

# The Bible - Truth or Fantasy

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## The spectacular stories of the Old Testament:

During most of my life, the general theme at school and the culture has been that God doesn't exist. Philosophies of evolution were crammed into every subject and a lot of entertainment. The constant barrage of evolution allowed most of my peers to reject the existence of God.

When I was younger God began building a relationship with me, to be discussed later. But to be fair, most of what the Bible teaches appears to be illogical and unbelievable.

First, as described in Genesis 1, the Bible starts by proclaiming that God spoke the universe into existence. That the universe was created in a very short time, out of nothing. The Bible states that the vastness, the intricacies of living creatures, and the complexities of life were created in 6 literal days. And were created only by the power of God's words. This is such a profound claim that there are only two possibilities. Either the Bible is a total fantasy, or it describes a God that is powerful beyond our imaginations.

The Bible goes on to make other potentially outlandish claims about Adam and Eve's relationship with God. Is this story wishful thinking, or does the all-powerful creator God desire a relationship with His creation? And then, God placed mankind in a paradise and gave them only one restriction, to not eat from a specific tree. Did God not know that given enough time, Adam and Eve would disobey and rebel? Why would He allow the opportunity for sin, knowing that the result would be millennia of death, pain, and misery? Again, this story must be either total fantasy or true.

However, what is not difficult to understand is that once removed from the garden, the history of mankind is full of selfishness, murder, and violence. This is the nature of the heart of mankind, for the strong to take advantage of the weak. The Bible states that the conditions became so grievous, that God planned to destroy the earth. But Noah was a righteous man who found favor with God and was commanded to build an Ark. There has been considerable debate if the described Ark was capable of saving the life that we have on earth. Still, studies indicate that the size of the Ark was feasible, and the design of the Ark was capable of surviving such a cataclysmic event as the great flood. But the fundamental question remains if the story is fantasy or if that was evidence of an all-powerful God.

A significant problem is that the driving force of evolutionists is to reject God's moral standards so they work diligently to argue that there is no God. Thus, they interpret scientific evidence to "prove" and promote their agendas and many embrace their conclusions because they too do not want the incumbrances of God's moral standards. But, in the end, the story of the Ark is either another fantasy or a demonstration of the power of God.

After the story of saving mankind, the Bible continues with more personal stories of individuals having a relationship with God. Such as the relationship that Abraham had with Him. The Bible tells us that God promised Abraham to be the father of a mighty nation. The problem was that Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90 before when they received the promise. The Bible then provides considerable descriptions of how God proceeded to fulfill those promises. Even in their advanced years, Issac was born and his descendants became a mighty nation that has survived thousands of years. But again, are these fantasies that have been handed down over millennia or are they part of God's ultimate plan?

Another fantastic series of events involving Abraham's great-grandson, Joseph. The Bible says that Joseph received dreams that God would make him great on the earth. But when Joseph told his brothers, their jealousy motivated them to sell him into slavery. Despite God's tremendous promises, Joseph found himself a slave in Egypt. And the twists and turns of Joseph's life were so dramatic, that the story of his life is either total fantasy or God was ultimately in control. The Bible teaches that while in captivity, God blessed Joseph so much that his owner gave him charge of his entire affairs—an interesting turn of events for a foreign slave. But, then Potiphar's wife desired Joseph and when he refused her, she falsely accused him of attacking her. Instead of God's tremendous promises, Joseph was imprisoned. But again, the Bible teaches that God manipulated events to allow Joseph to be given control of the prison. The Bible ultimately claims that Joseph, the slave, the prisoner, and a foreigner, was lifted up to the most powerful over Egypt, next to Pharaoh. Again, Joseph's life is either a fantasy or they demonstrate God's ability to intervene in Joseph's life.

Either Joseph's actions saved Egypt and all of the surrounding countries from a tremendous drought or the story is all a lie. After Joseph's death, over the next 400 years, Abraham's descendants grew to probably about 2,500,000 people. Given the nature of mankind, it is not hard to understand that Abraham's descendants (the Children of Israel) were forced into slavery.

To free God's people, the Bible proclaims more fantastic stories. Even from Moses' birth to when he was 80 years old, the description of his life is either very unique or a lie. When he was 80, God sent him to demand that Pharaoh release the children of Israel. However, Pharaoh was reluctant to lose such a large cheap workforce, but his real problem was that he didn't like his authority challenged. Even if it was by the Creator God of the Universe. The Bible then describes Moses bringing a series of supernatural plagues to Egypt. After each plague, Pharaoh initially repented but then went back on his word. This cycle repeated 10 times and each plague was more severe than the previous one. When Pharaoh finally allowed the Children of Israel to leave, he again changed his mind and sent his army after them. The Bible claims that God protected the descendants of Abraham with a pillar of smoke during the day and a pillar of fire at night. But when the children of Israel reached the Red Sea, they were trapped. However, God parted the Red Sea so that they could cross on dry land. It was an obvious trap but Pharaoh's arrogance prompted him to command his army to follow. And, as should have been expected, when the army was between the shores, God allowed the water to crash down and destroy Pharaoh's entire army. Again, so many miraculous and supernatural events demand that it was either all fantasy or that God exists, and designed the situation to demonstrate His power.

After crossing the Red Sea there were many more fantastic stories. However, because of disobedience, God caused the Children of Israel to wander the desert. But, again, the Bible makes fantastic claims of God providing food and water for probably about 2.5 million people and their animals for 40 years. During their time in the desert, Moses received the Ten Commandments and probably wrote the first 5 books of the Old Testament.

When the Children of Israel finally entered the promised land, the spectacular stories of God's supernatural intervention continued as the pagan inhabitants were conquered.

The time between Moses and Jesus was about 1400 years and the stories of David and Goliath, Samson, Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, and the whale, and many others continue to demonstrate the miraculous powers of God or they are mountains of lies upon lies.

### **Out of the darkness into the light:**

The Bible teaches many truths, such as, "Wine is a mocker and strong drink is a brawler". My parents were generally good people but their heavy drinking contributed to their divorce when I was 4 years old. As a single parent with limited job opportunities in the 50s, Mom found work as a cocktail waitress. She worked nights and weekends and I didn't see her for weeks at a time. To care for me, she found an apartment where the landlady was paid to watch over me. Sadly, the landlady only cared about the money and the care was poor. My daily diet consisted of a cheap hamburger patty, SpaghettiOs, and whatever I could find. I was often very hungry. I avoided her as much as possible and spent significant time in my apartment alone. From about 4.5 years old, my biggest problem was tremendous loneliness which is impossible for me to describe.

A few days after turning 5, I entered the first grade, and I was very immature. It wasn't long before I was the most disruptive student in class, and it is safe to say that I was not any of the teacher's pets. Mom relied on the teachers to be professionals, so she agreed that I needed to repeat the 1<sup>st</sup> grade to mature and learn to read. However, I didn't get any more help in my second 1<sup>st</sup> grade or the 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades and I made little progress in learning to read. Left to my own devices, I became a mean, grungy little kid who got into a lot of fights.

Entering the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, we moved to a rural school. Sadly, the new teacher was also from the previous school system and she also failed to be any help. However, the school board consisted of farmers and when they saw a recommendation for another social promotion, they had a lot of questions. Questions that the teacher didn't have good answers for. She was given a second year to help me learn to read. So, we repeated the 4<sup>th</sup> grade together. However, she still didn't spend much time with me, I still couldn't read, and after that year I never saw her again. Thankfully, the 5th-grade teacher diligently worked with me, and with much prayer and effort, when I was 12 years old, I finally learned to read by sounding out words.

Going back a few years, when I was 6 years old, (after my second 1st-grade year) I was loitering in the park on a summer day and someone captured my attention and presented the Gospel to me. There was

no question that I was a sinner and I needed God's love and forgiveness, so I eagerly asked Jesus into my heart.

Despite having Jesus in my heart, my behavior was so bad that most of my schoolmates had strict instructions to not play with me. I lived on a proverbial deserted island which added to my loneliness. I didn't understand anything about a relationship with God but one day, He gave me the idea to begin to talk and invite Him into my thinking. As a 6-year-old, I was very inconsistent and sometimes there were long periods between when I would spend time with Him. After a long silence, it was as if God gently tapped me on the shoulder, "Do you remember me?" I would ask His forgiveness and try harder to remember Him. Over time, the gaps grew less and less, and while I didn't know it at the time, God built a friendship with me. I didn't hear voices but I asked Him questions, shared thoughts, and ideas, and He prompted me with thoughts, questions, and sometimes instructions.

I wasn't aware of the depth of the friendship God was building with me until one day I was startled when I realized that my agonizing loneliness was gone. Some may say that my relationship with God was my imagination but even my creative abilities were not capable of overcoming the tremendous loneliness that I had felt.

My friendship with God began changing my life but it was a very slow process. Sadly, despite my relationship with Him, as I grew older my moral life degraded as lying, cheating, stealing, and other sins crept into my life. I knew that my thoughts, attitudes, and actions were wrong and to my shame, I was able to compartmentalize when I spent time with God from when I sought to fulfill my selfish wants and desires. I shudder to think what God endured with me.

Then, one day when I was 13, while walking along, minding my business, the Lord Jesus Christ confronted me. I can't say it was a vision, I can't say it was not, but I was in His presence. It is not possible to fully explain, but I still remember being surprised at how totally immersed I was in God's love. His love permeated every fiber of my being. Before, that time, God's love was an intellectual concept, but after that, God's love gripped me. Understanding and embracing God's love has been a priceless gift and I believe that everyone should diligently search for this priceless treasure.

While being enveloped by God's love I intuitively understood the Lord Jesus Christ's power, authority, and holiness. And, my sins began to flow through my mind. **There was no room to argue or to justify them.** Standing before His holiness and righteousness, I quickly confessed and repented from each of my sins and determined to forsake them. I later understood that was when I made Jesus Christ the Lord of my life. However, I did not make Him Lord, **out of obligation, fear, ritual, or religion but as an expression of love back to God.**

When I look back at my younger years, it is clear that He was changing my life from the inside out. God was building a friendship with me before, but afterward, I began an abiding relationship with Him. When I asked Jesus into my heart, I knew very little about anything and I had no idea that my relationship with God was based on Biblical truths or anything that the Bible taught.

But as I got older the constant attack against God became more blatant and I had many questions about the validity of my faith in God. So, I began to look for valid evidence.

### **The Promised Messiah:**

Most of the Old Testament was written between about 2,500 and 4,000 years ago, so there was much more potential for error and doubt. Many of the claims in the New Testament are potentially just as outlandish as in the Old Testament but the New Testament was written only 2,000 years ago. There are over 5,000 supporting documents, archeological discoveries, and other historical sources that either support its accuracy or are also part of the biggest conspiracy in all of history.

A series of evidence that is difficult to forfeit is the prophecies in the Old Testament of the promised Messiah. Most of these prophecies were written 400 to 800 years before Jesus Christ was born.

[Isaiah 7:14](#) Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

The Messiah is proclaimed to be Immanuel, which means “God with us”. If true, this means that the all-powerful creator God of the universe was going to humble Himself to be limited to live and suffer on earth as a man.

The foundation of the New Testament is the 4 Gospels. The Gospels of Matthes, Mark, and John are eyewitness testimonies of the Apostles who spent the last three years of Jesus’ life. The 4<sup>th</sup> Gospel, Luke, and the book of Acts are a chronological composite of the testimonies of many witnesses. What is very important for every individual to determine for themselves is if Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah. If there is fraud, then the Bible is a lie, but if He accurately fulfilled multiple prophecies, then the validity of the Bible must be taken very seriously.

The chart below describes how the Old Testament prophecies were recorded as being fulfilled in the New Testament:

Prophecy	Old Testament	New Testament
1. Born of a woman.	Genesis 3:15	Matthew 1:20,21
2. Born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:1, Luke 2:4-6
3. Born of a virgin	Isaiah 7:14	Matt 1:22-23, Luke 1:26-31
4. Descendent of Abraham	Gen 12:3, Gen 22:18	Matt 1:1
5. Descendent of Isaac	Gen 17:19, Gen 21:12	Luke 3:34
6. Descendent of Jacob	Numbers 24:17	Matt 1:2
7. Of the tribe of Judah	Gen 49:10	Luke 3:33
8. Heir of King David	2 Sam 7:12-13, Isaiah 9:7	Luke 1:32-33
9. His throne is eternal	Psalm 45:6-7, Daniel 2:44	Luke 1:33
10. The Messiah will be Immanuel	Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:23

11. Would spend time in Egypt	Hosea 11	Matthew 2:14-15
12. Children would be massacred	Jeremiah 31:15	Matthew 2:16-18
13. A Messenger would prepare His way	Isaiah 40:3-5, Malachi 3:1	Luke 3:3-6, Matt 11:10
14. The Messiah would be rejected	Psalms 69:8, Isaiah 53:3	John 1:11, Luke 23:18
15. Messiah would be a prophet	Deuteronomy 18:15	Acts 3:20-22
16. Proceeded by Elijah	Malachi 4:5-6	Matthew 11:13-14
17. Be declared to be the Son of God	Psalms 2:7	Matthew 3:16-17
18. From Davidic line a Nazarene	Isaiah 11:1-5	Matthew 2:23
19. Would be a great light to Galilee	Isaiah 9:1-2	Matthew 4:13-16
20. Would speak in Parables	Psalms 78:2-4	Matthew 13:10-15,34-35
21. Would heal the broken hearted	Isaiah 61:1-2	Luke 4:18-19
22. A priest after the order of Melchizedek	Psalms 110:4	Hebrews 5:5-6
23. Would be called King	Psalms 2:6	Matt 27:37
24. Would enter Jerusalem on a donkey	Zechariah 9:9	Matthew 21:4-5, Mark 11:7-11
25. Would be praised by little children	Psalms 8:2	Matthew 21:14-16
26. Would be betrayed	Psalms 41:9	Luke 22:47-48, Matt 26:14-16
27. Price of betrayal would be to buy a potter's field	Zechariah 11:12-13	Matthew 27:9-10
28. Would be falsely accused	Psalms 35:11-12	Mark 14:57-58
29. Would be silent Before His accusers	Isaiah 53:7	Mark 15:4-5
30. Would be spat upon and struck	Isaiah 50:6	Matthew 26:67
31. Would be hated without cause	Psalms 35:19, Psalms 69:4	John 15:24-25
32. Would be crucified with criminals	Isaiah 53:12	Matthew 27:38, Mark 15:27-28

33. Would be given vinegar to drink	Psalm 69:21	Matt 27:34, John 19:28-30
34. His hands and feet would be pierced	Psalm 22:16, Zech 12:10	John 20:25-27
35. Would be mocked and ridiculed	Psalm 22:7-8	Luke 23:35
36. Soldiers would gamble for His clothes	Psalm 22:18	Luke 23:34, Matt 27:35-36
37. His bones would not be broken	Exodus 12:46, Psalm 34:20	John 19:33-36
38. Would be forsaken by God	Psalm 22:1	Matthew 27:46
39. He would pray for His enemies	Psalm 109:4	Luke 23:34
40. His side would be pierced	Zechariah 12:10	John 19:34
41. He would be buried with the rich	Isaiah 53:9	Matthew 27:57-60
42. He would be resurrected from the dead	Psalm 16:10, Psalm 49:15	Matt 28:2-7, Acts 2:22-32
43. He would ascend to Heaven	Psalm 24:7-10	Mark 16:19, Luke 24:51
44. Would be seated at the right hand of God	Psalm 68:18, Psalm 110:1	Mark 16:19, Matt 22:44
45. He would be a sacrifice for sin	Isaiah 53:5-12	Romans 5:6-8
46. The Messiah will establish an everlasting Kingdom	Daniel 7:13-14	Revelations 19

Some of the prophecies are vague but many are very specific. Countless scholars agree that there is significant evidence that the prophecies were given centuries before Jesus was born. It is proposed that because Jesus Christ's life fulfilled the prophecies it is impossible for the prophets to make so many accurate "guesses" without God's guidance.

It is not unusual that the Messiah would be born of a woman [1] but it is unexpected that He would be prophesied to be born of a virgin [3]. It is no surprise that He would be in the line of Abraham and even a descendent of King David [4,5,6,7,8] but it is unexpected that He would spend time in Egypt [11]. If the Messiah were to be God with us, it is surprising that He would be rejected by the leadership of Israel [12,14]. There is not much of a surprise in the claims of 15 through 23, but it is expected that Kings, especially the King of Kings would arrive on a horse, not on the back of a humble donkey [24]. Given

that the Messiah is God with us, the probability of accurately predicting that He would be betrayed [26], falsely accused [28], hated and abused [30,31], and crucified with criminals [32] is very unlikely. The possibility of predicting the price of 30 pieces of silver to betray Jesus and then to be used to purchase the potter's field is impossible to predict hundreds of years before.

Then there is the prediction of piercing his hands and feet which was never practiced before the time of the prophecy. Crucifixion only became common by the Romans, hundreds of years later [34]. The prophecies of the soldiers offering Him vinegar [33], gambling for his clothes [36], and not breaking his legs [37] seem to indicate that the Roman soldiers were trying to fulfill prophecies. However, their mocking and ridicule [30,31,32,35] demonstrate their lack of respect for Him so this is very doubtful. It is interesting to note that the common practice to kill those being crucified was to break their legs so they would suffocate, so even if the prophets of old foresaw crucifixion, it is highly doubtful that they could guess that a spear would be thrust into Jesus' side [40] to verify that He had died.

It is not intuitive for us to understand Jesus taking on the sins of the world to pay for our debts but this was prophesized and fulfilled [45].

[1 Peter 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.](#)

It is well understood that God's holiness rejects sin and apparently, it was the goal of the forces of darkness for the Messiah to be forsaken [38]. However, because the Messiah God with us, when the debt was paid by His blood and death, Jesus Christ's righteousness conquered sin, reuniting Him with God.

And, in addition to the Old Testament prophecy, Jesus also prophesized that He would rise 3 days after His death [42], conquering death (Matthew 1:21).

Therefore, all those who embrace the Lord Jesus Christ, are covered with His righteousness, allowing them to conquer sin and death, so that they can enjoy an eternal relationship with God.

[1 Peter 1:3,4 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,](#)

The Bible describes God's plan for the Messiah (God incarnate) to come to earth, to allow Himself to be falsely accused, and crucified to conquer sin and death. It is natural to expect that the Messiah would then reign on the earth as the King of kings. But it was prophesied and fulfilled that Jesus Christ returned to heaven [43], and is seated at the right hand of God [44]. And because Jesus Christ gave the ultimate sacrifice, it is no surprise that He has been given all authority in heaven and on earth and is building an everlasting Kingdom [46] (Matthew 28:18-20).

Prophecy 46 also predicts that the Lord Jesus Christ will return with all majesty and power.



The Old Testament makes many fantastic claims that defy logic, but over several hundreds of years, many prophets predicted details of the promised Messiah. Stories are easily fabricated but when Jesus Christ was born and fulfilled all of the prophecies, such claims must be taken very seriously.

Many reject being subjected to God and His moral standards and have ulterior motives to deny the validity of the Bible. However, given the potential eternal consequences, it is vital for every individual to not rely on the opinions of others but to carefully evaluate the evidence for themselves. Sadly, many believe and embrace what they want, rather than seek the truth, especially when the Bible is involved.

**Evidence of Jesus Christ's Devine power:**

Countless numbers of scholars have spent their lives comparing, looking for mistakes, and challenging the validity of the New Testament. Instead of revealing significant errors, many have been convinced of the validity of the Bible (See Appendix C). Either the four Gospels describe the Lord Jesus Christ’s supernatural power, or they are all lies. Evidence of His divine power is recorded in the 4 Gospels:

Miracle	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
1. Turns water into wine				2:1-11
2. Heals an official’s son				4:43-54
3. Drives out evil spirits from a man		1:21-27	4:31-36	
4. Heals Peter’s mother-in-law fever	8:14-15	1:29-31	4:38-39	
5. Heals many sick and oppressed	8:16-17	1:32-34	4:40-41	
6. Miraculous catch of Fish			5:1-11	
7. Heals man with leprosy	8:1-4	1:40-45	5:12-14	
8. Heals a Centurian’s paralyzed servant	8:5-13		7:1-10	
9. Heals paralytic	9:1-8	2:1-12	5:17-26	
10. Heals man’s withered hand	12:9-14	3:1-6	6:6-11	
11. Raises widow’s son from the dead			7:11-17	
12. Calms a storm on the sea	8:23-27	4:35-41	8:22-25	
13. Casts demons out of a man into a heard of pigs	8:28-33	5:1-20	8:26-39	
14. Heals woman of long-term bleeding issues	9:20-22	5:25-34	8:42-48	
15. Raises Jairus’ daughter Back to life	9:18,23-26	5:21-24,35-43	8:40-42,49-56	

16. Restores sight of two blind men	9:27-31			
17. Heals mute man	9:32-34			
18. Heals crippled man				5:1-15
19. Feeds 5,000 plus women and children	14:13-21	6:30-44	9:10-17	6:1-15
20. Walks on water	14:22-33	6:45-52		6:16-21
21. Heals many sick	14:34-36	6:53-56		
22. Casts out demon from a girl	15:21-28	7:24-30		
23. Heals deaf and dumb man		7:31-37		
24. Feeds 4,000 plus women and children	15:32-39	8:1-13		
25. Heals blind man		8:22-26		
26. Heals man born blind				9:1-12
27. Casts out unclean spirit from a boy	17:14-20	9:14-29	9:37-43	
28. Pays tax with a coin found in a fish	17:24-27			
29. Heals a blind, mute demoniac	12:22-23		11:14-23	
30. Heals woman with a disabling spirit			13:10-17	
31. Heal man with dropsy			14:1-6	
32. Cleanses 10 lepers			17:11-19	
33. Lazarus is raised from the dead				11:1-45
34. Restored the sight of the blind	20:29-34	10:46-52	18:35-43	
35. Withers a fig tree	21:18-22	11:12-14		
36. Restores a severed ear			22:50-51	
37. A miraculous catch of fish				21:4-11

If the Biblical claims are false, then it cannot be claimed that Jesus Christ was a good man, but the ultimate scam artist and liar. But, if the claims are true, they reveal the supernatural power of the Lord Jesus Christ and that the Bible is true. This reinforces the critical need for every individual to carefully examine the evidence for themselves.

#### **His death and resurrection:**

Again, these are either fantastic events or lies.

Matthew 27:45-56 From **noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land** [1]. About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”). When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling Elijah.” Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. The rest said, “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.” And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. **At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom** [2]. **The earth shook, the rocks split** [3] and **the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life** [4]. They came out of the tombs after Jesus’ resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people. When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, “Surely he was the Son of God!”

[1] Every person in Jerusalem would have seen 3 hours of darkness in the afternoon.

[2] The veil represented the separation between the Holiness of God and sinful man. It was about 45 feet tall and several inches thick so when it tore from top to bottom it signified that through Jesus Christ’s death, God removed the separation between God and man.

[3] Upon His death, there was a massive earthquake and breaking open of many tombs. Most people in Jerusalem were probably aware of evidence of a significant event.

[4] Before the separation between God and man was removed, the Bible explains that those who looked forward to the Messiah by faith were in a suspended state until Jesus rose from His grave. They were then resurrected and seen by many.

Within the next few weeks, 3,000 people, most of whom probably witnessed many of the miracles described above, embraced Jesus Christ at what is called Pentecost. If these events did not occur, it is doubtful that so many would follow Jesus Christ, especially if He had not risen from the grave. If the events had not occurred why would anyone of the time believe such fabricated claims?

Some may claim mass hysteria but Rome demanded that all individuals under their rule bow to Caesar as god. However, those who followed the Lord Jesus Christ did so under the threat of violent death and Rome crucified countless Believers, hanging them on crosses along the sides of Roman roads for miles over the first 300 years. Not exactly an attraction for individuals to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ, but the early Church continued to grow and has continued to spread throughout the World to this day. The most reasonable conclusion is that many of the original followers witnessed these supernatural events and then developed personal relationships with the Lord Jesus Christ. So it wasn’t impossible to embrace their faith in light of Roman torture.

The fulfilled prophecies, His life, His death, and His resurrection present considerable evidence that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah. And then there are the countless numbers who sacrificed their lives to honor Him as Lord over the last 2,000 years. For so many to sacrifice their lives over so many centuries is testimony that their relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ was very real to them.

In addition to what God has done in my life, the evidence of those who were willing to die for their faith strengthens my confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Bible, and the validity of His moral standards.

However, it is important to mention that not all who call themselves Christians appear to have personal relationships with God. Many are Christians by their religious activities and values but those that I am referring to have wonderful abiding friendships with the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **The Lord Jesus Christ's teaching:**

Evolutionists promote ideas that mankind emerged from cosmic ooze, but as the intricacies of life are understood, especially the complexities within cells, scientists are forced to admit that there must have been a designer. But because of the moral standards of the Bible, despite historical and archeological evidence, they refuse to accept the God of the Bible. However, given the nature of man's heart and philosophies of the survival of the fittest, "moral evolution" is possibly more unlikely than biological evolution.

Many want to believe that the nature of man is basically good, but given historical figures of Adolph Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Mao Tse-tung, and many others, any honest person must admit that any such notion is a lie.

The Bible teaches that God's law is written on the heart of man (Romans 2:15). But, since the fall, the nature of man is usually controlled by the deceitfulness of the heart. And then when His moral laws are violated, the result is guilt.

It is proposed that because God's law is written on the heart, and because of rebellion there have been countless man-made gods. All of these gods demand some level of honor and respect. If they are not pleased, crops fail, children die, and there are any number of calamities. Some religions claim their god promotes love but Jesus Christ is the only God that demonstrated genuine love when He allowed Himself to be sacrificed on the Cross to pay for sin.

And, consistent with His life, the core of His teaching was love:

**Matthew 22:36-40** "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And he said to him, "**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.** This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: **You shall love your neighbor as yourself.** On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

Not only did He teach the importance of love but to also love enemies:

**Matthew 5:43-45** "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, **Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,** so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.

Therefore, much of the New Testament teaching and the purpose of life is for individuals to learn to die to self and to put others first. The Bible is the only book that is built on such a strong foundation of love.

## The purpose of life:

If it is accepted that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah. It follows that an all-powerful God performed the supernatural events recorded in the Bible and history. And that God has specific goals for the earth and mankind. And He has prompted, promoted, and preserved the integrity of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16) to reveal His purposes. Therefore, the fantastic nature of the stories reveals who God is, His power, and His character.

Furthermore, the Bible teaches that God's ultimate purpose for mankind is to create an intelligent being (man) to have genuine, close, and loving friendships with Himself. It is proposed that there is an inherent challenge to instill genuine love into any created entity. This is because the ability to love cannot be simply "programmed". Agape-type love is when personal wants and desires are sacrificial for the needs of others. Therefore, it was necessary for God to instill free will and strong self-centered desires into mankind. Thus, God placed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden. However, God also planned to promote and demonstrate genuine love by allowing His Son to become a humble man, to be falsely accused, painfully crucified, and to suffer the sins of the world.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

The downside of giving mankind free will is the tremendous desire to lie, cheat, steal, and murder if necessary to fulfill their lusts and desires.

Romans 5:8 "But God shows his love for us in that **while we were still sinners**, Christ died for us."

The actions and attitudes of the natural heart are sins, causing all to be enemies of God. So, when Christ died for us, God demonstrated perfect love towards mankind, His enemies.

And, because of God's perfect holiness, it is beyond our understanding of the high price the Lord Jesus Christ paid when He took on the sins of the world.

John 3:17-18 for God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. <sup>18</sup> **Whoever believes in him is not condemned**, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

When sin entered the world, mankind was separated from God. Thankfully, Jesus Christ's payment for sin allows individuals to be made righteous, so when God reveals Himself to individuals, they must humbly embrace their need for a savior and reflect love towards God by yielding their selfish wants and

desires to Him by bowing to Him as Lord. When this occurs, the Holy Spirit enters into them and regenerates their spirit, causing them to be born again. Thus, giving mankind the ability of Agape love.

Titus 3:4-7 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, **by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.**

Because the heart of the natural man is desperately wicked (Jeremiah 29:11) it is extremely hard for them to demonstrate genuine love. However, when individuals are born again, their hearts are regenerated and they receive tremendous power to be living sacrifices (Galatians 2:20). However, when a Believer is born again, God does not remove the natural desires of the heart because love is demonstrated when these powerful desires are sacrificed for God and others. Therefore, it is proposed that the primary purpose of life on earth is for Believers to perfect love to prepare them for an eternal relationship with God.

#### **Challenge and Warnings:**

The Bible warns of three primary motivations of man's natural heart, the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life. Those who desire to fulfill their lusts of the flesh are very motivated to reject God's moral standards. The problem is when God's standards are thrown out, lying, stealing, and moral failures are justified, which destroys societies, families, and individual lives. Lust of the eyes produces greed and selfishness, not only for material possessions but ultimately to control others. This is the driving motivation for tyrants and dictators. Pride of life motivates individuals to work toward and demand that everything and everyone bow to them.

This is not a pretty picture but these are the motivations of those who reject the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Scriptures, and His moral standards. And, when God is rejected, finding a meaningful purpose in life, striving to perfect love, and having any hope after death are all lost. What may not be so obvious is that God allows those who reject the Lord Jesus Christ to have futile thinking, foolishness, and darkness in their hearts.

Romans 1:18-22 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, **who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.** For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, **but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools,**

Many claim that there is no evidence to support the validity of the Bible, but when teachers, friends, and many in authority have such ulterior motives, their arguments should be highly suspect and

questionable. Godless evolutionists and Biblical Creationists use the same scientific evidence, but those who reject God's moral standards and the Bible, interpret "scientific" evidence to justify their lives, philosophies, and their moral choices. The motivations and biases of scientists are just as important to discern as the scientific evidence.

The Bible either proclaims many lies or fantastic revelations of God's power. **It is proposed that the prophecies and fulfillment of the Messiah, the life of Jesus Christ, His resurrection, His teachings, and the countless transformed lives, and what God has done in my life is convincing evidence the Bible is true.** And since the Bible teaches that without a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, there are eternal consequences. The challenge is for every individual to carefully evaluate the evidence of the validity of the Bible. Not to listen to what is popular or to those who claim their own authority but to speak truth in your heart.

The next challenge is when someone discerns the truths of the Bible, to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ, and bow to Him as Lord. When an individual is born again, they are covered with the Lord Jesus Christ's righteousness which allows them to enter directly into God's presence. Thus, they have the opportunity to begin building a friendship with the Lord Jesus Christ. [All Honor to the King- Discipleship](#) discusses important aspects of these relationships and [Discipleship Meditation System \(DMS\)-A Handbook for Mentors](#) is designed to help build abiding friendships with the Lord Jesus Christ.

**If it is accepted that Jesus Christ is God and He submitted Himself to tremendous humility, pain, torture, and suffering because He loves mankind, it is important for every individual to embrace that He is worthy of the highest praise and honor of our lives.**

#### **Appendage A, The Bible has been challenged:**

It is safe to say that the Bible is the most scrutinized Book in all of history. There have been many devout atheists who have sought to prove it to be false, only for some to embrace the truths of the Bible. One example is Lee Stoble. The point isn't to promote him or his books but they are good examples of the level of scrutiny that the Bible has survived.

I grew up in a culture and attended schools that have been antagonistic and critical of the Bible. Some arguments initially sounded reasonable but over time, most have been answered or disproven.

God welcomes honest questioning but those with insincere motives usually go down perverted paths (Romans 1). It has been said that "morality dictates theology". Therefore, it is very important to seek truth regardless of wants, personal motivations, or desires.