Corinthians to check for themselves:

1 Corinthians 15:3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom were still living, though some had fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last, of all, he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Paul asks people who do not believe to check with eyewitnesses still alive.

Fallen asleep is a euphemism for the word dead, just like we say passed on, not died.

The claim that you can’t prove the bible by using the bible is not entirely true. The Old Testament ends, and nothing was added before Jesus was born. It contains

Christophanies. These are appearances of Jesus in the text or predictions of Jesus coming. Jesus said before Abraham I AM. I AM was what God told Moses to tell the people was God's name. This was Jesus saying that he was God. Saying this was one of the many things that got Jesus in trouble.

In chapter 53 of Isaiah, the description of Jesus and his crucifixion are specific and perfect. It was written between 740 and 700 BC. In Isaiah, Jesus remained silent as he was led to the cross. He did say something to Pilot when questioned, and he did say some words on the cross, but there is no record of Jesus saying anything on the way.

53 Who has believed what he has heard from us?

And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

2 For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of the dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,

and no beauty that we should desire him.

*3 He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
and as one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

*4 Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God and afflicted.*

*5 But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds, we are healed.*

*6 All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—everyone—to his own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.*

*7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened
not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he opened not his mouth.*

*8 By oppression and judgment, he was taken away;
and as for his generation who considered
that he was cut off out of the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people?*

*9 And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich
man in his death,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.*

*10 Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him;
he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for
guilt,*

he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;

the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

11 Out of the anguish of his soul, he shall see and be satisfied;

by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore, I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong

because he poured out his soul to death

and was numbered with the transgressors, yet he bore the sin of many and makes intercession for the transgressors.

I saw a sermon by Pastor Joby Martin of the Church Eleven²². He described how Jesus on the cross just before he died said the first line of Psalm 22. The more educated Jews would have memorized the Psalms and could not have removed the balance of the Psalm from their minds. Even the poor people would have heard the Psalm in Temple. This Psalm was written 1,000 years before Jesus was crucified.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from saving me,

so far from my cries of anguish?

2 My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,

by night, but I find no rest.

3 *Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One;
you are the one Israel praises.[c]*

4 *In you our ancestors put their trust;
they trusted and you delivered them.*

5 *To you they cried out and were saved;
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.*

6 *But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by everyone, despised by the people.*

7 *All who see me mock me;
they hurl insults, shaking their heads.*

[Jesus was mocked on the cross as he died]

8 *“He trusts in the Lord,” they say,
“let the Lord rescue him.*

*Let him deliver him,
since he delights in him.”*

[This is what the soldiers and the crowd said to Jesus]

9 *Yet you brought me out of the womb;
you made me trust in you, even at my mother’s breast.*

10 *From birth I was cast on you;
from my mother’s womb you have been my God.*

[Jesus was pure from the start]

11 *Do not be far from me,
for trouble is near*

and there is no one to help.

12 Many bulls surround me;

strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.

[The bull was the symbol of the Roman legion X Fretensis in Judea at the time Jesus was crucified]

13 Roaring lions that tear their prey

open their mouths wide against me.

[The lion was the symbol of Rome]

14 I am poured out like water,

and all my bones are out of joint.

My heart has turned to wax;

it has melted within me.

15 My mouth[d] is dried up like a potsherd,

and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;

you lay me in the dust of death.

[Jesus said he was thirsty before he died]

16 Dogs surround me,

a pack of villains encircles me;

they pierce[e] my hands and my feet.

[Crucifixion was invented long after this Psalm was written. Complaining of hands and feet being pierced would not have made sense in the time of David. People at that time would have been concerned about being stabbed in the body by arrows, spears, and swords.]

17 All my bones are on display;

people stare and gloat over me.

[People were crucified naked]

*18 They divide my clothes among them
and cast lots for my garment.*

[This is what the Roman soldiers did when someone was crucified]

19 But you, Lord, do not be far from me.

You are my strength; come quickly to help me.

*20 Deliver me from the sword,
my precious life from the power of the dogs.*

*21 Rescue me from the mouth of the lions;
save me from the horns of the wild oxen.*

*22 I will declare your name to my people;
in the assembly, I will praise you.*

*23 You who fear the Lord, praise him!
All you descendants of Jacob, honor him!
Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!*

*24 For he has not despised or scorned
the suffering of the afflicted one;
he has not hidden his face from him
but has listened to his cry for help.*

*25 From you comes the theme of my praise in the great
assembly;
before those who fear you[f], I will fulfill my vows.*

*26 The poor will eat and be satisfied;
those who seek the Lord will praise him—
may your hearts live forever!*

*27 All the ends of the earth
will remember and turn to the Lord,
and all the families of the nations
will bow down before him,*

[Christianity]

*28 for dominion belongs to the Lord
and he rules over the nations.*

*29 All the rich of the earth will feast and worship;
all who go down to the dust will kneel before him—
those who cannot keep themselves alive.*

*30 Posterity will serve him;
future generations will be told about the Lord.*

*31 They will proclaim his righteousness,
declaring to a people yet unborn:
He has done it!*

[He (Jesus) has done what needed to be done so that we could be free of sin and death.]

Christian scholars count 44 passages in the Tanak (Old Testament) that predict Jesus. A few require imagination, but many are clear and specific, like the Isaiah and the Psalm quotes above.

After Jesus rose from the dead and gave instructions to the twelve apostles to spread the Gospel to all nations, the apostles went to do what Jesus had commanded. Eleven of the twelve were martyred. They had been with Jesus, saw what he had done, and learned what he had said. They knew the truth. If Jesus had been a fraud, they would have gone back to fishing or one of the other trades. Instead, they spent the balance of their lives spreading the gospel.

An example is a church in India founded in 52AD by St. Thomas, one of the twelve. The church is located at Palayur, in Thrissur district in Kerala on the west coast of India.

When some of Jesus' disciples were brought before the Jewish authorities for claiming that Jesus was raised from the dead, some wanted to have them stoned to death. The chief priest said that many cults had grown only to disintegrate once the leader had died, and if this one were not of God, it would also go away. He further said that it would grow and flourish if it was of God. He recommended that they be released.

One of the criticisms of Christianity is that it is polytheistic. Christians say that we have the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; Christians also claim the three are one. The answer is the same as Richard Feynman's answer to particles being in two places simultaneously, 'Nobody knows how it can be like that.' We can build computers using quantum mechanics; Christianity can have God in one and at the same time in three persons. Nobody knows how it can be like that.

To be Christian, I need to believe that Jesus was sent into the world to change the belief in God and the pagan gods

from following rules to one of love for one another. He wants us, Christians, to love so that we will be known to be Christians by our love.

Jesus' prediction of the temple's destruction was written before the event.

Examples of parables that are not history: A good shepherd had 100 sheep. One of them was lost. The shepherd left the 99 sheep to look for the lost one. When he found it, he was very happy. This parable is to explain how important to God to have one more convert

Jesus told them another parable: *“The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. “The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’ ‘An enemy did this,’ he replied. “ The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’*

“‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time, I will tell the harvesters: First, collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my bar.’”

Later his disciples came to him and asked about the meaning of this parable. He explained: “The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the kingdom's people. The weeds are the people of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

The question is, did these things happen? As far as we know, the answer is it could have. That is not important. Assuming it did or didn't happen, the story's principles and morals are the same. Many stories in the Bible may be actual events and include miracles. There are others that are stories to demonstrate principles. The important part is to grasp the story's principles and morality and not categorize it.

Another story: Jesus was walking by a fig tree, and he looked for a fig to eat. He didn't find one, and he said to the fig tree: "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." His disciples heard him say it. The next day the tree had withered and died. Did this happen, and did he perform a miracle when he killed the fig tree? The answer to both is yes. This story is told in Mark and Matthew. It has been interpreted as showing that the Jewish leaders and the temple were unproductive and would be destroyed. Later Jesus explicitly predicted that the Temple would be destroyed. He said it in Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Matthew 24 -1 to 2: Jesus came out from the temple and was leaving when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him. And He said to them, "*Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down.*" About 40 years later, it happened as Jesus had predicted. There is now a retaining wall that was not a part of the temple itself. All of the other building materials have been thrown down.

Jesus advised on forgiveness and love (Agape) that people have found hard to believe are correct. Psychologists now recognize that what he recommended was correct.

In an interesting twist, Mohamad, credited for starting the Muslim religion, said that the Bible of the Christians and Jews was perfectly preserved. This is even though he contradicted the Bible. Mohamad, in earlier writings, said that if he were a false prophet, his aorta would be cut. Just before he died of poisoning by a Jewish woman, Mohamad said, "My aorta has been cut" His last instruction to his followers was to kill Christians and Jews. If you are a Muslim, please read the Quran and Hadith. They will quickly dissuade you from staying a Muslim. David Wood, on his website, has information for Muslims. Go to <https://www.youtube.com/hashtag/acts17apologetics>

From the historical documents, including Paul's letters and the revolutionary Jesus teachings in the Bible books Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, a reasonable person would conclude that a man named Jesus existed, did, and said the things recorded.

Chapter 5 Conversions to Christianity

Here I describe my conversion and the conversion of others. There are many variations on how some people are led to believe. Some of them are below. If you want to become a Christian and think you are not worthy or there is something in your life that you would see as a stumbling block, the examples below may help relieve your concerns.

People who are susceptible to conversion need exposure to the basic message of Christianity: Jesus offers forgiveness and guidance on having a better life.

Becoming a Christian is the simplest thing to do and the hardest thing to do. All that is required is the sincere repentance of our sin, a genuine attempt to prevent repetition, and asking Jesus for forgiveness. Jesus was right; it is difficult for a rich man to become a true Christian. Drug addicts, when they hit bottom, are good at admitting sins and being sincere in their wish to be free of their drug-driven sinful life. Riches shield people from the consequences of their sins. Rich people can always put off any thought of God. Jesus described this problem when he said that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to get into heaven. The needle Jesus was talking about was a passageway where only one person could pass at a time. A camel would not be able to pass through.

Sometimes there are sudden conversions. In some cases, it takes a long time.

Hardcore conversions seem to follow the same pattern. The research done by an atheist to prove that God does not exist sometimes becomes the basis for believing that God does exist.

Anthony Flew's story:

Anthony was a strident atheist who later in life decided there was a God. He did not become a Christian but became a theist. In his words: "I now believe that the universe was brought into existence by an infinite Intelligence. I believe that this universe's intricate laws manifest what scientists have called the Mind of God. I believe that life and reproduction originate in a divine Source. Why do I believe this, given that I expounded and defended atheism for more than a half-century? The short answer is this: this is the world picture, as I see it, that has emerged from modern science. Science spotlights three dimensions of nature that point to God. The first is the fact that nature obeys laws. The second is the dimension of life, of intelligently organized and purpose-driven beings, which arose from matter. The third is the very existence of nature. But it is not science alone that has guided me. I have also been helped by a renewed study of the classical philosophical arguments . . . I must stress that my discovery of the Divine has proceeded on a purely natural level, without any reference to supernatural phenomena. It has been an exercise in what is traditionally called natural theology. In short, my discovery of the Divine has been a pilgrimage of reason and not of faith."

Luka's story:

"I simply could not find more money to buy drugs.... There was a turning point when I came to God alone, without going to church or talking to other people. I told him I wanted to live with him [God], and I did not want to take drugs anymore. That was my prayer to God on Christmas 2001. I have never taken drugs since then."

Researchers studied Serbian refugees in the Netherland and found several examples of addicts converting to Christianity and no longer interested in drugs. One interviewer said that several participants in the Serbian sample struggled to find the words that would adequately articulate their conversion experience. When we asked them to explain their conversion experience, they replied: “It just happened,” “Ask God how that happened. It’s a mystery,” “I just got transformed.” This lack of language stands in contrast to their ease in narrating their addiction experience.

Daria’s rock bottom moment happened when her friend overdosed in her house:

“He [the friend] overdosed on dope I had sold him. I was very afraid. Together with my son, I got down on my knees and said my first prayer. I cried out for God to bring back the lifeless body among the living. God answered my prayer, and my friend came back to life. After all these events, I decided to do something with my life.” (S. Daria)

The drug addicts and alcoholics seemed to need to hit bottom before inviting God into their life.

Like most practicing Christians, my conversion was more of a slow metamorphosis. I grew up in the church but did not take Christianity or my spiritual life seriously. I am not an emotional person; logic is where I go when a crisis arrives. I was given a vaccination for the plague just before boarding a military plane to Southeast Asia. My left arm became weak and limp. Assuming my left arm would not work anymore, I began to think through How I would dress, shave, brush my teeth, and do other chores required for independent living. I did not panic.

While in flight, the flight crew announced the fuel consumption was too high to finish the trip. Looking out the window, I could see we were over ice-covered water. The plane turned back, and we landed on one of the Aleutian Islands. The plane quickly got cold; There weren't any facilities for the passengers dressed for the Southeast Asia Jungle. We could refuel, and even though we could not make it all the way, we took off. We did make it to Japan. The aircraft had to be repaired before we could finish the trip.

My lack of emotion caused me concern. I don't react emotionally to events when others do. I thought that I might be a psychopath. I did cry uncontrollably when my mother was dying. I have concern and empathy, so I feel better that I don't appear to be a psychopath.

It was when I had children that I became a Christian. It wasn't a sudden conversion like the drug dealers. Knowing that Jesus was Christ, acting as if I believed in Jesus until my belief became a reality.

C S Lewis's conversion is how a dedicated atheist becomes a Christian.

Lewis was educated in boarding school and then by Oxford. He was a typical dedicated atheist who was articulate in criticizing religion as simply a fable for the uneducated. His foundation was somewhat shaken when his friend, T D Weldon, who Lewis described as a hard-boiled atheist, said the Bible was historically accurate. This bit of knowledge had haunted him for some time.

Lewis did not want to be a Christian. He thought Christianity was the enemy; he said he was willfully blind.

Lewis knew the ancient mythology of the ancient gods. When he read the New Testament, he found that it did not have the flavor of a myth but were eyewitness accounts of historical events. Lewis found that they were different from anything else in literature. He noted both the gospels' style and content when he said. "I am perfectly convinced that whatever else they are, they are not legends." Lewis: "They are not artistically enough to be legends; from an imaginative point of view, they are clumsy and don't work. Most of the life of Jesus is not known, and people building up a legend would not let this be so." (Lewis)

As an atheist, Lewis had dismissed Jesus as a Hebrew philosopher, another great moral teacher. Now he saw that Jesus made extraordinary claims about himself. Jesus said that he before Abraham was, I AM. When God had revealed himself to Moses, God said his name was I AM. Jesus, therefore, claimed to be God. Jesus also forgave sins, and only God could do this. Unless this person was God, the claims are preposterous. These claims meant that Jesus was a fraud, a con man, or he was God. Christianity is either a true following of God or is nothing.

Lewis described the moment of his coming to grips with the intellectual basis of Christianity on September 19, 1931, when he went on a walk with his friends Dyson and Tolkien. They discussed philosophy and religion all evening. At 3 in the morning, Tolkien went home to his wife. Lewis and Dyson continued for another hour. Lewis said that some conversions were sharp, like St Paul's, and some were gradual and intellectual. He said the actual time of his conversion was on a ride to the zoo. When Lewis started the ride, Lewis did not believe that Jesus Christ was the son of God. When Lewis arrived at the zoo, he believed

that Jesus was Christ and was the son of God. Lewis described it as a man lying motionless in bed and suddenly becoming aware that he was awake.

Dr. Armand M Nicholi, Jr describes the conversion of students as similar to Lewis. These conversions are in liberal universities where the climate is hostile to Christianity. Lewis decided to read the New Testament in Greek while the students usually joined a Bible group. The students and Lewis become aware of the historical reliability of the documents and understand that Jesus is not someone who died two thousand years ago but a living reality. After conversion, Lewis and the students found themselves having an improved temperament and self-image and becoming more productive.

St. Paul (Greek name Paul, Aramaic name Saul) was a Pharisee and Roman citizen, making him unlikely to convert to Christianity. He was known for actively hunting and persecuting Christians; he held the mob's coats that stoned Stephen to death. Stephen was the first Christian martyred. Paul was on his way to Damascus to imprison Christians when he was struck blind and heard a voice asking, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" His sight was restored when he met Christians in Damascus. St. Paul was a major force in establishing Christianity in the Roman world and wrote 13 of the 27 books in the New Testament. God chose Paul.

When Jesus was crucified, there were criminals crucified on both sides. The one mocked Jesus; the other admitted his criminal life and asked Jesus to remember him when he came into his kingdom. Jesus told the criminal he would be with Jesus in heaven.

Augustine's father taught his son to concern himself with worldly pleasures. When Augustine of Hippo was 16, he stole fruit from a neighbor's garden. The teen did not steal because he wanted the fruit, though; he stole because he wanted to feel the thrill of doing something forbidden. In his autobiography, "The Confessions," Augustine wrote that "it was foul, and I loved it. I loved my error—not that for which I erred, but the error."

When he was 32, Augustine heard a voice tell him to read Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Augustine did, and this was enough for him to convert. His writings have been helpful to the Christian community.

Alice Cooper was a hard-rock music pioneer. In 2006 he announced that he was turning away from his life of women, drugs, and booze and becoming a born-again Christian. Mr. Cooper said: "Drinking beer is easy. Trashing your hotel room is easy. But being a Christian, that's a tough call. That's rebellion."

Reggae legend Bob Marley is perhaps the most famous Rastafarian in history. Marley routinely spoke publicly about his Rasta faith: the worship of former Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie I as the messiah. He was baptized as an Orthodox Christian by Abuna Yesehaq, the archbishop of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in the Western Hemisphere, just before he died in 1981.

Bettie Page was an often nude, pin-up model noted for her sensuality and free spirit. In 1959, after attending the Key West Baptist Church, she converted and immersed herself in Bible studies.

David Wood's conversion:

David was a psychopath who grew up in a trailer park in West Virginia. As a psychopath, he is incapable of having empathy. His parents were on drugs and alcohol. He describes his neighbors as mostly being on drugs, alcohol, or both. He also describes their source of income as dealing drugs or other illegal activity. Based on his background and mental condition, most would predict that he would end up in prison, which is precisely what happened.

David was sent to prison for attempting to murder his father by hitting him in the head with a hammer. While in prison, he became friends with a Christian. They would debate the existence of God and the validity of the Christian religion. David would always lose in these debates. The Christian would fast, and because David was competitive, he would also fast. At one point, David decided to fast for 42 days to beat the Christian and Jesus. The prison authorities believed that David was fasting to commit suicide, so they put him in a special cell designed to prevent suicide.

While in the special cell, David asked the prison chaplain for a Bible and Christian literature. He did this to prepare to win the debates with the Christian. It didn't work out as David had planned. After studying the Bible and Christian literature, David converted to Christianity. He then decided to convert all of the atheists to Christianity. Because David did not cause trouble, he was released early and obtained a scholarship to a college. While in college, he was on the debate team.

His roommate, when the team traveled, was a Muslim. While on one of the trips, David asked the Muslim if he would want to know if his religion was false. The Muslim at first said no but later said he would. David then studied Muslim literature to become a Muslim scholar. Using that

knowledge, he was able to show his roommate that the Muslim religion was false. David then decided that his mission in life was to convert all Muslims in the world to Christianity. He also went on to obtain a Ph.D. in theology.

David now has a YouTube channel that is seen in many Muslim countries. It is [Youtube.com/acts17apologetics](https://www.youtube.com/acts17apologetics). He uses Youtube to show why the Muslim religion is false.

He has thousands of viewers and has made an unknown number of converts in places like Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, and other Muslim countries. David has also converted Muslims in the United States and other Western countries. Recently David said that he had over 100,000,000 views of his anti-Muslim videos.

According to a new 2020 survey of 50,000 Iranians—90 percent residing in Iran—by GAMAAN, a Netherlands-based research group, 1.5 percent identified as Christian. Extrapolating Iran’s population of approximately 50 million literate adults (the sample surveyed) yields at least 750,000 believers. According to GAMAAN, the number of Christians in Iran is “without a doubt in the order of magnitude of several hundreds of thousands and growing beyond a million.” In a country where admitting converting to Christianity is punishable by death, this is indubitably an undercount. According to David Wood, at least 60% of residents of Iran are not practicing Muslims.

Conversion of Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D.:

In the 1990s, Francis Collins was the head of the Human Genome Project. He stood by Bill Clinton’s side as the President announced: ‘Today we are learning the language in which God created life.’ One of the most respected scientists in genetic research, Collins was a self-described

obnoxious atheist in his academic days. During this stage in his life, it seemed clear to Collins that science had all of the answers. Any questions about life and the universe could ultimately be reduced to physics and chemistry.

After college, Collins attended medical school, where he was confronted by a broad spectrum of suffering and disease. To his surprise, one of his patients happily described how her religious beliefs supported her through her suffering and then challenged him on his own beliefs.

Forced to examine the evidence concerning the truth or falsity of religion, Collins was eventually led to read C. S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity*. He says, "...within the first three pages; I realized that my arguments against faith were those of a schoolboy." He realized that no law of science could adequately explain the existence of morality.

When Collins read Lewis's critique of the moral law, he realized that no law of science could adequately explain the existence of morality, but a Creator God fit the explanation perfectly. While its logic was striking, Collins' actual conversion experience came from having an experience of natural beauty. He describes it this way:

"I was hiking in the Cascade Mountains on a beautiful fall afternoon. I turned the corner and saw in front of me this frozen waterfall, a couple of hundred feet high. Actually, the waterfall had three parts to it — also the symbolic three in one. At that moment, I felt my resistance leave me. And it was a great sense of relief. The next morning, in the dewy grass in the shadow of the Cascades, I fell on my knees and accepted this truth that God is God, that Christ is his son and that I am giving my life to that belief."

Collins has become a controversial figure both in Christian and Atheist circles. He, like me, finds that evolution explains the diversity of life and that we must be intellectually honest when observing the findings of science. Many Christian groups do not agree with Collins' attempts to justify evolutionary theory in the light of Christian beliefs.

I recommend C.S. Lewis's writings. If you are not yet a Christian, start with *Mere Christianity*.

The conversion of Dr. Wayne Rossiter:

Wayne is the assistant professor of Biology at Waynesburg University and earned his Ph.D. in ecology and evolution from Rutgers University. Rossiter describes himself as a "sciencey kid" obsessed with chemistry, meteorology, and especially biology. Rossiter was fascinated with the idea of origins, and this parlayed into an interest in history and philosophy as he continued to mature.

As Rossiter entered college, he became a confirmed atheist in his views, progressed toward graduate school, and became ever more combative in his atheism. He described himself as a "staunch and cantankerous atheist" who sought every opportunity to destroy Christianity where it stood.

Rossiter's conversion from atheism to theism was sudden and violent. He describes a winter's night in March of 2008 after he and his wife had finished celebrating an academic milestone. She went to bed, but he stayed up to ponder the dying celebration and ask these questions:

"On what rational grounds could I care about the state of the planet (or even my family) after I'm gone? And what did I even mean by 'good' or 'bad'? I couldn't argue that any

objective morality existed apart from our subjective experiences. Any moral laws that might objectively exist – whether or not anyone ascribes to them – would be beyond our grasp, and we would have no objective or rational reason to obey them if they did exist.

"Nothing mattered. Evolution by natural selection is Dennett's 'universal acid,' and Darwin's ideas applied that acid to the human condition. If molecules led to cells, and cells to organs, and organs to bodies, then the 'molecules-to-man hypothesis was true. We were just wet computers responding to external stimuli in mechanical and unconscious ways. No soul, no consciousness. Just machines. I was completely and utterly devastated."

When he had this soul-crushing crisis of realization that atheism was philosophically bankrupt and could not supply the foundation for the standards he assumed, he realized the consequences of his reasoning were grim and that his current worldview wasn't defensible.

Rossiter began to flail, existentially. He explored philosophy and psychology – which included getting counseling. Rossiter's counselor happened to be a Christian. Before this crisis, the biologist would have dismissed or even attacked the therapist's beliefs. Under these circumstances, however, it intrigued him that a professional and a person he could respect could hold to such beliefs.

Having found his own beliefs lacking, he began to read Christian intellectuals to see if they had found some way to reconcile their scientific ideas with their religious faith. Had Christianity just been poorly held together patchworks of cognitive dissonance? The Christian worldview seemed to make sense of science for Rossiter. He became a

Christian and began teaching at a Christian College in Pennsylvania.

After listening to and reading other scientists and Science popularizers who were also Christians, he noticed many of them were simply becoming yes men to the scientific models which he had found increasingly inadequate over the years since he had left Rutgers.

Rossiter wrote his book *Shadow of Oz: Theistic Evolution and the Absent God* in response to this. This book tells some of his personal stories and addresses what he sees as increasingly bad science in the Christian camp.

As seen above, everyone has an opportunity to become a Christian. A career criminal, a psychopath, a scientist, a drug addict, it does not matter; all are welcome by Jesus. The results are always for the better. Genuine Christians have a better life.

Become one now.

Chapter 6 What it is to be a Christian

To grow as a Christian requires associating with other Christians, studying the Bible and Christian literature, and praying. A church is an excellent place to get guidance on studying the Bible, associating with other Christians, and learning how to pray. In countries where that is not possible, two people getting together may be all that is possible. Jesus said he would be in their midst if two or more were gathered in his name.

Christians are not prideful or arrogant. Christians do not need the most prominent and fanciest house or the latest fanciest car. Christians do not need to have the latest styles and the latest gadgets.

- Christians have courage. Courage is the testing point for most of the other requirements. As C.S Lewis said, Pontius Pilate was courageous in defending Jesus until it became risky.
- Christians should not be afraid of death.
- Christians are to love others as they love themselves. When we commit a sin and others commit sins, we continue to love others and ourselves just as much. We may hate the sin, but we must continue to love others and ourselves. The love, in this case, is agape.
- Christians do not hate others. Hate destroys love, and it hurts our souls. It does not affect the people or things we hate. Hate is also contagious.
- Christians are forgiving. We are to forgive others as we wish God to forgive us. Forgiveness is

challenging and requires that we separate the sin from the person.

- Christians do not commit adultery. The road to adultery is paved with popular media, pornography, flirting, and estrangement from their spouse. Christians refrain from even starting down that path.
- Christians are charitable. This does not end with what we put in the plate at church. We are to have charitable thoughts to the person that cuts us off on the road or pushes ahead of us in line. Being charitable is not giving to everything but researching to see that our gifts are truly helping.
- Christians should not worry. We plan for the future as best as we can and do each day what we can. We then let God have the rest.
- Christians are to be joyful. Without hate and with love and being generous, joy will be our natural state.

Below is a piece I wrote as if I was the devil and wanted my agents to destroy the Christian church. I present it in what I thought would be in hell's font.

Directions from the council below:

These directions are for angles on our side, and we should be careful that they do not fall into the wrong hands.

We are pleased that we have made progress by the following tactics: Making most mainline churches irrelevant by having them preach a politically correct message and focusing on recycling, sports activities, and tree planting. Successfully

tempting the Clergy to sin, having churches cover it up, and later exposing it to drive many away.

Making Clergy in mainline churches too timid to challenge their congregation to live up to the standards set by Jesus. (Be careful Christ means king, and we do not use that term) We are also pleased that some churches have substituted Mary or saints in place of God. All of this has been most satisfactory and should continue to be pursued.

Our current problem is that the enemy has begun to use diversionary tactics in independent churches and congregations that focus on the simple message.

The independent churches and select congregations of mainline churches need to be the focus of attack now. They are so diverse that no simple strategy will work for all of them. The best strategy is to get them to focus on literal interpretations of parts of the Bible. These churches should brand anyone who does not follow each passage's literal interpretation as a heretic.

Below are some ideas ripe for creating division and discouraging possible converts.

- ◇ *Our exact baptism ritual is the only one that counts. All others do not mark a real Christian.*
- ◇ *The earth is 4,652 years old. All other interpretations are blasphemy*
- ◇ *The bread and wine are miraculously converted into Jesus's body and blood or the bread and wine represent the body and blood of Christ. The other churches are wrong and hell-bound, whatever side the Church is on.*

- ◊ *Baptizing babies is wrong and should not be done or it is OK when the parents agree that the child should be brought up in the faith. Dencounce whichever the other churches decide.*
- ◊ *God created the universe in six literal days, and evolution is not true; God uses natural processes to bring the universe, the earth, the plants and animals, and humanity into being. Whatever side the Church is on the other side is wrong and not following the Bible.*
- ◊ *Have the Church make political positions part of the belief system. Political positions are emotional and will drive away one-half of the members of the Church independent of the position taken.*

Convince potential Christians that this and other sources of disagreement should be good reasons to leave the Church or, better yet, form another separate church, further dividing the Church into minor factions siphoning members from each other, and driving away potential converts. The list of items above is unlikely to be resolved and should continue to disrupt the Church's next millennium.

The agreement between the Roman Church and the Lutheran Church that faith, not works, is the way to eternal life was a disaster for our side. It has been nearly universally accepted. It is best to have Churches focused on works so that the congregation will believe that works are the way.

Block any thoughts that repentance, belief in Jesus, and accepting the Holy Spirit will forgive sins whenever possible. Their continued sin and guilt will keep the masses away from Churches forever. Blocking any thought of receiving the Holy Spirit is important. The busyness of life and the simple diversion of the cell phone work well. The Spirit, once accepted,

will make it more difficult for them to sin and block us from tempting and capturing their soul.

Note: The idea for the above format was copied from C S Lewis's book *The Screwtape Letters*.

Paul tells us what a Christian should do and what people are tempted to do. His positions are described below. Succumbing to temptations will lead to anxiety and depression; it will also cause health problems:

“The works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.”

Engaged in the things described by Paul as temptations should not be tempting. The list describes the characteristics of a sad life.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control; against such things, there is no law. These lead to Christian joy.

Christians have a better life.

The psychological community uses the word happy to describe what is in a person, and pleasant external experiences are described as pleasure. A hug from my wife is a pleasurable experience. Knowing the relationship I have with my wife is a source of happiness. The Christian community uses joy to express what is in a person. Paul found joy in being persecuted for his beliefs. He did not find them a source of pleasure.

As noted when I quoted Blaise Pascal, some think that following the teachings of Jesus would involve some sacrifices of pleasure. I take the position that it is quite the opposite. Starting with the simple ones:

The command is not to kill. I don't think I would give up any pleasure by not killing another person, just like in Solzhenitsyn's *Crime and Punishment*. I would be haunted from the first minute. Stealing and committing other sins would be a similar burden.

I have read that taking drugs provides pleasure the first time; when the drug wears off, the depression is worse than before the first dose. People then want more which must be resisted, or they become an addict. Being an addict is not a pleasurable way to live. I have never heard an addict say that being an addict was an enjoyable experience.

Adultery can provide a few minutes of pleasure for one of several unhappy results: divorce, guilt, permanent lack of trust, children's unhappiness, or many other bad outcomes. The net effect of illicit pleasure on happiness is always less happiness and more unhappiness.

I can't think of any sin that would lead to more long-term happiness. Pascal overrates the pleasurable effects of sin.

A study in the "American Journal of Epidemiology" by researchers at the London School of Economics (LSE) and the Erasmus University Medical Centre in the Netherlands found that the secret to sustained happiness lies in participation in religion. The study suggests that joining a religious group could do more for someone's "sustained happiness" than other forms of social participation, such as volunteering, playing sports, or taking a class. The researchers noted that it is unclear whether the benefits of

participating in a religious organization are connected to being in the religious community or to the faith itself.

This study was written as if the authors had found an alien civilization. The two organizations doing the study are secular. The authors were likely atheists or agnostics and did not understand Christianity. I find it amusing to read papers about religions that they do not practice or understand. The result they obtained and published gives it more credibility than if a Christian group had done this work.

Mauricio Avendano, an epidemiologist at LSE and an author of the study mentioned above, said, “The church appears to play a significant social role in keeping depression at bay and also as a coping mechanism during periods of illness in later life.” (Croezen et al., 2015)

Researchers looked at four areas: 1) volunteering or working with a charity; 2) taking educational courses; 3) participating in religious organizations; 4) participating in a political or community organization. Of the four, researchers found that participating in a religious organization was the only social activity associated with sustained happiness.

The study analyzed 9,000 Europeans who were older than 50. The study also found that joining political or community organizations lost its benefits over time. The researchers say: “The short-term benefits from those social connections often lead to depressive symptoms later.” Although healthier people are more likely to volunteer, the researchers found no evidence that volunteering leads to better mental health. Benefits could be outweighed by other

negative impacts of volunteering, such as stress, Avendano said.

In the Christian religion, we confess our sins and thereby are forgiven. We are not to worry about the future. We are to love others as we love ourselves. We are to be grateful. These actions are what the ancient philosopher Seneca recommended; psychologist Albert Ellis also recommends being grateful. A typical church service has group singing, meditating (praying), and expressing gratitude. There is group cohesion that provides a sense of belonging and friendship. It is no wonder that Christianity has proven to be helpful to happiness.

Joining a Christian Church and attending a small group in the church will often improve happiness. Volunteering to help on specific projects with others is also good. Be careful not to be in a position of responsibility if it is stressful. Stress can undo any of the benefits. There are plenty of people who want to be in positions of authority. The message of Jesus to us was that we are to be servants. There are many times when too many people want to be the leader. There is never a time when too many people want to serve.

It is interesting how hungry people are for spirituality. I have watched many people at shrines in Japan, Thailand, Hong Kong, Laos, and China. They are hungry for something but do not know about Christianity.

The underground Christian Church in China is flourishing because it is under threat, and only real Christians will be members. The Chinese government only allows churches that the government controls. The government appoints the leaders of these churches.

Interestingly, the underground church in China is a more robust church than the church in the United States. This is because the happiness they find in the church is more important than the suffering from government persecution. The increase in happiness is a phenomenon that appears everywhere. This was the case in Jerusalem in the year immediately after Jesus had risen. Happiness and lower stress are how the Church finds strength in many countries worldwide.

I had a friend that was part of a Christian Community in Communist China. We stopped communicating when it became too dangerous. I pray that he is OK.

I have observed eastern and western Russia, where the people are without religion. People in both ends of Russia appear to be unhappy and very materialistic. Socialism has destroyed religion there; Christianity is only coming back in pockets. The Eastern Orthodox Church is very ritualistic. The core members are quite old, and the Church has not found a way to attract youth to the joy of Christianity. Some of the mainline and evangelical churches from the US are finding their way into Russia.

Chapter 7 Teachings of Jesus

Some people say that Jesus was a wonderful person and a great teacher but not God. As we saw before, that is not an option. By claiming to be God, Jesus was either God, a fraud, a crazy person, or a con man. The teachings below are only a sample of what Jesus taught. Better scholars have written volumes on Jesus's teachings. This is only a sample. Let us look to see some of what Jesus taught.

In fasting for 40 days and then resisting the devil's three temptations, he showed that he would not be diverted from his mission.

Matthew 5-7: Jesus gave his followers lists of what he thought his followers should find important and how they should act. This list is usually called the sermon on the mount.

- *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of God*
- *Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.*
- *Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.*
- *Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.*
- *Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.*
- *Blessed are the clean in heart, for they will see God.*
- *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*

- *Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

There is second teaching usually called the Sermon on the Plain. This list was for a different audience. It is a similar list from Luke 6:

And he lifted his eyes on his disciples and said:

- *Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God*
- *Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.*
- *Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.*
- *Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.*

In this section, Jesus presents the undesirable alternative:

- *But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.*
- *Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry.*
- *Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.*
- *Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.*

Jesus's audience was mainly from Galilee. He would have spoken to them in Aramaic. Educated people like Matthew and Paul would have been fluent in Aramaic and Greek. The original text of the New Testament was written in Greek. The text above is in English. To understand the meaning of Jesus's teachings, we need to find the sense in the Aramaic.

We understand the poor as not having wealth. The poor at that time would not have been able to obtain proper nourishment. The poor in spirit would have been depressed; their social and economic condition would have caused this depression.

Based on the samples in the near-death section, there isn't mourning in the heaven version of the afterlife.

Understanding meek is more complicated. One way is to substitute submissive. Roman authorities ruled the Jews. They were all submitting to Rome. When Jesus was arrested, Peter drew his sword and cut off the ear of a servant that was part of the arresting party. Peter had a sword. Having a sword must have been common, just like in the early West, when men usually carried a pistol in a holster. The meek kept their sword in its sheath. Translated to the present day, the meek keep their gun in its holster.

Being merciful is clear. We are to be compassionate to others. We are to contribute to the food banks, supporting rescue missions. We are to help people in need.

Clean at heart. Here Jesus expands the ten commandments to include having the proper thoughts. This isn't about deeds. In this case and other admonitions, Jesus teaches us that thoughts are as important as deeds. Thoughts often turn into acts; even when they don't become acts, thoughts

change further thinking. Further wrong thinking, in the long run, can affect our actions. Even when there are no actions, there is an effect on our soul.

Jesus wants us to be peacemakers, not just bystanders.

Being persecuted for the sake of righteousness is a command to get involved even when there are costs. We are to do something about championing the cause of justice. We can't go to China and confront their leaders, but we can avoid being tourists there and buying the products. Many Chinese products are the direct or the indirect result of slave labor. We need to be on the side of justice even when it costs whatever we do.

In the Sermon on the Plain much of the teaching is redundant with the Sermon on the Mount. Here Jesus added the downside to not acting in the right way. In Jesus' time, there wasn't what we would call a middle class. The rich, full, and laughing people would have been the elite. In Jesus' time, there would have been the elite with servants and the poor with nothing.

The people spoke well about the Pharisees.

Based on all of the above, Jesus predicted the ordinary person would do better in the afterlife than the rich and powerful.

Friedrich Nietzsche was the son of a pastor and hated Christianity because of the instructions of Jesus. He thought that it made people too passive.

Jesus's admonition to stand up for Jesus's teachings in the face of persecution was not an instruction to be passive. We are to be steadfast with firm convictions. We are to help

others and not concern ourselves with our status or obtain recognition.

Jesus predicts the rich and the famous will not do well in the end. The rich and famous, particularly those in power, have no time for religion. We lived in a \$ 1.5 million house with a dock on a lake. We had easy access to the ocean by way of a lock. We docked our \$200,000+ yacht at our home. We would sail for months at a time. Our church life suffered during these times. This time in our life was not good for our Christian focus. The people in the neighborhood in similar circumstances were focused on money. When he said it is easier for a camel to pass through an eye of a needle than for a rich man to obtain salvation, he talked about most of my former neighbors and where we were headed. Conversion is easy for someone who has nothing compared to someone that has much.

Luke 22

A dispute also arose among the disciples, which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. *And he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; instead, let the greatest among you become as the youngest and the leader as one who serves.*

John 13: It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power and that he had come from God and was returning to God, so he got up

from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

In this demonstration, Jesus was showing that being a servant to others was higher than being lord over them.

Matthew 5:43

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Psychologists know that holding hate damages our immune system and causes inflammation that damages our internal organs. Loving your enemy is sound medical advice, as well as being good for our soul. If Jesus's instructions were taken as a complete set of instructions for all of humanity, his teachings would make the entire world a better place.

The parable of the good Samaritan: A person was robbed, beaten, and thrown to the side of the road. Several Jews passed and did nothing to help. Some Jewish religious leaders also passed and walked on the other side. Next came a Samaritan who put the person on his donkey and took him to a hostel. The Samaritan gave the hostel owner funds to take care of the person and promised that he would be back and pay them if more funds were needed.

The parable of the good Samaritan was described earlier. Jesus told this tale to show how we neglect to do the right thing and excuse ourselves by saying to ourselves that we have priorities that take precedent over what we should do. Using the good Samaritan as an example, Jesus shames the Jews for not taking care of even other Jews. Samaritans were considered as a low class by the Jews. The principles apply to each of us today. Would we walk on the other side and ignore a person in distress?

In summary, the teachings of Jesus were revolutionary and still seen as illogical by some. His teachings are supported by psychological research. If everyone followed his teachings and example, the world would be better.

Studying and following Jesus's teachings will make you a better person.

Chapter 8 The Great Commission

Jesus's last instruction to his followers was to spread his message to Judea, Samara, and the ends of the earth. Samaria was populated by the remnant of the local population when the Jews were taken into captivity by the Assyrians. The Jews who came back looked down on Samaritans and considered them traitors for not going to Assyria. This is part of understanding why Jesus would add them to the list of where to spread his message. His message today would be to go to the mountains of Peru or the jungles of Indonesia.

I believe I have a part in the great commission. My part is to write this book and see that it is distributed. In writing this book, I also find that my website needs more Christianity. This will be my next project.

Most Christians are like me and are reluctant to confront someone with a Christian message. However, Gregory Koukl has developed a set of tools for us. The complete explanation is in his book that is titled Tactics. The following is a short version of one of his ideas:

I use what Gregory Koukl calls the Columbo technique, named after the TV detective that stayed humble and asked seemingly innocent questions. After meeting someone for the first time, I could ask where they lived after introducing myself. After asking about their occupation, I could say something about churches in that area and ask if they go to one of those. I would listen to their answers and base further questions on what they said. The key tool is listening. Most people seldom have anyone listen to them. Even their dog doesn't listen to them. By being a good

listener, you will find that people are willing to share their darkest secrets with a perfect stranger.

If they say that they don't go to church, I could ask why. Based on that answer, if it was a bad experience, I could say that it is too bad I hope you can have a better experience in another church; if it was they never considered it, ask if they would be willing, as an experiment, to go to your church. The entire conversation can be you asking relevant questions and politely listening to their answers. If successful, the other person will ask about my beliefs. My short answer is:

I believe that Jesus is my savior, died for my sin, came into the world to display a perfect life, give us lessons on how to live, and he will forgive the sin of anyone who sincerely repents and asks for forgiveness.

At this point, getting into the details of Church doctrine is a mistake. Our theology should be what CS Lewis described in his book: *Mere Christianity*.

Paul preached the death, resurrection, and lordship of Jesus Christ, and he proclaimed that faith in Jesus guarantees a share in his life

The point is to plant the seed and allow the spirit described by Stephen Charnock to do the heavy work.

Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions, 10th Anniversary Edition By Gregory Koukl

Sometimes it can lead to a debate. In that case, the less we disclose our beliefs, the better. You do not need to defend what you did not propose. Atheism is a cause, and hard atheists are not the opposite of believers in God but are the opposite of agnostics. They can be true believers like

socialists or communists. They cling to their atheism to give their life meaning. They are prepared for a head-on attack; they are not prepared for philosophical thinking. Here we want to plant doubt and give the job to the Holy Spirit.

We need to be honest, and while these tactics may sound like a trick, we must not try to use them as a trick. Using the Columbo tactic requires that we are polite and never pushy. We should not initially talk about details of our beliefs in God, the Bible, or Jesus; we only want to start their thinking. Once they start thinking about religion, the Holy Spirit can stay on their mind until they do something about it.

When specifically asked, you can use my answer above, but your answer should be our personal belief.

This bare short answer should be sufficient to promote further questions. Details of our particular sect are not needed and can be a distraction. The sermon on the mount should be the basis of answers. Above is why God and Jesus are real, and science does not have all the answers. Quote the famous physicist Richard Feynman who said there is no answer to how it can be this way.

The great commission does not direct us to make everyone a Methodist, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, or Baptist. People must go where they feel comfortable. We must examine the foundational beliefs of the church we attend, and if they conflict with what Jesus said, we need to find another church. This happened to us recently. We belonged to a Methodist church that became what is called woke. They were focused on works and not on the gospel. We were gone the following week.

Being a homosexual is hard, just like anything that doesn't fit the standard. I spent some time thinking about how to minister to homosexuals. Below is my current thinking:

How should we treat homosexuals? As Christians, we should treat everyone the same, that is, with love (agape); We should pray that they find someone to share their life. They should love (Philia) that person. If we are conversing with someone who identifies themselves as a homosexual, we should recommend Christianity. Encouraging the elimination of homosexual sex would be good. Sodomy is a sin. We are all sinners, and God does the judging. We cannot force people to change behavior.

Let us reserve the word marriage for a man and a woman who want to spend their life together.

Chapter 9 Intrinsic and Extrinsic Christians

Ordon W. Allport divides people who profess to be Christians and go to church into extrinsic and intrinsic Christians. I have watched both kinds in Church. Once you think about it and practice, it is easy to tell the difference. We should not be making judgments, and if someone is in a church, there is always a possibility that they may become an intrinsic Christian.

The extrinsic Christians occupy a seat in a pew on Christmas and Easter. Some even come to church on most Sundays. They are there because of parents, children, other relatives, or neighbors; Some are there for socialization. In my book *Happy in Intensive Care Christian Edition*, I recommend going to church to be happier. Some are there because it is good for business. A plumbing contractor would like to be seen by potential clients. A plumbing contractor gains an aura of honesty from potential clients. An extreme version of this is Bill Clinton when he joined the large Baptist Church and sang in the choir; The service was broadcast every Sunday on Arkansas TV. They would show the choir during the songs, and Clinton would be in the center. He is still alive but, as far as I know, just as evil. Many obtained fame and adulation. Ravi Zacharias was a radio preacher credited with turning many to Christianity. Ravi was not alone; Jim Baker, Jimmy Swaggart, Ted Haggard, Tullian Tchividjian (grandson of Billy Graham), and Bill Hybels are just a few of the most famous. Later we found that they were not what they proclaimed to be. There are clergy and church workers who are also only there as a career. They may or may not be particularly evil, but it is wrong to profess Christianity and not believe.

The intrinsic Christians have Christianity as part of their being. Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 said we should pray continually. The apostle did not mean that we should walk around all day mumbling to God. Instead, he taught that we could live in a constant attitude of following the Holy Spirit as we go about our daily routines. We can maintain a natural, ongoing conversation with the Lord that encompasses our whole lives. We can ask God's help when making decisions. We make thousands of decisions each day; we don't need to stop, get on our knees and pray, we only need to keep god's presence in mind, and the right choice will flow automatically.

I have another reason to be an extrinsic Christian or not go to church. I know that Jesus is authentic, that he arose from the dead and is God. My intellectual basis for Christianity is solid. Each time we have moved, there has been a temptation not to join the new church. We quit when the Methodist Church we belonged to lost its moral compass. There was a temptation to stay churchless. We went to several to observe their services. I also looked online at the messages given by the preachers. I was glad to see that all of the services I viewed online were professing the correct theology. (Jesus is God; he died for our sins and was raised from the dead. Belief in Jesus and asking for forgiveness of sins was all that was required.) We found a loud rock band that drove us away when we visited the Churches. I was happy to have my Sunday mornings free. A friend suggested a Luthern Church. Pastor Johnson led the service. He was terrific, and his service fit my theological beliefs. The choir music was not very good and still is not very good. I can't sing, so I can't help. I want my Sunday mornings free, but we can't stay away.

There is a simple explanation of why people are agnostic or don't go to church. They stay away even when they know the basics of Christianity. People convince themselves that they are at least as good or better than anyone. They don't see a need to go to Church, and just as C.S. Lewis described himself, they are willfully blinded. Going to Church involves getting up on Sunday, driving there, and once becoming engaged, feeling obligated to contribute. The lazy way is to ignore the subject and do other activities. Every time my wife and I move, we delay our church search until we feel settled. By then, we are lazy and tempted to avoid Church. However, we always find we can't stay away.⁰

Churches could do better with a shorter liturgy and more extended socialization. Other Christians better support Christians. If our friends are fellow Church members, going to Church can better support our beliefs. When I was a child, we lived on a farm; we walked 0.6 miles to Church each Sunday. It was like a family reunion 52 times a year. Everyone knew everyone else, and the Church community supported each other. It was in the 1940s.

Even if you are an extrinsic Christian, I recommend going to Church. You will be happier. If you listen to the message and are open to the spirit of God, you may become an intrinsic Christian.

Chapter 10 Prayer is a conversation with God

Prayer is a conversation with God. I am not good at praying. I don't want to ask God for things; that is selfish. I do not want to ask God to do something; I consider that presumptuous. Asking God to prevent someone from dying is asking that the person not experience the heaven experience. I also don't know what is best for the person or the universe. My prayers are mostly thanking God for what has happened and how my life is progressing. I also review when I have fallen short and ask for forgiveness. Asking for forgiveness is hard because you can't ask for forgiveness without sincerely wanting to change the behavior you are bringing to God. Mark Twain had one of his characters say: "You can't pray a lie."

About 2,000 years ago, someone who was an expert did give us some direction on the subject.

We are not to repeat. In Matthew 6, Jesus said: And praying, do not use vain repetitions like the pagans, for they think they will be heard in their many words. We are not to pray in the open like hypocrites to be heard by others. We are to go to our room and pray in private. We can't pray a lie in private. We can fool ourselves, but the truth becomes apparent when trying to say it mentally to God.

Merely repeating a prayer of someone else is not praying. It must be your words. The disciples asked Jesus how to pray. He told them how to do it. It was not giving them something to repeat. It is instructions. I have used the translation in Matthew with trespasses and not debts. Various translations use sins, trespasses, and debts. I think trespasses describe more generally why we need forgiveness. It also explains what we are to forgive. It is not

money but our perceived harm. We do owe a debt to God that we can never repay. This debt is by what we have done and what we have not done. In our prayers, if we are genuinely repentant, Jesus will cancel that debt. The prayer examples below are short and only an example of a start at each category.

What has been called the Lord's prayer is to be our way of organizing our prayer. Taking it one part at a time:

Jesus: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name."

We are to address God in a very respectful way. It is as a child addresses a loving parent. For example:

Us:

Holy Father, God, I need you to be in my life. Thank you for hearing my prayer...

Jesus: "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

This phrase is to ask God to intervene in the world. Asking for North Korea to be wiped out is not Christian. Jonah asking for the destruction of Nineveh was not what God wanted. God wants repentance, obedience, and rejection of sin. Many people in North Korea are only trying to survive. Be careful asking for specifics. Sometimes we get what we ask. An example of asking:

Us:

Our world is a mess, and it needs your help. Please show me how I can help and be part of the solution. Please help the world leaders see how to do your will...

Jesus: “Give us this day our daily bread,”

In Jesus’ day, asking for food for the day was reasonable. Not everyone obtained enough food to survive. It wasn’t asking for food for a year. In the present day, having enough to eat is seldom the problem. In this case, we need to thank God for his abundant blessings. Asking for material things for ourselves seems wrong. At this point, thanking God for the abundance we have seems appropriate:

Us:

Thank you for all of our blessings.

Jesus:

“And forgive us our trespasses, as we also have forgiven those who trespass against us.”

This passage asks God to forgive us for all the things we have done wrong to God and the things we have done to others. We are asking God to apply the same standard we use to others. This is a high standard. It is hard to pray a lie, so asking to be forgiven as we forgive is harsh. It is for our good. Carrying the burden of not forgiving damages all our organs, including our brain. Hating someone does not send out hate waves that hurt the other person. Hate only hurts the hater. An example:

Us:

Please forgive me for not asking the person if they needed help and for being rude to the clerk at the store. Help me forgive Jerry and John. They were doing what was best for them...

Jesus' And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.'

This portion of the prayer asks God for help avoiding sin and overcoming sin. For example:

Us:

God, please help me avoid hard temptations for me to resist. Please give me the strength to overcome my internet, food, drug, alcohol, pornography, and gambling addiction. Help me treat others as you would. ...

When we ask God for help, we will get power.

Jesus: "For thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, Forever and ever. Amen."

This is to remind ourselves that we are not God. God is in control. His ways are not ours, and God will do what God does. For example:

Us: Thank you for the wonder of your creation and for allowing me to be part of your kingdom...

God answers prayer in his way. Some people feel God's presence and hear the answers as they pray. Sometimes it is only much later that we understand God's answer. In later pages of her diary, Mother Teresa complained to God that he was no longer answering. In my circumstances, I only discover the answers later. Sometimes the answer is no.

Praying requires practice. If we keep in contact with God, as Paul suggests, prayer will be simply an extension of our discussion with God. I recommend regular interaction with God and structured time to think about our actions and pray.

Chapter 11 The Soul and Consciousness

Is it essential for you to know if we survive death? If you knew that you would survive, what changes would you make in your life on this side of death? I will attempt to answer these questions.

We know that our consciousness is needed to animate our bodies. We need to keep it connected to our body's nervous system. When we are not conscious, our bodies lay there and do not perform any function. Dreaming is a state when our consciousness is exploring. Our body needs a consciousness, but does our consciousness need a body? From my research, I have discovered that our consciousness does not require a body.

Western civilization has ignored the subject of death and an afterlife. Ignoring death has been easy; we do not see people dying; death has been made sterile; death mostly happens in hospitals or hospice facilities. Funerals are usually held in funeral homes and not in Churches; speakers speak of the deceased in the past and their worldly accomplishments. Either there isn't any speculation of the person's soul or assumed that the soul is gone to a better place, and the subject is passed over lightly.

Christianity is under assault from the devil. His agents are easy to identify just by looking. George Soros and the organizations he funds, the national media, sports figures, actors, and socialist politicians. When the United States was founded, an atheist would have had difficulty at a confirmation hearing. Now you are suspect if you profess to be a Christian. President Obama's way of disparaging us was to say that we cling to our guns and the Bible. Someone like me who admits to clinging to the Bible and

clinging to my guns and professes to believe in a soul is considered a backwoods hick.

I hypothesize that there is a soul. Like any good scientist, once I have a hypothesis, I try to prove it wrong. This method of proof is backward from most thinking. Most people get an idea of how something works and look for confirmation. On the other hand, scientists look for ways to disprove the hypothesis. Failing in every way to disprove the idea is what scientists say is proof that it is true.

We need to start with consciousness. Everyone knows that they have it when awake. People think in words and pictures, interpreted by different parts of the brain. This aspect of consciousness is another phenomenon that scientists do not understand. People have been injured in ways that damage various parts of the brain.

Brain injury can destroy our ability to:

Create long term memories

See

Hear

Move parts of our bodies

Feel pain

Do math

Smell

Taste

It does not matter. There is no single part of the brain that will prevent us from being conscious. People who think more in words could continue to be conscious even if that

part of the brain is destroyed. People who think more in pictures can be conscious even with that part of the brain destroyed. Consciousness is preserved when multiple parts of the brain are removed or damaged. We find the prefrontal cortex in mammals. Birds, fish, and reptiles do not have this part of their brain. The prefrontal cortex is where higher-level thinking happens. Even with this part damaged or removed, we still have consciousness.

Dolphins are mammals and are known to be quite intelligent. They have a complex language but are hard to study. We may never know if they have a soul. Two mammals that are intelligent and reasonably easy to work with are the dog and the gorilla. I have had several dogs and studied them carefully. One dog liked to sleep on the hard, linoleum kitchen floor. My sister and I would put a pea-sized piece of ground beef in front of her nose. Her sleep would go from slow-wave sleep with shallow breathing to REM sleep with twitching legs, a muffled bark, and rapid eye movement with her eyelids closed. She was dreaming. Dreaming requires significant brain capability. She would wake up and gulp the ground beef. It would be gone in an instant.

My mother tested the dog and found the dog understood 23 words. She was a hunting dog and understood the basics of a rifle. She was careful not to be in front of a rifle. When I was cleaning a rifle, I would first take out the bolt to ensure it was safe. I would wave it around, pointing it up and down and spinning it around as I cleaned the various parts. Pointing the rifle in different directions made the dog nervous so that she would retreat to another room.

A trainer taught a female gorilla named Koko sign language. Her trainer claimed Koko had an IQ of between

75 and 95 and understood 2,000 words. I saw her perform for her trainer. Her sentences were short. For example: Give water. Hug Koko. I think that the 75 IQ was a stretch. Like my dog, the consciousness of Koko was not only quantitatively but qualitatively different from humans. The rest of the animal kingdom is likely to be less sophisticated than the dog or the gorilla.

Archeologists tell us that about 70 thousand years ago, our present species developed complex language. Language has the parts of speech needed to describe the world in detail. In English, we have nouns, pronouns, adjectives, determiners, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunction, and interjection. Other languages have similar tools.

Understanding the concept of God, the idea of life after death, and the idea of heaven or hell would be beyond a gorilla's ability to comprehend. Animals can be kind and gentle, but they do not have a moral code. For example, a female gorilla does not have any choice in their sexual partner. Stealing and other actions prevented in the ten commandments would not be understandable by a gorilla or a dog.

Our consciousness is linear. We only have one thought in our consciousness at the same time. When we are having a conversation while driving, our subconscious is driving. I experienced one of my grandchildren learning how to drive. She had to use her consciousness to do the driving. Her brain was overwhelmed by the inputs. She is now a good driver, able to drive without being overwhelmed. Her subconscious has now taken over most of the task of driving. My subconscious has taken over my driving routine; this is probably true of every driver.

We, in essence, have two brains, our conscious brain, and our subconscious brain. For an animal to survive in the wild, the equivalent of a subconscious brain is all that is required. A linear processing conscious brain requires a larger brain and more energy. Carrying a large brain would reduce survival chances. Our subconscious brain is aware but not in the same way as our linear processing conscious brain.

As I mentioned in the part about science, scientists do not understand consciousness. My hypothesis: Our conscious brain is our soul. I equate the soul and the spirit. The soul survives the body, and only in humans does it take up so much brain space and energy. We also seem to have a secondary linear consciousness. It is our conscience. It reminds us of our unethical behavior.

This hypothesis is only the beginning of a serious study of consciousness and the soul. Hypotheses are meant to be challenged. I hope my readers take the challenge. Experiences that are called near-death experiences give us a window into the body/consciousness connection.

Chapter 12 Near-death experiences

I submit that these should be called temporarily dead experiences. They are associated with patients being brain dead.

Magis Center is a Roman Catholic organization; Its mission is to restore, reconstruct, and revitalize belief in:

- God
- The transcendent dignity of every human person
- The significance of virtue
- The higher levels of happiness, love, and freedom
- The real presence of Jesus Christ

Below is what the Magis Center says about near-death experiences:

“According to the strict science of near-death experiences, a person must have a flat EEG (electroencephalogram) indicating an absence of electrical activity in the cerebral cortex (generating higher cerebral functioning), the absence of gag reflex, and fixed and dilated pupils, indicating a significant reduction of lower brain functioning. They are dead.

In this state, sensory organs are non-functional, both in themselves and in the brain's capacity to process their signals. Furthermore, higher cerebral functions such as thinking, processing memories, and linguistic functions are either completely absent or reduced to insignificance. Lower brain activity is also minimized, though there may be some sporadic and minimal "sputtering" of pockets of deep cortical neurons in those areas.

Dating back to 1982, we have data for Near-Death-Experience (NDE). A Gallup survey indicated that approximately 8 million adults in the United States had experienced an NDE. The people sampled report having some of the following ten characteristics, eight of which appear to be unique to near-death experiences:

- out of body experience
- accurate visual perception (while out of the body) even when the person has been blind from birth.
- accurate auditory perception (while out of the body)
- feelings of peace and painlessness
- light phenomena (encounter with loving white light)
- life review
- being in another world
- encountering other beings
- tunnel experience
- precognition”

The University of Virginia Division of Perceptual Studies is pursuing research to elucidate the relationship between the activities of a human mind and the multitude of physiological activities occurring in its associated brain and body functioning, also known in the research literature as the 'mind-brain problem.'

The University of Virginia's line description of the Division of Perceptual Studies provides the following: "Many persons have the experience of seeming to be located in space away from their physical body. One survey showed

that 15% of those questioned had such an experience at least once during their lifetime. Some persons, who have had this experience, report that they could look down on their body from a position above their body and observe its condition. This experience occurs in more than 65% of persons who come close to death and survive. The experience of being out of the body is a type of altered state of consciousness. A small number of persons claim to have an out-of-the-body experience voluntarily. Such persons may be suitable for experiments that might demonstrate a paranormal process. University of Virginia Division of Perceptual Studies is seeking persons who can demonstrate this type of voluntary control regarding an out-of-body state."

Although many of these experiences do not suggest any paranormal process, two types of events suggest such a paranormal process. First, some persons report that while they were "out of the body," they went some other place, sometimes a distant one, outside the range of their normal senses. Outside of the body, they observed (and later reported) events. These events, such as a conversation between two persons, could not normally be learned. Second, in a small number of cases, the person who reports having been out of their body may be perceived by another person at the place where the first person said they had gone. These latter cases are called "reciprocal."

In *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, Volume 89 February 1996, Susan Blackmore said: "The claim that out of body experiences are evidence for survival after death is untenable. Even though the boundary between life and death is pushed back by improved techniques, it is always possible to argue that the person did not actually die and

that the experiences were part of life and not; if there is life after death, these experiences may explain what it is like, but they can never be definitive evidence that there is.”

Ms. Blackmore then shows that expectations can't cause it because the experiences are across cultures, and some persons did not know of these experiences before experiencing one. She also rules out drugs because many people who have these experiences are killed in accidents. Endorphins are also a possibility; however, endorphins are not potent hallucinogens.

Anoxia is also possible; this is unlikely because some persons have had these experiences without becoming anoxic. Finally, the temporal lobe is likely crucial in near-death experiences (NDE) since it is sensitive to anoxia. Its stimulation can induce Hallucinations, memory flashbacks, body distortions, and out-of-body experiences. It would have to do all of the steps of the out-of-body experience in the time between partial anoxia and total brain shut down. This period is short. People who have out-of-body experiences have memories of the medical team and what they are doing. The time needed would be too long for the entire experience.

None of these possible explanations explains the experiences observed. No credible scientific explanation can show how a person could form memories with a dead brain. The most impressive parts of the stories are where patients experiencing a near-death experience see things impossible to see when they were brain dead.

Ms. Blackmore concludes by saying: “In the end, it is probably a matter of personal preference whether to interpret the NDE as a glimpse of the life beyond or the

product of the dying brain. Either way, the NDE deserves serious research, and the dying, the recovering, and their relatives deserve to know what we have learned. As Morse puts it, these experiences can help us restore dignity and control to the dying process. Just as NDEs reduce the fear of death in many people who have them, they can help all of us accept death as a positive aspect of life. Indeed, studying life at its last limits may tell us more about ourselves and our lives than it does about death.”

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/14517267_Near-Death_Experiences

To heaven or hell and back

The religious leaders challenged Jesus. Their challenge and his answer provide some idea of what to expect after death. The exchange between Jesus and the Sadducees is from The Christian Bible, New Testament, Matthew, Chapter 22, verses 23 to 32.

" That same day, the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. "Teacher," they said, "Moses told us that if a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and raise offspring for him. Now there were seven brothers among us. The first one married and died, and since he had no children, he left his wife to his brother. The same thing happened to the second and third brother, right on down to the seventh. Finally, the woman died. Now then, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven, since all of them were married to her?"

Jesus replied, *"You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. At the resurrection, people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they*

will be like the angels in heaven. But about the resurrection of the dead—have you not read what God said to you, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?" He is not the God of the dead but the living."

In ancient times, when the brain shut down, you were unlikely to be brought back. Some reports from ancient times match our modern experience. Some people in ancient times have become brain dead and come back to life. It was rare, and it is hard to understand how this could happen. It is impossible to know if the apparent dead people were brain dead. We now connect people to machines that measure brain activity and determine brain death.

With all of the advanced equipment, we can sometimes bring back someone whose brain has shut down for a significant time. It happens often enough that it is not in the newspaper. When connected to modern brain monitoring equipment, it is possible to see the exact time a patient's brain dies. As in the movie *Wizard of OZ*, the coroner says of the wicked witch: "She is most sincerely dead." With no electrical activity, there cannot be any thoughts.

When people have remembered experiences during periods of death, it is called a near-death experience. These people have no brain activity. So, they have lost all of their brain parts in this state. In this condition, they report having various experiences. A common experience is being out and above their body, observing what is being done to their bodies. Later they can accurately describe what had happened to their body and what was going on in the room. This experience occurs even when it would have been impossible for them to see what they later report.

An extreme example is Vicki Umipeg Noratuk, who was blind from birth. She was in an accident and taken to a hospital. She found herself floating on the ceiling, looking down on her body. She could see. She then passed through the ceiling and looked down on the city. She then passed through a tunnel toward a light. She saw many people there, including her grandmother and schoolmate that had died earlier. She said her former blind friend could also see. She then felt enveloped by Jesus, who told her that her time was not yet, and she had to return. Then she found herself in her body, and pain returned.

Several studies report that people blind from birth see during an out of death experience. They report events that happen with detail only a seeing person could report.

Jorden Peterson describes a client who had been in an automobile accident. The client did not remember the accident and was in a coma for two weeks. His doctors told him that he had died three times during the time in a coma. He described an out-of-body experience to Peterson similar to what many others have described with floating and meeting dead relatives. He told Peterson that he never knew others had the same experience, and he was hesitant to tell anyone about it.

Carl Jung was a great psychologist. He was a scientist who wrote many books on psychology. The following is his description of his near-death experience:

“At the beginning of 1944, I broke my foot, and a heart attack followed this misadventure. In a state of unconsciousness, I experienced deliriums and visions that must have begun when I hung on the edge of death and was

given oxygen and camphor injections. The images were so tremendous that I concluded that I was close to death. Afterward, my nurse told me: “It was as if a bright glow surrounded you.”

She added that that bright glow was a phenomenon she had sometimes observed in the dying. I had reached the outermost limit, and did not know whether I was in a dream or an ecstasy. At any rate, extremely strange things began to happen to me.

It seemed to me that I was high up in space. Far below, I saw the globe of the Earth bathed in gloriously blue light. I saw the deep blue sea and the continents. Far below my feet lay Ceylon, and in the distance ahead of me, the subcontinent of India. My field of vision did not include the whole Earth, but its global shape was plainly distinguishable, and its outlines shone with a silvery gleam through that beautiful blue light. The globe seemed colored or spotted dark green like oxidized silver in many places. Far away to the left lay a broad expanse – the reddish-yellow desert of Arabia; it was as though the earth's silver had there assumed a reddish-gold hue. Then came the Red Sea, and far, far back – as if I could just make out a bit of the Mediterranean in the upper left of a map. My gaze was directed chiefly toward that. Everything else appeared indistinct. I could also see the snow-covered Himalayas, but it was foggy or cloudy in that direction. I did not look to the right at all. I knew that I was on the point of departing from the Earth.

Later, I discovered how high in space one would have to be to have an extensive view of approximately a thousand miles! The sight of the Earth from this height was the most glorious thing I had ever seen.

This experience gave me a feeling of extreme poverty, but at the same time of great fullness. There was no longer anything I wanted or desired. I existed in an objective form; I was what I had been and lived. At first, the sense of annihilation predominated, having been stripped or pillaged; but suddenly, that became no consequence.

We shy away from the word eternal, but I can describe the experience only as of the ecstasy of a non-temporal state in which present, past, and future are one.”

No one had been in space in 1944, and Jung’s accurate description of the colors could only have come from someone who had been in space. People who have seen the earth from space sometimes refer to the earth as a blue marble. Jung’s description of the earth, bathed in blue light, matches the experience of those who have been in space.

In his final interview with BBC News in 1959, the reporter asked Dr. Jung if he believed that life went on after the body’s death. “I don’t believe,” Jung said emphatically, remembering his near-death experience. “I know!”

From The Daily Mail

A boy who almost died from a ruptured appendix has said he met the dead sister he did not know existed.

The extraordinary claims by Colton Burpo, aged four, came after he was misdiagnosed with flu while his family, from Imperial, Nebraska, were on a trip to Colorado. By the time they returned home, he was seriously ill and had to undergo emergency surgery twice.

While he was in the operating theatre, his parents, Todd and Sonya, prayed, believing they would lose their son.

However, Colton soon recovered and told his astonished parents that he had met the sister his mother had miscarried a year before his birth.

What made this even more remarkable was that his parents had never spoken to him about her.

Colton Burpo: The youngster from Nebraska says he sat on Jesus' lap and saw his dead sister when he was four.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1362127/Schoolboy-says-went-heaven-met-dead-sister-knew-about.html>

When she was in childbirth with me, my mother said she knew me from conception. In childbirth with my sister, she said she did not know her during pregnancy but saw her soul come down from heaven at delivery. For my mother, the vision was vivid.

Gary Habermas did an article on near-death experiences for the North American Mission Board website. He provided the following observations:

However, some NDE reports are accompanied by evidential claims. In these cases, the dying persons report data that can often be verified. The closer the individual is to death and the more detailed the evidential report, the more able the experience is to answer subjective claims like common brain physiology.

For example, in dozens of NDE accounts, the dying person claims that, precisely during their emergency, they actually observed events that were subsequently confirmed. These observations may have occurred in the emergency room when the individual was in no condition to be observing what was going on around them. Sometimes, the data are

reported from a distance away from the scene and may not have been observable from the individual's location even if they had been healthy, with the normal use of their senses.

Gary Habermas also reported

In more evidential cases, the dying person reported their observations during extended periods without a heartbeat. No brain activity was present in the individual on rare occasions, either. Further, blind persons have also given accurate descriptions of their surroundings, even when they had never seen anything before or since.

One well-documented case involved a little girl who had nearly drowned and did not register a pulse for 19 minutes. Her emergency room physician, pediatrician Melvin Morse, states that he "stood over Katie's lifeless body in the intensive care unit." An emergency CAT scan indicated that Katie had massive brain swelling, no gag reflex, and was "profoundly comatose." Morse notes that "When I first saw her, her pupils were fixed and dilated, meaning irreversible brain damage had most likely occurred." An artificial lung machine did her breathing. She was given very little chance of surviving. But then, just three days later, Katie unexpectedly made a full recovery. When she was revived, she reproduced an amazing wealth of information regarding the emergency room, specific details of her resuscitation, and physical descriptions of the two physicians who worked on her. All this occurred while she was completely comatose and most likely without any brain function. As Morse recounts, "a child with Katie's symptoms should have the absence of any brain function and therefore should comprehend nothing."

It took her almost an hour for Katie to recall all the recent details. However, part of the story made no sense in usual medical terms. Katie related that she was visited by an angel named Elizabeth during her comatose state. The angel allowed her to look in on her family at home. Katie correctly reported specific details concerning what her siblings were doing, even identifying a popular rock song that her sister listened to, watched her father, and then observed as her mom cooked a meal that she correctly identified: roast chicken and rice. She described the clothing and positions of her family members. Later, she shocked her parents by telling them these details that had occurred only a few days before.”

Thomas Fleischmann did a YouTube video describing the most common sequence of events after brain death.

First, their pain is gone. And there is no longer any anxiety. Next, the patient finds themselves floating above their body, looking down on their body, the people, and the equipment in the room where they are being treated

Next, they find themselves confined in a dark room. 98 to 99% of the patients are comfortable with this. 1 to 2% Are frightened to see strange creatures, smell terrible smells, and hear frightening noises. This terrifying experience I call the hell experience.

The patients now see a light and a tunnel being formed. This tunnel leads to the light.

Then the patients move through the tunnel to the light,

They find themselves in a beautiful place where, on arrival, they meet people they knew who have died.

Then they feel surrounded by a creature of light. Christians say that this person was Jesus.

They either decide to go back because of unfinished business or are told to go back because they have things that they should do.

People who have this experience are usually changed for the better. They are more understanding, more relaxed, and more social. They no longer have a fear of dying.

Sam Parna and 30 other scientists did a study of near-death experiences. Among 2060 cardiac arrest events, 140 survivors completed stage 1 interviews, while 101 of 140 patients completed stage 2 interviews. 46% had memories. These included feeling at peace; scenes more vivid; bright light; Deja-vu; family; while 2% described awareness with explicit recall of seeing and hearing actual events related to their resuscitation. These subjects were connected to equipment that measured brain activity. The experiences of the people studied were during periods with zero brain activity. (Parnia et al., 2014)

There have been survivors who say they met Jesus and others who have met dead relatives. I have watched many YouTube videos where people describe their near-death experiences. They generally say they wanted to stay out of their bodies and no longer fear death.

Many near-death survivors report coming to a barrier where there could not be any coming back. Most wanted to go further but were told that their time had not yet come, and they were returned alive in their bodies back in the emergency room or the hospital.

As a scientist and engineer, I work with material things in my technical work. As you can see from the documentation of Near-Death-Experiences, there is more to reality than the physical.

Chapter 14 Hell experiences

Hieronymus Bosch painted this based on a description of the hell room. Either he had this experience, or someone described it to him.



In the Journal of the Missouri State Medical Association, Nancy Evans Bush and Bruce Greyson reported on near-death experiences that were hell. Below are some of those in their journal article:

A man thrown from his horse found himself floating at treetop height, watching emergency medical technicians working over his body. "No! No! This isn't right!" He screamed, "Put me back!" but they did not hear him. Next, he was shooting through the darkness toward a bright light, flashing past shadowy people who seemed to be deceased family members

waiting. He was panic-stricken by the bizarre scenario and his inability to affect what was happening.

A woman in childbirth felt her spirit separate from her body and fly into space at tremendous speed, then saw a small

ball of light rushing toward her: "It became bigger and bigger as it came toward me. I realized that we were on a collision course, which terrified me. I saw the blinding white light come right to me and engulf me."

A woman collapsed from hyperthermia and began re-experiencing her entire life. She said: "I was filled with such sadness and experienced a great deal of depression."

There are void experiences. Some of these are below:

"A second woman in childbirth found herself abruptly flying over the hospital and into deep space. A group of circular entities informed her she had never existed and been allowed to imagine her life, but it was a joke; she was not real. She argued with facts about her life and descriptions of earth. "No," they said, "none of that had ever been real; this is all there was." She was left alone in space.

Another woman in childbirth felt herself floating on water, but at a certain point, "It was no longer a peaceful feeling; it had become pure hell. I had become light out in the heavens, and I was screaming, but no sound was going forth. It was worse than any nightmare. I was spinning around, and I realized that this was eternity; this was what forever was going to be. I felt the aloneness, the emptiness of space, the vastness of the universe, except for me, a mere ball of light, screaming."

A woman who attempted suicide felt sucked into a void: "I was being drawn into this dark abyss, tunnel, or void.... I was not aware of my body as I know it. I was terrified. I felt terror. I had expected nothingness; I expected the big sleep; I expected oblivion, and I found now that I was going to another plane, and it frightened me. I wanted

nothingness, but this force was pulling me somewhere I didn't want to go, but I never got beyond the fog."

A man who a hitchhiker attacked felt himself rise out of his body: "I suddenly was surrounded by total blackness, floating in nothing but black space, with no up, no down, left, or right.... What seemed like an eternity went by. I fully lived it in this misery. I was only allowed to think and reflect."

Bush and Greyson describe more hell experiences:

"Overtly hellish experiences may be the least common type of distressing near-death experience. A man with heart failure felt himself falling into the depths of the earth. At the bottom was a set of high, rusty gates, which he perceived as the gates of hell. Panic-stricken, he managed to scramble back up to daylight.

A woman was being escorted through a frighteningly desolate landscape and saw a group of wandering spirits. They looked lost and in pain, but her guide indicated she could not help them.

An atheistic university professor with an intestinal rupture experienced being maliciously pinched, then torn apart by malevolent beings.

A woman who hemorrhaged from a ruptured Fallopian tube reported a near-death experience involving "horrific beings with gray gelatinous appendages grasping and clawing at me. The sounds of their guttural moaning and the indescribable stench remain 41 years later. There was no benign Being of Light, no live video, nothing beautiful or pleasant."

A woman who attempted suicide felt her body sliding downward in a cold, dark, watery environment: "When I reached the bottom, it resembled the entrance to a cave, with what looked like webs hanging.... I heard cries, wails, moans, and the gnashing of teeth. I saw these beings that resembled humans, with the shape of a head and body, but they were ugly and grotesque. They were frightening and sounded like they were tormented, in agony."

Nancy Evans Bush and Bruce Greyson describe common responses people had to these negative near-death experiences in their report. These experiences disturb the concept of the subject of reality. Bush and Greyson put the experiences into three categories: turnaround, reductionism, and the long haul.

The turnaround response:

These people take the experience as a warning against unwise or wrong behaviors. When asked, these people say that they were shown that they needed to shape up and get their act together. They took the experience as a warning. Clinical social worker Kimberly Clark Sharp observed, "All the people I know who have had negative experiences have become Bible-based Christians.... They might express it in various sects. But they all feel that they have come back from an awful situation and have a second chance."

The atheistic professor above, who experienced being maliciously pinched, then torn apart by malevolent beings, left his university and attended seminary.

Others also reported newfound devotion, "I've stopped drugs, moved back to Florida, and now I'm in Bible college. I used to have a casual attitude toward death, but now I fear it more. So yes, it was a warning. I was

permitted another chance to change my behavior on earth. I've taken my fear of death and given it to the scriptures." Since then, I have dedicated my life to the most high God Jehovah, and spend 60 hours a month speaking and teaching about the Creator of Heaven and earth and all living creatures. I'm not worried about when I die because now I know that God has promised us something far more."

These people are fortunate to turn this experience into something useful.

The reductionist response:

Subjects put up an internal defense to treat the event as if it did not matter. Reductionists look for rational explanations. The three stories below are examples:

A woman whose anaphylactic reaction precipitated a near-death experience with loving and frightening elements concluded, "There are actual rational explanations for what I experienced. The brain, under stress, releases natural opiates that stop pain and fear. Lack of oxygen disrupts the visual cortex's normal activity; much neural activity in the dying brain causes stripes of activity. Even closed, our eyes interpret those stripes of activity as the sensation of moving forward in a tunnel. There are more brain cells concentrated in the middle of the cortex than on the edges. As we get closer to death, the brain interprets all those dense cells with their crazy activity as a bright light in the middle of our visual field. It's all very scientific." She concludes that, based on scientific evidence, the experience had no ontological meaning. For her, any lingering anxieties will go unaddressed.

A woman who had a terrifying experience during childbirth likewise dismissed the reality of the experience: "Perhaps it

was the effect of the ether and not a near-death experience.”

A woman attacked by a lion dismissed the memory of her near-death experience as hallucinatory: “I often wonder if in the shock of the attack, my mind played tricks on me and that I may have just been unconscious and my brain deprived of oxygen.”

People who react in the ways described above often have constant stress in their life from these experiences. Stress caused by this denial causes the release of cortisol, our stress hormone. A temporary spike in cortisol enables one to meet challenges. Long-term cortisol exposure damages internal organs, including the heart and the brain.

The Long Haul

Bush and Greyson describe these people as spending their lives struggling with the implications of their experience. They try to repress the memories but find that the nightmare remains vivid in their mind. One victim said, “I see this vision as flashbacks that I cannot get out of my head. I still see it in my mind from my own eyes. It has been two years, yet I have never talked about it. My husband does not even know. I want to put this behind me but am unable.”

Members of this long-haul group are often articulate people searching for a cognitively and emotionally grounding explanation. They cannot accept that the event happened. According to Bush and Greyson, a literal reading of the event is unacceptable, but reductionist explanations only assign a cause without addressing meaning. They struggle to make sense of the distressing near-death experience without destroying them (and their trust in the world's

workings) in the process. More than others, these experiencers enter psychotherapy, some for many years, though without data, this may indicate nothing other than openness and financial means. Too often, physicians prescribe medications to mask questioning and dismiss the near-death experience as fanciful or pathological.

Therapists will not address the matter or leave the client feeling blamed or romanticized spirituality and cannot deal with its dark side. Bush and Greyson say many clergy have no idea what to say or reject the experience outright. This is unfortunate. A near death experience should be embraced by clergy to show that there is a spirit independent of the body. This experience is knowledge of an afterlife that few experience.

According to Bush and Greyson, there are Seven Things to Know about Distressing Near-Death Experiences: “

1. Distressing near-death experiences occur under the same wide range of circumstances and feature most of the same elements as pleasant near-death experiences. What differs is the emotional tone, which ranges from fear through terror to, in some cases, guilt or despair. The reports typically lack two elements common in pleasant near-death experiences: a positive emotional tone and loss of the fear of death.
2. A notorious reluctance to report a distressing near-death experience may lead to long-lasting trauma for individuals and limit the data on occurrence. A literature review covering thirty years of research concludes that as many as one in five near-death experiences may be predominantly distressing.

3. The etiology of all such events remains unknown. Despite decades of clinical studies, none so far adequately explains either the cause or function of near-death experiences. Further, near-death experiences cross many clinical circumstances and demographic bases; there is no way to predict what type of near-death a person will experience. No evidence supports the conventional assumption that “good” people get pleasant near-death experiences and “bad” people have distressing ones. Saints have reported extremely disturbing near-death experiences, while felons and suicide attempters have encountered bliss.
4. Pleasant near-death experiences tend to convey universal messages of compassion that cross religious and philosophical systems. Distressing near-death experiences typically have less focused messages but follow the ancient shamanic suffering/death/resurrection pattern. This pattern can be read as an invitation to self-examination, disarrangement of core beliefs, and rebuilding in less metaphoric terms. In practical terms, a common interpretation of a distressing near-death experience is a message to turn one’s life around.
5. The description of any near-death experience is shaped by the experiencer’s pre-existing mental categories and vocabulary. For example, although the archetype of a benevolent guide is common in near-death experiences, individuals typically identify the presence according to their cultural vocabulary. Any report identifying an archetypal individual by name is a perception that may or may

not be factually accurate but cannot be confirmed as such. Understandably, facts like these are what religious groups and materialists alike may find troubling. Secular Westerners often believe a near-death experience indicates a psychotic episode.

6. The primary effect of many near-death experiences is a powerful and enduring awareness that the physical world is not all of reality. Because this perception runs so profoundly counter to western materialism. Conversely, because its implications affect some dogmatic theological teachings, the new conviction commonly overturns experiencers' personal life and social relationships abruptly and permanently.
7. A significant challenge for physicians and other scientists dealing with reports of near-death experiences is to manage this intrusion of non-materialist religious and philosophical language and understandings into the hard data of clinical thinking. Curiously, at the extremes of religious fundamentalism and material scientism, one finds literalism an issue. For fundamentalists, the accounts are believed to be literally, physically actual; for convinced materialists, they must be dismissed as lunacy because a literal, physical actuality is impossible and no alternative concept is acceptable.”

As a scientist and engineer, I work with material things. As you can see from the documentation of Near-Death-Experiences, there is more to reality than the physical.

Chapter 14 Terminal lucidity

Alzheimer's disease causes brain cell loss because the brain cannot use glucose as fuel. When the brain cells stop using glucose, the oxygen level in the cell builds up. Excess oxygen causes apoptosis, which is the way cells commit suicide. Apoptosis is the body's way of clearing out damaged cells. Alzheimer's kills the cells on the brain's peripherals and slowly continues until the brain loses all higher-level functions and can only perform the same processes as a lizard. If caught in the early stages, Alzheimer's disease can be stopped, and a slight reversal is possible by reducing carbohydrates (glucose and fructose) and replacing carbohydrates with fats. For some who have had Alzheimer's disease for a long time and without switching the diet from carbohydrates to fat, the brain can't replace any functions lost. The brain cells are no longer available. Details are in *Age Successfully* by Robert Harrison Black.

Alzheimer's disease sometimes causes terminal lucidity. Terminal lucidity is when someone dying with Alzheimer's suddenly becomes lucid and either engages in a sensible conversation or tells someone at the bedside. This sudden clarity is physically impossible based on what we know about the brain and the brain structure—our understanding of biology does not limit the soul.

Michael Nahm and his team researched what they called terminal lucidity. They found 85 well-documented cases of terminal lucidity. Their paper tells three stories that relate to the soul overriding physical limitations.

The first case concerned an older woman cared for by her daughter. The woman was unresponsive for years and

showed no sign of recognizing her daughter or anybody else. However, a few minutes before she died, she started a normal conversation with her daughter. The daughter was unprepared for this experience. The conversation left the daughter utterly confused. (Nahm, M. et al.)

The second Alzheimer's case was remarkably similar. In this case, a woman's grandmother had neither talked nor reacted to family members for many years until the week before she died, when she suddenly started chatting with the granddaughter, asking about the status of various family members and giving her granddaughter advice. Her granddaughter reported that "it was like talking to Rip Van Winkle."

The third Alzheimer's case involved an 81-year-old woman who had been demented for a long time and living in a retirement home in Iceland. Her family took turns visiting her; she did not recognize any of them or speak for a year. On one occasion, her son Lydur was sitting at her bedside working on a crossword puzzle. Suddenly she sat up, looked him directly in the face, and said, "My Lydur, I am going to recite a verse to you". She then recited clearly and loudly the following verse, thought by her son to be quite relevant to her situation (translated into unrhymed English by E.H.):

Oh, father of light, be adored.

Life and health you gave to me,

My father and my mother.

Now I sit up, for the sun is shining.

You send your light into me.

Oh, God, how good you are.

She then lay back on her pillow, was again nonresponsive, and remained so until she died about a month later. Her son immediately wrote down the verse, thinking it was his mother's poetry, but he later learned it was the first stanza from a psalm by an Icelandic poet. (Nahm, Greyson, Kelly, & Haraldsson, 2012)

In another publication, Michael Nahm and others reported Anna Katharina Ehmer's death, a 26-year-old woman with severe mental disabilities. Anna lived in an institution for people with mental disorders. Anna had allegedly never spoken a single word during her life. Yet, she sang dying songs for a half-hour before she died.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21764150/>

What some Scientists think about terminal lucidity:

Terminally ill patients can suddenly wake up out of dementia and carry on sensible conversations or say something to the people at the bedside. Scientists usually call these events paradoxical mental lucidity.

These events seem to occur predominantly within 1–2 days before death. This phenomenon is consistent with Batthyany's study of patients with dementia. Of 38 case descriptions, 44% occurred within one day before death, 31% within 2–3 days, and 6% within 4–7 days before death.

Nahm does not explain how terminal lucidity could occur except that complex systems, when damaged, can rearrange to give surprising results.

Scientists documenting a phenomenon is not explaining how it can develop. The idea of a conscious soul with serial

consciousness independent of the body that can animate the body seems to be the only explanation. I recognize that this explanation is without a scientific basis. It is a case that when we eliminate all other possibilities, then the remaining explanation is the only possibility.

H K Normann 1, K Asplund, and A Norberg did not explain how terminal lucidity could be possible but described how often it happened. They interviewed twenty employees in three nursing homes and found 92 episodes of terminal lucidity. Most occurred when the patient's caregiver was with the patient, not making demands and listening. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/9888375/>

George A.Mashour and his team studied both paradoxical lucidity and near-death experiences.

Paradoxical lucidity and near-death experiences demonstrate that there is more than the physical world. Many of these experiences are not possible if the world is only physical. These experiences show me that we have a soul, and it is only connected to our brain and body when we are conscious.

Chapter 15 Ancient evidence of religion

God has given us a sense of a need for religion. This need was long before God presented himself to humans. God did not reveal himself to humanity until Adam. The Adam and Eve story describes when mankind became aware of right and wrong. Before that, our predecessors were like any other animal. Humans in tribes would be like packs of wolves or prides of lions. Lions and wolves can show affection and be pets, but they don't understand right and wrong. I do not know God's interest in humanity before Adam or why he waited. My only answer is that God does what God does. He doesn't consult me.

In 1908, two brothers who were also archeologists uncovered the 50,000-year-old Neanderthal skeleton in the cave. They believed that the remains were intentionally buried. We now have evidence from at least 20 sites that Neanderthals buried their dead at least some of the time. We do not know their motivation, but animals were not buried but were left for scavengers at the same sites simultaneously. There must have been some idea by these people that those that they buried were special. The concept of an afterlife may have been some of the motivation. Later primitive sites included burial with tools and other goods for the afterlife.

The ancient Egyptian culture focused on the afterlife. Egyptians who had enough wealth could go to a priest and pay him to prepare what we now call a book of the dead. Books of the dead were individually created for a specific individual. The document was buried with the person. The belief was that the dead person would need to pass through judgment in the hall of the truth, then cross over the Lily Lake to the field of reeds. The field of reeds was the

equivalent of heaven. To get to the final destination, the person needed to know how to interact with the various gods along the way. The book for each individual was a set of instructions on making the journey. It was a cross between a map and an instruction manual. What is now available and called the book of the dead is a series of these texts translated into English. I read some of one of them. They are deadly dull. Reading these will kill you with boredom.

Egypt's burial industry was the primary source of employment for priests for each of the gods, funeral organizers, gravediggers, and grave decorators. Akhenaten, one of their Pharaohs, decided to have only one god, the sun god. He ruled from 1353 to 1336 BC. Having only one god put many in the death industry out of work. He only lasted 17 years.

In the fifth year, Akhenaten underwent a dramatic religious transformation, changing his devotion from the cult of Amun to that of Aten, the sun god. For the next twelve years, Akhenaten became famous (or infamous) as the 'heretic king' that abolished the traditional religious rites of Egypt and instituted what was reported to be the first documented monotheistic state religion in the world. They may not have been the first monotheistic religion because the Jews were also monotheistic at about that time.

In recent times we have the Buddhist traditions from Tibet. They believe that the period between death and rebirth is 49 days. During that time, the person can understand that they are dead and reflect on their past life. After that, they go through a nightmare scene. Finally, the person enters a new body. During the 49 days, the person can hear and understand the prayers spoken on the dead person's behalf.

This tradition could have started from reports from people who had out-of-body experiences and were brought back to life. Rather than seeing a room in a hospital, they saw the people praying over them.

Chapter 17 God speaking to one person:

The Bible says that God chooses, and it also says that we are free to choose. God chose Paul.

A Swiss scout leader in perfect health and without any troubles suddenly found himself raised above himself. He felt the power, love, and goodness of God. The emotions caused him to sit down on a rock and cry. He begged God to allow him to do his will. He thanked God for his life. God said he should do his will daily in humility and poverty. God told him that God would judge whether he should witness more conspicuously.

William James tells the story of George Fox, the founder of the Quaker religion. He was walking with friends and saw church spires. He had his companions go into the house, which was their destination. God told him to run to what turned out to be Litchfield. On the way, God told him to take off his shoes. He hesitated because it was winter. He handed his shoes to some shepherds and ran into Litchfield. There he was told to cry out, "Woe to the bloody city of Litchfield." He ran up and down the streets, crying this. He appeared to see blood running in the streets and the marketplace. He then went out of town in peace, retrieved his shoes from the shepherds, and returned to his colleagues. He wondered why God wanted him to do this. Later, he found out that over 1,000 Christians had been martyred in that city.

George Fox did not appear to have any mental illness; he was exceptionally gifted as a speaker and a writer. This episode was in contrast to his usual business-like demeanor.

Dan Rather, a CBS anchor, once asked Mother Teresa what she said during her prayers. She answered, "I listen." So Dan turned the question and asked, "Well then, what does God say?" Mother Teresa smiled with confidence and answered, "He listens." For an instant, Dan didn't know what to say. "And if you don't understand that," Mother Teresa added, "I can't explain it to you."

God picked a Jew named Saul, who persecuted the early Christians to become his best ambassador to the gentiles. He is best known by his Greek name Paul. It was, in retrospect, a strange pick.

Some people feel the Holy Spirit and have a personal relationship with God. These people feel God's instruction directly. Others feel the Holy Spirit more abstractly. Just like any other skill, you may be able to have a close personal link to God, or you may be like me and feel the Holy Spirit more abstractly. In either case, it will guide you if you let it.

God would have us all become disciples and be part of the work of the great commission. We can all join, but God explicitly picks some and gives them specific tasks.

Our only explanation for these events is God is what he is and does what he does. These phenomena are the same as quantum mechanics.

Chapter 17 Other religions and how they relate

I have watched Nichiren Buddhists meet, greet, and chant together. They seemed to be a happy group. I have watched Thai Buddhists at an indoctrination ceremony, worship, and visit other Buddhists. They also seem to be a happy group. Cambodian Buddhist also seem to be happy. I have only spent a short time observing Taoists. Taoists also seem to be happy.

I have read the Tao; it is like Buddha's teachings but somewhat more esoteric. There are 81 verses, each one to three paragraphs long. It is a slow read because each sentence and paragraph in the Tao has deep meaning. Lao Tsu is believed to be the author. Lao Tsu did not claim to be God or bring a message from God.

Buddha did not claim to be a God. He did not claim that he obtained messages from God. Some Buddhist messages are about what we would call a version of the ten commandments without involving God. Some of the messages are more like legal rules for inheritance, debt rules, and other legal matters. The goal of Buddhism is to become enlightened and thereby obtain Nirvana.

Buddha explained his eightfold path to enlightenment

The Noble Eightfold Path

1. Right understanding
2. Right thought
3. Right speech
4. Right action
5. Right livelihood

6. Right effort
7. Right mindfulness
8. Right concentration

None of Buddha's or Lao Tsu's teachings conflict with Christianity. On the contrary, they are all good recommendations for living a good life. When living in Thailand or traveling in Southeast Asia, I have counseled Christian missionaries not to disparage Buddha or the Tao but to add Jesus. Because Buddhism comes from a Hindu tradition, some parts like reincarnation conflict, but the idea of life after death is not foreign to Buddhists.

In a way, Buddhism is selfish. Obtaining nirvana is for yourself, and there is no direction to convert others or help others. If we as Christians don't spread the word about Christianity or help others become Christian, we can be just as selfish.

I have not studied the Hindu religion. The Indians seem to enjoy the festivals and the rituals. I know that India's corruption has prevented them from being as economically well off as possible. I do not know anything to recommend we do about their conversion to Christianity. I hope someone more knowledgeable can find a solution.

The Muslims in South West Thailand I observed were not happy. The Muslims I see on TV and those I hear about seem to practice hate. Hate is a powerful way to block happiness. I found that Indonesia was unhappy with 87% of the population Muslims. Jakarta and Samarang in Indonesia are principally Muslim and not happy places. With 83% Hindu, Bali, Indonesia, seemed to be a happier place.

Above I described how David Wood is working on converting Muslims to Christianity.

In Mainland China, integrity doesn't seem to have value. The government is corrupt and repressive. Those without religion are not happy.

Some religions like Tao and Buddhism seem able to provide some happiness through community togetherness. Still, Christianity is unique in providing not only a moral code and an understanding of God but also a psychological understanding of humans and our weaknesses. Love is the basis of Christianity. Christianity also provides a way to free ourselves from the burden of past sin and the path to freedom from future sin.

Because the Muslim religion is based on hate, in my experience, it provides neither happiness nor freedom from sin.

The incredible growth in wealth of the United States was as a Christian nation. We seem to be losing our Christianity, becoming corrupt, and losing our wealth simultaneously.

I am glad I know Christianity and pray that the world would come to know Christ.

Chapter 18 Ideas on Improving Worship Services.

As described above, Jesus gave us directions on praying. He said not to repeat, and he gave us an example of prayer. His directions and example were his response to his disciples asking him how they should pray. Every church service I have experienced has ignored his instructions. Prayers have been repeated, and we repeat the prayer Jesus gave us as an example of how to pray. I can recite the Lord's Prayer and the disciple's creed while thinking about what is for lunch. We say it too fast for me to think about what I am saying.

Above I go through each verse one by one; below is how I propose we use the instructions of Jesus in a Church service. It would require a handout. The prayer of each individual would be unique to that individual; the individual prayers would be silent. Only the Almen would be out loud.

Leader: Our Father, who art in heaven, may your name be holy.

Congregation: Silently considers God's magnificence and power to bring the universe into existence. Acknowledges God as their father in prayer.

Leader: God's will be done, and God's kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.

Congregation: Silently thinks of how humanity has strayed from being what God would have us be and how we individually have strayed from what we should be. Then considers what we as individuals should do to bring God's kingdom to earth and how we could follow God's will. Pray that we can do better.

Leader: Our daily bread.

Congregation: Silently thinks how thankful they are for what they have; think about our responsibility to the needs of those who require daily nourishment.

Leader: Forgive us our sins as we forgive others.

Congregation: Silently considers the sins that have been forgiven and mentally reviews things that have been done to us. Mentally forgives all those that have harmed us. Pray that they will do well physically and economically.

Leader: help us avoid temptation and help us escape sin.

Congregation: Silently reviews their specific temptations and prays for God's help in escaping the sins that tempt us.

Leader: God is the power and the glory forever.

Congregation: Replies out loud, Almen

The disciple's creed can be done over eight or sixteen weeks with a short meditation over each point.

- 1) I believe in God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ, his
only Son, our Lord;
- 2) Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary,
- 3) Jesus suffered under Pontius Pilate,
He was crucified, dead, and buried.
He descended into hell.
- 4) On the third day, Jesus rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven.

And he sits on the right hand of God the Father
almighty.

- 5) Jesus will come to judge the quick and the dead.
- 6) I believe in the Holy Ghost, and
The holy catholic Church.
- 7) The communion of saints,
The forgiveness of sins,
- 8) The resurrection of the body,
And the life everlasting.

Depending on the church belief system, both the Lord's
prayer and the disciple's creed would be varied. The critical
point I am making is to eliminate blind repetition.

Expanding the principle of doing what Jesus said to do will
require a reworking of the entire liturgy.

Chapter 19 A scientific analysis of the data

I will start with the claims. The atheist's first claim: God was not needed to explain the universe's beginning. The Bible says that God created the heavens and the earth. Hawking's claim that a vacuum fluctuation caused it does not pass the smell test. Something must have created the fluctuating vacuum. Similar explanations always require something before or something more complex and still do not remove the need for God. Lametri developed the mathematical equations for the beginning of the universe. These equations were based on the data from Hubble and equations developed by Einstein. Lametri showed that the universe had a beginning. We now have sufficient measurements from the microwave background radiation and the expansion rate to show that the universe began 13+ billion years ago. Richard Feynman agrees that it must have been God because scientists have not figured it out yet.

Atheists 0 Theists 1

The second atheist claim is that the Bible is fiction filled with implausible and nonsensical stories. Atheists point out the impossibility of stories like Jonah and the whale. Many of the stories are like the boy that cried wolf. When looked at from the perspective of instruction, the stories make sense. The Bible is a hyperlinked text. Everything is linked to everything else. Early texts describe later; later texts reference earlier texts. There are 63,779 cross-references in the Bible. The hyperlinks show that it was a creation of one being. Many of the predictions in the Bible have come true. Prophecies like Isaiah accurately predicted Jesus more than one thousand years before Jesus are common throughout the Bible.

Atheist 0 Bible Scholars 1

The atheists say that Jesus did not exist or wasn't who he claimed to be or did what he claimed to have done. Christians reference Roman documents to show that Jesus existed. These documents match Bible documents as to Roman leaders and events in Roman history. In Paul's letter to the Corinthians, he challenged them to confirm that Jesus had come back from the dead by asking the observers of Jesus after he rose from the dead.

This letter of Paul was written when many of these people would have still been alive. Jesus's prediction of the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem was written in the book of Mark before it happened. All of Jesus's disciples worked to bring converts to Jesus after he rose from the dead. In all but one case, they were killed in the process. If Jesus were fake, The disciples would have gone back to fishing or other careers. Present psychologists confirm that Jesus's teachings on how we should live are correct. Freud points out that loving one's neighbor does not make sense. Lewis disagrees with Freud. Freud, not understanding love as agape, led him to the wrong conclusion.

Atheist 0 Christians 1

Atheists claim that only the material world exists. After death, that is the end; there is no life after death. All of your memories and consciousness are in your brain. The material world is nothing but vibrations in fields when we look deep enough. Some Atheists also claim that free will does not exist. We are just meat robots who follow our genetically preprogrammed life without choice. Both near-death experiences and terminal lucidity refute this atheist

argument. Our soul can do things and go places beyond the body. Our consciousness is as real as the material world. Perhaps the only real thing.

Athiest 0 Spiritual World 1

Summary

Based on our trip from atheist positions to God and then through the Bible to Jesus, Christianity, and the spirit, and finally, to step by step analysis of atheist positions, I have developed a solid basis for my Christian belief. I pray that this has had the same effect on you.

About the Author

Robert is a Christian that has had a full life. He has obtained three degrees: BS in Chemistry, MS Electrical Engineering, MBA in Finance.

Robert:

Is married with a wife, two children, eight grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Has 17 patents

Was a Registered Professional Engineer

Was a Captain in the US Air Force

Traveled to 65 places around the world

Written four other books

Taught in University

Has had many jobs starting at five years old

Raised Geese

Worked on a farm

Paperboy

Entrepreneur growing and selling sunflower seeds

Dishwasher

Waiter

Cook

Camp counselor

Chemical plant operator

Chemist

Engineer

Manager at three companies

Entrepreneur, President of three companies

Most importantly, he studied theology from a secular perspective using material from Yale and the University of North Carolina, read the Bible multiple times, studied, and continues to study material written by solid Christians.

Appendix 1 Chance of Extraterrestrial Life

Is there Intelligent life on other planets in our observable universe?

We hear from many scientists that there must be intelligent life on other planets. The large number of planets makes intelligent life on other planets a near certainty. Enrico Fermi disputed this position.

Fermi realized that any civilization with a modest amount of rocket technology and an immodest amount of imperial incentive could rapidly colonize the entire galaxy; the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI) Institute in Mountain View, California, said on its website. "Within ten million years, every star system could be brought under the wing of empire." Ten million years may sound long, but it's quite short compared with the galaxy's age, which is more than ten thousand million years. Colonization of the Milky Way should be a quick exercise. If our civilization survives, Elon Musk and his successors will do it.

I looked at the problem scientifically, taking the probabilities of life one by one. Some may dispute the probabilities I use, but the step-by-step sequence is defensible. The point of the exercise is to show that the glib statements that there must be other intelligent life because of the billions of possible planets needs to be analyzed in depth. I use scientific notation. Scientific notation is where 2×10^{24} means 2 times 10^{24} or

2,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000

Stars in the observable universe 2×10^{23}

10 planets per star

Possible planets 2×10^{24}

50% of Planets are not in orbit. One-half of planets are not orbiting a star. These planets are a danger to our solar system. These planets have been thrown out of solar systems and move randomly through the galaxy. I worked on a program that would allow someone to build a planetary system by starting with a star and adding planets one at a time. When adding each planet, I had to specify the orbit and size. After four, the planets I entered would either collide, or one of the planets would be thrown out within a few million years.

Possible planets 1×10^{24}

99.99 % of stars are too close to the Galaxy center; stars closer in would have planet orbits disrupted too often. Our star has gone around the galaxy 20 times. Scientists believed a close encounter early on shuffled the planets. The star Gliese 710 is predicted to pass within 9,300,000,000,000 miles in about 1.6 million years. That's well within the outer edge of the Oort Cloud. The Oort cloud is a collection of debris held by gravity to the earth at the edge of space. Previous extinctions are believed to have been caused by the disruption of this material. These disruptions of the material on the Oort cloud formed asteroids that collided with earth. The future close encounter with Gliese could be the event that causes life on earth to become extinct.

Possible planets 1×10^{20}

99.99% of stars are too big or too small. Too big, and the star's life is not long enough. It has taken

earth 4.5 billion years to develop intelligent life. We only have about a billion years before the sun grows and becomes hotter. The expansion and higher radiation from the sun will make the earth uninhabitable. By this time, the earth will have lost additional atmosphere and will be more vulnerable to this higher level of radiation.

Too small, and the planets will be tidally locked with one side facing the star. Our moon is an example of tidal locking.

Possible planets now 1×10^{16}

99.999% Planets without stabilizing moon A large close moon is required to keep the axis of a planet stable over billions of years. An unstable axis would cause the regular extinction of larger life forms. From present observations, the earth looks unique.

Possible planets now 1×10^{11}

99.99% of planets without a large iron core. A large hot iron core is needed to prevent the loss of the atmosphere in the habitable zone. Earth is slowly losing its atmosphere. The earth is now losing hundreds of tons of atmosphere each day. If the earth had a smaller iron core, the atmosphere would be, like mars, nearly gone by now.

Possible planets now 1×10^7

99% of planets are outside the habitable zone. The habitable zone is narrow.

Possible planets now 1×10^5

99.9% planet arrangement is not suitable. In most planetary systems, the larger planets are close to the star, and smaller planets orbit further away. Astronomers were surprised when they first found the order of planets in other star systems.

Possible planets now 1×10^2

90% of planet orbits are elliptical Elliptical orbits would cause the extinction of larger life. The planet would be too hot for life or too cold for large life for extended periods.

Possible planets now 10

90% of life development dead ends without developing intelligent life. Earth has had at least seven mass extinctions. We only know about extinctions within the last 500 million years. There may have been many before that time. Life before these mass extinctions was not headed towards intelligence. We have intelligence because of the part of our brain called the prefrontal cortex. This part of the brain is only found in mammals. Dinosaurs would never develop intelligent life. The large brain required would make extinction more likely. Neanderthals had bigger brains that may have been better than ours. We had fire, tools, language, culture, and high manual dexterity; the Neanderthals have had fire and primitive tools, but we do not know about the rest. Our species did nearly go extinct. Archeologists and Geneticists believe we were down to less than 20,000 people on the planet at least once.

Possible planets with intelligent life 1

Appendix 2 Beginning of Life

When I was in Highschool in the 50s, there was a reported experiment where an atmosphere and water were in a chamber with simulated lightning. The water was later found to have amino acids and other molecules of life.

Since then, I and others have believed life was easy to start. Many biologists continue to write papers describing how this would come about. Synthetic chemists would disagree.

The first impediment would be chirality. Most of the molecules of life are chiral. That is, they are handed. Just like a right-hand glove does not fit a left hand. Molecules made with carbon have four connections. If the four connections link to four different things, there are two ways to assemble the molecule. Just like a glove, the two ways are mirror images. Nonbiological processes generate both types. Chemists call these ways handedness. Molecules of the same chemistry but with the left-handed or right-handed structure are identified as l or d.

Glucose, for example, has six carbons; four of these carbons connect to four different things. There are, therefore, 16 different configurations. Only one of these configurations can be used in most of life.

19 of the 20 amino acids that make up proteins are chiral. Only one of these is used in biology. A 100 amino acid protein is small. There would be 20 possible amino acids for each of the links. Even if the correct handedness were available, having the correct sequence would be unbelievably unlikely. In each case, picking out from a random soup, there would be 20 potential picks at each step, even if the soup only had proteins. For a short functional protein of only 100 units, the chance of getting

the correct thing would be 20^{100} possibilities or 1.27×10^{140} . The universe is only 8.64×10^{13} seconds old. Life consists of proteins that are hundreds of amino acid units long.

Making RNA or DNA would be more difficult. They both consist of a stack of four-component molecules. They have ribose, a sugar, or a ribose missing a hydroxy link on the outside. In the middle is a pair of what are called base pairs. The stack forms a spiral. The ribose is a sugar, and the chance of having the correct sugar is unlikely, and the individual layers are unstable. In water, they would quickly decompose. Life makes DNA and RNA by unwinding one, splitting the DNA or RNA in half, and adding the other half to each respective halves. They can't be made even in nature without starting from DNA or RNA. The formation of these basic cell assembly instructions will not happen in any soup that has been conceived.

A cell outside wall is made of a bilayer of fats. The fats are arranged with the outsides of the cell wall compatible with water and the inside wall surface compatible with water. The fat is inside the wall surface. The cell surface must have ports so that the correct molecules can enter and cell waste exit. This also will not happen randomly. Archea can have a simpler cell surface, but it has the same function of keeping everything inside and allowing the needed molecules to pass through the cell wall.

We don't know how to absorb the correct molecules through this fat bilayer selectively or through the cell wall in the case of archaean.

Finally, the life form must divide. It is done in life by unwinding the DNA, splitting it in half, and at the same

time reassembling both halves. In all life, this requires a giant protein / RNA molecule.

Based on the above, the chance of life beginning randomly is zero. There must be some directed intervention. I believe that God did the intervening.

Chemists can not make life even given all the starting materials and all the chemical equipment ever made. Chemists can modify life but not make it.

Appendix 3 Materialism

Rupert Sheldrake gives a list of the fundamental beliefs of Materialism. This list is what most scientists would believe. They are as follows:

1. Everything is essentially mechanical. Dogs, for example, are complex mechanisms rather than living organisms with goals of their own. Even people are machines, “lumbering robots,” in Richard Dawkins' vivid phrase, with brains that are like genetically programmed computers.

2. All matter is unconscious. It has no inner life or subjectivity, or point of view. Even human consciousness is an illusion produced by the material activities of brains.

3. The total amount of matter and energy is always the same

(except for the Big Bang, when all the matter and energy of the universe suddenly appeared).

4. The laws of nature are fixed. They are the same today as they were at the beginning, and they will stay the same forever.

5. Nature is purposeless, and evolution has no goal or direction.

6. All biological inheritance is material, carried in the genetic material, DNA, and other material structures.

7. Minds are inside heads and are nothing but the activities

of brains. When you look at a tree, the image of the tree you are seeing is not “out there,” where it seems to be, but inside your brain.

8. Memories are stored as material traces in brains and are wiped out at death.

9. Unexplained phenomena like telepathy are illusory.

10. Mechanistic medicine is the only kind that really works.

If you believe in all of the items on the list, then free will is an illusion. When presented with a choice, the circuits in our brain and experience make a choice. Our conciseness does not play a part.

Sheldrake explains how this cannot be the complete picture of reality. Near-death experiences are only one example. Free will is another.

There is more than the physical.

Michael Egnor has pointed out several ways reality must be more than the physical.

- “Throughout our lives, we are the same person despite a continual turnover of matter in our brains. The matter that constitutes your brain today is different matter, for the most part, than the matter that constituted your brain ten years ago. Furthermore, your brain matter is organized differently now than ten years ago. Yet, a fundamental characteristic of minds, your sense of identity is continuous over time. You are you, despite profound changes in brain matter and

organization. What property then is the “same” that accounts for you being the same? It’s not matter and it’s not organization of matter. Hume thought that the sense of personal continuity was the result of a continuous string of memories, but his theory begs the question. Who is it that has the string of memories?”

- Incorrigibility, related to restricted access, means the unassailable knowledge of one’s thoughts. If I think of the color red, no one can credibly refute that fact. Of course, I may be lying about what I am thinking, or I may be mistaken about the implications of my thoughts, but I experience my thoughts in a way that no one else does. If I say (honestly) that I like an impressionist painting, it is nonsensical for someone else to assert, “You are mistaken; you don’t like impressionist paintings.” This incorrigibility isn’t a property of matter.
- If the mind is entirely caused by matter, it is difficult to understand how free will can exist. Fixed laws govern matter, and if our thoughts are entirely the product of brain chemistry, then our thoughts are determined by brain chemistry. But chemistry doesn’t have “truth” or “falsehood” or other values. It just is. Enzymatic catalysis isn’t true or false; it just is. The view that “materialism is true” is meaningless... If materialism is true, then the thought “materialism is true” is just a chemical reaction, neither true nor false. While some philosophers assert that free will can exist in a deterministic materialistic world (they’re called

“compatibilists”), and some have argued that quantum indeterminacy may leave room for free will, the most parsimonious explanation for free will is that there is an immaterial component of the mind that is undetermined by matter. Intentionality is the “aboutness” or meaning of a mental state, the ability of a mental state to refer to something outside of itself. Ink on paper has no meaning unless it is conferred by a mind which wrote it or read it.

The matter may have intentionality only secondarily (“derived intentionality”). Many philosophers believe the problem of the intentionality of the mind to be the most serious challenge to materialism. “Meaning” is imparted to matter by a mind; matter isn’t the source of meaning. Therefore matter (brain tissue) can’t be the entire cause of the mind. (Egnor, 2008)

Appendix 4 What is Reality?

Isaac Newton developed calculus to describe physics on the macro scale. He worked out the mathematics to mathematically describe force, gravity, acceleration, energy, mass, and time. Engineers use Newton's mathematics to design the things we use in everyday life.

Albert Einstein looked deeper and found more complex math that better describes the gravity of very large things like planets and very fast things like light and atomic particles. The clocks in orbit must take relativity physics into consideration of their clock rate to make GPS work

Dmitri Mendeleev developed a system for organizing elements. That led to studying how the elements are structured

Ernest Rutherford found that atoms were mostly empty space with a positive charge inside and electrons moving in the space surrounding the central charge. He discovered that an atom was 99.9+% nothing.

A number of scientists found that the center of an atom contained neutrons and protons.

Quantum mechanics was a description of matter that came next. This describes matter as the size of elementary particles. This physics is counter to our intuition and experience. Things can be two places at the same time. The neutron and proton were made of simpler particles called quarks.

Richard Feynman and others then developed Quantum Field Theory, which examines material more fundamentally. Quantum field theory describes the universe as filled with quantum fields. There is a field for each of the atomic particles. For example, there is a quantum

electron field for the electron and an up quark field for the up quark. This theory describes a particle as a vibration in this field. This vibration must have spin and charge.

By looking out to distant galaxies, we are looking back in time; when we look back to nearly the beginning of time, we see that the quantum fields were the same then as they are now. The quantum fields have expanded as fast as the universe.

We can measure these fields in a vacuum. The quantum fields are active. In a vacuum, they generate and then absorb particles. There are no net particles generated, so the conservation of energy and matter principle is not violated.

Scientists have developed mathematical equations that describe how the disturbance (wave) of the field can be a particle. There are theories like string theory and M theory, but how this all exists is not understood. In any case, what we call reality is mostly empty space. As scientists probe deeper, they find that the material universe is mostly nothing.

Some scientists and philosophers believe that the only real things are conciseness and information.

Is the Universe filled with conciseness? Is that conciseness God?

St. Augustine wondered why there was something rather than nothing. He concluded that the word of God was the reason anything exists.

John 1:1, In the beginning, was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

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