To my brother, Jim.

As I look back on this life,
I am amazed and humbled at the manifold wisdom of God.
What I mean is this.
Of all the people that the Lord would ordain to overshadow me,
via an only older brother,
it was and is you.

Thank you for the sharing of your time,
your patience, your wisdom, and very life in me.
It has proven to be an investment in God’s hands,
to help mold me into a responsible man.

At times, you have been more then a brother to me,
but a father figure as well, when I needed it most.
Thank you, Jim.
I love you.
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Preface

When I was a “brand new” Christian I was busy doing what I figured all Christians should do and that is, witnessing. I was learning new and exciting information each day as I had enrolled in Bible College eight weeks after being saved. One day, I was engaged in a conversation with my brother Jim concerning the Book of Genesis and the conditions of the Garden of Eden prior to the fall of man. As we continued to talk, I was challenged with the classical response of, “How do I know its true?” This hit me like a ton of bricks. I knew the Bible was God’s Word but this was the first time that I was asked for “proof.” I stumbled through the rest of the conversation and left shortly thereafter. That night I prayed a prayer that changed the course of this life. I cried out, “God, I don’t want to be a ‘copy cat Christian.’ I do not want to merely repeat or ‘copy’ what I learn about the Scriptures from my instructors, even though I do not doubt their integrity, but I want to know for myself, why I believe what I believe.” From then on, I began to not only study the truth of God’s Word but to understand it from all angles, skeptic and non-skeptic alike. This has proven to be a powerful force in enabling God to use this life right on up to today in “giving a reason for the hope that lies within me.”

Now, even though this is clearly a mandate for all believers to fulfill, I have noticed that over the years, although there are volumes of apologetic books out there to equip the Christian to give a proper defense and aid them in effective witnessing, many people still will not pick them up. Some might buy one or two in their lifetime but they seem have a hard time in reading them due to the “technical” language that is by necessity contained within. The constant complaint seems to be “It’s too hard to understand. It’s too boring.” Therefore, the purpose of this book is not to merely hand you yet another apologetic book on popular questions raised by the skeptic, but one that is easy to understand and follow, and believe it or not, actually fun to read! My desire is that you will not only finish this book, but that you would join me in a passionate pursuit of God’s truth and share it with every soul that the Lord would put in your path. One last piece of advice. When you are through reading this book, then will you please READ YOUR BIBLE? I mean that in the nicest possible way. Enjoy, and I’m looking forward to seeing you someday!

Billy Crone 2009
Part I

Does God Really Exist?
Well, I’d like to start off this book by giving a proper appreciation to all our Mother’s out there. This is simply because, the ministry of motherhood is a powerful tool for the shaping and instruction of the next generation for good or bad. Therefore, we should give pause to celebrate this wondrous and life changing mission of motherhood.

Anybody knows that being a mom is a tremendous privilege but it also can be quite draining at times. It would seem that much of a mother’s time is spent correcting and training their children with a special kind of wisdom that only mother’s seem to have. For instance I came across a list of “special wisdom” that maybe even your mom shared with you.

1. My Mother taught me about ANTICIPATION....
   “Just wait until your father gets home!”
2. My Mother taught me about RECEIVING....
   “You are going to get it when we get home!”
3. My Mother taught me to MEET A CHALLENGE...
   “What were you thinking? Answer me when I talk to you … Don’t talk back to me!”
4. My Mother taught me LOGIC ...
   “If you fall off that swing and break your neck, you can’t go to the store with me.”

5. My Mother taught me about MEDICINE.....
   “If you don’t stop crossing your eyes, they’re going to freeze that way.”

6. My Mother taught me to THINK AHEAD ...
   “If you don’t pass your spelling test, you’ll never get a good job.”

7. My Mother taught me about ESP...
   “Put your sweater on; don’t you think I know when you are cold.”

8. My Mother taught me HUMOR ...
   “When the lawn mower cuts off your toes, don’t come running to me.”

9. My Mother taught me how to BECOME AN ADULT...
   “If you don’t eat your vegetables, you’ll never grow up.”

10. My Mother taught me about GENETICS....
    “You’re just like your father!”

11. My Mother taught me about my ROOTS....
    “Do you think you were born in a barn?”

12. And my all time favorite ... JUSTICE....
    “One day you’ll have kids, and I hope they turn out just like you....then you’ll see what it’s like.”

Yes, mom’s are very good at teaching and sharing wisdom, aren’t they? But you know, I hope that there is one thing that your mom never taught you and that is of course to question, “Does God Really Exist?” The question of God’s existence is one that everyone one of us here has asked ourselves at one time or another. And what amazes me in our society today is that instead of quickly answering with an affirmative, “Yes, of course!”, many people either can’t make up their minds or just flat out say no. And the question of “Does God Really Exist?” is no small question. It has serious consequences to one’s life now and also in the hereafter. **You see, what you believe determines how you behave.** And if you don’t believe that there is a God, then you will act accordingly.

People, this is what is wrong with our society.
Therefore, this is what I want to do over the next four chapters. I want to give you solid proof for the existence of God not only for your own edification but so that you might be able to give a ready answer to those who are in doubt.

**Does God really exist? Absolutely!**

**Exodus 3:1-14** “One day Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he went deep into the wilderness near Sinai, the mountain of God. Suddenly, the angel of the LORD appeared to him as a blazing fire in a bush. Moses was amazed because the bush was engulfed in flames, but it didn’t burn up. ‘Amazing!’ Moses said to himself. ‘Why isn’t that bush burning up? I must go over to see this.’

When the LORD saw that he had caught Moses’ attention, God called to him from the bush, ‘Moses! Moses!’ ‘Here I am!’ Moses replied. ‘Do not come any closer,’ God told him. ‘Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground.’ Then he said, ‘I am the God of your ancestors – the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ When Moses heard this, he hid his face in his hands because he was afraid to look at God.

Then the LORD told him, ‘You can be sure I have seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard their cries for deliverance from their harsh slave drivers. Yes, I am aware of their suffering. So I have come to rescue them from the Egyptians and lead them out of Egypt into their own good and spacious land. It is a land flowing with milk and honey – the land where the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites live. The cries of the people of Israel have reached me, and I have seen how the Egyptians have oppressed them with heavy tasks. Now go, for I am sending you to Pharaoh. You will lead my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.’

‘But who am I to appear before Pharaoh?’ Moses asked God. ‘How can you expect me to lead the Israelites out of Egypt?’ Then God told him, ‘I will be with you. And this will serve as proof that I have sent you: When you have brought the Israelites out of Egypt, you will return here to worship God at this very mountain.’

But Moses protested, ‘If I go to the people of Israel and tell them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,” they won’t believe me. They will ask, ‘Which god are you talking about? What is his name?’ Then what should I tell them?’
God replied, ‘I AM THE ONE WHO ALWAYS IS. Just tell them, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” (NLT)

In this passage of Scripture God declares to us that He just is. He is the Great I Am. He has always been and will always be Who He is, the Supreme One and Only Deity. He doesn’t have to “prove” Himself. He simply tells Moses that He just is and that He has called His people to worship Him. This is the 1st line of argument for the existence of God. It is called the Ontological Argument.

Ontology means the study of being. It refers to the saying that if anyone even considers the fact that a Supreme Being exists (and we do) then this is in a way, admitting that there is a God. Here’s how the basic argument goes.

1. God is by definition, a necessary Being.
2. It is logically necessary to affirm what is necessary to the concept of a Necessary Being.
3. Existence is logically necessary to the concept of a Necessary Being.
4. Therefore, a Necessary Being (God) necessarily exists. 2

In simpler terms, a Supreme Being, i.e. God, is the greatest Being which can be conceived or thought of. If He didn’t exist, we wouldn’t conceive of Him. Therefore, a Supreme Being exists because we consider Him to be a Necessary Being which causes us to worship.

You see, the critical question is that if there is no God then why else would every culture on the planet have an automatic and necessary ability and desire to worship something or someone higher or above themselves? Why do people even conceive of God unless of course God, Who really does exist, put that desire of worship in their hearts so that they might worship the One and Only True God.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 “He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.” (NIV)
You see, this is precisely what God has done. He has put eternity in the hearts of everyone who has ever been born. It is this innate desire that we all have that creates within us the automatic desire to worship something or someone higher or above ourselves. Just look at all the different religions on the planet. People everywhere are busy worshipping “their version” of God. If there was no God then why are people trying to worship something or someone? If there is no God then why do people even bother? But what we do in fact see is that people all over the planet are busy worshipping “their version” of God giving credence that God must necessarily exist.

But sadly, many people who “think” they are worshipping the True God and are even engaged in “religious” activity are actually being fooled by the devil and are still on their way to hell. I say this because if their worship does not come from the Biblical account of God then their beliefs and practices are ultimately satanically inspired. To show you just how far off base some people’s “version” of God is, let’s look at just a few of the unbiblical beliefs of the occult & various cults out there.

VARIOUS FALSE BELIEFS OF CULTS & THE OCCULT

1. Mormonism:
   a. They will become gods.
   b. Women will forever become pregnant populating planets with “spirit babies.”
   c. Everyone will appear before Joseph Smith at the final Judgment.
   d. Jesus is the “spirit brother” of satan.

2. Jehovah’s Witnesses:
   a. Jesus was not God but merely the archangel Michael.
   b. People are not to think for themselves but to submit to the Watchtower Society.
   c. Jesus is not to be worshipped.
d. You have to “earn” your way to heaven.

3. Islam:
   a. God won’t provide your salvation. You earn it.
   b. The Koran, not the Bible, is the very Word of God.
   c. Jesus escaped the crucifixion and later appeared to His disciples without having to die.
   d. Muslim men who “go to paradise” get to satisfy their lust with as many virgins as they want.

4. Hinduism:
   a. Worships multiple deities. To date, about 30 million “gods & goddesses.”
   b. Reincarnate into other bodies (cows, snakes, etc.)
   c. Caste Society – People are “born into” a certain “position” in life from priest to slave and cannot escape their “destiny.”

5. Spiritism:
   a. Use animals, plants, and human remains to contact the “spirit realm.”
   b. Drugs are used to achieve a “spiritual trance” to communicate with the gods.
   c. Through certain rituals one can be “inhabited” by a god (demonic possession).

6. New Age:
   a. There is no such thing as sin.
   b. You determine your own reality.
   c. You are already “god” but you have only forgotten this.

7. Buddhism:
   a. There is no need of personal salvation.
   b. There is no afterlife of heaven or hell.
   c. Main goal is to achieve “nirvana” (state of nothingness).

Now, we Americans sometimes laugh at those people who believe that their ancestors have reincarnated into a cow or snake. In fact, we often chuckle at those who worship the little Buddha statues, which is nothing more than idolatry. But we don’t even think twice about our modern idolatry, like this guy.
“A young man eager to be rich asked an old rich man how he made his money. The old guy fingered his expensive wool vest and said, ‘Well, son, it was 1932, the depth of the Great Depression. I was down to my last nickel. I invested that nickel in an apple. I spent the entire day polishing the apple and, at the end of the day, I sold the apple for ten cents. The next morning, I invested those ten cents in two apples. I spent the entire day polishing them and sold them at 5:00 PM for 20 cents. I continued this system for a month, by the end of which I’d accumulated a fortune of $1.37. Then my wife’s father died and left us two million dollars.’” ³

As you can see people worship money. Some will ruin their health, marriage, and families just for more money, making money an idol. Oh but we don’t stop there. We also worship pleasure like this guy did.

“There was a 92 year old man who went to the doctor to get a physical. A few days later, the doctor saw the man walking down the street full of pleasure with a gorgeous young lady on his arm.

At his follow up visit, the doctor talked to the man and said, ‘You’re really doing great, aren’t you?’

The man replied, ‘Just doing what you said Doctor. Get a hot mamma and be cheerful.’

The Doctor said, ‘I didn’t say that. I said you’ve got a heart murmur. Be careful.’” ⁴

Yes, some people worship pleasure. They think that pleasure is where you’ll find fulfillment in life, making pleasure an idol. D. Martin Lloyd-Jones states, “A man’s god is that for which he lives, for which he is prepared to give his time, his energy, his money, that which stimulates him and rouses him, excites, and enthuses him.” ⁵ What is it that consumes your time, your energy, your treasure? Whatever it is, it has become your god. And if it’s not God Almighty then your guilty of idol worship just as much as bowing down before a Buddha statue.
You see, God has set eternity in our hearts so that we might come to worship Him, the One and Only True God, not plants, trees, rocks, money, pleasure, material things, or even yourself. God has set eternity in our hearts revealing to us that He does in fact exist so that we can ultimately be restored in a relationship with Him by having our sins forgiven, not through a system of works, but only through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. However, sadly, as we have seen, many people, although they automatically know that there is a God, refuse to worship Him on His terms and instead become fools by worshipping a lie. This is what the Apostle Paul was saying.

Romans 1:21-25 “Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn’t worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. The result was that their minds became dark and confused. Claiming to be wise, they became utter fools instead. And instead of worshipping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshipped idols made to look like mere people, or birds and animals and snakes.

So God let them go ahead and do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other’s bodies. Instead of believing what they knew was the truth about God, they deliberately chose to believe lies. So they worshipped the things God made but not the Creator himself, who is to be praised forever. Amen.” (NLT)

You see, unless people come to God and worship Him on His terms in His way through His Son Jesus Christ as is clearly explained for us in the Bible, God will give them over to their sinful desires and they will spend eternity separated from Him in hell.

As we have seen, it is pretty obvious that God does exist because people are busy everywhere worshipping something or someone. But even with this clear and solid evidence for the existence of God, some people still refuse to look at the facts that are staring them right in the face. Just like this guy did.
“A man bought two horses, and could never remember which one was which. So a neighbor suggested that he cut the tail of one of the horses. This procedure worked out great, that is until the other horse got his tail caught in a bush. It tore just right and looked exactly like the other horse’s tail and the man was stuck again.

So then the neighbor suggested the man notch the ear of one of the horses. And this worked fine too. That is until the other horse caught his ear on a barbed wire fence. Once again the man couldn’t tell them apart.

Finally the neighbor suggested that the man measure the horses for height. And when he did, he was very pleased because he discovered that the white horse was two inches taller than the black one.”

Now that guy was a fool wasn’t he? He refused to look at the facts that were staring him right in the face. But you know, there’s an even bigger fool then that guy. It’s the person who says there is no God.

Psalms 14:1 “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” (NAS)

If there is no God then why else would every culture on the planet have an automatic ability and desire to worship something or someone higher or above themselves? Unless of course God, Who really does exist, put that desire of worship in their hearts so that they might worship the One and Only True God.

The question of “Does God Really Exist?” is no small question. It has serious consequences to one’s life now and also in the hereafter. **What a person believes determines how they behave.** And if our society by and large doesn’t believe that there is a God, then they will act ungodly.

People of God, what our society needs today is to come face to face with the truth that there really is a God. We don’t need any more midnight basketball leagues to curb gang activity or metal detectors in school facilities. What we need is the truth of God’s existence to be proclaimed across our great nation. People need to know that **God alone** is to be worshipped, and that God alone will
demand an account of every word and every deed we have ever done. And people need to know that God alone has stooped down out of love for His fallen sinful creation. He has freely given His Only Son so that our sins may be completely forgiven and that we may receive the gift of eternal life in order to save us from the wrath to come.

**Does God Really Exist?** Yes, as we have seen, He does. The question for the skeptic is, “Will you choose the right answer before it’s too late?”
Chapter Two

Teleological Argument

You know, sometimes when you try to convey a message, idea, or particular truth, part of it can get lost in the process of translation. I mean, you can share or reveal something to someone that is plain and clear to you but nonetheless they interpret it in a totally different way. Anybody reading this book encounter that? Well, for those of you who didn’t raise your hands, I stumbled across a list of actual English subtitles of movies from Hong Kong showing us that some things can be lost in the translation.

1. I am darn unsatisfied to be killed in this way.
2. Fatty, you with your thick face have hurt my instep.
3. Gun wounds again?
4. A normal person wouldn’t steal pituitaries.
5. Take my advice, or I’ll spank you a lot.
6. Who gave you the nerve to get killed here?
7. I’ll fire aimlessly if you don’t come out!
8. I will surround their house by myself.
10. Beat him out of recognizable shape!
11. Yah-hah, evil spider woman! I have captured you by the short rabbits and can now deliver you violently to your doctor for a thorough extermination.
12. I have been scared silly too much lately.
13. I got knife scars more than the number of your leg’s hair!
14. Beware! Your bones are going to be disconnected.
15. You always use violence. I should’ve ordered glutinous rice chicken.
16. Darn, I’ll burn you into a BBQ chicken.
17. Quiet or I’ll blow your throat up.
18. Greetings, large black person. Let us not forget to form up a team together and go into the country to inflict the pain of our karate feets on some but of the giant lizard person. ¹

Yes, some things do get lost in the process of translation and are unfortunately misinterpreted, aren’t they? Well, I hope that there is one thing you don’t interpret or answer wrong and that is of course the question, “Does God Really Exist?” And the question “Does God Really Exist?” is no small question. It has serious consequences to one’s life now and also in the hereafter. You see, what you believe determines how you behave. And if you don’t believe that there is a God, then you will act accordingly. People, this is what is wrong with our society.

Therefore, were going to continue our study of looking at the solid evidence for the existence of God. In the last chapter we looked at the 

**Ontological Argument.** There we saw that every culture on the planet has an automatic inward desire to worship something or someone higher than themselves and that as the Bible states, God purposely put this desire in everyone’s heart that they might come and worship Him, the One and Only True God. You see, if there is no God then why do people even bother? But since we do in fact see that people all over the world are busy worshipping “their version” of a god then this gives credence that God must necessarily exist.

In this chapter I want to look at the 2nd line of argument for the existence of God which is called the **Teleological Argument.** This argument states that the order of our world is not accidental, as evolutionists or atheists
would say. Rather, if the world shows intelligent design (and it does), then logically an Ultimate Designer (God) **must also** exist. **Does God really exist?** Absolutely!

**Romans 1:18-20** “But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who push the truth away from themselves. For the truth about God is known to them instinctively. God has put this knowledge in their hearts. From the time the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky and all that God made. They can clearly see his invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse whatsoever for not knowing God.” (NLT)

   You see, it is actually the evolutionists and atheists who are storing up for themselves the wrath of God for they are guilty of suppressing the truth about God’s existence. God has made His existence plain to them in the intelligent design of creation and so on Judgment Day they will be without excuse. And to see just how plain God’s existence has been made known, let’s take a look at how the **Teleological Argument** basically goes.

1. A watch shows that it was put together for an intelligent purpose (to keep time):
   a. It has a spring to give it motion.
   b. It has a series of wheels to transmit this motion.
   c. The wheels are made of brass so that they do not rust.
   d. The spring is made of steel because of the resilience of that metal.
   e. The front cover is of glass so that one can see through it.
2. The world shows even greater evidence of design than a watch:
   a. The world is a greater work of art than the watch.
   b. The world has more subtle and complex design than a watch.
   c. The world has an endless variety of means adapted to ends.
   d. Therefore, if the existence of a watch implies a watchmaker, the existence of the world implies an even greater intelligent Designer (God). ²

   Pretty straightforward isn’t it? **Design implies an Ultimate Designer.**

But for the diehard evolutionist, I want to look at just a smidgen of the proof out
there that shows us how everything is a product of design not chance or luck.

Let’s start with the Design of the Universe & Earth.

1. **THE FORCE OF GRAVITY:** The force of gravity is that unknown force that causes a mass to be attracted to another mass. What causes this to happen is not known. But what is known, is that if the force of gravity was 1% higher than it is presently, our sun would be much bigger than it presently is and life on earth would cook! If the force were 1% less than the sun would be too small to support life and we would freeze!

2. **THE NUCLEAR FORCE:** This is the force that keeps the protons in the nucleus of each atom together. Protons are positively charged particles that are densely packed in the center (called the nucleus) of each atom. They are packed in the nucleus with neutral particles called neutrons. Anyone who has played with two magnets knows that the two positively charged ends repel each other when held together and that this repulsion gets stronger as the magnets get closer. Well, the same thing happens in the nucleus of the atom. Physicists propose that there is a force that holds these protons in place and this force is able to overcome the repulsive force. This is called the nuclear force. If there were a very slight increase in the strength of this nuclear force then the number of protons that would be attracted to the nucleus would greatly increase and the universe would consist of mainly heavy metals. The chemicals of life, oxygen, hydrogen, carbon, would be almost non-existent. Consequently, life would exist nowhere in the universe. A very slight decrease in the nuclear force and the only element in the universe would be hydrogen, which contains only one proton. The result: No life!

3. **ELECTROMAGNETIC COUPLING CONSTANT:** This force is the same as the magnetic force that causes like charges to repel and opposite charges to attract. This force also causes negatively charged electrons to be attracted to the positively charged nucleus. If this constant were slightly stronger, then it would prevent atoms from sharing electrons and the result would be that no molecules and consequently no life could exist. If this constant were slightly smaller, then electrons would too easily leave the nucleus and again, no life!

4. **EXPANSION RATE OF THE UNIVERSE:** The universe is expanding away from a point of origin. The speed of this expansion is approximately 2,000,000 miles per hour. Physicists have determined that if this rate were a
few percent slower, then all the matter in the universe would collapse into a ball. If the rate of expansion were slightly faster, then galaxies and stars could not form. Either way, no life!

5. **MASS OF THE UNIVERSE:** The matter in the entire universe is also fixed within a very narrow range. According to astrophysicists, a few percent increase in the amount of matter in the universe would have resulted in stars which were too big and then too hot. A few percent decrease in the total mass of the universe would have resulted in no heavy elements and stars too small to support life. The main element in the universe would be hydrogen. The final result: No life in the universe.

6. **DISTANCE BETWEEN STARS:** Astrophysicists have discovered that the distance between stars is critical to life. If the distance between the stars was just a few percent closer, then this would destabilize the planetary orbits around the sun and the earth would not be capable of supporting life. If the distance between stars was too far, then planets would not be able to form. Again, no life.

7. **GRAVITY ON EARTH:** The earth’s gravity is critical to the balance of the atmosphere. A slight increase in the earth’s gravitational strength and the atmosphere would retain too much ammonia and methane, which are toxic to life. A slight decrease in the strength of the earth’s gravity and the earth’s atmosphere would lose too much water. In either case life could not exist.

8. **EARTH’S DISTANCE FROM THE SUN:** The water cycle on our earth is of course critical to the maintenance of life on earth. The distance of the earth from the sun plays a critical role in the balance of the water cycle. If the earth was a few percent farther from the sun, then the earth would be too cool for a stable water cycle and the entire planet would freeze over. If the earth was a few percent closer to the sun, the waters of the earth would boil. In either case, no life.

9. **THE EARTH’S ROTATION TIME:** The time the earth takes to rotate on it’s axis is critical to the weather balance. If the time the earth takes to rotate once (now 24 hours) were increased by a few percent, then temperature differences would be too great to support life. If the rotation time were a little slower, then the atmospheric wind velocities would be too great and life would be wiped out.
10. **SIZE OF THE MOON**: The gravitational effects that the moon has on our earth’s weather and tides are critical. If the moon were slightly bigger, then it’s gravitational effect on the earth would be greatly increased. This would result in massive tides and ferocious winds that would wipe out life on earth. If the moon were slightly smaller, then the tides and winds would be too small and the earth would overheat. Again life could not exist.

11. **EARTH’S MAGNETIC FIELD**: The magnetic field is important in protecting the earth’s surface from harmful radiation from the Sun. If the magnetic field was slightly less, then we would have inadequate protection from the sun’s radiation and all life would die. If the magnetic field was slightly stronger, then there would be constant severe magnetic storms and life could not exist as well.

12. **AXIAL TILT OF THE EARTH**: The axial tilt of the earth is important in the temperature balance of the earth’s surface. The earth is tilted 23.5 degrees on its axis. If this tilt were slightly greater or lesser than present, the surface temperature differences would be too great to support life.

13. **OZONE IN THE EARTH’S ATMOSPHERE**: The amount of ozone in the upper atmosphere greatly affects the surface temperature as well as the amount of radiation that reaches the surface of the earth. If the amount of ozone in the atmosphere were slightly increased then the surface temperature would be too low. This is because less heat from the sun would get through the ozone layer. If the ozone layer is depleted by a few percent, then the amount of heat and ultraviolet radiation reaching the surface greatly increases. This would cause the planet to overheat and excess radiation would cause death due to cancer. The excess heat and radiation would have also prevented spontaneous generation, i.e. the origin of life from non-life by chance.²

Please keep in mind that this is only the tip of the iceberg in regards to the mountainous volumes of data that reveal that all of life is intricately designed. These are just a few of the many ways in which science and astronomy has uncovered the incredible delicate balance and design of our universe and earth. It is obvious that God is the reason for our existence not blind chance. He is the
final cause, not billions of years and luck. The intelligent design that we observe in all areas of life point to an Intelligent Designer. **Design implies an Ultimate Designer** just like a watch. This Intelligent Designer is God.

Now let’s look at the **Design of the Human Body**. As we are about to see, the human body is a storehouse of information concerning the intelligent design of our internal makeup. However, some people miss this crucial point and are unfortunately only concerned about the body’s external makeup like this lady was.

“There was a lady who had just bought a new line of expensive cosmetics absolutely guaranteed to make her look years younger. She sat in front of the mirror for what had to be hours applying the ‘miracle’ products. Finally, when she was done, she turned to her husband and said, ‘Hon, honestly now, what age would you say I am?’

He nodded his head in assessment, and carefully said, ‘Well, hon, judging from your skin, twenty. Your hair, mmmm, eighteen. Your figure, twenty-five.’

‘Oh, you’re so sweet!’

‘Well, hang on, I’m not done adding it up yet.’”

You see, that lady missed the powerful point that one of the body’s greatest treasures is not in young looking skin but in revealing the existence of intelligent design. Let me show you what I mean.

**INTELLIGENT DESIGN OF THE HUMAN BODY**

1. The kidneys contain approximately 280 miles of tubes and filter 185 quarts of water a day from the blood.
2. The heart pumps 5,000 gallons of blood a day. It beats approximately 100,800 times a day or 2 billion 500 million times in an average lifetime.
3. The human skeletal structure is light and flexible yet can withstand enormous stress.
4. The eye has automatic aim, focus, and aperture adjustment. It provides color and 3-dimensional images and can function in darkness to bright light and makes 100,000 motions in a day.

5. The body replaces over 1 trillion cells in a day.

6. The lining of the digestive track turns over about every 2 days. Faster if you eat spicy Mexican food.

7. The lining of our skin turns over about every 2 to 4 weeks. We shed about 40 lbs. of skin in a lifetime. This is why old sofas weigh so much.

8. The body makes 2 to 10 million blood cells every second. If you lined up your red blood cells end to end they would go around the equator of the earth four times.

9. There is enough DNA data in a single human cell to fill an encyclopedia volume. And just as the words and letters in an encyclopedia volume are arranged in an intelligent pattern, the DNA in a cell is likewise perfectly formatted and constructed in an intelligent pattern.

10. Our most sophisticated computers are no match for the human brain. The brain stores so much memory data that by the age of 40 it would take the Empire State building full of computers just to store the same amount of information. 

It is obvious that the body is jammed packed full of evidence for the existence of God due to its amazing and intricate design. **Design implies an Ultimate Designer** just like a watch. This Intelligent Designer is God.

But just to make sure that you completely understand that there is no such thing as chance, or that it could ever even have been possible for life to occur “accidentally,” let’s now look at the **Odds** of an event like this occurring.

“Sir Frederick Hoyle, a world famous astronomer, knighted by the Queen of England, along with some graduate students, set out to calculate the probability of the origin of a single bacterium, by chance in a primordial soup. Using the laws of chemistry, probability, thermodynamics and a computer, they calculated the odds of the spontaneous generation of the simplest known free-living life form on the earth, a bacterium. Prior to this project Hoyle was a firm believer in the spontaneous generation of life. This project however, changed his opinion 180 degrees.
Hoyle and his associates calculated the probability of the spontaneous generation of just the proteins of a single amoeba. He determined that the probability of such a feat is one chance in ten to the 40,000th power, i.e. that’s a 1 with 40,000 zeros after it. Mathematicians tell us that if an event has a probability of greater than one chance in $10^{50}$, then that event is mathematically impossible, and if it were to occur, it would be considered a miracle!

Here is a simple way to picture just how big this number ($10^{40000}$) is. The number of atoms in the universe (yes, the entire universe - space, matter - *all of it*) is estimated to be about $10^{87}$. It’s clear that we are toying in the realm of silliness. This kind of thinking is tantamount to reasoning that if the Scrabble factory explodes enough times, the letters will eventually land so they spell out perfectly the book “War and Peace.” Or that a tornado can whip through a junk yard leaving behind a perfectly formed Boeing 747. In fact, if you won the state lottery every week consecutively for eighty years this would be more likely than the spontaneous generation of just the proteins of a single amoeba!”

Keep in mind that that is just the odds for the proteins of a single amoeba. Our bodies have an estimated 100 trillion cells which all have to be in existence all at the same time and all have to work properly all at the same time in order to function. Now, this is just one human body. Keep in mind that if you want to procreate, then you need two of them at the same time, one male and one female, and they have to be interested in each other. And what about the rest of life on the planet?

As you can see it’s quite obvious that God is the reason for our existence not blind chance. God is the final cause, not billions of years and luck. The intelligent design that we observe in all areas of life point to an Intelligent Designer. **Design implies an Ultimate Designer** just like a watch. This Intelligent Designer is God.

However, sadly, as we have seen, many people, especially evolutionists or atheists, although they automatically know that there is a God, they refuse to
worship Him and instead withhold the truth about His existence. This is what the Apostle Peter was saying.

2 Peter 3:3-7 “First, I want to remind you that in the last days there will be scoffers who will laugh at the truth and do every evil thing they desire. This will be their argument: Jesus promised to come back, did he? Then where is he? Why, as far back as anyone can remember, everything has remained exactly the same since the world was first created.

They deliberately forget that God made the heavens by the word of his command, and he brought the earth up from the water and surrounded it with water. Then he used the water to destroy the world with a mighty flood. And God has also commanded that the heavens and the earth will be consumed by fire on the day of judgment, when ungodly people will perish.” (NLT)

You see, the atheist or evolutionist “deliberately forget” (which is being “dumb on purpose”) the plain evidence that intelligent life arose from an Intelligent Designer giving credence that God, the Ultimate Designer, really does exist. But even with this clear and solid evidence for the existence of God, some people, even though the facts are staring them right in the face, still arrive at the wrong conclusion, like these guys did.

“Two men were walking through the woods and came upon a big black, deep hole. One man picked up a rock and tossed it into the hole and stood listening for the rock to hit bottom. There was no sound. He turned to the other guy and said ‘That must be a deep hole...let’s throw a bigger rock in there and listen for it to hit bottom.’

The men found a bigger rock and both picked it up and lugged it to the hole and dropped it in. They listened for some time and never heard a sound. Again, they agreed that this must be one deep hole and maybe they should throw something even bigger into it. One man spotted a railroad tie nearby. They picked up the tie, grunting and groaning, and lugged it to the hole. They tossed it in. No sound.

All of a sudden, a goat came flying out of the woods, running like the wind, and flew past the men and jumped straight into the hole. The men were amazed.
About that time, an old hayseed farmer came out of the woods and asked the men if they had seen a goat.

One of the men told the farmer of the incredible incident they had just witnessed that they had just seen a goat fly right out of the woods, run and leap into the big hole. The man asked the farmer if this could have been his goat. The old farmer said ‘Naw, that can’t be my goat...he was chained to a railroad tie.’

Now those two guys were fools weren’t they? The facts were staring them right in the face but they still arrived at the wrong conclusion. Everyone knows that a goat can’t fly. But you know, there’s an even bigger fool than those guys. It’s the person who says there is no God.

Psalms 14:1 “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” (NAS)

The question of “Does God Really Exist?” is no small question. It has serious consequences to one’s life now and also in the hereafter. What a person believes determines how they behave. And if our society by and large doesn’t believe that there is a God, then they will act ungodly.

People of God, what our society needs today is to come face to face with the truth that there really is a God. We don’t need any more psychobabble from secular psychologists and we certainly don’t need more sex education in our school facilities. What we need is the truth of God’s existence to be proclaimed across our great nation. People need to know that God alone is to be worshipped, and that God alone will demand an account of every word and every deed we have ever done. And people desperately need to know that God loves them and has given His Only Son Jesus Christ so that our sins may be forgiven and that we may receive the gift of eternal life in order to save us from eternal destruction.

Does God Really Exist? Yes, as we have seen, He does. And He extends to everyone the free gift of salvation. But the question for the skeptic is, “Will you receive it before it’s too late?”
“There was a guy named John who was a clerk in a small drugstore, but he was not much of a salesman. He could never find the item the customer wanted. Bob, the owner, had had enough and warned John that the next sale he missed would be his last. Just then a man came in coughing. He asked John for their best cough syrup.

Try as he might though John could not find the cough syrup. Remembering his boss’ warning he instead sold the man a box of Ex-Lax and told him to take it all at once. The customer did as John said and then walked outside and leaned against a lamppost.

Bob, the owner, had seen the whole thing and came over to ask John what had transpired. So John explained, ‘He wanted something for his cough, but I couldn’t find the cough syrup. So, I substituted Ex-Lax and told him to take it all at once.’

‘Ex-Lax??! That won’t cure a cough!’ Bob shouted angrily.

‘Sure it will!’ John said, pointing at the man leaning on the lamppost. ‘Just look at him. He’s afraid to cough!’”

Well, that guy John was dishing out some bad advice wasn’t he? The sad thing was that the other guy came to John for help but instead received a bad prescription that
messed up his health, didn’t it? You know, the same thing is going on today all over the world. People are in a frantic search for spiritual health and meaning to life and instead of receiving the right prescription, there are those who are quick to dish out some bad advice, by questioning “Does God Really Exist?”

And the question of “Does God Really Exist?” is no small question. It has serious consequences to one’s life now and also in the hereafter. You see, what you believe determines how you behave. And if you don’t believe that there is a God, then you will act accordingly. People this is what is wrong with our society. Therefore, were going to continue our study of looking at the solid evidence for the existence of God.

We first looked at the Ontological Argument. There we saw that every culture on the planet has an automatic inward desire to worship something or someone higher than themselves and if there was no God then why do people even bother?

Then in the last chapter we looked at the Teleological Argument. There we saw that if the world shows intelligent design (and it does), then logically an Ultimate Designer (God) must also exist. And that just as we wouldn’t say that a watch didn’t evolve accidentally but must have had a watchmaker then even more so the world with all its complexities must have been created by a “world-maker” or in other words, God.

In this chapter I want to look at the 3rd line of argument for the existence of God which is called the Anthropological Argument. Here’s how the argument basically goes.

1. Man’s intellectual and moral nature requires for its author an intellectual and moral Being. The mind cannot evolve from matter; neither can spirit evolve from flesh. Consequently, a Being having both mind and spirit must have created man.
2. Man’s moral nature proves the existence of a Holy Law Giver and Judge. Otherwise, conscience cannot be satisfactorily explained.
3. Man’s emotional and volitional nature requires for its author a Being, who can furnish in Himself a satisfying object of human affection and an end which will call forth man’s highest activities and ensure his highest progress. 

The **Anthropological Argument** demonstrates that if man’s personality has the ability to worship, think abstractly, make moral decisions, etc., then we must come from an intelligent, moral, and personal Creator. Once again, this Personal Creator is God. **Does God really exist?** Absolutely!

**Romans 2:5-16** “But no, you won’t listen. So you are storing up terrible punishment for yourself because of your stubbornness in refusing to turn from your sin. For there is going to come a day of judgment when God, the just judge of all the world, will judge all people according to what they have done.

He will give eternal life to those who persist in doing what is good, seeking after the glory and honor and immortality that God offers. But he will pour out his anger and wrath on those who live for themselves, who refuse to obey the truth and practice evil deeds. There will be trouble and calamity for everyone who keeps on sinning – for the Jew first and also for the Gentile. But there will be glory and honor and peace from God for all who do good – for the Jew first and also for the Gentile.

For God does not show favoritism. God will punish the Gentiles when they sin, even though they never had God’s written law. And he will punish the Jews when they sin, for they do have the law. For it is not merely knowing the law that brings God’s approval. Those who obey the law will be declared right in God’s sight. Even when Gentiles, who do not have God’s written law, instinctively follow what the law says, they show that in their hearts they know right from wrong. They demonstrate that God’s law is written within them, for their own consciences either accuse them or tell them they are doing what is right.

The day will surely come when God, by Jesus Christ, will judge everyone’s secret life. This is my message.” (NLT)
It is here in this passage that the Apostle Paul declares to us that everyone on the earth has a built-in conscience. Even if someone never came across the Ten Commandments, they would still have an automatic inward sense of right and wrong. You see, all of mankind has a conscience or an inward sense of right and wrong that didn’t originate from within themselves but came from God. This happened because we were created in His image so that we might rightly conclude that God the Absolute Moral Law Giver really does exist and is Whom we will stand before one day and give an account.

And because we were created by an Absolute Moral Law Giver (God) then we live in a world of absolutes. We all know that it is absolutely wrong to steal. We all know that it is absolutely wrong to murder. We all know that it is absolutely wrong to lie.

Amazingly though, our society is trying to get around this truth that points to God’s existence by claiming that truth is not absolute but instead “relative” to each individual person. Therefore people say that since they can make up truth as they go then there is no need for a Moral Law Giver, i.e. God.

This line of thinking is called relativism. Relativism is not only absurd as we shall see in a moment but it is completely ridiculous for as soon as someone says that everything is relative and there are no absolutes, they are actually making an absolute statement! Relativism simply is a belief system that implies that all knowledge is relative, or to use a popular phrase, “Whatever you believe is true to you and whatever I believe is true to me.” In other words, they say there are no absolutes, no right or wrong for we each define what’s right or wrong according to our own definition. Thus, all things are relative.

Is this true? Is it even accurate? Hardly, as we shall soon see. If you try relativism anywhere in life, you’ll run into serious problems. For instance how
about the classroom? Will relativism work there? In class, you were taught that 2+2=4 right? Now, what if it was your personal opinion that 2+2=5? In your world, you have decided this to be true. But does the sincerity of your opinion make the statement true? Hardly! Try putting the answer of 2+2=5 on your math test and see how far you get.

Or how about science class? There you were taught the principle of gravity. You know, if you hold an object off the ground and then let go it will return to the ground. Now, what if it was your personal opinion that you could jump out of a plane and fly upwards? In your world, you have decided this to be true. But does the sincerity of your opinion make the statement true? Hardly! Try testing that personal opinion the next time you’re in a plane by jumping without a parachute. I thought so.

Or how about history? In class, you were taught that Abraham Lincoln was a president of the United States. Now, what if it was your personal opinion that he really was a Wild West cowboy? In your world, you have decided this to be true. But does the sincerity of your opinion make the statement true? Hardly! Try sharing that personal opinion on your history final and see if you get it right.

Speaking of Abraham Lincoln, even he knew the absurdity of relativism.

“Lincoln was trying to make a point. His hearer was unconvinced and stubborn. So Lincoln tried another tactic. He said to the disputer, ‘Well, let’s see now. How many legs does a cow have?’

The disgusted reply came back ‘Four, of course.’

Lincoln agreed, ‘That’s right. Now, suppose you call the cow’s tail a leg; how many legs would the cow have?’

The opponent replied confidently, ‘Why, five, of course.’
Lincoln came back, ‘Now that’s where you’re wrong. Calling a cow’s tail a leg doesn’t make it a leg!’”

You see, sincerity of opinion is no measuring rod for something to be “right.” It just means that you can be sincerely wrong! However, it is truth that distinguishes between right and wrong. There’s a saying, “If you don’t believe in something you’ll fall for anything.” Sounds nice yet more accurately it should read, “If you don’t believe in absolutes you’ll fall for anything.” Why? This is because without absolutes, truth is reduced to personal opinion. With mere opinions, there is no longer a standard for right and wrong, nothing is stable or constant, and there is no foundation to build reality upon. Therefore, you will fall for anything, for everything is “fair game.”

Truth is defined as absolute reality. You might say, “You are being very dogmatic about that.” Well, think about it for a moment. Truth by its very nature is dogmatic. Otherwise, it would not be truth! In fact, Jesus Himself stated that He is the truth.

**John 14:6** “I myself am the way,” replied Jesus, “and the truth and the life. No one approaches the Father except through me.” (J.B.P.)

Notice He did not say that He was “a” way, “a” truth, or “a” life. He was absolute in what He said, the way, the truth, and the life. You cannot escape from absolutes because we owe our existence to an Absolute Moral Law Giver, i.e. God. It is in every fabric of life. Remember that even when a person says, “There are no absolutes” they are making an absolute statement! Next time they say that, ask them, “Are you absolutely sure about that?”

Christianity and the Scriptures are full of absolutes. Jesus said He is the only way to heaven, not one of many. The Bible declares that there is only one God; not many or that we ourselves are gods. The Bible also says that man lives
once then faces the judgment of God, not many lives. The very Ten Commandments are all absolute statements. You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, etc. Hey, that’s it! If you are caught stealing at work just tell them that in “your world” you sincerely believe that it is okay. You and I both know that your next stop will be the unemployment line! Also, if there is no right or wrong, then why do we have a judicial system? Why do we have courts of law? Why would we dare prosecute someone and send him or her to jail against their own wishes?

Relativism would have you believe that all values, opinions, and claims to truth are equal. But this flatly denies reality. How can all values be equal? There will always be right and wrong. For instance, what if it was someone’s “value” to molest his or her children? Is that right? If you believe in relativism then you would have to say yes. Yet, every fiber of your being cries NO! Or what if it was another person’s “value” to teach their children to steal for a living? Or what if it was a mother’s “value” to introduce her daughter to prostitution as a fulfilling lifestyle? Or how about a father who has a “value” that he feels is proper for his son, that of being an abuser of woman? If there are no absolutes and everything is relative to one’s own value or claim to truth then does that mean that Hitler’s slaughter of millions of Jews was okay? Why not? Are you being a bigot? I’m sure he was just following his “claim to truth.”

Do you see the danger of this relativistic line of thinking? If relativism were true then there would be no difference between Adolph Hitler and Mother Teresa! However, the Bible clearly states that:

**Isaiah 5:20** “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!” (NAS)
Our society today is calling what we inherently know as good as now being evil and what we inherently know as evil as now being good. You see, only God’s moral hierarchy of laws provides stability, protection, and a foundation for life. Why? Because they are absolute!

“Historians agree that the basis for any successful society has been a law system, based on moral code, which has always used at its foundation ‘religion.’ And thus it has always been; a society that is no longer capable of distinguishing right from wrong—extinguishes itself.” 4

Jesus said that the truth will set you free, not the lie of relativism. But even with this clear and solid evidence for the existence of God, some people, even though the facts are staring them right in the face, still ignore them and reap the consequences, like this guy did.

“Ol’ Fred had been a faithful Christian and was in the hospital, near death. The family called their Pastor to stand with them. As the Pastor stood next to the bed, Ol’ Fred’s condition appeared to deteriorate and he motioned frantically for something to write on.

The Pastor lovingly handed him a pen and a piece of paper, and Ol’ Fred used his last bit of energy to scribble a note, then he died. The Pastor thought it best not to look at the note at that time, so he placed it in his jacket pocket.

At the funeral, as he was finishing the message, he realized that he was wearing the same jacket that he was wearing when Ol’ Fred died. He said, ‘You know, Ol’ Fred handed me a note just before he died. I haven’t looked at it, but knowing Fred, I’m sure there’s a word of inspiration there for us all.’

He opened the note, and read to the crowd, ‘You’re standing on my oxygen tube!’” 5

Now that guy was a fool wasn’t he? The facts were staring them right in the face but he ignored them and it cost someone their life. But you know, there’s an even bigger fool then that guy. It’s the person who says there is no God.

**Psalms 14:1** “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” (NAS)
If our society by and large doesn’t believe that there is a God, then they will act ungodly. We need to come face to face with the truth that God really does exist. We don’t need any more positive affirmations and we certainly don’t need any more political correctness training. We need the truth of God’s existence proclaimed across our great nation. People need to know that God alone is to be worshipped, and that God alone will demand an account of every word and every deed we have ever done.

And people desperately need to know that God loves them and has given His Only Son Jesus Christ so that our sins may be forgiven and that we may receive the gift of eternal life in order to save us from eternal destruction.

The Anthropological Argument reveals that it is obvious that man has a spiritual, moral and abstract side that did not happen by chance. We have distinct personalities that are able to worship, think creatively, appreciate beauty, art, music, and perform heroic deeds, etc. These qualities are inherent traits in man, which are not “self-created.” Therefore, we must conclude that a spiritual and moral Being outside of ourselves created man. This Spiritual and Moral Being is once again God.

Does God Really Exist? Yes, as we have seen, He “absolutely” does. And He extends to all the free gift of salvation. But the question for the skeptic is, “Will you receive it before it’s too late?”
You know, one of the universal principles of life is that we all have to be educated. And during this education process we are sent to schools so that we might learn how to be properly equipped to face life in our society. And one of the ways that schools measure whether or not students are being equipped with the necessary knowledge that they need to make it in this world is by giving tests, right? However, anyone who has taught in any capacity quickly realizes that no matter how hard you try to instill knowledge in people, some of them still just don’t get it and consequently come up with some really unintelligent answers to your questions. For instance, I was able to stumble across a list of some unintelligent answers to a real science quiz. See if you agree.

1. “When you smell an odorless gas, it is probably carbon monoxide.”
2. “Nitrogen is not found in Ireland because it is not found in a free state.”
3. “Three kinds of blood vessels are arteries, vanes, and caterpillars.”
4. “H2O is hot water, and CO2 is cold water.”
5. “The moon is a planet just like the earth, only it is even deader.”
6. “Mushrooms always grow in damp places and so they look like umbrellas.”
7. “The pistol of a flower is its only means of protection against insects.”
8. “The alimentary canal is located in the northern part of Indiana.”
9. “A permanent set of teeth consists of eight canines, eight cuspids, two
   molars, and eight cuspidors.”
10. “Germinate means to become a naturalized German.”
11. “A magnet is something you find crawling all over a dead cat.”
12. “A rhubarb is a kind of celery gone bloodshot.”
13. “A vacuum is a large, empty space where the pope lives.”
14. “To remove dust from the eye, pull the eye down over the nose.”
15. “To collect fumes of sulfur, hold down a deacon over a flame in a test
    tube.”
16. “The body consists of three parts - the brainium, the borax and the
    abominable cavity. The brainium contains the brain, the borax contains
    the heart and lungs, and the abominable cavity contains the bowels, of
    which there are five - a, e, i, o, and u.”

Yes, sometimes people can come up with some really unintelligent
answers to your questions. However, to me, probably one of the most
unintelligent answers I hear is to the question “Does God Really Exist?” The
question of “Does God Really Exist?” is no small question. It has serious
consequences to one’s life now and also in the hereafter. You see, what you
believe determines how you behave. And if you don’t believe that there is a
God, then you will act accordingly. People this is what is wrong with our society.

Therefore, we are going to finish our study of looking at the solid
evidence for the existence of God. We first looked at the Ontological Argument.
There we saw that every culture on the planet has an automatic inward desire to
worship something or someone higher than themselves and if there was no God
then why do people even bother? Then we looked at the Teleological Argument.
There we saw that if the world shows intelligent design (and it does), then
logically an Ultimate Designer (God) must also exist. And in the last chapter we
observed the Anthropological Argument. There we saw that all of mankind has
a conscience or moral law that didn’t originate from within themselves. So if
there is an absolute moral law then there must be an Absolute Moral Law Giver, i.e. GOD. In this chapter we will conclude our study by looking at the 4th and final line of argument for the existence of God which is called the **Cosmological Argument**. Here’s how it basically goes.

1. Something exists, and  
2. Owes its existence either to nothing or to something.  
3. Nothing cannot cause something.  
4. There is, then, a something, which is either one or many.  
5. If many, the beings would be mutually dependent for their own existence or dependent on another.  
6. They cannot be mutually dependent for their existence. Something cannot exist through a being on which it confers existence.  
7. Therefore, there must be one being through which all other beings exist.  
8. This being must exist through itself.  
9. Whatever exists through itself, exists in the highest degree of all.  
10. Therefore, a supremely perfect Being exists in the highest degree. ²

Basically stated, if there was a beginning then there must have been a cause to our beginning since we can’t create ourselves. For instance, it has been scientifically proven that if your Mother doesn’t have any children, then you won’t either! **Does God really exist?** Absolutely!

**Matthew 19:1-6** “After Jesus had finished saying these things, he left Galilee and went southward to the region of Judea and into the area east of the Jordan River. Vast crowds followed him there, and he healed their sick. Some Pharisees came and tried to trap him with this question: ‘Should a man be allowed to divorce his wife for any reason?’

‘Haven’t you read the Scriptures?’ Jesus replied. ‘They record that from the beginning ‘God made them male and female.’ And he said, ‘This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.’ Since they are no longer two but one, let no one separate them, for God has joined them together.’” (NLT)
You see, Jesus knew that there was a beginning and this beginning owed its existence to Him, the Creator of all life. This Cause of our existence, is of course God Who is not dependent upon anyone for His existence. He never had a beginning. But something that has a beginning implies an Ultimate Beginner, God. In fact, all of life had a beginning and owes its existence to God and this is evident when we look at the Origin of the Universe.

Interestingly enough, what evolutionists call the Big Bang actually proves the existence of a Creator. This is because the Big Bang reveals that there is a beginning point in creation. If there is a beginning to a cause then there must be a First Cause. Here is how this all came about.

In order for the theory of evolution to work it needs vast amounts of time. Evolution basically states that time plus matter plus chance equals life. It was posed as a “theory” to replace the need for a Creator. Some evolutionists theorized that the universe was created by what is called the “oscillating” model. This says that the universe expands and contracts, essentially recreating itself without requiring an ultimate beginning. Others favored the “steady state” model, which claimed that the universe had always existed.

Is this true? Hardly. Scientific discoveries have led to the conclusion that the universe actually had a beginning. The universe is not eternal nor does it destroy and recreate itself. Here’s how this discovery came about.

As was stated above, for many years people believed that the universe had no beginning and therefore would have no end. They theorized that since matter and space were eternal, there was no need for a Creator. However, in 1887 two physicists, Michelson and Morely, determined that the measured speed of light was constant in all circumstances. It did not vary, even if the observer was rapidly moving away from or toward the source of light. Then in 1905 Albert
Einstein drew on this information to form the basis of his new theory of special relativity. This showed that measurement of mass, length and time were relative to the observer’s own velocity and in turn revealed that measurements of time, space and matter were relative to the observer. This basically showed that the universe wasn’t so easily predictable.

Later in 1913 an astronomer named Vesto Slipher discovered that about a dozen galaxies in our vicinity were racing away from us at enormous speeds of up to 2 million miles per hour. Prior to this astronomers believed that galaxies were fixed in space and only rotating in place. Then in 1915 Albert Einstein published his second theory of general relativity. He built on his earlier theory with the measurements of time, space, matter and length from an observer who is accelerating. This revealed that all the matter in the universe was moving away from a point of origin. Hence, the universe was not eternal but finite. The universe had a beginning! Thank you, Mr. Einstein.

To further cement this truth, Edwin Hubble discovered that the farther away galaxies are, the faster they are moving away from their point of origin. This likewise showed that the universe began at a single point in space, at a definite moment in time, in a sudden burst of light, heat and energy. Here’s where we get the term “Big Bang”. But science and evolutionists are at a loss as to what caused this “Big Bang”. However, as the rational argument you read above goes, everything that begins to exist must have a cause to its existence. **Since the universe is now proven to have a beginning, it must have a First Cause for its existence.** Can you guess Who that might be?

Oh, but it gets even better. Not only do we know that the matter in the universe had a beginning but so did space and time. This revelation occurred due to the work of three British astrophysicists, Steven Hawking, George Ellis, and
Roger Penrose. In 1968 and 1970 they added time and space to the equation of Einstein’s theory of general relativity. What was discovered was that space and time are not infinite. Their calculations showed that time and space had a beginning right along with matter and energy.

If space, time, and matter (our universe) could arise from nothing (and they did), it would be considered a miracle. But this is something that evolutionists deny. I guess they’re not big on science after all! The facts show us that we exist because we were caused to exist. This first cause of existence was of course God. Hmmmm. Just like the Bible states.

Furthermore, science and evolutionists are at a loss as to what caused this “Big Bang”. They say the universe came from an exploding ball of dirt. But all you have to do is ask them, “Where did the dirt come from?” Remember, nothing cannot create something so somebody had to create this supposed ball of dirt. Scientists call this dilemma the “X Factor” which is a fancy way of saying, “We have no stinking idea.” You see, the Big Bang actually proves the existence of a Creator by revealing that the universe had a beginning. **If there is a beginning then there must be an Ultimate Beginner, i.e. God.**

But even though the “Big Bang” rather than disproving God actually proves His existence, people will still object to believing in God for a couple of reasons. The **first reason** is that when you ask them “Who made the ball of dirt,” they often reply, “Well, who made God?” Actually this question is illogical when you look at the definition of a Supreme Being. A Supreme Being by definition is not a created being with a “beginning point in time” nor owes their existence to anyone. If they were then they would not be a Supreme Being. Rather, a Supreme Being is uncreated, has always been and always will be, and is not dependent on anyone or anything for existence. Otherwise they wouldn’t be Supreme now
would they? This is just what the Bible states. God exists outside of time in the eternal dimensions. He can view the past, present, and future as if He were looking at the pages of a book. Notice the diagram below. As you can see, the top line represents eternity and is where God the Father dwells.

![Diagram of Eternity and Time]

Now observe how the arrows indicate no beginning or end. This is all outside the realm of time. The lower line represents the realm of time. Notice that there is a definite beginning and ending as indicated by the points. By looking at both lines simultaneously, you can see how God is able to view time as if He were merely looking at the pages of a book. He is above and beyond time. That’s why,

2 Peter 3:8 “With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.” (NIV)

Remember, a Supreme Being by definition is not a created being with a “beginning point in time” nor owe their existence to anyone. If they were then they would not be a Supreme Being now would they? Therefore, to ask the question, “Who made God” is asking a “time-based” question upon a Being Who
by definition is above and beyond time with no beginning. Thus, the question is illogical and moot.

The second reason people still object to the existence of God is that they cannot “see” Him. They say that He cannot be real because they haven’t seen Him. However everyone knows that just because you can’t see something doesn’t mean that it’s not real, like this lady found out.

“A lady went into the sporting section at Wal-Mart to buy her husband a rod for his birthday. She went up to the salesclerk and said, ‘I’m here to buy a rod for my husband, can you help me pick something out?’

The man replied, ‘To tell you the truth, Ma’am, I’m blind, but if you drop a rod on the counter, I’ll tell you what it is.’

‘Okay,’ the lady said, seeming a bit mystified.

She picked up a rod and dropped it on the counter, and immediately he began droning on about it, ‘Zebco rod and reel...’

Amazed, the lady said, ‘Okay it seems like a good rod, how much is it?’

‘$19.99’ he said.

‘Okay then I’ll buy it,’ she said.

As she was standing there waiting for him to ring it up she accidentally passed gas. Embarrassed she looked around and was relieved to see nobody close to her. ‘The salesclerk won’t know it’s me, because he’s blind,’ she thought.

‘That will be $25.89,’ the salesclerk said.

Confused the lady said, ‘I thought the rod was $19.99?’

‘Yeah,’ the man said, ‘but the duck call is $3, and the catfish bait is $2.’” 4

Boy, that lady learned the hard way that just because you can’t see something doesn’t mean that it’s not real or that others won’t notice. You see,
just because God is invisible doesn’t mean that He’s not real, in fact He has told us about His invisible qualities beforehand in the Bible.

**Colossians 1:15-17** “Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before God made anything at all and is supreme over all creation. Christ is the one through whom God created everything in heaven and earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can’t see – kings, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities. Everything has been created through him and for him. He existed before everything else began, and he holds all creation together. (NLT)

You see, due to the invisible nature of the Lord, we establish the validity of His existence by faith as well as the obvious evidences that we have been looking at over the last four chapters. Now, is this mere “blind faith” as some would like to say? Not at all! Einstein knew better and we consider him to be one of the most intelligent men that ever lived.

You see, an interesting outcome of Einstein’s theory of relativity was the discovery of dimensions of time and space that exist separately and distinct from the four dimensions we experience. In fact, these dimensions may even be in our midst but not visible to us! More recently, mathematicians have shown that up to eleven dimensions may exist in the universe. Physicists believe that there are places in the universe where time actually ceases to flow. One of these places is a black hole. Now it’s interesting that the Bible tells us that God dwells in a place where time does not flow. For centuries, scientists mocked this biblical truth. But such a place is now scientific fact! In fact, these strange facts of physics may be evidence for the truth of what we call the supernatural “spirit realm.” A whole other dimension of reality that exists simultaneously even though we cannot presently see it. Hmmmm.

People believe in a lot of things we can’t see: wind, atoms, heat, electromagnetic radiation, etc. **Just because you can’t see it doesn’t mean it’s not real.**” So it is with God.
God never said to check your brain in at the door when becoming a Christian. By all means, bring your brain in with you. You’re going to need it for God said in,

**Isaiah 1:18** “Come now let us reason together.”

Why? Because there is so much proof for His existence that you would have to be “brainless” not to see it. Gee, I guess we could have saved billions of taxpayers dollars if only we could have gotten those scientists to use their brain and read the first verse in the Bible!

**Genesis 1:1** “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”. (NIV)

Original Hebrew “At the beginning of (time), God created from nothing the heavens (space) and the earth (matter).”

“For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries!”

But even with this clear and solid evidence for the existence of God, some people, even though the facts are staring them right in the face, still come to the wrong conclusion, like this guy did.

“A woman boarded a bus, holding a baby. The bus driver said, ‘Wow!!! That’s the ugliest baby I have EVER seen!’

In a huff, the woman slammed her fare into the fare box and took an aisle seat near the rear of the bus. She fumed for a few stops and started getting really worked up. The man seated next to her sensed that she was agitated and asked her what was wrong.

‘The bus driver insulted me!’ she fumed.

The man sympathized and said, ‘Hey! He’s a public servant and he shouldn’t say things to insult the passengers.’
‘You’re right!’ she said. ‘I think I’ll go back up there and give him a piece of my mind.’

‘That’s a good idea,’ the man said. ‘Here, let me hold your monkey!’

Now that guy was a fool wasn’t he? The facts were staring them right in the face but he still thought that lady gave birth to a monkey. But you know, there’s an even bigger fool then that guy. It’s the person who says there is no God.

**Psalms 14:1** “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” (NAS)

If our society by and large doesn’t believe that there is a God, then they will act ungodly. We don’t need any more secular solutions to the ills of our society. How many do we have to try before we realize that none of them will ever work? We need to come face to face with the only solution that will work guaranteed and that is that **God Really Does Exist**. We need the truth of God’s existence proclaimed across our great nation. People need to know that **God alone** is to be worshipped, and that God alone will demand an account of every word and every deed we have ever done.

And people desperately need to know that God loves them and has given His Only Son Jesus Christ so that our sins may be forgiven and that we may receive the gift of eternal life in order to save us from eternal destruction.

**Does God Really Exist?** Yes, He does. And once more, He extends to the world the free gift of salvation. But the question for the skeptic is, “Will you receive it before it’s too late?”
Part II

Who Says the Bible is God’s Word?
“A guy dies and goes to hell. The devil meets him at the gate and says, ‘All right, you have died and come to hell. You will spend eternity here, but you get to choose how to spend it. You may choose one of these three doorways. Once you choose a door, you may not change it. So let’s get started.’

The devil opens Door One. The guy looks in and sees a couple of people standing on their heads on a Concrete floor. The guy says, ‘No way, let’s move on.’ The devil opens Door Two. The guy sees a few more people standing on their heads on a Wood floor. The guy says, ‘No way, let’s move on.’ The devil opens Door Three. The guy sees a bunch of people standing knee-deep in cow manure drinking coffee. The guy says, ‘Great, this is the one I will chose.’ The devil says, ‘OK, wait right here, I will get you some coffee.’

The guy settles in with his coffee thinking that this isn’t so bad. What’s the big deal? After about 10 minutes a voice comes over the loud speaker saying, ‘Coffee break’s over. Back on your heads!’”  

Yes, many people are concerned about what will happen to them when they die. But the questions don’t stop there. People are longing for answers to questions such as “Why do we exist? Where did we come from? Is there any purpose or meaning to life? Many people are on a constant journey looking for
answers to true and lasting peace and love. And believe it or not, one of the most popular “supposed” answers to these questions is that mankind will find their purpose, direction, and source of truth relating to their existence from...aliens! Yes, I said aliens. Everywhere you go nowadays there is talk about alien life forms. They are in movies, advertising, books, and even toys. People either say that they saw an Extra Terrestrial of some sort, or were abducted by one, or think they might even be one!

The premise is that since mankind is so messed up that only a “higher” intelligence, that is an alien, could solve all of our problems. Now as crazy as this seems, people really are hoping and wishing that they could have contact with a “supposed” alien or at least find some source of data “left behind” by these ET’s with the answers to life.

Now, what if I was to tell you that even as a Christian, that I have made personal contact with an alien? What if I were to also declare that I have not only made contact but also engage in daily conversation with a real live ET and know this alien by name? What if I was to further tell you that this alien has “left behind” for me specific written data providing direct answers to life’s deepest questions of, “Why do I exist? Where did I come from? Is there life after death? What is the meaning of life?”

Well, before you think that I have “lost it,” I guess I better tell you who this alien is. The alien is of course God Almighty. He is truly, in a sense, an Alien. You see, God is “not of this world” for He created it. God not only provides answers to all of life’s questions but He is also the Author of all life. And what is amazing is that God has “left behind” for us an account of data that gives specific answers to life’s questions. He left us a record in which to discover true and lasting peace and love and know for sure our divine purpose, direction,
and truth relating to our existence. Of course, I am speaking of the Bible, which is the very Word of God.

Now, you would think that with a source of truth about all of life that we have contained for us in the sacred Scriptures, people, especially Christians, would pour over the material day and night seeking valid answers to their deepest questions. You would think that the Bible would be utterly revered, especially by Christians, since what they hold in their hands is literally a message from another world, from God Almighty. Sadly though, this does not seem to be the case, even among Christians. Observe the following statistics to see what I mean.

- Six out of ten adults maintain that the Bible is totally accurate in all of its teachings. (2000)
- 13% of born again Christians disagree that the Bible is totally accurate in all of its teachings. (2000)
- Almost half of the population (45%) believes that the Bible is absolutely accurate and everything in it can be taken literally. (1994)
- While millions believe the Bible is accurate in its recording of information, a substantial number of adults do not believe that all of the information is relevant for today. One out of every five adults (18%) contend that one of the renowned portions of the Bible - the Ten Commandments - is not relevant for people living today. (1992)
- Most people take the Bible at face value when it comes to the descriptions of the miracles that took place. Three out of four adults (73%) believe that all of the miracles described in the Bible actually took place. (1994)
- There is much misunderstanding about the history of the Bible. For instance four out of every ten adults (38%) believe that the entire Bible was written several decades after Jesus’ death and resurrection. While this appears to be true for the New Testament, the entire Old Testament was written hundreds of years prior to the birth of Jesus Christ. (1994)
• Almost two out of three adults (62%) know that the Book of Isaiah is in the Old Testament. One out of ten people (11%) believe it is in the New Testament. One out of four (27%) don’t know. (1994)

• 12% of adults believe that the name of Noah’s wife was Joan of Arc. (The Bible does not provide her name.) (1997)

• One out of six people (16%) believe that one of the books in the New Testament is the Book of Thomas, written by the apostle Thomas. Another one-third of the population are not sure whether or not there is such a book in the New Testament of the Bible. (1994)

• Half of all adults (49%) believe that the Bible teaches that money is the root of all evil. One-third (37%) disagree with this contention. The actual teaching indicates that it is the love of money that is the root of all kinds of evil. (1994)

• A majority of adults (56%) are convinced the Bible proclaims that the single, most important task in life is taking care of one’s family. (1997)

• Eight out of ten born again Christians (80%) agree that the Bible teaches that God helps those who help themselves. (1997)²

I don’t know about you but I am completely aghast at these statistics.

Why didn’t Christians have a 100% agreement concerning the accuracy of the Scripture! Of all people who should never doubt the Bible, which speaks of Christ through and through, surely it would be Christians who are after all, followers of Christ. Unfortunately this is not the case. There appears to be much doubt on the horizon and many people, even Christians, are asking the question, “How do I know that the Bible is the Word of God?”

As shocking as this is I think that much of the problem has arisen due to a century or more of harsh criticism and skepticism towards the authenticity and accuracy of Scripture and many do not know how to respond to these arrogant
accusations. Many now assume that the Bible is full of errors and or contradictions. Many now consider much of the Biblical account as mythical and no longer relevant to us today. However, those who proudly spout these false claims only reveal their bias and ignorance of the plethora of evidence concerning the authenticity and accuracy of the Bible. Can we really know if the Bible is the Word of God? The answer is a resounding YES as we shall soon discover.

You see, God has left us a massive amount of evidence to clearly reveal the fact that the Scriptures are indeed the genuine Word of God. But unfortunately, most people, as you can see by the results of the previous survey, do not take the time to uncover the evidence that’s there for anyone to see. So because of this attitude, when a Christian responds that the Bible is God’s Word, most people reply, “Oh yeah! **Who says the Bible is God’s Word?**”

Well, this next objection from the skeptic is exactly what we will be addressing. We are going to look at ten lines of evidence that gives us **solid proof** that the Bible really came from God. So let’s get started.

**2 Timothy 3:14-17** “But you must remain faithful to the things you have been taught. You know they are true, for you know you can trust those who taught you. You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus.

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. It is God’s way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do.” (NLT)

**Who says the Bible is God’s Word?** Well, the **1st line of evidence** is that **the Bible says so**. You see, anyone who is in a genuine search to
authenticate a document must first give that document the benefit of the doubt. Even Aristotle knew this when he said,

“The benefit of the doubt is to be given to the document itself, and not arrogated by the critic to himself.”

“One must listen to the claims of the document under analysis, and not assume fraud or error unless the author disqualified himself by contradictions or known factual inaccuracies.”

However, the problem today is that the skeptic assumes that the Bible is full of errors until proven innocent. Yet as we can even agree in our court systems, something is innocent until proven guilty. Thus, the same standard should likewise be applied to the Sacred Scripture should it not? So then, what does the Bible have to say about it being the Word of God? Well, first of all, it flat out declares that **what the Bible speaks God speaks** as is shown by the following statistics.

“Thus saith the Lord” – 415 times
“Saith the Lord” – 854 times
“The word of the Lord” – 258 times
“The Lord hath spoken” – 30 times
“It is written” – 80 times

As you can see, the Bible emphatically declares and simply assumes that it is indeed the Word of God. “The Bible can only be rejected by rejecting its constant claims to being God’s Word.” If you are honest in your approach to the Bible then you will have the proper attitude that the Bible is innocent until proven guilty instead of the false approach towards the Bible being guilty until proven innocent. No honest scholar would treat any other ancient document in like manner as many of the skeptics do with the Bible.
You see, you cannot have it both ways. You cannot agree with some of the Bible’s teaching and then turn around and deny the authenticity of the Bible for the **Bible itself clearly presents itself as the genuine Word of God**. Anything short of this is outright hypocrisy.

**Who says that the Bible is the Word of God?** Well, the 2nd line of evidence is that Jesus says so. What is funny is that while many skeptics, although they disbelieve that Jesus was God in the flesh and is the Savior of the world, they will nonetheless at least label Him as a “good teacher.” Now although I think this is a grossly narrow view of the Lord, at least the skeptic has to concede that Jesus was an incredible teacher of truth. I say it is a grossly narrow view, for Jesus did not leave us with the “option” of Him being merely a good teacher. For He was either a liar, a lunatic, or indeed Lord God. Nonetheless, let us meet the skeptic on their terms and see just what Jesus had to teach or say about the Bible.

1. Divine authority – Matthew 4:4, 7, 10
2. Indestructibility – Matthew 5:17-18
3. Infallibility or Unbreakability – John 10:35
4. Ultimate supremacy – Matthew 15:3, 6
5. Factual inerrancy – Matthew 22:29; John 17:17
7. Scientific accuracy – Matthew 19:4-5; John 3:12

“**The authority of Jesus confirms the authority of the Bible. If He is the Son of God then the Bible is the Word of God. Indeed, if Jesus were merely a prophet, then the Bible still is confirmed to be the Word of God through His prophetic office. Only if one rejects the divine authority of Christ can he consistently reject the divine authority of the Scriptures. If Jesus is telling the truth, then it is true that the Bible is God’s Word.**”

You see, even if you only have a narrow view of Jesus and concede that He was merely a profound teacher then you must be honest with all of His
teachings. You cannot have it both ways. You cannot agree with some of His teaching and then turn around and deny the authenticity of the Bible for Jesus clearly presented the Scripture as the genuine Word of God. Anything short of this is outright hypocrisy.

Who says that the Bible is the Word of God? Well, the 3rd line of evidence is that the Apostles say so. The verification of the Bible being the Word of God doesn’t stop with the Bible itself or only with Jesus. It is very obvious that the Apostles and writers of the New Testament assumed this truth. In fact, they made plain statements about the Old Testament and what they themselves were speaking and teaching, which was to become the New Testament, was indeed the Word of God. Here, read a few of them for yourself.

2 Timothy 3:15-16 “And that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.” (NAS)

2 Peter 1:20-21 “But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” (NAS)

Romans 9:6 “But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel.” (NAS)

Hebrews 4:12 “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” (NAS)

1 Corinthians 2:13 “Which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.” (NAS)
**Galatians 3:16** “Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as referring to many, but rather to one, ‘And to your seed,’ that is, Christ.” (NAS)

**Ephesians 6:17** “And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” (NAS)

**James 1:21-23** “Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror.” (NAS)

**1 Peter 2:2** “Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation.” (NAS)

Furthermore, the Apostles were so convinced of this that we have the harsh warning in the last book of the Bible that no one should even dare tamper with the words which they recorded for us in the Scripture.

**Revelation 22:18-19** “I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.” (NAS)

You see, you cannot have it both ways. You cannot agree with some of the Apostles teaching and then turn around and deny the authenticity of the Bible for the Apostles clearly presented the Scripture as the genuine Word of God. Anything short of this is outright hypocrisy.

**Who says that the Bible is the Word of God?** Well, the 4th line of evidence is that the Early Church and Church History says so. The proof of the Early Church’s position of the Bible being the Word of God is shown not only in what they taught about the authority of the Bible but also in their direct
citations of it. The following is a list of merely some of the Early Church Fathers and their citations of just the New Testament.

**Early Citations of the New Testament**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Writers</th>
<th>Gospels</th>
<th>Acts</th>
<th>Pauline</th>
<th>General</th>
<th>Revelation</th>
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“Sir David Dalrymple was wondering about the preponderance of Scripture in early writing when someone asked him, ‘Suppose that the New Testament had been destroyed, and every copy of it lost by the end of the third century, could it have been collected together again from the writings of the Fathers of the second and third centuries?’

After a great deal of investigation Dalrymple concluded: That question roused my curiosity, and as I possessed all the existing works of the Fathers of the second and third centuries, I commenced to search, and up to this time I have found the entire New Testament, except eleven verses.”

People of God, as you can clearly see, even if the entire New Testament was completely destroyed, we could still reconstruct it **just from the quotations taken from it**! The Bible is the only book in the world that you can do this with.
You see, many that doubt the authenticity of the Bible assume that their doubting position has been commonplace throughout history. However, nothing could be further from the truth. The belief in the Bible being the valid Word of God was virtually held by nearly everyone for the last 2,000 years of Church History. Not so surprisingly we find that it is the false accusatory remarks of the skeptic of the genuineness of the Scripture who is the relatively newcomer on the scene, especially in the scope that we see it today.

“There is abundant evidence in the writings of the earliest Church Fathers and historians of their commitment to the infallibility of Scripture. Clement, Polycarp, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Origen, Athanasius, Chrysostom, Augustine, and a host of others believed the Bible to be the very Word of God in the whole and in the part. The belief of the orthodox Church for the first five centuries regarding the total infallibility of the Bible held true for the remaining centuries up to the nineteenth.”

One who doubts the authority of the Bible being the Word of God is forced to say that their private knowledge of the Scripture is greater then all the great thinkers and scholars of the Scripture for the last 2,000 years. And this is completely absurd especially when one takes into account that most people who disclaim the validity of the Bible being the Word of God have rarely if ever even read the Bible let alone studied it!

You see, you cannot have it both ways. You cannot agree with some of the Early Church’s or Church History’s teaching and then turn around and deny the authenticity of the Bible for the Early Church and Church History clearly present the Bible as the genuine Word of God. Anything short of this is outright hypocrisy. And speaking of hypocrisy, I want to make sure that we’re all on the same page here, and clearly understand what hypocrisy is.

“There was a guy who found himself in desperate need of money so he went to the city zoo, hoping to find a job feeding the animals. Although no such opportunity was available, the manager seeing the size and the strength of the
applicant, suddenly got an idea. ‘You know,’ he said, ‘there are a few creatures who attract attention like a gorilla. Unfortunately, ours died yesterday. If we got you a special fur suit, would you be willing to imitate him for a few days?’

The hungry man agreed to try. He was quite successful as he beat his chest, bellowed, and shook the bars of the cage – much to the amusement of visitors who said they had never seen a gorilla with such intelligence.

One day, while swinging on his trapeze he accidentally lost his grip and landed in the lion’s den. The huge beast gave a ferocious roar. Backing away, the impostor realized he couldn’t cry for assistance without revealing that he was a fake. He retreated, hoping to crawl back over the fence into his own cage. The lion, however, followed him. Finally in desperation, he yelled, ‘Help!’ Immediately the lion said in an undertone, ‘Shut up, stupid! You’ll get us both fired!’” 12

You see, that man was a hypocrite. He was saying one thing trying to fool people while in reality he was somebody else. So it is with the skeptics of the Bible. They spout off bold claims that the Bible cannot be trusted, that the Bible is full of errors, that the Bible isn’t God’s Word when all the time they refuse to look at the evidence. Now I ask you, whose being the hypocrite?

Our world is in a frantic search for purpose, direction, and truth relating to their existence. Many are desirous of true and lasting peace and love. Questions arise such as, “Why do I exist? Where did I come from? Is there life after death? What is the meaning of life?” How sad and ironic it is that this “mysterious” book that they are in search of can be found on bookshelves, collecting dust, in virtually every home in America. Of course, I am speaking of the Holy Bible. People of God, there is no need to doubt. What we hold in our hands is the genuine Word of God!
Chapter Six

Evidences 5-7

You now, if there’s one thing I have learned in life, it would have to be that life itself can be quite annoying. And it’s really not that hard to figure out why. Life is mainly annoying because we live in a world of annoying people who do annoying things. In fact, to help you understand just how commonplace this is, I want to share with you a list of things that you can do that will surely annoy people. See if you agree.

1. Sit in your yard pointing a hair dryer at passing cars to see if they slow down.
2. Sing along at the opera.
3. Insist on keeping your car windshield wipers running in all weather conditions “to keep them tuned up.”
4. Reply to everything someone says with “that’s what YOU think.”
5. Practice making fax and modem noises.
6. Signal that a conversation is over by clamping your hands over your ears.
7. Holler random numbers while someone is counting.
8. Adjust the tint on your TV so that all the people are green and insist to others that you “like it that way.”
9. Repeat the following conversation a dozen times: “Do you hear that?” “What?” “Never mind it’s gone now.”
10. As much as possible skip rather than walk.
11. Go to a poetry recital and ask why each poem doesn’t rhyme.
12. Try playing the William Tell Overture and announce “No wait, I messed it up” and repeat.
13. While making presentations occasionally bob your head like a parakeet.
14. While people are talking to you, make a big display of looking up their nose.
15. If you have a glass eye, tap on it with your pen while talking to others.  

Yes, life can be quite annoying at times can’t it? But probably the most annoying thing to me is when somebody doubts the truth that the Bible really came from God. I say this because people today are quick to spout off bold claims about how there is no way in which the Bible can be said to come from God. In fact, they imply that anyone who believes this is acting like a fool. However, in reality, as we are discovering, the skeptic is the one who is the fool for they refuse to look at the evidence.

Skeptics of the Bible have arisen due to a century of unbelief and false criticism, which has led many people to doubt the fact that the Bible really came from God. When a Christian responds that the Bible is God’s Word, most people reply, “Oh yeah! Who says the Bible is God’s Word?”

Well, in the last chapter we observed the first four out of ten lines of evidence giving us solid proof that the Bible really came from God. We saw that the Bible says so, Jesus says so, the Apostles say so, and the Early Church and Church History say so. Oh, but the evidence doesn’t stop there. We still have six more to go. So let’s get started on the next three.

2 Peter 1:16-21 “For we were not making up clever stories when we told you about the power of our Lord Jesus Christ and his coming again. We have seen his majestic splendor with our own eyes. And he received honor and glory from God the Father when God’s glorious, majestic voice called down from heaven, ‘This is my beloved Son; I am fully pleased with him.’

We ourselves heard the voice when we were there with him on the holy mountain. Because of that, we have even greater confidence in the message proclaimed by the prophets. Pay close attention to what they wrote, for their
words are like a light shining in a dark place – until the day Christ appears and his brilliant light shines in your hearts.

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophets themselves or because they wanted to prophesy. It was the Holy Spirit who moved the prophets to speak from God.” (NLT)

Who says that the Bible is the Word of God? Well, the 5th line of evidence is that the Transmission Standards say so.

I am sure that you are familiar with the common response that skeptics make when a Christian declares that the Bible is indeed the Word of God. Many will say, “Even if what was originally spoken to the people in the Scripture was really from God we however have no guarantee that what we have recorded in the Bible today is accurate.” They will then usually cite the typical scenario of where people play the game of saying a phrase to one person who then whispers it to the person next to them and so on it goes around a large circle. Then the last person speaks what they last heard and invariably what is spoken is far removed from the original statement. They then reply that this is “proof” that we cannot be sure of the accuracy of the Bible for it wasn’t just quickly spoken orally to those around a circle but also over many centuries.

However, those who make this ridiculous assumption are really showing their ignorance of how the Bible has been transmitted to us throughout history. Let us look first at the transmission standards of the Old Testament. Just how was it transmitted to us? Is what was recorded for us reliable? See for yourself by the following charts on the next several pages.3

Many people will look at the Old Testament, especially the first five books of the Bible which were clearly written by Moses and ask, “How in the world could Moses know, let alone accurately, what went on in the Genesis account, the garden of Eden, the flood, etc. when he is so far removed in time
from the actual events? How can we trust the data that he wrote?” Well, again, that’s the importance of the following charts, which shows us the genealogical record and life spans of the people in the Book of Genesis.

Do you remember that part in the Bible where it says so and so begot so and so? I know most people think of that part of the Scripture as boring but its actually a very important direct link of accurate transmission of the events in the beginning of man’s history, leading eventually all the way down to the time of Moses.

If you’ll notice, the chart starts with Adam and Seth and all his sons going all the way down to Noah and then even to the time of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. Notice how the ages of the people mentioned overlap the life span of another.
Adam knew Methuselah for 243 years.

Methuselah knew Noah for 600 years.
And Noah had 6 living ancestors that could’ve personally known Adam.

And Noah was still alive 58 years after Abraham was born.
In fact, all 10 of Abraham’s post-flood ancestors (even Noah) were still alive for his early life.

And even more interesting is that Noah’s son Shem was still alive not just for Abraham, but even Isaac and Jacob!
Shortly thereafter we have the birth of the Jewish nation through Abraham who later went into captivity into Egypt in which God called Moses to lead the Israelites out of their bondage. Therefore, the transmission of data of the beginnings of man’s history is not only possible but also retrieved from firsthand accounts. As you can see, Moses did not just whoop up some story.

Also, the other thing we need to keep in mind is that, the authors of the Old Testament did not just arbitrarily write down some message and hopefully somebody got it right with no errors. We know this because if you study Jewish history you will see that they followed strict copy methods for the specific reason of accurate transmission of the data. Here’s just a few of their stipulations when copying their writings.

1. A synagogue roll must be written on the skins of clean animals.

Thus the first 2,157 years of mankind’s history is covered by the lives of just 3 men!
2. Prepared for the particular use of the synagogue by a Jew.
3. These must be fastened together with strings taken from clean animals.
4. Every skin must contain a certain number of columns, equal throughout the entire codex.
5. The length of the column must not extend over less than 48 nor more than 60 lines; and the breadth must consist of thirty letters.
6. The whole copy must be first-lined; and if three words should be written without a line, it is worthless.
7. The ink should be black, neither red, green, nor any other color, and be prepared according to a definite recipe.
8. An authentic copy must be the exemplar, from which the transcriber ought not in the least deviate.
9. No word or letter, not even a yod, must be written from memory, the scribe not having looked at the codex before him…
10. Between every consonant the space of a hair or thread must intervene;
11. Between every new parashah, or section, the breadth of nine consonants;
13. The fifth book of Moses must terminate exactly with a line; but the rest need not do so.
14. Besides this, the copyist must sit in full Jewish dress,
15. Wash his whole body,
16. Not begin to write the name of God without a pen newly dipped in ink,
   And should a king address him while writing that name he must take no notice of him.  

In fact, their manuscripts were checked within thirty days and if it even had one mistake, it was destroyed by burning it and then even the ashes were buried just to make sure no one would ever find the remains. As you can see, this is a far cry from the common scenario suggested of just “talking around a circle” don’t you think?

Well, how about the New Testament? Just how was it transmitted to us? Is what was recorded for us reliable? See for yourself. Let us now look at the transmission standards of the New Testament. Here are some of the common practices of the student of a Rabbi (who would follow their Rabbi around constantly where ever he went) back in the days of Jesus.
“In the Jewish religion it was customary for a student to memorize a rabbi’s teaching. A good pupil was like ‘a plastered cistern that loses not a drop’ (Mishna, Aboth, ii, 8). If we rely on C.F. Burney’s theory (in The Poetry of our Lord, 1925), we can assume that much of the Lord’s teaching is in Aramaic poetical form, making it easy to be memorized.” 5

Unlike today, people back then would literally memorize word for word what they were taught. And as you can see this is exactly the same standard that Jesus would have employed with His disciples. He taught in poetic and parable form along with common everyday analogies that his followers could easily retain “without losing a drop.”

Furthermore, the Apostles and other writers also had the promise of Jesus sending of the Holy Spirit to “remind” them of what He had spoken and taught to them to insure the accuracy of what they recorded for us.

John 14:25-26 “All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”(NIV)

What is amazing is that these strict and reliable forms of transmission of information are unique in this kind of depth to the Scripture alone. Many books of antiquity that the skeptics assume are reliable do not even come close to following these kind of transmission methods let alone have any. You see, you cannot have it both ways. You cannot accept some books of antiquity who have little or no standard of reliable transmission and then turn around and deny the authenticity of the Bible for the Bible’s unique and amazing transmission standards clearly presents the Bible as the genuine Word of God. Anything short of this is outright hypocrisy.

Who says that the Bible is the Word of God? Well, the 6th line of evidence is that the Manuscript Data says so. The reason why manuscript data concerning the Bible is important in regard to the validity of it being the Word of
God is that the larger amount of manuscript data that one has of a document, the more one can cross reference the copies to ensure that what we have today is indeed accurate to the original.

“The Bible was one of the first major books translated (Septuagint: Greek Translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, ca 250 BC). The Bible has been translated and retranslated, and paraphrased, more than any other book in existence. *Encyclopedia Britannica* says that ‘by 1966 the whole Bible has appeared... in 240 languages and dialects... one or more whole books of the Bible in 739 additional ones.’ Three thousand Bible translators between 1950 and 1960 were at work translating the Scriptures. The Bible factually stands unique (one of a kind) in its translation.”

As you can see, the Bible is unlike any other piece of writing in the History of mankind. No other book on the planet has been translated with such volume throughout the centuries. However, many will say that even if the Word of God was transmitted reliably by the authors of the books of the Bible that we cannot be sure of the Bible’s accuracy today since we do not have the original copies. However, nothing can be further from the truth. This is because of the fact that the more copies of manuscripts of a document the more assured we can be of its authenticity to the original.

“The more often you have copies that agree with each other, especially if they emerge from different geographical areas, the more you can cross-check them to figure out what the original document was like. The only way they’d agree would be where they went back genealogically in a family tree that represents the descent of manuscripts. We can have great confidence in the fidelity with which this material has come down to us, especially compared with any other ancient literary work. Sir Frederick Kenyon has concluded, ‘The last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed.’”

The reason why we can state with confidence that it is possible to reconstruct the original text of the Bible with complete accuracy even though none of the original autographs are now in existence is due to the rules of textual
criticism and how we actually go about reconstructing the Bible that we have today. The rules for textual criticism is something that scholars have developed over time to develop certain criteria for determining which reading of a text is the correct original one. The rules they employ for this means are as follows. First the older reading is to be preferred for it is closer to the original. Second the more difficult the reading is to be preferred for scribes were more apt to “smooth out” difficult readings. Third the shorter reading is to be preferred for copyists were more apt to insert new material than omit part of the sacred text. Fourth the reading that best explains the other variants is to be preferred. Fifth the reading with the widest geographical support is to be preferred because such manuscripts are less likely to have influenced each other. Sixth the reading that is most like the author’s usual style is to be preferred. Seventh the reading that does not reflect a doctrinal bias is to be preferred. Because of this procedure we can accurately state that 99% of the New Testament is guaranteed of the original autographs and 95% of the Old Testament, neither with serious discrepancies.

The amazing thing is that when looking at the manuscript evidence for the Bible especially in comparison to other works of antiquity, whose validity is never questioned mind you, the results are quite embarrassing for the skeptic. Let us look first at the New Testament.

“There are now more than 5,300 known Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. Add over 10,000 Latin Vulgate and at least 9,300 other early versions and we have more than 24,000 manuscript copies of portions of the New Testament in existence. No other document of antiquity even begins to approach such numbers and attestation.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>When Written</th>
<th>Earliest Copy</th>
<th>Time Span</th>
<th>Copies</th>
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<tr>
<td>Caesar</td>
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<td>1,000 yrs.</td>
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<td>427-347 B.C.</td>
<td>A.D. 900</td>
<td>1,200 yrs.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Date of Copy</td>
<td>Years Gap</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tacitus</td>
<td>A.D. 100</td>
<td>A.D. 1100</td>
<td>1,000 yrs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suetonius</td>
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<td>A.D. 950</td>
<td>800 yrs.</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
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<td>A.D. 900</td>
<td>1,300 yrs</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sophocles</td>
<td>496-406 B.C.</td>
<td>A.D. 1000</td>
<td>1,400 yrs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catullus</td>
<td>54 B.C.</td>
<td>A.D. 1550</td>
<td>1,600 yrs</td>
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<td>Euripides</td>
<td>480-406 B.C.</td>
<td>A.D. 1100</td>
<td>1,500 yrs</td>
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<td>Demosthenes</td>
<td>383-322 B.C.</td>
<td>A.D. 1100</td>
<td>1,300 yrs</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aristotle</td>
<td>384-322 B.C.</td>
<td>A.D. 1100</td>
<td>1,400 yrs</td>
<td>49</td>
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<td>Aristophanes</td>
<td>450-385 B.C.</td>
<td>A.D. 900</td>
<td>1,200 yrs</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homer (Iliad)</td>
<td>900 B.C.</td>
<td>400 B.C.</td>
<td>500 yrs.</td>
<td>643</td>
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<tr>
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<td>A.D. 40-100</td>
<td>A.D. 125</td>
<td>25 yrs.</td>
<td>24,000+</td>
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Now isn’t it interesting, as the above chart shows, that many works of antiquity, which are never “questioned” for their accuracy or reliability mind you, are not only so few in number but have hundreds of years of gaps between the original document and the copies we have today. Why is it that nobody questions the authenticity of Plato’s writings when we have only seven copies, which are 1,200 years from the original? Yet, although we have portions of the New Testament within 25 years of the original with tens of thousands of copies, people still scoff at the Christian who declares that the Bible is not only accurate
but also completely reliable? I guess they won’t share this kind of information on the five o’clock news will they, let alone the following quotes?

“Since scholars accept as generally trustworthy the writings of the ancient classics even though the earliest MSS were written so long after the original writings and the number of extant MSS is in many instances so small, it is clear that the reliability of the text of the New Testament is likewise assured.” 10

“Sir Frederick Kenyon writes, ‘The interval then between the dates of the original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible…Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established.” 11

“Add to their proximity to the autographs not only the multiplicity of the New Testament manuscripts, but the prolific quotation by the early Church Fathers and the plurality of early versions, and without entering the mechanics by which the character of the New Testament text is established, it can be readily understood why no book from the ancient world comes to us with more abundant evidence for its integrity than does the New Testament.” 12

Now let us turn our attention to the manuscript evidence for the Old Testament. How does it hold up? Is it reliable? Of course it is. This is one of the amazing discoveries that was confirmed by the finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls. You see prior to this discovery the earliest copy that we had of the Hebrew Old Testament was from 900 AD onward. However, with the Dead Sea Scrolls we reduced this gap by about 1,000 years to around 125 BC When the Dead Sea Scrolls first came out there was a flurry of expectation since with these new scrolls, we now possessed manuscripts of the Old Testament 1,000 years older than previously. The premature charge of the skeptic was that there was bound to be serious errors in our current version of the Old Testament. So was there you ask? Nope. Of the variances that did exist it was minor with such things as punctuation or differences of spelling. In fact, there were no major changes and no doctrinal variances as to what we have faithfully recorded for us today.
“When the facts are known and compared, there is an overwhelming abundance of reasons for believing that the MSS we possess are trustworthy. We shall see, as Sir Frederick Kenyon put it, that ‘the Christian can take the whole Bible in his hand and say without fear or hesitation that he holds in it the true Word of God, handed down without essential loss from generation throughout the centuries.’”

What is astounding is that this plethora of manuscript data can only be said of the Scripture. As you have seen, many books of antiquity that the skeptics assume are reliable do not even come close to the massive amount of manuscript data. You see, you cannot have it both ways. You cannot accept some books of antiquity who have a small or minuscule amount of manuscript data as being valid and then turn around and deny the authenticity of the Bible for the volumes of manuscript data clearly present the Bible as the genuine Word of God. Anything short of this is outright hypocrisy.

Who says that the Bible is the Word of God? Well, the 7th line of evidence is that Archaeology says so. You see, archaeology is important in showing the historical accuracy of the Scripture. This is because the skeptics have made many false claims as to the “supposed” unreliability of the Bible in its historical data. Therefore, they say that the Bible cannot be the Word of God for there is error in it. However, it has been the privileged duty of the archaeologist’s spade to silence to mouth of the skeptic. Let me show you what I mean with just a “few” of the many examples.

1. **The Black Stele:** Skeptics claimed that Moses could not have been the author of the Pentateuch for writing was supposedly not developed during his time. However, thanks to the discovery of the Black Stele which contained in “written” form the laws of Hammurabi, writing was in fact commonplace during Moses’ time just like the Bible states.

2. **The Hittites:** Skeptics claimed that there were no such people as the Hittites, which are mentioned in the Old Testament. However, thanks to the discovery of archaeologists, we now know that the Hittites were a real people and even
now have records of over 1,200 years of their civilization just like the Bible states.

3. **Belshazzar:** Skeptics claimed that there was no such person as Belshazzar as is mentioned in the Book of Daniel. However, thanks to the discovery of archaeologists, we now know that he existed and ruled in Babylon just like the Bible states.

4. **Doors in Sodom:** Skeptics claimed that doors as were mentioned in the account of Lot in Sodom were not in use during that time in that culture. However, thanks to the discovery of archaeologists, we now know that doors were used then as a means of protection just like the Bible states.

5. **Camels:** Skeptics claimed that the account of camels in the Book of Genesis is false for they were not utilized back in those times. However, thanks to the discovery of archaeologists, we now know that the usage of camels was indeed commonplace just like the Bible states.

6. **Luke’s Census:** Skeptics claimed that the account in Luke’s gospel of the census is nowhere to be found in Roman records. However, thanks to the discovery of archaeologists, we now know that this kind of census taking was commonplace during that time just like the Bible states.

7. **Pontius Pilate:** Skeptics claimed that there are no Roman records of Pontius Pilate ruling in Judea. However, thanks to the discovery of archaeologists, we now know that Pontius Pilate was not only a real person but also ruling in Judea just like the Bible states.

8. **Nazareth:** Skeptics claimed that there was no such place as the town of Nazareth. However, thanks to the discovery of archaeologists, we now know that Nazareth was an actual town just like the Bible states.

9. **The Pool of Bethesda:** Skeptics claimed that there is no evidence for this pool. However, thanks to the discovery of archaeologists, we now know that the pool of Bethesda was not only real but also right where it is supposed to be just like the Bible states.

10. **Seat of Moses:** Skeptics claimed that the mentioning of this must be figurative for there is no evidence for an actual seat of Moses. However,
thanks to the discovery of archaeologists, we now know that the seat of Moses was an actual seat that was made of stone where the teacher of a synagogue would have sat just like the Bible states. 14

“We find that there is good evidence that from archaeology that the Scriptures speak the truth. In many instances, the Scriptures even reflect firsthand knowledge of the times and customs it describes. While many have doubted the accuracy of the Bible, time and continued research have consistently demonstrated that the Word of God is better informed than its critics. In fact, while thousands of finds from the ancient world support in broad outline and often in detail the biblical picture, not one incontrovertible find has ever contradicted the Bible.” 15

Now, isn’t it interesting to say the least that when skeptics make a false claim concerning the historical accuracy of the Bible that it makes front-page news? Yet when they are proven false in their biased assumptions, these true findings which verify the Scripture are not given equal exposure in the various forms of the media.

You see, you cannot have it both ways. You cannot agree with some of the Bible’s teaching and then turn around and deny the authenticity of the Bible due to claims of the skeptic who state that the Bible is historically inaccurate especially when time and time again the skeptic is the one who has been proven false. One must admit that the historical integrity of the Bible that is verified by archaeology clearly presents it as the genuine Word of God. Anything short of this is outright hypocrisy.

People of God, don’t be fooled by the appearance of “supposed” wisdom from the critic. For as we all know, appearances can be deceiving like these guys found out.

“Two young guys were in the woods when all of a sudden there was a downpour of thunder and rain. The two ran for about 10 minutes in the pouring rain, finally reaching their car just as the rain let up. They jumped in the car, started it up and headed down the road.
All of a sudden an old man’s face appeared in the passenger window and tapped lightly on the window! The passenger screamed out, ‘Eeeekkk! Look at my window!!! There’s an old guy’s face there!’ (Was this a ghost?) The old man kept knocking, so the driver said, ‘Well open the window a little and ask him what he wants!’ So the passenger rolled his window down part way and said, scared out of his wits, ‘What do you want?’

The old man softly replied, ‘You have any food?’ The passenger, terrified, looked at the driver and said, ‘He wants food!’ ‘Well, offer him a sandwich! HURRY!!’ the driver replies. So the passenger fumbles around with the pack and hands the old man a sandwich, rolling up the window in terror and yells, ‘Step on it!!!’

Now going about 80 miles an hour, they calm down and they start laughing. The passenger says, ‘What did you think of that?’ The driver says, ‘I don’t know. How could that be? I am going pretty fast.’

All of a sudden, AGAIN there is a knock on the window and the old man is looking in the window.

‘Aaaaaaaahhhhhhh! There he is again!’ the passenger yells.

‘Well, see what he wants now!’ yells back the driver.

The passenger rolls down the window a little ways and shakily says ‘Yes?’

‘Do you have a napkin?’ the old man quietly asks. The passenger throws a napkin out the window at him, rolls up the window and again yells, ‘STEP ON IT!’

They are now going about 100 miles an hour, trying to forget what they had just seen and heard. Suddenly, again there is more knocking! ‘HE’S BACK!’ He rolls down the window and screams out, ‘WHAT DO YOU WANT?’ in stark fear.

The old man gently replies, ‘You want some help getting out of the mud?’

Yes, appearances can be deceiving. You see those two guys thought they had all the facts but in the end they were deceived, weren’t they? So it is with the
skeptics of the Bible. They spout off bold claims giving the “appearance” of wisdom. They say that the Bible cannot be trusted, the Bible is full of errors, the Bible isn’t God’s Word when all the time they refuse to look at the evidence. Now I ask you, just who are the ones being the hypocrites?

People of God, there is no need to doubt. There is no need to cave in to the false claims of the skeptic. What we hold in our hands is the genuine Word of God!
You know, because we live in a fallen world, one of the common occurrences in life is that sooner or later you are going to run across certain people who, for the lack of a better term, are a french fry short of a happy meal, or whose cheese has done slid off their cracker, or even laid on there side too long and their brain done rolled out the side of their head. Sometimes these encounters can hit you with surprise but it doesn’t have to be. You see, I have observed if you pay attention long enough that there will be surefire signs to indicate that someone isn’t too smart. Here’s a few indicators that I keep in mind when dealing with people.

1. They call you to get their phone number.
2. They spend 20 minutes looking at the orange juice box because it said “concentrate.”
3. They put lipstick on their forehead because they wanted to make up their mind.
4. They told you to meet them on the corner of “Walk” and “Don’t Walk”.
5. They thought a quarterback was a refund.
6. Under “education” on their job application, they put “Hooked on Phonics.”
7. They tripped over a cordless phone.
8. They took a ruler to bed to see how long they slept.
9. It takes them 2 hours to watch *60 Minutes*.
10. They studied for a blood test.
11. They thought *Boyz II Men* was a daycare center.
12. They thought *Meow Mix* was a record for cats.
13. They sold their car for gas money.
14. When they saw the “NC-17” (under 17 not admitted), they went home and got 16 friends.
15. When they heard that 90% of all crimes occur around the home, they moved.
16. When they took you to the airport and saw the sign that said “Airport Left” they turned around and went home.
17. They think *Taco Bell* is where you pay your phone bill.  

Unfortunately, the signs or indications that somebody isn’t very smart don’t stop there. To me, one of the most unintelligent statements that a person can make today, which indicates that they can’t be too smart, is when they doubt the truth that the Bible really came from God. I say this because people today are quick to spout off bold claims about how there is no way in which the Bible can be said to come from God. In fact, they imply that anyone who believes this is a mental idiot. However, in reality, the skeptic is the one whose “cheese has fell out of their sandwich” for they refuse to look at the evidence.

Skeptics of the Bible have arisen due to a century of unbelief and false criticism, which has led many people to doubt the fact that the Bible really came from God. When a Christian responds that the Bible is God’s Word, most people reply, “Oh yeah! Who says the Bible is God’s Word?”

The last two chapters we began looking at the first seven of ten lines of evidence giving us solid proof that the Bible really came from God. We saw that the **Bible** says so, **Jesus** says so, the **Apostles** say so, the **Early Church and Church History** say so, **Transmission Standards** say so, **Manuscript Data** says so, and **Archaeology** says so. Oh, but the evidence doesn’t stop there. We still have three more to go. So let’s get started.
1 Peter 1:13-25 “For you have been born again. Your new life did not come from your earthly parents because the life they gave you will end in death. But this new life will last forever because it comes from the eternal, living word of God. As the prophet says, People are like grass that dies away; their beauty fades as quickly as the beauty of wildflowers. The grass withers, and the flowers fall away. But the word of the Lord will last forever. And that word is the Good News that was preached to you.” (NLT)

Who says that the Bible is the Word of God? Well, the 8th line of evidence is that Predictive Prophecy says so. Prophecy is another important point that one must keep in mind when considering whether or not the Bible truly is the Word of God. The reason is that if a book were truly from God then one would expect that it would contain things that only God could know. Of course the Bible is full of them.

“One of the strongest evidences that the Bible is inspired by God is its predictive prophecy. Unlike any other book, the Bible offers a multitude of specific predictions-some hundreds of years in advance-that have been literally fulfilled or else point to a definite future time when they will come true. In his comprehensive catalogue of prophecies, Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecies, J. Barton Payne lists 1,817 predictions in the Bible, 1,239 in the Old Testament and 578 in the New.”

You see, there are almost 2,000 prophecies mentioned in the Bible. In fact, one-third of the Bible’s content deals with the issue of predictive prophecy. The Bible has already predicted in intimate detail the rise and fall of nations, peoples, and cities. It even predicted to the exact day from the time of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem that 173,880 days later the Messiah would enter Jerusalem. And of course, exactly 173,880 days later we see in history the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. We could go on and on but I only have time to show you the following chart of just a small example of a few of the prophecies in the Bible. This chart includes just some of the prophecies that Jesus fulfilled proving that He was indeed the Messiah of the world.
MESSIANIC PROPHECIES FULFILLED IN CHRIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scripture Prophecy</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Scripture Fulfillment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 3:15</td>
<td>Born of the seed of a woman</td>
<td>Galatians 4:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 12:2-3</td>
<td>Born of the seed of Abraham</td>
<td>Matthew 1:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 17:19</td>
<td>Born of the seed of Isaac</td>
<td>Matthew 1:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers 24:17</td>
<td>Born of the seed of Jacob</td>
<td>Matthew 1:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 49:10</td>
<td>Descended from the tribe of Judah</td>
<td>Luke 3:33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaiah 9:7</td>
<td>Heir to the throne of David</td>
<td>Luke 1:32-33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaiah 7:14</td>
<td>Born of a virgin</td>
<td>Luke 1:26-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micah 5:2</td>
<td>Born in Bethlehem</td>
<td>Luke 2:4-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeremiah 31:15</td>
<td>Slaughter of the innocents</td>
<td>Matthew 2:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hosea 11:1</td>
<td>Flight to Egypt</td>
<td>Matthew 2:14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaiah 40:3-5</td>
<td>Proceeded by a forerunner</td>
<td>Luke 7:24-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalm 2:7</td>
<td>Declared the Son of God</td>
<td>Matthew 3:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaiah 9:1-2</td>
<td>Galilean ministry</td>
<td>Matthew 4:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deuteronomy 18:15</td>
<td>The prophet to come</td>
<td>Acts 3:20, 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaiah 61:1-2</td>
<td>Came to heal the brokenhearted</td>
<td>Luke 4:18-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaiah 53:3</td>
<td>Rejected by His own (the Jews)</td>
<td>John 1:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalm 110:4</td>
<td>Priest after the order of Melchizedek</td>
<td>Hebrews 5:5-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zechariah 9:9</td>
<td>Triumphal entry</td>
<td>Mark 11:7-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zechariah 11:12-13</td>
<td>Sold for thirty pieces of silver</td>
<td>Matthew 26:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalm 35:11</td>
<td>Accused by false witnesses</td>
<td>Mark 14:57-58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaiah 53:7</td>
<td>Silent to accusations</td>
<td>Mark 15:4-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaiah 50:6</td>
<td>Spat upon and smitten</td>
<td>Matthew 26:67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalm 35:19</td>
<td>Hated without reason</td>
<td>John 15:24-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaiah 53:5</td>
<td>Vicarious sacrifice</td>
<td>Romans 5:6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaiah 53:12</td>
<td>Crucified with transgressors</td>
<td>Mark 15:27-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zechariah 12:10</td>
<td>Hands pierced</td>
<td>John 20:27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalm 69:21</td>
<td>Given vinegar and gall</td>
<td>Matthew 27:34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalm 22:18</td>
<td>Soldiers gambled for His coat</td>
<td>Matthew 27:35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalm 34:20</td>
<td>No bones broken</td>
<td>John 19:32-36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zechariah 12:10</td>
<td>Side pierced</td>
<td>John 19:34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaiah 53:9</td>
<td>Buried with the rich</td>
<td>Matthew 27:57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Psalm 16:10; 49:15 Would rise from the dead  Mark 16:6-7
Psalm 68:18 Would ascend to God’s right hand  Mark 16:19

You know, what’s interesting is that there were about 300 prophecies predicting Jesus first coming. You’ll also find it interesting to note that the odds for one person to fulfill just a **hand-full** of these prophecies, of which Jesus fulfilled **all** of them, would be the same as if you took the entire state of Texas and covered it knee deep in silver dollars. You then flew over the state in a plane, marked on one silver dollar with a red “X” and then threw it out the window. Now you landed the plane and blindfolded a guy and told him to go in the whole state and pick out the silver dollar with the red “X” on the first try. This would be the same odds of one person fulfilling just a hand-full of these prophecies. In fact, one other interesting note is that there are 318 prophecies predicting Jesus’ second coming. So guess what? He’s coming back folks and I sure hope all of us are ready.

As you can see, one of the strongest evidences that the Bible really comes from God is its predictive prophecy. Unlike any other book, the Bible alone offers a multitude of specific predictions-some hundreds of years in advance—that have been literally fulfilled. This shows us that the Bible alone contains things that only God can know and thus reveals its divine inspiration.

“The argument from prophecy is the argument from omniscience. Limited beings know the future only if it is told to them by an omniscient Being. If an omniscient Being is known to exist and highly improbable predictions are made in His name which come to pass without fail, then it is reasonable to assume that they were divinely inspired. If an omniscient God exists who knows the future, then predictive prophecy is possible. And if the Bible contains such predictions, then they are sign of the Bible's divine origin.”

You see, you cannot have it both ways. You cannot agree with some of the Bible’s teaching and then turn around and deny the authenticity of the Bible.
Because it’s obvious that the predictive prophecies clearly present the Bible as the genuine Word of God. Anything short of this is outright hypocrisy.

Who says that the Bible is the Word of God? Well, the 9th line of evidence is that Science says so. How many times have you heard it said that the Bible is full of errors and or contradictions? It seems to be a constant cry of the critics. And one of the most popular areas of “supposed” contradictions that the Bible is said to contain is in the area of science. However, there are some very important things to keep in mind when we look at the Scripture in regards to our current scientific mindset that we have today.

“To be true, something does not have to use scholarly, technical, or so-called ‘scientific’ language. The Bible is written for the common person of every generation, and it therefore uses common, everyday language. The use of observational, nonscientific language is not unscientific, it is merely prescientific. The Scriptures were written in ancient times by ancient standards, and it would be anachronistic to superimpose modern scientific standards upon them. However, it is no more unscientific to speak of the sun ‘standing still’ (Josh. 10:12) than to refer to the sun ‘rising’ (Josh. 1:16). Meteorologists still refer to the times of ‘sunrise’ and ‘sunset.” 5

This is a key point to keep in mind when approaching the Scriptures for sure. However, I do find it quite interesting that not only does the Bible not contradict science but that it is actually science who is “catching up” to what the Bible has been saying all along!

1. The Universe had a beginning: Genesis 1:1
2. No new matter is being created: Genesis 2:2
3. The universe is running down: Psalm 102:25-27
4. Life produces after its kind: Genesis 1:24
5. Humans made from earth: Genesis 2:7
6. Water returns to its source: Job 37:16
7. The earth is round: Isaiah 40:22
8. The earth hangs in space: Job 26:7
9. The sea has paths and channels: Psalm 8:8
10. The sea has boundaries: Proverbs 8:29
11. Life is in the blood: Leviticus 17:11
12. Disease can be spread by physical contact: Leviticus 13:6
14. Law of conservation of mass and energy: 2 Peter 3:7
15. Hydrologic cycle: Ecclesiastes 1:7
16. Vast number of stars: Jeremiah 33:22
17. Atmospheric circulation: Ecclesiastes 1:6
18. Gravitational field: Job 26:7

“All attempts to convict the Bible of scientific error fail. Both Nature and Scripture are revelations of God, and God cannot contradict Himself. Conflicts that exist are not between nature and Scripture but between fallible understanding of one or the other of them, or both.”

This kind of information comes in handy when you run across those people who will only give credence to what they can see or explain “scientifically.”

“An atheist came to a preacher one time and stated, ‘I don’t believe anything in the Bible.’ The preacher said, ‘You don’t believe anything?’ He said, ‘Nothing. I only believe what you can prove scientifically.’ Then the atheist continued, ‘If you can prove one verse out of the Bible, scientifically, I’ll believe it.’

The preacher said, ‘Okay.’ He grabbed the atheist around the neck, grabbed his nose, and began twisting it back and forth, back and forth. Pretty soon, blood was pouring down his face. The atheist exclaimed, ‘Man, what are you doing?’ The preacher replied, ‘I was proving the Bible to you. It says in Proverbs 30:33, ‘Surely the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood.’”

Now, I don’t recommend that you give a skeptic of the Bible a bloody nose to prove it’s scientific accuracy. But what you can do is happily point out the fact that it is actually science who is the one “catching up” to what the Bible has been saying all along!

You see, you cannot have it both ways. You cannot agree with some of the Bible’s teaching and then turn around and deny the authenticity of the Bible because it’s obvious that **by containing no contradictions to science and all the**
while “assisting” modern science with the facts that its been stating for several millennia, clearly presents the Bible as the genuine Word of God!

Anything short of this is outright hypocrisy.

Who says that the Bible is the Word of God? Well, the 10th line of evidence is that the Nature and Scope of Data says so. One of the most convincing proofs of the authenticity of the Bible being the Word of God is simply by observing the reality that it is completely and profoundly different than any other book or piece of literature on the planet. Just look at some of these statistics about the nature of the Bible and I think you will see what I mean.

1. **Written over a 1,500-year span.**

2. **Written over 40 generations.**

3. **Written by more than 40 authors, from every walk of life-including kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, poets, statesmen, scholars, etc.**
   a. Moses, a political leader, trained in the universities of Egypt
   b. Peter, a fisherman
   c. Amos, a herdsman
   d. Joshua, a military general
   e. Nehemiah, a cupbearer
   f. Daniel, a prime minister
   g. Luke, a doctor
   h. Solomon, a king
   i. Matthew, a tax collector
   j. Paul, a rabbi

4. **Written in different places.**
   a. Moses in the wilderness
   b. Jeremiah in a dungeon
   c. Daniel on a hillside and in a palace
   d. Paul inside prison walls
   e. Luke while traveling
   f. John on the isle of Patmos
   g. Others in the rigors of a military campaign
5. Written at different times.
   a. David in times of war
   b. Solomon in times of peace

6. Written during different moods.
   a. Some writing from the heights of joy and others from the depths of sorrow and despair

7. Written on three continents.
   a. Asia, Africa, Europe

8. Written in three languages.
   a. Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek

   Keep in mind that with all these variables and differences between the time, place, circumstances, etc., that the Bible completely retains its unity and continuity throughout both the Old and New Testaments as you can see below.

   **RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN GENESIS AND REVELATION**

   | 1. The Book of Beginnings | 1. The Book of the End |
   | 2. The earth created (1:1) | 2. The earth passed away (21:1) |
   | 3. Satan’s first rebellion | 3. Satan’s final rebellion (20:3, 7-10) |
   | 4. Sun, moon, stars for earth’s with government (1:14-16) | 4. Sun, moon, stars connected earth’s judgment (6:3, 8:12, 16:8) |
   | 5. Sun to govern the day (1:16) | 5. No need of Sun (21:23) |
   | 6. Darkness called night (1:5) | 6. “No night there” (22:5) |
   | 7. Waters called seas (1:10) | 7. “No more sea” (21:1) |
   | 8. A river for earth’s blessing (2:10-14) | 8. River for new earth (22:1,2) |
   | 9. Man in God’s image (1:26) | 9. Man headed by one in Satan’s image (13) |
   | 10. Entrance of sin (3) | 10. Development & end of sin (21:22) |
   | 11. Curse pronounced (3:14, 17) | 11.”No more curse” (22:3) |
   | 12. Death entered (3:19) | 12.”No more death” (21:4) |
   | 14. Man driven out of Eden (3:24) | 14. Man restored (22) |
15.Tree of Life guarded (3:24)  15.Right to Tree of Life (22:14) 
17.Man’s religion, art & science resorted to for enjoyment apart from God (4) 
18.Man’s religion, art & science in their full glory, judged & destroyed by God (18) 
18.Beast (great rebel, king & manifested anti-god) reviver of Babylon (13-18) 
19.Flood from God to destroy an evil generation (6:9) 
19.Flood from satan to destroy an elect generation (12) 
20.Bow (token of God’s covenant with earth) (9-13) 
20.Bow (betokening God’s remembrance of His covenant with earth (4:3, 10:1) 
21.Sodom & Egypt, the places of corruption & temptation (13:19) 
21.Sodom & Egypt again (11:8) 
22.A confederacy against Abraham’s people overthrown (14) 
22.A confederacy against Abraham’s seed overthrown (12) 
23.Marriage of First Adam (2:18-23) 
23.Marriage of Last Adam (19) 
24.Bride sought for Abraham’s son and found (24) 
24.Bride made ready & brought to Abraham’s Son (19:9 & Matt.1:1) 
25.Two angels acting for God on behalf of His people (19) 
25.Two witnesses acting for God on behalf of His people (11) 
26.Promised Seed to possess the gates of His enemies (22:17) 
26.Promised Seed coming into possession (11:18) 
27.Man’s dominion ceased & satan’s began 
27.satan’s dominion ended & man’s restored 
28.Old serpent causing sin, suffering, death 
28.serpent bound for 1000 years (20:1-3) 
29.Doom of serpent pronounced (3:15) 
29.Doom of serpent executed (20:10) 
30.Sun, moon, stars associated with Israel 
30.Sun, moon, stars associated with Israel 

Now add to this the fact of the incredible scope of the various topics that the Bible covers from law, marriage, government, life, death, heaven, hell, etc. It even utilizes various literary types such as poetry, history, biography, diaries, parables, allegories, etc., and even with all this it still holds on to its unity.
Furthermore, the Bible alone is unique in its circulation. No other book in our history has had such a circulation. In fact each year there are so many Bibles sold that it consistently tops the *New York Times* bestseller list but it is left off due to the fact that it would always be listed as the number one bestseller.

“The Bible has been read by more people and published in more languages than any other book in history. More copies of its entirety and more portions and selections have been produced than any other book. Absolutely no other book even begins to compare with that of the Scriptures.

Hy Pickering says that about thirty years ago, for the British and Foreign Bible Society to meet its demands, it had to publish ‘one copy every three seconds day and night; 22 copies every minute day and night; 1,369 copies every hour day and night; 32,876 copies every day in the year.’ According to *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, ‘No other book has known anything approaching this constant circulation.’

Also keep in mind that the Bible has survived attack after attack by people seeking or predicting its demise or destruction. Yet throughout history the Bible has still come out on top.

“Being written on material that perishes and having to be copied and recopied for hundreds of years before the invention of the printing press did not diminish the style, correctness, or existence of the Bible. The Bible has withstood vicious attacks of its enemies as no other book has. Many have tried to burn it, ban it, and ‘outlaw it, from the days of the Roman Emperors to present day Communist-dominated countries.’

Voltaire the French infidel who died in 1778, said that in one hundred years from his time Christianity would be swept from existence and passed into history. But what happened? Voltaire has passed into history, while the circulation of the Bible continues to increase in almost all parts of the world, carrying blessing wherever it goes.

Concerning the boast of Voltaire on the extinction of Christianity and the Bible in one hundred years, only fifty years after Voltaire’s death the Geneva Bible Society used his press and his house to produce stacks of Bibles. WHAT AN
IRONY OF HISTORY! Anyone seeking truth ought to consider a book that has the above qualifications.” 13

You see, you cannot have it both ways. You cannot agree with some of the Bible’s teaching and then turn around and deny the authenticity of the Bible. Because through the incredible nature and scope of its data in and still retaining its unity thus making it unlike any other book in the history of mankind the Bible clearly presents itself as the genuine Word of God.

Anything short of this is outright hypocrisy.

People of God, don’t be fooled by the skeptic who spouts off a bunch of “intelligent sounding” facts. For as we all know, “intelligent sounding” facts can be deceiving.

“Two guys named Al and Joe are bungee-jumping one day. Al says to Joe, ‘You know, we could make a lot of money running our own bungee jumping service in Mexico.’ Joe thinks this is a great idea, so they pool their money and buy everything they’ll need; a tower, an elastic cord, insurance, etc.

They travel to Mexico and begin to set up on the square. As they are constructing the tower a crowd begins to assemble. Slowly, more and more people gather to watch them work. When they had finished, there was such a crowd they thought it would be a good idea to give a demonstration. So Al jumps.

He bounces at the end of the cord, but when he comes back up, Joe notices that he has a few cuts and scratches. Unfortunately, Joe isn’t able to catch him, and he falls again, bounces again and comes back up again. This time he is bruised and bleeding. Again Joe misses him. Al falls again and bounces back up. This time he comes back pretty messed up. He’s got a couple of broken bones and is almost unconscious.

Luckily Joe catches him this time and says, ‘What happened? Was the cord too long?’ Barely able to speak, Al gasps, ‘No, the bungee cord was fine. It was the crowd... WHAT THE HECK IS A PIÑATA?’” 14
Yes, “intelligent sounding” facts can be deceiving. You see those two guys thought they had all the “intelligent” facts they needed on how to have a successful Bunjee jumping business in Mexico. But they left out one important fact about Piñatas, which almost cost the one guy his life didn’t it? So it is with the skeptics of the Bible. They spout off a bunch of “intelligent sounding” facts such as the Bible cannot be trusted, the Bible is full of errors, the Bible isn’t God’s Word when all the time they refuse to look at the evidence. It is they who refuse to look at the facts! You see, in the end the skeptics miss the most important fact of all, that the Bible really is the Word of God. Sadly though, if they continue down this path, it will cost them their lives for all eternity!

“There was a wealthy merchant who had undertaken a lengthy journey, carrying with him his most valuable jewels. Along the way, another traveler befriended him, making it look like a chance meeting but with the sole intent of laying his hands on those precious stones. At the end of each day when they arrived at a local inn they would share the room for the night.

As was customary, each received his mat and pillow and also a wash basin with a towel for his nightly washings. The merchant, somewhat suspicious of his newfound friend’s real motives, devised a scheme to safeguard his valuables that was to leave his ill-intentioned companion completely befuddled. Before they turned in for the night, he would graciously offer the would-be thief the privilege of washing up first. As soon as the thief would leave the room, the rich man would take his bag full of precious stones and hastily hide it under the pillow of the thief.

When the thief would return, the rich man would make his exit, taking his turn at cleaning up. Awaiting this moment of opportunity, with predatorial glee the rogue would plunge into the rich man’s belongings, rummaging through his bag, even ransacking in and under the rich man’s pillow, feverishly searching for the precious stones. His frenzied and fruitless attempts at every stop left him utterly frustrated, and eventually he would lay his sleepless head on his pillow, angry at his failure to locate the treasure.
Finally, as it came time to part on their last day together, the rich man began his farewell pleasantries and, to the speechless astonishment of his companion, informed him that all along he had been painfully aware of his real motives. Then came the agony-inflicting revelation: ‘You poured all your energies into looking everywhere – except under your own pillow. The wealth was nearer to you than you realized.’”  

As I stated in the beginning of this section, people are in a frantic search for purpose, direction, and truth relating to their existence. Many are desirous of true and lasting peace and love. Questions arise such as, “Why do I exist? Where did I come from? Is there life after death? What is the meaning of life?” The world is on a quest for some secret “alien” book or an ancient writing that will unlock the key to life. How ironic it is that this “mysterious” book that they are in search of can be found on bookshelves, collecting dust, in virtually every home in America. Of course, I am speaking of the Holy Bible. The answers to life are nearer than you realize.

- Among households which own a Bible, the typical count is three Bibles per household. (1993)
- Almost every household in America (92%) owns at least one copy of the Christian Bible. This includes most homes in which the adults are not practicing Christians as well as the homes of hundreds of thousands of atheists. (1993)  

Yes, the answers to life are nearer than you realize. However, it’s too bad that people won’t read them, especially when they are most likely right in their own home! So now I ask you, the reader, the question, “Can we know that the Bible is the Word of God?” I think that you would have to conclude that it is only obvious in light of the massive amount of evidence that we just observed, that the Bible is indeed the Word of God. Furthermore, this amazing truth of the authenticity and accuracy of the Scripture is something that we can know for certain! **Who says that the Bible is the Word of God?** Well, I and hopefully
yourself are not the only one’s “who say so.” Many other prominent people have also come to the same correct and obvious conclusion.

**Abraham Lincoln:** “I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man. All the good from the Saviour of the world is communicated to us through this book.”

**W.E. Gladstone:** “I have known ninety-five of the world’s great men in my time, and of these eighty-seven were followers of the Bible. The Bible is stamped with a Specialty of Origin, and an immeasurable distance separates it from all competitors.”

**George Washington:** “It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible.”

**Napoleon:** “The Bible is no mere book, but a Living Creature, with a power that conquers all that oppose it.”

**Queen Victoria:** “That book accounts for the supremacy of England.”

**Daniel Webster:** “If there is anything in my thoughts or style to commend, the credit is due to my parents for instilling in me an early love of the Scriptures. If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity.”

**Thomas Carlyle:** “The Bible is the truest utterance that ever came by alphabetic letters from the soul of man, through which, as through a window divinely opened, all men can look into the stillness of eternity, and discern in glimpses their far-distant, long-forgotten home.”

**John Ruskin:** “Whatever merit there is in anything that I have written is simply due to the fact that when I was a child my mother daily read me a part of the Bible and daily made me learn a part of it by heart.”

**Charles A. Dana:** “The grand old Book still stands; and this old earth, the more its leaves are turned and pondered, the more it will sustain and illustrate the pages of the Sacred Word.”
Thomas Huxley: “The Bible has been the Magna Charta of the poor and oppressed. The human race is not in a position to dispense with it.”

W.H. Seward: “The whole hope of human progress is suspended on the ever growing influence of the Bible.”

Patrick Henry: “The Bible is worth all other books which have ever been printed.”

U.S. Grant: “The Bible is the sheet-anchor of our liberties.”

Horace Greeley: “It is impossible to enslave mentally or socially a Bible-reading people. The principles of the Bible are the groundwork of human freedom.”

Andrew Jackson: “That book, sir, is the rock on which our republic rests.”

Robert E. Lee: “In all my perplexities and distresses, the Bible has never failed to give me light and strength.”

Lord Tennyson: “Bible reading is an education in itself.”

John Quincy Adams: “So great is my veneration for the Bible that the earlier my children begin to read it the more confident will be my hope that they will prove useful citizens of their country and respectable members of society. I have for many years made it a practice to read through the Bible once every year.”

Immanuel Kant: “The existence of the Bible, as a book for the people, is the greatest benefit which the human race has ever experienced. Every attempt to belittle it is a crime against humanity.”

Charles Dickens: “The New Testament is the very best book that ever was or ever will be known in the world.”

Sir William Herschel: “All human discoveries seem to be made only for the purpose of confirming more and more strongly the truths contained in the Sacred Scriptures.”
Sir Isaac Newton: “There are more sure marks of authenticity in the Bible than in any profane history.”

Goethe: “Let mental culture go on advancing, let the natural sciences progress in ever greater extent and depth, and the human mind widen itself as much as it desires; beyond the elevation and moral culture of Christianity, as it shines forth in the gospels, it will not go.”

Henry Van Dyke: “Born in the East and clothed in Oriental form and imagery, the Bible walks the ways of all the world with familiar feet and enters land after land to find its own everywhere. It has learned to speak in hundreds of languages to the heart of man. Children listen to its stories with wonder and delight, and wise men ponder them as parables of life. The wicked and the proud tremble at its warnings, but to the wounded and penitent it has a mother’s voice. It has woven itself into our dearest dreams; so that Love, Friendship, Sympathy, Devotion, Memory, Hope, put on the beautiful garments of its treasured speech. No man is poor or desolate who has this treasure for his own. When the landscape darkens, and the trembling pilgrim comes to the Valley of the Shadow, he is not afraid to enter; he takes the rod and staff of Scripture in his hand; he says to friend and comrade, “Goodbye; We Shall Meet Again”; and, confronted by that support, he goes toward the lonely pass as one who walks through darkness into light.” 17

People of God, there is no need to doubt. There is no need to cave in to the false claims of the skeptic. What we hold in our hands is the genuine Word of God!
Part III

The Problem of Suffering
Questions, questions, questions. If there’s one thing in life I’ve learned it is that life is full of them. Lots of them! Questions even come in different shapes and sizes. Some are big, some are little, some seem very important while other questions are quite ridiculous. In fact, if you listen long enough to our society, you’ll soon discover that there are a plethora of popular questions that people seem to have no answer for. Anyone notice besides me? Well, for those of you who still aren’t sure about what I’m talking about, I want to show you a list of popular questions that I’ve stumbled across over the years.

1. Is it true that travel is very educational for it allows you to say “Kaopectate” in many different languages?
2. Is it true that the lottery is a tax on people who are bad at math?
3. Is it true that the easiest way to find something lost around the house is to buy a replacement?
4. What do you call a cow that only has two legs? Lean beef?
5. What do you call a boomerang that doesn’t work? A stick?
6. Is it true that clones are people two?
7. Is it true that research causes cancer in rats?
8. If you don’t want to kill flies but still want to mess with their minds couldn’t you just hold them over a globe until they freak out and yell, “Whoa, I’m way to high!”

9. Is an intellectual a person who can listen to the William Tell Overture without thinking of the Lone Ranger?

10. If you have a lot of tension and a headache shouldn’t you do what it says on the aspirin bottle, “Take two and keep away from children.”

11. Is it true that people are so surprised when they are born that they don’t talk for a year and a half?

12. Is it true that women should not have children after 35? I mean really…35 children are enough.

13. Why do they report power outages on TV?

14. Is it true that if you eat a live toad in the morning then nothing worse will happen to you the rest of the day?

15. If carrots are so good for our eyes, how come there are so many dead rabbits on the highway?  

Yes, as you can see there are many popular questions in life aren’t there? But if you were to ask me what is one of the most important popular questions that I get asked from the skeptic in regards to Christianity, it would have to be concerning the problem of evil and suffering in our world today.

You’ve heard the cry of the skeptic. They ask, “How can there be an All-Powerful Loving God with all the suffering in the world?” Then I’ve also noticed that non-Christians usually pose this question with a triumphal sneer as if they have just crushed my faith or even the very existence of God Himself. But actually, much to their surprise, I readily agree with them that suffering and evil is rampant in our society. In fact, I am quick to point out that the 20th century is the most evil and bloodiest century ever known in the history of mankind.

There is no doubt about it. Evil and suffering is real and getting worse all the time and now more than ever people are demanding a satisfactory answer. And the great thing is that the Bible has a clear, rational, plausible, and true answer to that popular skeptical question. In fact, Christianity not only gives a
rational and true answer to the problem of suffering but it also is the only worldview that additionally gives encouragement and hope in the midst of life’s difficulties.

Therefore, to aid us in giving that satisfactory answer that skeptics all around us are demanding, we are going to begin a section on looking at **The Problem of Suffering**. And we’ll begin with the 1st obvious question of, **Where Did Suffering Come From?**

You see, when we understand just who is responsible for suffering then we will be able to give a ready answer to the objections of the skeptic out there. What objections? Well, I’m glad you asked. **Objection #1** usually goes something like this, “**God is not loving because He created evil.”** Now on the surface this question seems to be very imposing, but a quick look at the facts, reveals just how false it really is. So let’s find out just who is responsible for evil.

**Isaiah 14:12-15** “How you are fallen from heaven, O shining star, son of the morning! You have been thrown down to the earth, you who destroyed the nations of the world. For you said to yourself, ‘I will ascend to heaven and set my throne above God’s stars. I will preside on the mountain of the gods far away in the north. I will climb to the highest heavens and be like the Most High.’ But instead, you will be brought down to the place of the dead, down to its lowest depths.” (NLT)

As you can see, this passage is clearly speaking about the devil or evil one. But unfortunately, because many people refuse to read the Bible, they come up with all sorts of goofy answers for the identity of the evil one.

Everyone knows Barney ... that cute purple dinosaur. But here’s something that you may not know:

1. Start with the given: CUTE PURPLE DINOSAUR
2. Change all U’s to V’s (which is proper Latin anyway)
3. Extract all Roman Numerals:
CV V L DI V

4. Convert these into Arabic values:
100 5 5 50 500 1 5

5. Add these numbers up:
100
5
5
50
500
1
+ 5
----
666

There you have it... A valid mathematical proof that Barney is the evil one!  

Now, as convincing as that formula may be, Barney may be evil but no
he is not the evil one. You see, according to the Bible, satan is the evil one. In
fact, in our passage we just read we saw that our enemy, satan, was the first one
with the “I” problem. The devil wanted to be God. Notice how many times the
word “I” was used by him in just two verses. J. Vernon McGee says in regards to
this passage.

“These are the five ‘I wills’ of Lucifer. He was setting his will against the will
of God. This is sin in embryo. It began by a creature setting his will against the will
of God. The sin of satan was overweening pride. It wasn’t the purpose of satan to
be different from God; he wanted to be God. He put his will above the will of
God, and any creature who does that puts himself in the place of God.”

You see, originally, God created this world and mankind to worship and
glorify Him. And when He was done, He even said that it was very good. But
then the devil came along and tempted mankind so that we too would become infected with this me, myself, and I disease. Then because Adam chose to sin, each one of us is born with this “I” problem and in turn want to rule our own lives and be the master of our destiny. In fact, to be “just like God.” And because of this act of rebellion that was instigated by the devil, suffering and death came into the world for the very first time.

Romans 5:12 “This, then, is what has happened. Sin made its entry into the world through one man, and through sin, death. The entail of sin and death passed on to the whole human race, and no one could break it for no one was himself free from sin.” (J.B.P.)

People, this world is not how it was originally created. We have all been infected by this me, myself, and I disease which gives rise to the evil that we see. This rebellious nature, as we have read, came from the devil. So to answer the skeptic’s objection, we can clearly see that satan gave rise to the evil and suffering that we see in our world today, not God.

However some skeptics out there might still object saying, “Okay, so the devil is responsible for suffering and evil but, Objection #2, ‘God still created evil for He created the devil.’” Now, on the surface this question seems to be very imposing but a quick look at the facts, reveals just how false it really is.

You see, believe it or not, originally satan was a blameless beautiful angel before he turned into the devil that we have to contend with today. In fact, he was actually an angel that worshipped God until that is, wickedness was found within in. This is what Ezekiel says.

Ezekiel 28:12-17 “You were the perfection of wisdom and beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God. Your clothing was adorned with every precious stone all beautifully crafted for you and set in the finest gold. They were given to you on the day you were created. I ordained and anointed you as the mighty angelic guardian. You had access to the holy mountain of God and walked among the
stones of fire. You were blameless in all you did from the day you were created until the day evil was found in you.

Your great wealth filled you with violence, and you sinned. So I banished you from the mountain of God. I expelled you, O mighty guardian, from your place among the stones of fire. Your heart was filled with pride because of all your beauty. You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth and exposed you to the curious gaze of kings.” (NLT)

You see, since wickedness was found within satan, he is responsible for it not God. This is because evil is not a “created” thing such as dirt or water. Rather evil is an absence or a complete lack or withholding of something good or desirable. And we all know that the absence of something can leave a trail of suffering in one’s life like this guy found out.

“A man placed some flowers on the grave of his dearly departed mother and started back toward his car when his attention was diverted to another man kneeling at a grave.

The man seemed to be praying with profound intensity and kept repeating, ‘Why did you have to die? Why did you have to die?’

The first man approached him and said, ‘Sir, I don’t wish to interfere with your private grief, but this demonstration of pain is more than I’ve ever seen before. For whom do you mourn so deeply? A child? A parent?’

The mourner took a moment to collect himself, then replied, ‘My wife’s first husband.’”

Now that guy found out real fast that the absence of something or someone could cause a lot of suffering didn’t he? Well, it’s kind of the same thing with evil. Evil is the absence of good. For instance, let’s say that I made a blanket, but after awhile I find a hole in it. Now, you can’t really say that the hole is something created but rather it’s a lack of or absence of the blanket material, right? This is the same thing with the devil whereas we read that evil was found
within him. Now this is not saying that evil is an illusion or is not real. Evil is very real. Rather what I am saying is that it is a lack of something good. One person put it this way.

“The question, ‘Did God create evil?’ makes no more sense than the question ‘Did you bake your term paper?’ Term papers are not the kind of things that you bake. In the same way, evil is not something that exists which must have had a cause for its existence. It does not have being; it is a cancer within being. Thus it could not have been created.” 5

So to answer the skeptics objection, we can clearly see that since evil is not a created thing but an absence of good, that it therefore cannot be said to have been created by God. The devil is still responsible for it.

However some skeptics out there might still object saying, “Okay, so God didn’t create evil for it’s not a created thing and the devil himself is still responsible for suffering and evil but, Objection #3, ‘God is not loving for He has done nothing to stop suffering.’” Now, on the surface this question seems to be very imposing, but a quick look at the facts, reveals just how false it really is.

You see, even a cursory reading of the Scripture reveals that God has done something incredible about evil and suffering. And this is good news. In fact, the word gospel means good news. However, I must clarify before we go any further that this good news that the Bible declares about what God has done about suffering is not merely a pat on the back, or a trivial word of encouragement from God and it certainly is not just for a select few like this story suggests.

“One day God was looking down at Earth and saw all of the evil that was going on. He decided to send an angel down to Earth to check it out. So he called on an angel and sent him to Earth for a time. When he returned he told God, yes it is bad on Earth, 95% is bad and 5% is good.
Well, he thought for a moment and said maybe I had better send down another angel; to get both points of view. So God called another angel and sent him to Earth for a time. When the angel returned he went to God and told him yes, the Earth was in decline, 95% was bad and 5% was good.

God said this was not good. He decided to email the 5% that were good and encourage them to help them keep going.

Do you know what that email said? Oh, so you didn’t get one either?” 6

People, the gospel or the good news that you and I have the privilege to share with others is not that God merely sent an email to a select few. No! He has done something way better then that. Rather, He has sent His very own Son to save each and everyone who would call upon His name from an eternal evil existence.

John 3:16-18 “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to condemn it, but to save it. There is no judgment awaiting those who trust him. But those who do not trust him have already been judged for not believing in the only Son of God.” (NLT)

You see, God has taken the evil and suffering of our world and has judged it, put a limit on it, and made a way of escape through His Son Jesus. So to answer the skeptic’s objection, God has done something about evil and suffering. In fact, it gets even better. The rest of the good news is this. God has not only provided a way out, but now He has judged the devil himself and put him on death row. Then the Lord has put a limit upon it for the devil is also awaiting his final sentence in the lake of fire. Therefore, satan is not a loose cannon on deck but rather God has ultimately destroyed his evil work. In fact many people do not realize that this was one of the primary ministries of Jesus.
1 John 3:8 “Now the Son of God came to earth with the express purpose of undoing the devil’s work.” (J.B.P.)

People, Jesus didn’t come to condemn the world. It’s already condemned for all have been corrupted with sin along with the devil. This was satan’s evil work, to corrupt you and I with sin that we might join him in hell.

You see, there are two Greek words for “evil” in the New Testament. One is “kakos.” which simply means bad or of corrupt character. An example of “kakos” would be a man who robs a store. His behavior is bad or “kakos.” However, the second word for evil is “poneros.” It implies much more than just being bad. An example would be of a man who robs a store and then gets caught while he’s doing it. The police have him surrounded and there is no way of escape but he refuses to come out. He knows he’s a “dead man.” So what does he do? He starts killing as many people in the store as he can just to see how many he can take down with him. This is “poneros.” Now, can you guess which of these two words is always used when speaking of the devil? That’s right! He is called the evil or “poneros” one.

You see, satan knows that he is finished and that he was completely defeated by Jesus. He is well aware that what awaits him is the lake of fire. But he is so evil that he is seeing how many people he can take down with him. And one of the best methods he uses to get people to join him in eternal destruction is to get them to blame God for suffering and evil, to get them to blame God for creating evil, to get them to think God has done nothing about evil and suffering.

People, please don’t be fooled by the father of lies. lucifer is the one responsible for the evil, suffering, and death in our world today. Where did suffering come from? As we have seen, it came from the devil, not God.
And please don’t forget that God **has** done something about it because He loves us. He has demonstrated His love for you and I in that He has provided a way out through His Son to save **us** from our **certain** death row sentence. Lord Jesus took the death penalty in our place on the cross and pardoned our sins. But a pardon is only put into effect if the person pardoned receives it. You see, unless you open your heart and receive God’s pardon for your sins, **you** will have chosen to stay on death row. It’s not a matter of **if** but **when**. The choice is yours. God loves you. He will not force you. He wants a loving relationship with you. Please, don’t be fooled by the devil about where suffering came from. If you already haven’t then take God’s pardon, choose eternal life.
Chapter Nine

Why Does Suffering Occur?

You know, many times most of us are so busy in life, moving from one chore or activity to another that we never get around to thinking about or entertaining the deep thoughts of life. We sort of leave that kind of thinking up to the philosopher. However, I’ve noticed that kids have a completely different attitude towards the deep thoughts of life. In fact, they are not only full of deep thoughts but what they come up with can be quite educational for us adults. Let me show you some of their deep thoughts I’ve came across.

1. I believe you should live each day as if it is your last, which is why I don’t have any clean laundry because, come on, who wants to wash clothes on the last day of their life? Age 15
2. Give me the strength to change the things I can, the grace to accept the things I cannot, and a great big bag of money. Age 13
3. I often wonder how come John Tesh isn’t as popular a singer as some people think he should be. Then, I remember it’s because he stinks. Age 15
4. Often, when I am reading a good book, I stop and thank my teacher. That is, I used to, until she got an unlisted number. Age 15
5. It would be terrible if the Red Cross Bloodmobile got into an accident. No, wait. That would be good because if anyone needed it, the blood would be right there. Age 5
6. If we could just get everyone to close their eyes and visualize world peace for an hour, imagine how serene and quiet it would be until the looting started. Age 15

7. Once, I wept for I had no shoes. Then I came upon a man who had no feet. So I took his shoes. I mean, it’s not like he really needed them, right? Age 15

8. The only stupid question is the one that is never asked, except maybe “Don’t you think it is about time you audited my return?” or “Isn’t it morally wrong to give me a warning when, in fact, I was speeding?” Age 15

9. I once heard the voice of God. It said “Vrrrrmmmm.” Unless it was just a lawn mower. Age 11

10. When I go to heaven, I want to see my grandpa again. But he better have lost the nose hair and the old man smell. Age 5

Yes, as you can see there are many deep thoughts in life aren’t there? But if you were to ask me what is one of the deepest thoughts in life that people all over the world are grappling with, it would have to be the problem of evil and suffering.

You’ve heard the cry of the skeptic. They ask, “How can there be an All-Powerful Loving God with all the suffering in the world?” And now more than ever society is demanding of the Christian a satisfactory answer. But there’s no need to fear, for the Bible has a clear, rational, plausible, and true answer to that deep thought in life. And that’s why in the last chapter we began our series on The Problem of Suffering by looking at the 1st obvious question of Where Did Suffering Come From?

There we saw, contrary to the claims of the skeptic, that God did not create evil. This is because evil is not a created thing but the absence of good and that evil was found in and started by the devil on the day he turned from worshipping God to wanting to be God himself. Then we also saw, contrary to the critic, that God has done something about evil and suffering by judging it, putting a limit on it, and making a way of escape through His Son Jesus Christ.
Therefore, to further aid us in giving that satisfactory answer that skeptics all around us are demanding, we are going to continue our study on The Problem of Suffering by looking at the 2nd obvious question of, “Why Does Suffering Occur?”

You see, the events in our lives do not happen arbitrarily. There are specific reasons why things happen to us, even suffering. And the Bible declares that no matter what you go through in life, it will be due to one of four reasons. So let’s take a look at the first possibility of Why Suffering Occurs.

2 Kings 6:8-17 “When the king of Aram was at war with Israel, he would confer with his officers and say, ‘We will mobilize our forces at such and such a place.’ But immediately Elisha, the man of God, would warn the king of Israel, ‘Do not go near that place, for the Arameans are planning to mobilize their troops there.’ So the king of Israel would send word to the place indicated by the man of God, warning the people there to be on their guard. This happened several times.

The king of Aram became very upset over this. He called in his officers and demanded, ‘Which of you is the traitor? Who has been informing the king of Israel of my plans?’ ‘It’s not us, my lord,’ one of the officers replied. ‘Elisha, the prophet in Israel, tells the king of Israel even the words you speak in the privacy of your bedroom! ‘The king commanded, ‘Go and find out where Elisha is, and we will send troops to seize him.’ And the report came back: ‘Elisha is at Dothan.’

So one night the king of Aram sent a great army with many chariots and horses to surround the city. When the servant of the man of God got up early the next morning and went outside, there were troops, horses, and chariots everywhere. ‘Ah, my lord, what will we do now?’ he cried out to Elisha. ‘Don’t be afraid!’ Elisha told him. ‘For there are more on our side than on theirs!’

Then Elisha prayed, ‘O LORD, open his eyes and let him see!’ The LORD opened his servant’s eyes, and when he looked up, he saw that the hillside around Elisha was filled with horses and chariots of fire.” (NLT)

As our text here clearly reveals, Elisha had to pray to God to open the servant’s eyes so he could see that they were neither alone nor outnumbered. But
rather, God’s invisible spiritual army far outnumbered their enemy that was right before their eyes. This is one passage of Scripture of many that shows us how there is a whole other dimension of reality that currently exists all around us yet we do not see. It is called the spiritual realm. And in this spiritual realm the Bible declares it is full of holy, good angels serving God and unholy, bad angels serving the devil. That’s why one of the possibilities for Why Suffering Occurs is due to demonic activity.

Now, I know, in our “modern” technological society many people find this hard to believe. In fact, most people, when it comes to the supernatural teachings in the Bible are quite skeptical, like this guy.

“There was this Christian lady that had to do a lot of traveling for her business, so she did a lot of flying. Flying made her nervous, so she always took her Bible along with her to read and it helped her to relax.

One time, she was sitting next to a man and when he saw her pull out her Bible, he gave a little chuckle and went back to what he was doing. After awhile, he turned to her and asked, ‘You don’t really believe all that stuff in there do you?’

The lady replied, ‘Of course I do. It is the Bible.’

He said, ‘Well, what about that guy that was swallowed by that whale?’

She replied, ‘Oh, Jonah. Yes, I believe that, it is in the Bible.’

He asked, ‘Well, how do you suppose he survived all that time inside the whale?’

The lady said, ‘Well, I don’t really know. I guess when I get to heaven, I will ask him.’

‘What if he isn’t in heaven?’ the man asked sarcastically.

The lady replied, ‘Then you can ask him.’
Yes, skepticism has its price doesn’t it? You know I’ve never seen radio waves or wind but all of us know that they are real, don’t we? You see, it’s the same thing when the Bible says there are evil spiritual forces at work all around us, and even though we might not see them, they are nonetheless real. This is the real battle that we wage war against.

_Ephesians 6:10-12_ “In conclusion be strong—not in yourselves but in the Lord, in the power of His boundless strength. Put on God’s complete armor so that you can successfully resist all the devil’s craftiness. For our fight is not against any physical enemy: it is against organizations and powers that are spiritual. We are up against the unseen powers that control this dark world, and spiritual agents from the very headquarters of evil.” (J.B.P.)

You see, the devil and demons are real whether anybody believes in them or not. And the Bible is very clear, that their mission is to wreak havoc and suffering in people’s lives and to trick them into rejecting God so they can join them in hell.

However, **demonic activity** is not the only reason **Why Suffering Occurs**, but it could also be for a second reason, a by-product of **Adam’s sin**. What I am referring to is the sin nature that everyone in the world is born with thanks to Adam.

_Psalm 51:5_ “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” (NIV)

You see each one of us is born with a natural propensity to rebel against God, rule our own lives, and be the so-called master of our destiny. It’s that dark side of us that we all have that cause us to do harmful things to others like this lady did.

“A lady was at a store and watched as the cashier rang up her purchases. ‘Cash, check or charge?’ the cashier asked after folding the items the other lady had bought.”
As the lady fumbled for her wallet the cashier noticed a remote control for a television set in her purse and so she asked, ‘Do you always carry your TV remote?’

‘No,’ she replied. ‘But my husband Jeff, refused to come shopping with me, so I figured this was the most evil thing I could do to him.’”

Now that lady had a dark side that caused some serious suffering, didn’t she? This is because everyone has this sin nature from birth. In fact, the doctrine of original sin is the only philosophy that can be empirically validated over 3,500 years of human history.

You see, because we all have a sin nature, guess what? We do sinful things to each other and it’s only getting worse. Man is not evolving but rather devolving. In fact, did you know that it only took the movies 50 years to go from silent to unspeakable? One guy stated that he used to say civilization was going to the dogs but he quit saying that out of respect for the dogs. People, look around, one of the reasons Why Suffering Occurs is due to living in a sinful world.

However, demonic activity, or Adam’s sin are not the only reasons Why Suffering Occurs but it could also be for a third reason, a by-product of Your Own sin. Many people would like to blame all their problems on the devil or other people but I’ve learned that our biggest enemy and greatest cause for suffering is none other than me, myself, and I, like this guy found out.

“An able-bodied seaman meets a pirate, and they take turns recounting their adventures at sea.

Noting the pirate’s peg-leg, hook, and eye patch the seaman asks, ‘So, how did you end up with the peg leg?’

The pirate replies, ‘We was caught in a monster storm off the cape and a giant wave swept me overboard. Just as they were pullin’ me out, a school of sharks
appeared and one of ‘em bit me leg off.’

‘Blimey!’ said the seaman. ‘What about the hook?’

‘Ahhhh...,’ mused the pirate, ‘we were boardin’ a trader ship, pistols blastin’ and swords swingin’ this way and that. In the fracas me hand got chopped off.’

‘Zounds!’ remarked the seaman. ‘And how came ye by the eye patch?’

‘A seagull droppin’ fell into me eye.’ answered the pirate.

‘You lost your eye to a seagull dropping?’ the sailor asked incredulously.

‘Well,’ said the pirate, ‘it was me first day with the hook.’”

Now that guy couldn’t blame the devil or anybody else for his pain and suffering, could he? He alone was responsible for it, wasn’t he? And if we’re honest with ourselves, we are the ones who are responsible for most of the difficulties that we encounter due to the goofy and sometimes outright sinful decisions we make. This is the process called “reaping what you sow” as the Bible clearly talks about.

**Galatians 6:8** “The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.” (NIV)

You see, every day we have choices to make, which will, in large measure, determine the events of the day. And because we sometimes choose to give in to our sinful nature, we reap the consequences don’t we?

However, demonic activity, or Adam’s sin, or even Your Own sin are not the only reasons Why Suffering Occurs but it could also be the fourth and final reason, that of, for the Glory of God.

**John 9:1-3** “Later, as Jesus walked along he saw a man who had been blind from birth. ‘Rabbi, whose sin caused this man’s blindness,’ asked the disciples, ‘his
own or his parents?’ ‘He was not born blind because of his own sin or that of his parents,’ returned Jesus, ‘but to show the power of God at work in him.’” (J.B.P.)

You see, right after Jesus made this statement, He healed the man of his blindness. And this shows us that some things, even suffering, really do occur so that God might move in power and reveal His glory in and through us for a wonderful testimony.

However, many of us tend to have a hard time with this Biblical truth because we become so locked in to life’s difficulties that we forget to look up to God, let alone trust Him, and see things from His eternal perspective. People, God is not being a big ol’ meany by allowing suffering in our lives. Rather He is displaying His power and love by taking all of life’s difficulties and turning them around for His glory and our highest good. In fact, I call God the Ultimate Recycler. You see in these last eight years of being a Christian, I’ve watched over and over again in my own life, how God will take whatever suffering comes my way, whether it’s demonic activity, Adam’s sin or even my own sin, and out of love for me, He will recycle it or turn it around for His Glory and my highest good.

We see this same pattern in the life of the Apostle Paul. Paul suffered under demonic activity with the thorn in the flesh, which was a messenger of satan, or in other words a demon. Now was God being a big ol’ meany? No! God allowed it to keep Paul from becoming arrogant and proud so he would proclaim the gospel in love and humility. So it worked out for God’s glory and Paul’s highest good. Then we see how Paul suffered under Adam’s sin when the Jews wanted to assassinate him. Now was God being a big ol’ meany? No! This course of events led Paul to a trip to Rome at Rome’s expense, which was where he wanted to go anyway to preach the gospel. So it worked out for God’s glory and
Paul’s highest good. Then we see how Paul suffered under **His Own sin** when he was on the road to Damascus seeking to capture and possibly kill some Christians. Now was God being a big ol’ meany? No! Paul was soon to be knocked off his horse and blinded temporarily. However, when it was all said and done, Paul got saved and became Christianity’s greatest ally! So it worked out for God’s glory and Paul’s highest good.

People, the Bible is very clear about God taking **all the sufferings** that life will throw at us and turning them around for our own good. **Romans 8:28** “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.”(NIV)

Now why is it when we come to passages in the Bible about Jesus performing miracles that we don’t hesitate to believe them? Why is it when we read about the resurrection of Christ that we don’t even blink an eye for we know that God can do anything? But for some reason, when it comes to Romans 8:28 and many other passages just like it, we hem haw around and vacillate as to whether or not “all” means all?

People, please remember, God is the **Ultimate Recycler**. Only He can take whatever comes your way, whether its demonic activity, Adam’s sin, or even your own sin, and because He loves you, He makes good out of it. Understanding **Why Suffering Occurs** will either make or break you as a Christian. Joni Eareckson Tada, a quadriplegic whose been in a wheelchair for over 30 years, who has suffered more then most of us ever will on this earth, has this to say about suffering.

“In God’s wisdom and love, every trial in a Christian’s life is ordained from eternity past, custom made for that believer’s eternal good, even when it doesn’t seem like it. Nothing happens by accident…not even tragedy…not even sins committed against us.
Our pain, poverty, and broken hearts are not His ultimate focus. He cares about them, but they are merely symptoms of the real problem. God cares most – not about making us comfortable – but about teaching us to hate our sins, grow up spiritually, and love Him.

Every sorrow we taste will one day prove to be the best possible thing that could have happened. We will thank God endlessly in heaven for the trials He sent us here. This is not Disneyland – it is truth.”

People whether you see it or not, or believe it or not, if you have a relationship with Jesus Christ, God has promised that He will work everything out for His glory and your highest good.

You see, as a Christian, our lives are like a piece of embroidery with one side looking like a tangled, confused mess, illustrating how we view our lives from a human standpoint. But on the other side, when we get to heaven, we will see how our lives, with all our difficulties, have actually formed a beautiful picture, because this is the plan that God has for those who love Him, the Christian.

So if you’re reading this book, and don’t have a relationship with God, the question no longer becomes so much Why Does Suffering Occur, but rather when it occurs will you be on your own with no guarantee’s, or will you give your life to Jesus and allow Him to create a masterpiece out of all of it, even your suffering? The choice is yours.
Chapter Ten

Does a Christian Have to Suffer?

Now I don’t know about you guys, but after High School I figured I was finally through having to learn stuff. I figured I could just sit back and enjoy life without having to “crack the books.” But as I’m sure most of you have found out, the learning process not only did not stop but I was about to embark on a lifelong journey of learning. However, I’m no longer bummed out about it because some of the things I have learned in life have proven to be quite beneficial. In fact, I want to show you a few of the important things that I’ve learned over my lifetime that I think are valuable to all of us.

1. Never lick a steak knife.
2. You will never find anybody who can give you a clear and compelling reason why we observe daylight savings time.
3. You should never say anything to a woman that even remotely suggests that you think she’s pregnant unless you can see an actual baby emerging from her at that moment.
4. The one thing that unites all human beings, regardless of age, gender, religion, economic status or ethnic background, is that, deep down inside, we ALL believe that we are above average drivers.
5. Sooner or later your wild oats will turn into prunes and All Bran.
6. If God wanted us to touch our toes, he would have put them on our knees.
7. You will always find a dog with no legs right where you left him.
8. He who laughs last thinks slowest.
9. When the chips are down the buffalo is empty.
10. Never under any circumstances take a sleeping pill and a laxative on the same night. ¹

Yes, there are a lot of important things in life we all need to learn aren’t there? But if you were to ask me what is one of the most important things in life that people all over the world need to learn, it would have to be about the problem of evil and suffering. You’ve heard the cry of the skeptic. They ask, “How can there be an All-Powerful Loving God with all the suffering in the world?” And now more than ever skeptics are demanding of the Christian a satisfactory answer.

But there’s no need to fear, for the Bible has a clear, rational, plausible, and true answer to that deep thought in life. And that’s why we began this section on The Problem of Suffering by looking at the 1st obvious question of Where Did Suffering Come From? There we saw, contrary to the claims of the critic, that God did not create evil but the devil did and that God has done something about evil and suffering by judging it, putting a limit on it and making a way of escape through His Son Jesus Christ. Then in the last chapter we looked at the 2nd obvious question of Why Does Suffering Occur? There we saw that no matter what we encounter in life it will either be as a result of demonic activity, Adam’s sin, Your Own Sin, or for the Glory of God. However, for the Christian, God will work everything out for His glory and our highest good.

But now in this chapter I want to turn our focus from the cry of the skeptic to the cry of the Christian concerning the problem of suffering by looking at the 1st obvious question from Christian, that of Does a Christian Have to Suffer? Now I think we all know the answer to this. Especially when we
look at the example and life of our Lord Jesus who was the “Suffering Servant” and that we are all called to follow in His footsteps. But unfortunately, in the Christian community this question seems to be up for grabs. Some would say that if a Christian is suffering that it is due to some “secret sin.” Or others would say that all suffering is bad. In fact, there are those who would have you and I believe that God would never permit suffering upon one of His children. So who’s right or wrong? **Does a Christian Have to Suffer?**

Well, in order to find out, I propose that we first look at those in the faith who have gone on before us and see if by their example they could tell us whether or not we should have to suffer. How about the Apostles? They seem like an appropriate place to start. After all, they were right there with Jesus when He was obtaining our salvation. Did they have to suffer? What kind of example did they leave us?

1. James, brother of John, was beheaded.
2. Thomas was run through the body with a lance.
3. Simon, brother of Jude, was crucified in Egypt.
4. Simon the Zealot was crucified.
5. Mark was burned and buried after being dragged through the streets.
6. Bartholomew was beaten, skinned alive, crucified, then beheaded.
7. Andrew was crucified.
8. Matthew was killed by a spear.
9. Philip was stoned and then crucified.
10. James was thrown off the Temple and then clubbed to death.
11. Peter was crucified upside down.
12. Paul was beheaded.
13. Luke was hanged upon an olive tree.
14. Jude was shot to death by arrows.
15. Matthias was first stoned then beheaded.
16. Barnabas was stoned to death.
17. John was put into a cauldron of boiling oil but survived and later died a ‘natural’ death.
But you might say, “That was those Apostle guys. We’re not called to be Apostles like they were. That really doesn’t prove whether or not we should have to suffer.” And if you were to say this, I would agree. We are not called to be Apostles. So then, let us move a little further down the road in history. How about the Early Church? We talk about them as our paradigm for behavior. What example did they leave us? Does a Christian Have to Suffer?

Well, around 165 AD there was an astounding Christian man of the Early Church named Polycarp. He was the Bishop of Smyrna. There was intense persecution taking place at this time as Christians were blamed for everything from bad weather to crop failure. To prove their loyalty to Caesar, believers in Jesus were required to swear and burn incense. If believers did so, it equated to denying our Lord (which they would not do), so as a result scores were promptly put to death. Upon the scene arose a noble Christian man named Germanicus. He resisted Caesar and consequently was thrown to the wild beasts. He fought outstandingly and when he was asked to consider his youthfulness, Germanicus forcibly dragged the wild beast to himself so as to be released from this wicked world! After that, the crowds naturally marveled at the God-loving and God-fearing race of Christians and began to cry out for Polycarp.

“As Polycarp entered the stadium, there came a voice from heaven: ‘Be strong, Polycarp, and act like a man.’ And no one saw the speaker, but those of our people who were present heard the voice. And then, as he was brought forward, there was a great tumult when they heard that Polycarp had been arrested. Therefore, when he was brought before him, the proconsul asked if he was Polycarp. And when he confessed that he was, the proconsul tried to persuade him to recant, saying, ‘Have respect for your age,’ and other such things as they are accustomed to say. ‘Swear by the Genius of Caesar, repent.’ The magistrate persisted and said, ‘Swear the oath, and I will release you; revile Christ,’ Polycarp replied, ‘For eighty-six years I have been his servant, and he has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?’
But as he continued to insist, saying, ‘Swear by the Genius of Caesar,’ he answered: ‘If you vainly suppose that I will swear by the Genius of Caesar, as you request, and pretend not to know who I am, listen carefully: I am a Christian. Now if you want to learn the doctrine of Christianity, name a day and give me a hearing.’ The proconsul said; ‘Persuade the people.’ But Polycarp said: ‘You I might have considered worthy of a reply, for we have been taught to pay proper respect to rulers and authorities appointed by God, as long as it does us no harm; but as for these, I do not think they are worthy, that I should have to defend myself before them.’

So the proconsul said: ‘I have wild beasts. I will throw you to them, unless you change your mind.’ But he said: ‘Call for them! For the repentance from better to worse is a change impossible for us; but it is a noble thing to change from that which is evil to righteousness.’ Then he said to him again: ‘I will have you consumed by fire, since you despise the wild beasts, unless you change your mind.’ But Polycarp said: ‘You threaten with a fire that burns only briefly and after just a little while is extinguished, for you are ignorant of the fire of the coming judgment and eternal punishment, which is reserved for the ungodly. But why do you delay? Come, do what you wish.’

And so Polycarp was burned at the stake. But even then, you might state, “That still doesn’t prove your point. That was the early Church and they were experiencing severe persecution and harsh behavior which was to be expected in such times.” If you were to say this then I would agree. So let’s keep moving further down the road in Christian History and look at another guy. His name is John Hooper. Let’s see if he can tell us, Does a Christian Have to Suffer?

The year was 1555 and his crime was that he refused to forsake his Protestant beliefs and accept the Pope as the head of the Church of England. And so Mr. Hooper was burned at the stake.

“He had been given packages of gunpowder by the guard, to hasten his death and lessen his suffering. These he put under his arms and between his legs. Three irons were brought to fasten him to the stake—one for his neck, one for his waist, one for his legs—but Hooper said they weren’t necessary. Just the one around his waist was used.
After Hooper forgave the man who made the fire, it was lit, but the fire builder had used green wood, and even when it finally caught, the wind blew the flames away from Hooper. A second fire was lit, but it only burned low, not flaring up as it should have. When the fire was lit the third time, the gunpowder on Hooper went off, but even that didn’t do much good because of the wind.

Even when Hooper’s mouth was black and his tongue swollen, his lips continued to move until they shrank to the gums. He knocked on his breast with his hands until one of his arms fell off. Then he knocked with the other—fat, water, and blood dropping off the ends of his fingers—until his hand stuck to the iron around his waist.

Hooper was in the fire for over forty-five minutes, suffering patiently even when the lower part of his body burned off and his intestines spilled out. Now he reigns as a blessed martyr in the joys of heaven that are prepared for the faithful in Christ.”

However, you may still persist by declaring, “Hey, that’s just Church History stuff and things are much different today. That time of suffering was apparently necessary but now we are much more civilized.” Are we really? Did you know that more Christians have died for their faith in the last century than in the previous nineteen centuries combined! More than 160,000 Christians were killed in 1996 because of their belief in Jesus! Do the math and that’s about 438 Christians a day and I hear the figure is now approaching 210,000 a year. So while you were reading this book today in relative safety and comfort, hundreds of fellow believers all over the world just became martyrs.

Yet, amazingly you might respond that this kind of suffering is only for a select few. Besides, you base your validity of truth according to what the Bible has to say. Well, if you were to say this then I would again agree. Right on! We must base our decisions by the authority of God’s written Word. Okay then, so
just what does the **Bible** have to say about suffering? **Does a Christian Have to Suffer?**

**Psalms 34:19** “A righteous man may have many troubles but the Lord delivers him from them all.” (NIV)

**Isaiah 48:10** “See I have refined you though not as silver, I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.” (NIV)

**1 Thessalonians 3:2-4** “We sent Timothy, our brother and a ministering servant of God in the good news of the Christ, with a view to stabilizing and encouraging you concerning your faith, that is, that no one be shaken or disturbed and be caused to break down in the midst of these afflictions, for you yourselves know with a positive assurance that for this we are destined. For also when we were with you, we kept on telling you beforehand that we are destined to be suffering affliction, even as it also came to pass and you know well.” (WUEST)

**II Timothy 3:12** “Persecution is inevitable for those who are determined to live real Christian lives.” (J.B.P.)

**Acts 14:22** “It is a necessity in the nature of the case to enter the kingdom of God through many tribulations.” (WUEST)

**Philippians 1:29** “And the reason why you should not be terrified is because to you that very thing was given graciously as a favor for the sake of Christ and in His behalf, not only to be believing on Him but also to be suffering for His sake and in His behalf.” (WUEST)

**Philippians 3:10** “Now I long to know Christ and the power shown by His resurrection, now I long to share His sufferings, even to die as He died.” (J.B.P.)

**1 Peter 5:9** “Resist him (devil) standing firm in the faith because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.” (NIV)

**1 Peter 4:12-13** “And now, dear friends of mine. I beg you not to be unduly alarmed at the fiery ordeals which come to test your faith, as though this were some abnormal experience. You should be glad, because it means that you are sharing in Christ’s sufferings.” (J.B.P.)
People, this is just a few of the hundreds of examples in Scripture concerning the fact that a Christian will encounter suffering. Old Testament or New Testament, it doesn’t matter; examples of God’s people suffering is everywhere. The reason why we tend to have a problem with this obvious Biblical truth is that in our relationship with Jesus, we oftentimes attribute His allowance of difficulties in our lives to a lack of His love for us. We say, “If God really loved me, He wouldn’t allow me to suffer.” However, nothing could be further from the truth. The Bible is persistent in saying that it is because God loves you that He allows difficulties. In fact, as we have seen, the Bible declares that we should not only expect hardships nor consider them abnormal, but to even rejoice in them. This is because suffering is not only for our benefit now, but also in the life to come like these ladies found out.

“There were three nurses who died and went to Heaven. They were met at the Pearly Gates by St. Peter, who questioned them. ‘What did you used to do back on Earth?’ he asked the first nurse. ‘Why do you think you should be allowed into Heaven?’

She told him, ‘I was a nurse at an inner city hospital. I suffered long and worked hard to bring healing and peace to many sufferers, especially poor children.’

‘Very noble. You may enter.’ And he ushered her through the gates. He asked the same questions to the next nurse.

‘I was a missionary nurse in the Amazon. I suffered for many years and worked day and night with a small group of doctors and nurses to help people in numerous tribes, healing them and telling them of God’s love.’

‘Excellent!’ said St. Peter. And he ushered her through the gates as well. Finally he posed his questions to the third nurse.

She hesitated, then explained, ‘I was just a nurse at an HMO.’
St. Peter considered her answer for a moment, then told her, ‘Well, you can enter, too.’

‘Wow!’ the nurse exclaimed in relief. ‘I almost thought you weren’t going to let me in.’

‘Oh, you can certainly come in,’ St. Peter told her, ‘but you can only stay for three days.’ 7

Now those two ladies who suffered sure did benefit from it didn’t they? It’s the same thing the Bible tells us. In fact, one of the beneficial reasons why God will permit suffering is in answer to our prayers. How many of you have ever prayed one of the following prayers?

1. “Lord, I choose to take up the cross and deny myself.”
2. “Oh God, please crucify my flesh.”
3. “Heavenly Father, conform me to the image of Christ.”
4. “Jesus, renew my mind.”
5. “God, transform me.”
6. “Oh Lord, purify my heart.”

Now how do you think these prayers are worked out in our lives? That’s right! We go through difficult circumstances in order that through them God will work the flesh out of us and shape us more like Him. And if we’re honest with ourselves, our greatest times of growth in our relationship with Jesus is when? It’s when life is at its toughest, isn’t it? Now, even though sometimes it can be painful, the Scripture reveals why we should consider this a good thing, even something to rejoice in!

Romans 5:3–5 “We can be full of joy here and now even in our trials and troubles. These very things will give us patient endurance, this in turn will develop a mature character, and a character of this sort produces a steady hope, a hope that will never disappoint us.” (J.B.P.)
Now was the Apostle Paul on drugs? I mean, who in their right mind rejoices in suffering? Unless of course Paul knew something that much of Christianity has forgotten. Chuck Swindoll talks about God’s character shaping procedure through life’s difficulties in the following story.

‘In the northeastern United States codfish are a big commercial business. Note the following facts: There is a market for eastern cod all over, especially in sections farthest from the northeast coastline. But the public demand posed a problem to the shippers. At first they froze the cod, then shipped them elsewhere, but the freeze took away much of the flavor. So, they experimented with shipping them alive, in tanks of seawater, but that proved even worse. Not only was it more expensive, the cod still lost its flavor and, in addition, became soft and mushy. The texture was seriously affected.

Finally, some creative person solved the problem in a most innovative manner. The codfish were placed in the tank of water along with their natural enemy—the catfish. From the time the cod left the East Coast until it arrived at its westernmost destination, those ornery catfish chased the cod all over the tank. And, you guessed it, when the cod arrived at the market, they were as fresh as when they were first caught. There was no loss of flavor nor was the texture affected. If anything, it was better than before.

Each one of us is in a tank of particular and inescapable circumstances. It is painful enough to stay in the tank. But in addition to our situation, there are God-appointed ‘catfish’ to bring sufficient tension that keeps us alive, alert, fresh and growing. It’s all part of God’s project to shape our character so we will be more like his Son. Understand why the catfish are in your tank. Understand they are part of God’s method of producing character in your life and mine.’

You see, when you stop to think about it, we are the ones who make suffering, suffering. This is done by our avoidance of it and by our ignorance of the blessing that God has for us through it. People, God means for those catfish to be a blessing for us. Suffering is the “cry” of the flesh. It does not want to die or lose control. When an artist chisels on a statue, what does the block of stone do? It puts itself into the master’s hands and trusts that eventually a masterpiece
will begin to take shape. And you and I today, when the circumstances or catfish that God allows in our life to come chasing down upon us, can we not trust our Master? Can we not place ourselves in His hands and allow Him to chisel out and form a masterpiece with our lives? You see, the slowest death comes not by way of a person dying from a terminal illness, the slowest death comes by way of you and I as Christians, who a little each day die in surrendering our will and our way, for God’s will and God’s way.

You see, God wants us to become mighty warriors. And you’re either going to be one of two. Is it a “Beetle Bailey Believer” or a “Conan the Christian?” A “Beetle Bailey Believer” is one who constantly complains, grumbles, and whines in the midst of difficulties. Or you can be what God wants you to be, plans for you to be, and has given you the strength to be and that is a “Conan the Christian.”

I learned this valuable lesson in life at a job I worked at for almost ten years. There was much persecution and disappointment to say the least. One day I inquired of the Lord, “God, why do I have to be here? After all these years, nothing seems to change or get better. Hardships keep on happening day after day after day after day.” As you can tell I was complaining, grumbling, and whining. You know, a “Beetle Bailey Believer.” But then came the Conan the Barbarian analogy. In the movie Conan the Barbarian, as a young boy, Conan was captured and put into slavery. After this we see him tied to a grain grinder pushing it round and round like an ox. The next scene shows how over the years Conan began to grow up into a strong man; massive and powerful. From here, he went on to accomplish great exploits (in the eyes of the world anyway). Finally the light bulb went on. I began to realize that the difficulties at my job were designed for the very same thing. Day after day, as tedious and difficult as it
seemed, God was using those experiences to make me spiritually strong in Him. Once I began to see the painful experiences through His sovereignty and His wisdom, I realized that difficulties serve to make me strong in the Lord. From then on, when I went to work, I knew it was for a deeper purpose and I could praise my Lord for it all because I wanted to be a “Conan the Christian.”

You see a “Conan the Christian” says, like Polycarp when he is faced with imminent death, “Why delay, bring what you will!” Only a “Conan the Christian” can stay in the fire for over forty-five minutes like John Hooper. It is a “Conan the Christian” who declares with Job,

**Job 13:15** “Though He slay me yet will I hope in Him.” (NIV)

And only a “Conan the Christian” can triumphantly state with the Apostle Paul,

**2 Corinthians 4:8-9** “We are hard-pressed on all sides, but we are never frustrated; we are puzzled, but never in despair. We are persecuted, but are never deserted: we may be knocked down but we are never knocked out!” (J.B.P.)

Understanding the blessings that God has for us in permitting difficulties will either make you or break you as a Christian. Finally, here’s a true-life story of a man who was made into a Conan the Christian through many difficulties.

“When he was seven years old, his family was forced out of their home on a legal technicality, and he had to work to help support them. At age nine, his mother died. At twenty-two, he lost his job as a store clerk. He wanted to go to law school, but his education wasn’t good enough.

At twenty-three, he went into debt to become a partner in a small store. At twenty-six his business partner died, leaving him a huge debt that took years to repay. At twenty-eight, after courting a girl for four years, he asked her to marry him. She said no. At thirty-seven, on his third try, he was elected to Congress, but two years later, he failed to be reelected.
At forty-one, his four-year-old son died. At forty-five, he ran for the Senate and lost. At forty-seven, he failed as the vice-presidential candidate. At forty-nine, he ran for the Senate again and lost.

At fifty-one, he was elected President of the United States. His name was Abraham Lincoln, a man many consider the greatest leader the country ever had. Some people get all the breaks.” 9

People of God, it’s your choice. What’s it going to be? Will you take the easy route by continuing to complain, grumble, and whine, and forever be a “Beetle Bailey Believer?” Or will you transcend your difficulties by trusting in God’s goodness, trusting in His wisdom and trusting in His love for you and allow Him to make you into a “Conan the Christian?” That’s the amazing potential that each one of us has in all our everyday problems. And that’s why a Christian Does Have to Suffer.
Chapter Eleven

Why Does God Allow Suffering?

You and I live in a world today where we are experiencing nothing short of an information explosion. We’ve got TV, radio, the Internet, movies, magazines and even newspapers. But even with all this new information, we all know that you can’t trust everything you see or read, can you? And so many people have become skeptical and have a hard time believing anything that comes their way. And to show you just how common it is that people can be like this, I want to share with you just a few things that were actually printed in newspaper ads out there that many find hard to believe are true.

1. Help wanted ad – “Saleslady for cosmetic counter in department store. Must like people part or full time.”
2. From a display ad for an automotive dealership in Cleveland, Tenn. – “Why go anywhere else and get cheated when you can come here!”
3. Food Farm ran ad in Montana – “Golden, Ripe, Boneless Bananas, 39 cents a pound.”
4. Car Sales Ad – Hummers – largest selection ever, if it’s in stock, we have it!
10. For Sale by Owner. Complete set of *Encyclopedia Britannica*. 45 volumes. Excellent condition. $1,000.00 or best offer. No longer needed. Got married last weekend. Wife knows everything.  

Yes, it’s easy to understand how people have a hard time believing in anything nowadays isn’t it? But if you were to ask me what I think that people have the **hardest time believing** today, it would have to be about reconciling evil and suffering with an All-powerful Loving God.

And now more than ever skeptics are demanding of the Christian a satisfactory answer. But believe it or not there’s no need to fear for the Bible has a clear, rational, plausible, and true answer to **reconcile** these two truths. And that’s why we began this section on *The Problem of Suffering* by answering in great detail the two obvious questions from the skeptic of **Where Did Suffering Come From?** and **Why Does Suffering Occur?** And then we turned our focus from the cry of the skeptic to the **cry of the Christian** by looking at the 1st obvious question from the Christian, that of **Does a Christian Have to Suffer?** There we saw that yes, God’s children do have to suffer because it is part of God’s method of making us into mighty warriors. And we’re either going to be a Beetle Bailey Believer or a Conan the Christian. So in this chapter I want to continue focusing on the cry of the Christian concerning *The Problem of Suffering* by looking at the 2nd obvious question from the Christian of **Why Does God Allow Suffering?**

Now we already know that **in general** God works everything out for His Glory and our highest good and that we are shaped into spiritual warriors through life’s difficulties. But now I want to look at the **specific** reasons why God allows
suffering. I’d like to share from the Bible and personal experience, six specific reasons why God allows suffering in the life of the believer. So let’s get started.

The 1st specific reason why God allows suffering is To Eradicate Sin From Within Us. Let’s see how this is done.

Romans 7:7-9 “What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, ‘Do not covet.’ But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from the law, sin was dead. Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died.” (NIV)

As the context of our passage here clearly reveals, the Apostle Paul had no idea of the depth of the sin in his life until he came face to face with the Law of God. It was God’s Law that forced the sin in Paul to “spring to life.” And if we’re honest with ourselves, it is not only when you and I encounter the Law of God but also when we encounter suffering that we see what we’re really made of. You see, when life is going “great” according to our definition anyway, we can appear to be calm, cool, and collected and act like we have it all together, when all the while we’ve got major problems within like this guy found out.

“A husband and wife had recently had a huge argument and ended up not talking to each other for days. Finally, on the third day, the husband asked where one of his shirts was.

‘Oh,’ the wife said, ‘now you’re speaking to me.’

The husband looked confused and then said, ‘What are you talking about?’

The wife challenged, ‘Haven’t you noticed I haven’t spoken to you for three days?’

The husband replied, ‘No, I just thought we were getting along.’” 2
Now that guy had no idea that he had major problems within his marriage did he? And it’s the same thing with us. When everything is going “our way” we think we got this sin thing mastered and being a Christian is a “piece of cake.” But, throw in a little suffering and watch out! Our sin nature violently reacts against it and rears its ugly head. And we find out real quick with the Apostle Paul just how sinful we really are. Now is God being a big ol’ meany? No, not at all. Rather, He is lovingly forcing our flesh out into the open so it can be eradicated from within us like this story reveals. The following account is from a Christian brother in China about the war with Japan.

“During the first three months of the Japanese War in China we lost a great many tanks and so were unable to deal with the Japanese armor, until the following scheme was devised.

A single shot would be fired at a Japanese tank by one of our snipers in the ambush. After a considerable lapse of time the first shot would be followed by a second; then, after a further silence, by another shot; until the tank driver, eager to locate the source of the disturbance, would pop his head out to look around.

The next shot, carefully aimed, would put an end to him. As long as he remained under cover, he was perfectly safe. The whole scheme was devised to bring him out into the open.”

You see, when the shots of life come at us, oftentimes our flesh comes to the surface and out into the open doesn’t it? Now, although this is humbling to see and painful to endure, the poison then becomes the cure. This is because the difficult circumstances have served to become an opportunity to honestly deal with the sin within us and surrender another portion of it over to God and so grow closer in our relationship with Him. Now, isn’t that what we all pray for? And it’s all because of suffering.

The 2nd specific reason why God allows suffering is To Ward Off Spiritual Laziness. You see, if things are going smooth in our lives for quite
some time, we have a tendency to start slacking off in our relationship with God. But, throw in a little suffering and watch out! Spiritual laziness goes right out the window. And I’m sure that you guys have noticed, as I have, that some of our best times of prayer and seeking God are during difficulties, aren’t they?

An example of this would be the time when I had my car stolen, I was going through financial crisis, and yes, I was in my first year of marriage! And we all know that marriage can be rough and full of problems like these guys found out.

“A woman died and found herself standing outside the Pearly Gates, being greeted by St. Peter. She asked him, ‘Oh, is this place what I really think it is? It’s so beautiful. Did I really make it to heaven?’

To which St. Peter replied, ‘Yes, my dear, these are the Gates to Heaven. But you must do one more thing before you can enter.’ The woman was very excited and asked of St. Peter what she must do to pass through the gates.

‘Spell a word,’ St. Peter replied.

‘What word?’ she asked.

‘Any word,’ answered St. Peter. ‘It’s your choice.’

The woman promptly replied, ‘Then the word I will spell is love. L-o-v-e.’

St. Peter congratulated her on her good fortune to have made it to Heaven, and asked her if she would mind taking his place at the gates for a few minutes while he went to the bathroom. ‘I’d be honored,’ she said, ‘but what should I do if someone comes while you are gone?’

St. Peter reassured her, and instructed the woman to simply have any newcomers to the Pearly Gates spell a word as she had done. So the woman is left sitting in St. Peter’s chair and watching the beautiful angels soaring around her, when lo and behold, a man approaches the gates, and she realizes it is her husband.

‘What happened?’ she cried, ‘Why are you here?’
Her husband stared at her for a moment, then said, ‘I was so upset when I left your funeral, I was in an accident. And now I am here? Did I really make it to Heaven?’

To which the woman replied, ‘Not yet. You must spell a word first.’

‘What word?’ he asked. The woman responded, ‘Czechoslovakia’” 4

Yes, that couple’s marriage had a lot of problems didn’t it? Well, it was no different for my wife and I. We laugh about it now, but the only kind of laughter we were engaged in back during our first year of marriage was that hideous insane laughter. Now was God being a big ol’ meany? No, not at all. The Lord used those and many other unpleasant circumstances to get me on my knees and seek Him. You see, the challenge is to seek God at **all times**, not just when things are difficult. Otherwise, there will be a terrible price to pay.

**1 Peter 5:8** “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” (NAS)

You see, if we do not stay constantly alert in our relationship with Jesus but instead let our guard down and become spiritually lazy, we just became a prime target for the enemy to devour. It was because of suffering that it didn’t take me long to realize that the Lord was my only source of hope and strength. I **had to be alert at all times** if I was going to make it through my difficulties. I definitely had no time for spiritual laziness! But when all was said and done, I actually became the benefactor of those various sufferings by growing closer in my relationship with the Lord. Now, isn’t that what we all pray for? And it’s all because of suffering.

The **3rd specific reason** why God allows suffering is **For the Comfort of Others**. As we have already seen, you and I greatly benefit from suffering
because it eradicates sin from within and protects us from spiritual laziness. And believe it or not, we are not the only ones who benefit from our personal suffering. Rather, many times it is meant for the comfort of another.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of compassion and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.” (NIV)

You see, God comforts us in our painful circumstances not merely for ourselves but so that somewhere down the road in life, we can share this heavenly comfort for the benefit of somebody else. I’ve learned this truth time and time again in my own life. For instance, I would never wish upon anyone the hellish life of drugs, sexual immorality, and selfishness that I lived before becoming a Christian. But I can honestly look back now and thank God that I went through it all because when it was all said and done I got saved. And if that wasn’t cool enough, I’ve watched how God has not only comforted me in my pain but He has even used my wretched past over and over again to bring comfort to others who may be struggling with the very same things that I went through. And it’s a level of comfort that only one who has “been there, done that, wish they wouldn’t have bought the T-shirt,” can give to another person like this guy was able to do.

“There was a boy who had lost his right hand. He felt so badly about it that he did not want to see anyone. His father said, ‘I’m going to bring the minister in to see you.’ The boy said, ‘I don’t want to see him.’

But out of his concern for his son, the father brought the minister anyway. When the minister had arrived, the boy looked up and noticed that the man had no right arm; there was an empty sleeve.
The minister came over to the boy and said, ‘I haven’t any hand, either. I lost mine when I was a boy, and I know how it feels.’ It wasn’t hard for the boy to get acquainted with the minister who knew how it felt.”

People of God, each one of us here have the ability to share a kind of comfort with someone in distress that the rest of us cannot. Because of our unique set of difficulties, each one of us can effectively council, console, and comfort one another with the same comfort God has extended to us. So I ask you to take a moment and look beyond yourselves and your own unique problems in life and ask yourself this question, “What difficulties are you going through, that God, out of His concern for another one of His children, wants you to use to become a source of comfort?” This is the privileged ministry that each one of us has in all our trials. And it is here that our suffering takes on a whole new meaning, purpose, and even value. Now, isn’t that what we all pray for? And it’s all because of suffering.

The 4th specific reason why God allows suffering is To Not Be Offended When God Doesn’t Meet “Our” Approval. Let’s take a look at a familiar guy in the Bible who learned this valuable lesson. It is none other then John the Baptist.

Matthew 11:1-6 “When Jesus had finished giving these instructions to his twelve disciples, he went off teaching and preaching in towns throughout the country. John the Baptist, who was now in prison, heard about all the things the Messiah was doing. So he sent his disciples to ask Jesus, ‘Are you really the Messiah we’ve been waiting for, or should we keep looking for someone else?’

Jesus told them, ‘Go back to John and tell him about what you have heard and seen – the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor. And tell him: God blesses those who are not offended by me.’” (NLT)
As the context of our passage here clearly reveals, John the Baptist was having a problem with the way things were turning out. He just came off of a fruitful ministry in the desert preparing the way of the Lord, but now here he was in prison. And later in the Bible we see that John ended up being beheaded. You see, John thought for sure that Jesus would usher in His Kingdom right then and there as did many of the Jews of his day. But they were wrong, weren’t they? And because life wasn’t meeting up to his expectations, John began to doubt God’s plan for his life. Remember, this is the same John who declared about Jesus, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.” Yet, doubt crept in and he sent his disciples to check things out.

And if we’re honest with ourselves, we do the exact same thing in our relationship with Jesus. Many times we live under the illusion that in order for life to be successful, that it must go according to our expectations. We, like John, wrongly think that we know what’s best for us. And like John, we set ourselves up for a huge disappointment by thinking that we have the ability to rightly determine the course of events in our lives. Simply put, we think that we need to be in control, not God. So, how does God rid us of this harmful attitude? That’s right! Throw in a little suffering and watch out! We find out real quick that we are definitely not the ones in control like these guys found out.

“Everybody on earth died and went to heaven. God came and said, ‘I want the men to make two lines. One line for the men that controlled their women on earth and the other line for the men that were controlled by their women. Also, I want all the women to go with St. Peter.’

With that said and done, the next time God looked, the women were gone and there were two lines. The line of the men that were controlled by their women was 100 miles long, and in the line of men that controlled their women, there was only one man.

God said, ‘You men should be ashamed of yourselves. I created you in my image
to be in control and you were all whipped by your mates. Look at the only one of my sons that stood up and made me proud. Learn from him! Tell them my son, how did you manage to be the only one in this line?’

And the man replied, ‘I don’t know, my wife told me to stand here.’” 6

Now, not one of those guys was in control were they? And believe it or not, this is one of the best lessons that we could ever learn from our difficulties. You see, in reality, none of us are in complete control of life but God is. And the success of life is not governed by our expectations but by the Lord’s. Now is God being a big ol’ meany? No, not at all. Rather He is teaching us a very valuable lesson in life. That He is God and we are not! That He knows what’s best for us, not ourselves. And we can either doubt His love and care for us when life doesn’t go our way and get “offended,” or we can trust in God’s wisdom even when life doesn’t make sense at all, like this lady learned.

“Years ago a fishing fleet went out from a small harbor on the East Coast of Newfoundland. In the afternoon there came up a great storm. When night settled down not a single vessel of all the fleet had found it’s way into port.

All night long wives, mothers, children, and sweethearts paced up and down the beach, wringing their hands and calling on God to save their loved ones. To add to the horror of the situation, one of the cottages caught fire. Since the men were all away, it was impossible to save the home. When the morning broke, to the joy of all, the entire fleet found safe harbor in the bay.

But there was one face which was a picture of despair—the wife of the man whose home had been destroyed. Meeting her husband as he landed, she cried, ‘Oh husband, we are ruined! Our home and all it contained was destroyed by fire!’ But the man exclaimed, ‘Thank God for the fire! It was the light of our burning cottage that guided the whole fleet into port!’” 7

Now, that lady found out that God was in full control all the time and that He knew what was best for everyone, didn’t she? You see, this is the choice that we all have in all our everyday trials. We can either doubt God and begin to
question His goodness when our lives aren’t living up to our expectations, or we can trust God no matter what happens and sit back, relax and enjoy the ride of life even in the midst of the worse of storms. Now, isn’t that what we all pray for? And it’s all because of suffering.

The 5th specific reason why God allows suffering is To Conform Us to the Image of Christ. We all pray, hopefully, as Christians that we want to be more like Jesus, right? But we often make a big mistake thinking that this process of becoming more like Christ comes naturally or that we have the ability to live just like Jesus on our own. However, this attitude is nothing more than spiritual pride. And this is a serious error. You see, if you and I could live the Christian life on our own, then why would we need a Savior? So how does God rid us of this arrogance? That’s right! Throw in a little suffering and watch out! We find out real fast that we not only do not have the ability to live a Christ-like life, but that the only way to be rid of our sinful behavior is from the purifying hand of God alone. The Bible says that the heart is deceitfully wicked, who can know it? Well, the only One Who can is God. Therefore, only He knows the depth of our sinfulness and only God knows how to draw it out and test the value of our faith and strengthen us. Simply put, only God can purify our hearts. This is what Peter was saying.

1 Peter 1:6-7 “So be truly glad! There is wonderful joy ahead, even though it is necessary for you to endure many trials for a while. These trials are only to test your faith, to show that it is strong and pure. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold – and your faith is far more precious to God than mere gold. So if your faith remains strong after being tried by fiery trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.” (NLT)

The “testing by fire” that Peter is talking about here is an illustration of a smelting furnace. A smelting furnace was a red-hot furnace that one would put
raw ore in, such as gold, after it was mined. It’s not put into the furnace to destroy it but rather to purify it. You see, when raw gold is melted down, the impurities rise to the top and are skimmed off. And when the goldsmith can see his reflection in the liquid gold, he knows that it is now pure. This is what Kenneth Wuest talks about concerning the Christian life and suffering.

“Christian suffering, whether it be in the form of persecution because of a Christlike life, or whether it comes to us in the form of trials, and testings which are the natural accompaniment of a Christlike life, such as illness, sorrow, or financial losses, is always used by a God of love to refine our lives. It burns out the dross, makes for humility, purifies and increases our faith, and enriches our lives.

And like the goldsmith of old, God keeps us in the smelting furnace until He can see the reflection of the face of the Lord Jesus in our lives. God is not so much interested in how much work we do for Him, as He is in how much we resemble His Son.”

Now is God being a big ol’ meany? No, not at all. As we’ve seen, He uses our everyday difficulties to get rid of the crud in our hearts and replace it with the image of Christ. And when this happens, you and I not only grow closer in our relationship with the Lord, but we also become a powerful and useful tool in His hands for His divine purposes. Now, isn’t that what we all pray for? And it’s all because of suffering.

The 6th specific reason why God allows suffering is To Wean Us Off This World. In case you haven’t noticed, there are three enemies that a Christian has to contend with each and every day. One is the wicked enemy, the second is your wicked self, and the third is this wicked world system. And if we’re honest with ourselves, we see that this wicked world system pulls out all the stops to get you and I to live only for ourselves and to selfishly indulge in the things of this
world. But we all know that selfishness can be quite costly like this guy found out.

“A couple had been married for 25 years and was celebrating the husband’s 60th birthday. During the party, a fairy appeared and said that because they had been such a loving couple all those years, she would give them one wish each.

The wife said, ‘We’ve been so poor all these years, and I’ve never gotten to see the world. I wish we could travel all over the world.’ The fairy waved her wand and POOF! She had the tickets in her hand.

Next, it was the husband’s turn. He paused for a moment, and then selfishly said, ‘Well, I’d like to be married to a woman 30 years younger than me.’ So the fairy waved her wand and POOF! He was 90.”

Now that guy found out real fast that selfishness doesn’t pay, didn’t he? But if we’re honest with ourselves, isn’t this exactly what the world tries to get you and I to do? This wicked world system entices you and I to live selfish lives and indulge our every whim with all the glamour and glitter that they have to offer. But the Bible gives a stiff warning to those who would live like this.

1 John 2:15 “Stop loving this evil world and all that it offers you, for when you love the world, you show that you do not have the love of the Father in you.” (NLT)

Oh, but the warning gets even stronger than that. The Lord also declares that we are to live for eternal things. We are to store up treasure in heaven, which lasts forever, not things upon this temporary earth. In fact, the Bible also declares that our lives will be utterly wasted if we only live for this world because this world will not last forever. I know this may come as a surprise to some people but one day this world is going up in smoke.

2 Peter 3:10 “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.” (NAS)
Since the world is going to be destroyed, why would I want to invest my whole life into the things of this world that will one day be blown to smithereens? It wouldn’t be very smart would it? So how does God protect us from living selfishly and loving this world instead of Him and making sure that our lives are not wasted? That’s right! Throw in a little suffering and watch out! The world suddenly loses its glamour and glitter and we get steered onto that which is truly important in life. Our eyes quickly become focused on heavenly things and eternal matters, not on this world nor the things of it, which are soon to pass away.

Now is God being a big ol’ meany? No, not at all. Rather He is protecting us from destroying and wasting our lives by running after the things of this world. He is making sure that our lives will count for something not only for now, but also for all eternity. Now, isn’t that what we all pray for? And it’s all because of suffering.

You see, the road of suffering is the road of Christ’s power. But because many people don’t want to travel here, many never learn the secret to a powerful Christian life. People of God, it is by understanding the blessings that God has for us in permitting difficulties that will either make us or break us as Christians. It is precisely because God loves you and I that he allows suffering. God accepts us for who we are and where we are. But He loves us so much that He is not going to leave us there. God is more concerned about our character than merely our overall comfort. Therefore, He’s going to cause us to grow. In fact, He will use whatever He can, even suffering, to enable us to grow deeper in our relationship with Him and be a benefit to others, for He loves us. And that’s Why God Does Allow Suffering.
You know, no matter where you go on this planet, you run into all kinds of people having all kinds of problems. And I’ve noticed that most of the problems that people have in life are actually self-inflicted. And many problems occur because we simply take things for granted. For instance, in a marriage or romance, we always start off with a bang, but give it some time and it soon explodes into turmoil. This happens because we take each other for granted and forget the blessings we are to each other. And to show you just how common this attitude of taking things for granted is, I want to share with you a list of some people’s attitudes before and after marriage. See if you can recognize a few yourself.

1. **Before** – She says she loves the way I take control of the situation  
**After** – She called me a controlling, manipulative egomaniac

2. **Before** – He makes me feel like a million dollars  
**After** – If I had a dime for every stupid thing he’s done...

3. **Before** – The Sound of Music  
**After** – The Sound of Silence
4. Before  – He’s completely lost without me  
   After  – Why won’t he ever ask for directions?  
5. Before  – Oysters  
   After  – Fishsticks  
6. Before  – I can hardly believe we found each other  
   After  – I can’t believe I ended up with someone like you  
7. Before  – Is that all you’re having?  
   After  – Maybe you should just have a salad, honey.  
8. Before  – I love a woman with curves  
   After  – I never said you were fat  
9. Before  – Charming and Noble  
   After  – Chernobyl  
10. Before  – Lucy and Ricky  
    After  – Fred and Ethel  

Yes, it’s pretty common for people to take things for granted isn’t it? But if you were to ask me what I think that people take for granted the most, it would have be that you can actually reconcile evil and suffering with an All-powerful Loving God. And that’s why we began our section on The Problem of Suffering by answering in great detail the two obvious questions from the critic of Where Did Suffering Come From? and Why Does Suffering Occur? And then we turned our focus from the cry of the critic to the cry of the Christian by looking at the questions Does a Christian Have to Suffer? and specifically Why Does God Allow Suffering? And there we saw that it was for the purposes of Eradicating Sin From Within Us, Warding Off Spiritual Laziness, For the Comfort of Others, To Not Be Offended When God Doesn’t Meet “Our” Approval, To Conform us to the Image of Christ, and To Wean Us Off This World. Now, in this chapter I want to conclude our section on The Problem of Suffering by looking at our final and most important question of all, “How Should We Respond to Suffering?”
You see, our response to suffering will either make or break us as Christians. This is where the rubber meets the road. In large measure, our response will determine what kind of Christians we are going to be. This is because although our circumstances may never change, you and I will, if we respond in the right manner. So, what are we to do? What is our response to be individually when suffering does occur? Well, I believe that if we will ask ourselves three questions during our difficulties, not after, that we will not only grow leaps and bounds in our relationship with God, but we will also be able to soar above any and every situation that we might encounter. So what are these questions? I’m glad you asked.

The 1st question we need to ask in the midst of our suffering is “Lord, what are You trying to teach me?” This is a question that reminds you and I of God’s sovereignty and that He is in full control of everything, even of our suffering. Let’s take a look at this truth.

Matthew 10:24-31 “A student is not greater than the teacher. A servant is not greater than the master. The student shares the teacher’s fate. The servant shares the master’s fate. And since I, the master of the household, have been called the prince of demons, how much more will it happen to you, the members of the household!

But don’t be afraid of those who threaten you. For the time is coming when everything will be revealed; all that is secret will be made public. What I tell you now in the darkness, shout abroad when daybreak comes. What I whisper in your ears, shout from the housetops for all to hear!

Don’t be afraid of those who want to kill you. They can only kill your body; they cannot touch your soul. Fear only God, who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Not even a sparrow, worth only half a penny, can fall to the ground without your Father knowing it. And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. So don’t be afraid; you are more valuable to him than a whole flock of sparrows.” (NLT)
As the context of our passage reveals, there is no such thing as “chance,” is there? Rather, God is in full control right down to the number of hairs on your head. This teaching is very clear in the Bible but unfortunately, many Christians ignore this and live like practical atheists. They act like their lives are merely a leaf being blown here and there by the winds of chance. They say they believe in God but when suffering comes, they act like He’s not there, let alone in control. Many people simply have a hard time believing that God is totally sovereign even over suffering. And I don’t know why this is a problem, for a Supreme Being by nature must be all-powerful, all-knowing, and everywhere present. Otherwise they would not be supreme, would they? If there was just one maverick molecule in the universe, then God could not be God. Therefore He has to be in control of everything, even suffering. Besides, can you imagine if evil were not filtered by God’s sovereign will? Life would be a living hell.

“Do we find repulsive a God who gives the nod to our tragedies? Think about the alternative. Imagine a God who didn’t deliberately permit the smallest details of your particular sorrows. What if you’re trials weren’t screened by any divine plan? What if God insisted on a hands-off policy towards the tragedies swimming your way? Think what this would mean.

First, the world would be worse, much worse, absolutely intolerable – for everyone – every second. Try to conceive of Lucifer unrestrained. Left to his own, the devil would make Jobs of us all. The Third Reich would have lasted forever. Your head would be mounted on satan’s wall above his fireplace. Human sacrifice would entertain basketball crowds at half-time. ‘Child Molesting Techniques’ would be taught at community colleges.

The only reason things aren’t worse is that God curbs evil. ‘satan had asked to sift you like wheat,’ Jesus told Peter – we can be certain the old snake didn’t check in with God out of politeness. He had to get permission, which means that he operates under constraints. Evil can only raise its head where God deliberately backs away – always for reasons that are specific, wise, and good, but often hidden during this present life. If God didn’t control evil, the result would be evil uncontrolled. God permits what He hates to achieve what He loves.” 2
You see, in going through difficulties there is nothing worse than thinking that there is no rhyme or reason to them. But there is nothing more comforting to me then knowing that no matter what I go through in life, it has occurred because and only because God has decreed it from the beginning of time. Therefore, even though I may not see it or understand it at that time it must serve a good and loving purpose because God Himself is good and loving. This is the same powerful lesson that Joseph learned even when his very own brothers tried to kill him.

**Genesis 50:20** “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.” (NAS)

You see, by asking ourselves “**Lord what are You trying to teach me?**” we are reminded that a good and loving God is in full control. And so this enables us to be calm and at peace no matter what we go through in life. But if we don’t acknowledge God’s sovereignty in all our trials, then we will be left in a state of doubt, despair, and discouragement. Now I ask you, which would you rather have?

The 2nd question we need to ask in the midst of our suffering is, “**Lord, how can I please You in this?**” This is a question that reminds you and I of our personal responsibility that we have towards God in any situation. You see, I can remind myself that God is sovereign and be at peace, but if I don’t acknowledge my personal responsibility, then I can ruin and even miss the lesson that God wants me to learn from my difficulties. In fact, most people today don’t want to be responsible for their actions. Rather they resort to blaming others for their problems like this lady did.
“A very attractive young lady was sitting in a fine restaurant one night. Waiting for her date as she was, she wanted to make sure everything was perfect. So, as she bends down in her chair to get the mirror from her purse, she accidentally breaks wind quite loudly just as the waiter walks up. Sitting up straight, embarrassed and red faced, sure that everyone in the place heard her, she turns to the waiter and demands, ‘Stop that!’ The waiter looks at her dryly and says, ‘Sure lady, which way was it headed?’”

Now that lady found out real fast that she couldn’t get away from blaming somebody else for her problem could she? She needed to take responsibility for her actions and learn from them didn’t she? It’s the same thing with you and I. We cannot blame others for our actions. Rather, we need to take personal responsibility and learn what God is trying to teach us through our difficulties. You see, we cannot change somebody else’s actions but by the grace of God we can change our reactions to them. We are not responsible for what people do to us, but we will be held accountable for what we do to people. And many times we flat out forget just who it is that we are responsible to please in life. The Bible is very clear that it is not others, not ourselves, but it is God whom we are to please.

**Colossians 1:10** “So that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.” (NAS)

The reason why we should want to please God is because we love Him for saving us from our sins and from hell, and because ultimately we will stand before Him and give an account of our lives. You see, we will not stand before our friends or family or IRS or even the U.S. Supreme Court on the other side. Rather, we will stand before the court of the Almighty God. And if I seek to please Him, **in all respects**, even in my difficulties, then I won’t give into blame
and I will **always learn from every trial** that I go through and even begin to see the **value** and yes, **meaning** of my pain. It’s like this analogy reveals.

“You are walking down the street, minding your own business, when you are accosted and forced to carry a huge and heavy basket on your back. You’re ordered to walk three blocks, turn left, go two blocks, turn right, then proceed straight on. Staggering under the weight, you stumble on, bewildered and angry. The weight of the basket is crushing. Your back is breaking. The whole thing is meaningless and haphazard. You resent how the heavy burden consumes you, becoming the focal point of your entire existence. When your halfway down the third block, reeling under the burden, you finally bellow, ‘What gives!’

The truth is then revealed. The burden you are carrying is your child, injured and unconscious. ‘What?’ On top of that, you discover you are not trudging through a meaningless rat-maze but the most direct route to a hospital emergency room. Immediately you straighten. You inhale new vigor. Your knees quit buckling. Adrenaline and fresh energy quicken your pace, and you move forward with a new attitude.

Why the change? The suffering you’re going through involves a relationship. Not just any relationship, but one with your child. It is the love you have for your child that quickens your step and buoys up your heart. Your relationship gives your burden **meaning**. Even your twisted path makes sense. You know where you are going. Your journey has a positive end – the hospital – and this instills **hope**. Suffering has no meaning in itself. Left to its own, it is a frustrating and bewildering burden. But given the context of **relationship**, suffering suddenly has meaning.”

You see, you may not see it now and your circumstances may never change, but **your attitude will** if you ask yourself **“Lord how can I please You in this?”** This question reminds us that in our relationship with Jesus there is meaning and value in all our suffering. There’s always a purpose and a lesson to learn. Realizing this will give us new strength and vigor and catapult us into a position to **learn from all of our trials** and to grow spiritually. But if we give in to blaming and don’t seek to please God in our trials we will miss the lesson and
be forced to take another lap and learn it all over again. Now I ask you, which 
would you rather have?

The 3rd question we need to ask in the midst of our suffering is, “How 
would my attitude change if I knew I was going to meet the Lord in five 
minutes?” This question has a way of putting our problems into the proper 
perspective. You see, many times in life when we encounter difficulties we can 
get tunnel vision because we have allowed our problems to become all that we 
can see. Then because we keep looking at them over and over again, they usually 
get blown way out of proportion. And when this happens, the results are quite 
disastrous like this guy found out.

“There was a guy who had a wife who still used curlers in her hair after she 
washed it and so she looked a little odd. And one evening while he was watching 
TV, she came into the family room curlers and all.

And apparently he stared at her funny because she promptly informed him, ‘I just 
set my hair.’

And apparently she took it wrong because the last thing he remembered saying 
was, ‘Oh, really? And what time does it go off?’”

Now that guys comment was blown way out of proportion wasn’t it? It’s 
the same thing with you and I. When we no longer have a proper perspective on 
our problems, they seem larger then life and the results are quite disastrous. We 
inflict unnecessary agony upon ourselves. And this is because we have allowed 
our problems to become all that we can see simply by forgetting the nearness of 
our Lord. We forget that Jesus can come back at any moment and we’ll meet 
Him in the air. Not only that, we forget that we might die and meet the Lord in 
heaven. The Bible is very clear that we should not boast about tomorrow for we 
may not have one. In fact, only God knows how much time we have left to live.
Job 14:5 “You have decided the length of our lives. You know how many months we will live, and we are not given a minute longer.” (NLT)

In case you haven’t figured it out, each one of us are given an allotted amount of time to live by the Lord and He will determine exactly when its our time to go like these people found out.

“There is a true story about the West Side Baptist Church in Beatrice, Nebraska. Normally all of the good choir people came to the Church sanctuary on Wednesday night to practice, and they tended to be early, well before the 7:30 starting time. But one night, March 1, 1950, one by one, two by two, they all had excuses for being late.

Marilyn, the Church pianist overslept on her after-dinner nap, so she and her mother were late. One girl, a high school sophomore, was having trouble with her homework. That delayed her, so she was late. One couple couldn’t get their car started. They, and those they were to pick up, were subsequently late. All eighteen choir members, including the pastor and his wife, were late. All had good excuses.

At 7:30, the time the choir rehearsal was to begin, not one soul was in the choir loft. This had never happened before. But that night, the only night in the history of the Church that the choir wasn’t starting practice at 7:30, was the night that there was a gas leak in the basement of the West Side Baptist Church sanctuary. At precisely the time at which the choir would have been singing, the gas leak was ignited by the furnace and the whole sanctuary blew up. The furnace room was right below the choir loft!” 6

Now I bet you that those people learned all three of our questions in that one occurrence. They learned that God was sovereign, didn’t they? And I also bet that they were glad they sought to please God and learned that there must be a valuable reason and lesson why they were going to be late instead of determining to go there anyway, weren’t they? And I also bet that they learned that they could meet the Lord at any moment, didn’t they? You see, some of us are going to live a long time, and others not so long. But be rest assured, like those people found
out, we’re all going to die right on time. Therefore, since none of us know how long we’ve got, it would be wise to live each day as if it were our last because it might very well be. If we remind ourselves of this truth, then our problems are kept from being blown way out of proportion.

For instance, if you were going to meet God in five minutes then that guy that cut you off on the freeway a couple of hours ago really isn’t that big of a deal, is he? The fact that the transmission went out on your car last week isn’t worth another hour of worry, is it? The squabble you’ve been having with that loved one for several months isn’t worth another moment of bitterness, is it?

It is by asking ourselves “How would my attitude change if I knew I was going to meet the Lord in five minutes?” that ever reminds us of this important fact. It funnels our problems into the right perspective and our lives aren’t filled with self-inflicted and unnecessary suffering. Now I ask you, which would you rather have?

You see, if we can get to the point where we can ask these three questions—not before, not after, but smack dab in the middle of suffering— we will not only become better at dealing with adversity and powerfully grow in our relationship with Jesus, but we will also soar above any and every situation we encounter. And that’s How We Should Respond to Suffering. Amen?
Part IV

The Tale of Two Destinies
You know, if there’s one thing in life I have learned it’s that life itself is very, very short. Therefore, I personally try to get the most bang for my buck and make the most of each moment. I really try hard not to waste time for none of us know how much time we actually have left. Whether it’s in the grocery store line, the drive through window, or even on an elevator, I try to make the most of it and have fun. And it’s in places like an elevator where we just seem to pass the time away instead of making the most of it. Therefore, for those of you who want to be wise with your time, I’m here to help you out. That’s right, I came across a list of some fun things to do in an elevator.

1. Grimace painfully while smacking your forehead and muttering: “Shut up, all of you just shut UP!”
2. Whistle the first seven notes of “It’s a Small World” incessantly.
4. Crack open your briefcase or purse, and while peering inside ask: “Got enough air in there?”
5. Stand silent and motionless in the corner, facing the wall, without getting off.
6. When arriving at your floor, grunt and strain to yank the doors open, then act embarrassed when they open by themselves.
7. When at least 8 people have boarded, moan from the back: “Oh, not now, motion sickness!”
8. Give religious tracts to each passenger.
9. Meow occasionally.
10. Sing “Mary had a little lamb” while continually pushing buttons.
11. Walk on with a cooler that says “human head” on the side.
12. Stare at another passenger for a while, then announce “You’re one of THEM!” and move to the far corner of the elevator.
13. Burp, and then say “mmmm...tasty!”
14. Draw a little square on the floor with chalk and announce to the other passengers that this is your “personal space.”
15. Bring a chair along.
16. Announce in a demonic voice: “I must find a more suitable host body.”
17. Make explosion noises when anyone presses a button.
18. Stare at your thumb and say, “I think it’s getting larger.”
19. Wear a puppet on your hand and talk to other passengers “through” it.
20. Greet everyone getting on the elevator with a warm handshake and ask them to call you Admiral.
21. Stare, grinning, at another passenger for a while, and then announce: “I’ve got new socks on!”

Yes, as you can see, it’s obvious that even time on an elevator can be very valuable, can’t it? But I think one of the wisest things we can do on an elevator is to allow it to serve as a reminder of where we are going to spend the majority of our existence. You see, an elevator has two destinations. Either up or down. And the Bible weaves the same tale for every one of us. It is a Tale of Two Destinies. Each one of us here is currently headed for eternal bliss in heaven, or eternal torment in hell.

Yet in our skeptical world today, people laugh and scoff at this clear teaching that is presented for us in the Holy Bible. And think of the sad and rude awakening that awaits those who knew the truth but refused to heed its warning. Therefore, to dispel any doubts about where we’ll spend eternity and to lovingly warn those who may indeed be headed in the wrong direction, we’re going to
conclude this book with a section dealing with a favorite topic of the skeptic, The Tale of Two Destinies.

In this chapter, we’ll start with the 1st question that skeptics seem to ask when dealing with eternal matters, and that’s the question, “Is There Life After Death?” So I ask you the reader, “Is There Life After Death?” How do we know? Well, I propose that we start off by asking your average Joe on the street. How about the non-Christian? What are their beliefs on eternal matters?

- 67% unchurched adults call themselves Christian.
- 81% believe the notion that God helps those who help themselves is taught in the Bible.
- 63% have no idea what “John 3:16” refers to, much less has the ability to quote that verse.
- 2% believe everyone is God.
- 7% believe that God is the total realization of personal, human potential.
- 2% believe that there are many gods, each with different power and authority.
- 10% believe that God is a state of higher consciousness that a person may reach.
- 2% believe that there is no such thing as God.
- 45% say that Jesus did not come back to physical life, but was a great teacher.
- 51% believe that while Jesus Christ lived on earth He committed sins.
- 22% believe that Jesus Christ never got married because he was a priest and priests do not marry.
- 37% noted that there are some crimes that are unforgivable, even by God.
- 19% believe that “the whole idea of sin is outdated.”
- 68% stated that Satan is merely a symbol of evil.
- 81% believe that angels exist and influence people’s lives.
- 64% believe that if a person is generally good, or does enough good things for others during their life, they will earn a place in Heaven.
- Only four out of ten Americans (39%) believe that “people who do not consciously accept Jesus Christ as their savior will be condemned to hell.”
• There is a growing tendency to believe that all good people, whether or not they consider Jesus Christ to be their savior, will live in heaven after they die on earth.  

Well, as you can tell, the average Joe seems to be quite confused on this issue. So, maybe we should ask God’s children. Surely they could tell us, Is There Is Life After Death? Let’s now take a look at your average Christian on the street and their beliefs on eternal matters.

• 80% of Christians believe “the Bible teaches that God helps those who help themselves.”
• 53% says the Holy Spirit does not exist.
• 30% says that Jesus Christ died but never had a physical resurrection.
• 29% contend that “when he lived on earth, Jesus Christ was human and committed sins, like other people.”
• 29% assert that “there are some crimes, sins, or other things which people might do which cannot be forgiven by God.”
• 47% says that Satan does not exist.
• 49% express agreement with the statement, “the devil, or Satan, is not a living being but is a symbol of evil.”
• 25% agreed that it doesn’t matter what faith you follow because all faith groups teach the same lessons.
• 22% agreed that all people will experience the same outcomes after death, regardless of their religious beliefs.
• 31% says that a good person can earn his/her way into heaven.
• 10% believe that they will go to heaven because basically they are a good person.
• 12% do not know what will happen to them after they die.
• 7% believe that they will go to Heaven because God loves all people and will not let them perish.
• 5% believe that when they die they will go to Heaven because they have tried to obey the 10 commandments.
• 2% believe that when they die they will not go to Heaven.
Well, as you can tell, shockingly enough, the Christian community seems to be **just as confused** on the issue. George Barna has this to say about the alarming status of the Church today.

“The Christian body in America is immersed in a crisis of biblical illiteracy. How else can you describe matters when most Church-going adults reject the accuracy of the Bible, reject the existence of Satan, claim that Jesus sinned, see no need to evangelize, believe that good works are one of the keys to persuading God to forgive their sins, and describe their commitment to Christianity as moderate or even less firm? In many ways, we are living in an age of theological anarchy.” 4

In light of this “theological anarchy,” maybe we should ask **those who have supposedly been there and came back**. Surely they could tell us. **Is There Life After Death?** Let’s now look at a couple of people’s testimonies that have had **Near Death Experiences**.

“In December 1943, during World War II, twenty year old Dr. George Ritchie died of pneumonia. Nine minutes later, miraculously and unaccountably, he returned to life to tell of his amazing near-death experience in the afterlife.

I heard a click and a whirr. The whirr went on and on. It was getting louder. The whirr was inside my head and my knees were made of rubber. They were bending and I was falling and all the time the whirr grew louder. I sat up with a start. It was the first time in this entire experience that the world “death” occurred to me in connection with what was happening. But I wasn’t dead! How could I be dead and still be awake? I was me, wide awake, only without a physical body to function in. Frantically I clawed at the sheet, trying to draw it back, trying to uncover the figure on the bed. All my efforts did not even stir a breeze in the silent little room.

Now however, we seemed to have left the earth behind. And then I saw a city. A glowing, seemingly endless city, bright enough to be seen over all the unimaginable distance between. The brightness seemed to shine from the very walls and streets of this place, and from beings which I could now discern moving about within it. In fact, the city and everything in it seemed to be made of light.
At this time I had not yet read the Book of Revelation. I could only gape in awe at this faraway spectacle, wondering how bright each building, each inhabitant, must be. Could these radiant beings, I wondered, amazed, be those who had indeed kept Jesus the focus of their lives? Was I seeing at last ones who had looked for Him in everything?

Seeing these beings and feeling the joy, peace and happiness which swelled up from them made me feel that here was the place of all places, the top realm of all realms. The beings who inhabited it were full of love. This, I was and am convinced, is heaven.”

Well, that man’s near death experience seemed pleasant enough. However, not all NDE’s are quite that wonderful as this next one reveals.

“On June 1, 1985, at the age of 38, Howard Storm had a near-death experience due to a perforation of the stomach and his life was since forever changed.

I felt really strange, and I opened my eyes. To my surprise I was standing up next to the bed, and I was looking at my body laying in the bed. My first reaction was: ‘This is crazy! I can’t be standing here looking down at myself. That’s not possible. Why was I still alive?’ Then I heard my name. I heard: ‘Howard, Howard – come here.’

Wondering, at first, where it was coming from, I discovered that it was originating in the doorway. There were different voices calling me. I asked who they were, and they said: ‘We are here to take care of you. We will fix you up. Come with us.’ Asking, again, who they were, I asked them if they were doctors and nurses. They responded: ‘Quick, come see. You’ll find out.’

With some reluctance I stepped into the hallway, and in the hallway I was in a fog, or a haze. But the people who were calling me were 15 or 20 feet ahead, and I couldn’t see them clearly. They were more like silhouettes, or shapes, and as I moved toward them they backed off into the haze. My perspective at these times was as if I were floating above the room looking down.

As we traveled, the fog got thicker and darker, and the people began to change. At first they seemed rather playful and happy, but when we had covered some distance, a few of them began to get aggressive. The more questioning and suspicious I was, the more antagonistic and rude and authoritarian they became.
Now things were worse as I was forced by a mob of unfriendly and cruel people toward some unknown destination in the darkness. They began shouting and hurling insults at me, demanding that I hurry along. And they refused to answer any question.

Finally, I told them that I wouldn’t go any farther. At that time they changed completely. They became much more aggressive and insisted that I was going with them. A number of them began to push and shove me. A wild orgy of frenzied taunting, screaming and hitting ensued. All the while it was obvious that they were having great fun.

It seemed to be, almost, a game for them, with me as the center-piece of their amusement. My pain became their pleasure. They seemed to want to make me hurt – by clawing at me and biting me. Whenever I would get one off me, there were five more to replace the one.

By this time there were an innumerable host of them. Each one seemed set on coming in for the sport they got from hurting me. My attempts to fight back only provoked greater merriment."  

Well, even though near death experiences are fascinating I don’t think that even they can give us a definitive answer about life after death for some of them not only contradict each other but the Bible as well. Therefore, if we really want to know for sure, then I propose that we ask the Author of all life, God. I think He’d know. **Is There Life after Death?** Let’s find out.

**Daniel 12:1-3** “Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.” (NAS)
This is just one of many passages in the Bible that clearly reveal the fact that when we die, we will not cease to exist. Rather, we will experience life after death in one of two places; everlasting life or everlasting contempt. In fact, the Bible teaches that when someone is buried in their grave that their souls do not stay in the ground. Rather, they go immediately upon death to the grave or the place of the departed dead also called Sheol. The Bible reveals that Sheol was originally the dwelling place for both the righteous and unrighteous.

**Psalm 9:17** “The wicked will return to Sheol, Even all the nations who forget God.” (NAS)

So, as we can see, the wicked go to Sheol.

**Psalm 30:3** “O LORD, You have brought up my soul from Sheol; You have kept me alive, that I would not go down to the pit.” (NAS)

However, here is a righteous person who was not going to “the pit” yet was in Sheol. So how then could the righteous and unrighteous coexist in the same place? Well, Jesus sheds light on this truth.

**Luke 16:22-26** “Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.’

But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.” (NAS)

So as you can see, Jesus informed us that both the righteous and unrighteous originally went to Sheol upon death yet they were separated by a
great chasm. Below is what *Life After Death* looked like prior to the resurrection of Jesus.

As you can see, in the Old Testament times when people died they went to the grave or what was called Sheol. Sheol means “grave” in Hebrew. When the word grave is used in the New Testament it is called Hades. Both words are
synonymous and refer to the place of the departed dead. As you can see, just as Jesus said, there exists a great chasm fixed between the two eternal destinies and neither could pass over to the other. This is how the righteous and unrighteous formally coexisted. However, after Jesus was raised from the dead, He took with Him to heaven the Old Testament righteous saints. And today, for those who give their lives to Jesus, we no longer go to a “two-sided” Sheol but go immediately to heaven.

Ephesians 4:8-10 “Therefore it says, WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN. Now this expression, He ascended, what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.” (NAS)

2 Corinthians 12:3-4 “And I know how such a man--whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows--was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.” (NAS)

2 Corinthians 5:8 “We are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.” (NAS)

On the following page is a depiction of what Life After Death looked like after Jesus was raised from the dead. This is what will happen when a person dies today.
Here we see that the unrighteous are still cast down to Sheol or Hades which is still a place of torment. However, after the resurrection of Jesus from the grave, the other portion of Sheol or Hades, the righteous saints, were taken up with Jesus when He ascended unto heaven. Therefore, know that Jesus is right now at the right hand of the Father and that as we have just read, that when the Christian leaves their body they go to be with Jesus who is with the Father in heaven, not in Sheol or Hades. Simply put, because of Jesus’ sacrifice on the
cross, upon death, believers now go straight to heaven while unbelievers go straight to a “one-sided” Sheol awaiting the final judgment before being cast into the Lake of Fire.

In fact, this issue of there really being Life After death is so important in the Bible that the whole integrity of the Gospel and Christianity hinges on it.

1 Corinthians 15:13-14 “But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.” (NAS)

Simply put, if Jesus wasn’t resurrected or didn’t experience Life after Death, then neither will we. People of God, the Bible really does weave a Tale of Two Destinies. There really is life after death. You can count on it. In fact, you’ll find out quick one day whether or not you currently believe in it. So the question you must ask yourself as you’re reading this book is, are you ready for the journey? Have you made adequate preparations? The sad thing is that most people are just plain too busy making other plans. Erwin Lutzer reveals this sad truth.

“Recently, I read a tragic story about people enjoying themselves on the top stories of a tall apartment building not knowing that there was a fire burning on the lower floors. Just so, many are enjoying life, comfortably ignoring the fact that their death is not only inevitable, but much nearer then they think. Though there are many uncertainties in our lives, we can count on this: Whatever we strive for in this world must of necessity be temporary. Indeed, this world and all we have accumulated will eventually be burned up.

The other day I was browsing in a travel section of a bookstore. Potential travelers were buying maps and guidebooks on Hawaii and Europe. Some were purchasing booklets to help them learn some phrases of a foreign language. No doubt they had saved their money, blocked out their vacation schedules, and purchased airline tickets. All that just for a two-week journey.
I wondered how many of them were giving at least that much attention to their final destination. I wondered how many were reading the guidebook, studying the map, and trying to learn the language of heaven. Europe and Hawaii seemed so much more real than the unseen realm of the dead. And yet, even as they planned their vacations, they were en route to a more distant destination.

If we are wise, we will spend our time preparing for that which lasts forever. What is life but preparation for eternity?”

Did you know that you are going to be dead a lot longer then you are alive? You are you know? Each one of us is going to make that journey, some sooner then others. Are you sure that if you were to die today, that you’d go to heaven and not hell? Well, if you’re reading this book and you’re not sure, then don’t delay. Once you’ve gone, you’re not coming back and there is no second chance. Please, I encourage you today, give your life to Jesus now, while He may still be found. God loves you and has made provision for you to spend eternal bliss with Him. But you must make that eternal decision that will decide your ultimate destiny.

Is There Life After Death? Yes, there is. So please, give your heart to Jesus. Don’t leave this earth without Him. Reach out and accept His forgiveness of your sins. Let Him fill your heart with His love. Please, go to heaven, don’t go to hell!
Chapter Fourteen

What Happens When You Die?

You know, many people today have different responses to the universal truth that we’re all going to die someday. Some react in a very responsible manner while others try to prolong the inevitable like this guy did.

“A Bible study group was discussing the unforeseen possibility of sudden death. ‘We will all die some day,’ the leader of the discussion said, ‘and none of us really knows when, but if we did we would all do a better job of preparing ourselves for that inevitable event.’ Everybody nodded their heads in agreement with this comment.

‘What would you do if you knew you only had four weeks of life remaining before your death, before your Great Judgment Day?’ the leader asked the group.

One gentleman said, ‘For those four weeks, I would go out into my community and minister the Gospel to those that have not yet accepted Jesus into their lives.’

‘A very admirable thing to do,’ said the group leader. And all the group members agreed that would be a very good thing to do.

One lady said enthusiastically, ‘For those four weeks, I would dedicate all of my remaining time to serving my family, my church, and my fellow man with a greater conviction.’
'That’s wonderful!' the group leader commented, and all the group members agreed that would be a very good thing to do.

One gentleman in the back finally spoke up loudly and shared, ‘For those four weeks, I would travel throughout the United States with my mother-in-law in a Ford Escort, and stay in a Motel 6 every night.’

Everyone was puzzled by his answer. ‘Why would you do that?’ the group leader asked.

The man smiled sarcastically and said, ‘Because it would be the longest 4 weeks of my life.’1

Yes, as you can see, many people try to prolong the inevitable don’t they? But you know, try as we might, not one of us will escape from having to leave this earth behind. Nonetheless, there’s no need to fear, because we can know for sure where we will spend eternity. In fact, it’s pretty simple. We have two options to choose from. It’s either up or down. And the reason why we can know this for sure is that the Bible weaves the same tale for every one of us. It’s a Tale of Two Destinies. Each one of us here is currently headed for eternal bliss in heaven or eternal torment in hell.

Yet in our skeptical world today, people laugh and scoff at this clear Biblical teaching. And think of the sad and rude awakening that awaits those who knew the truth but refused to heed its warning. Therefore, to dispel any doubts of where we will spend eternity and lovingly warn those who may indeed be headed in the wrong direction, were going to continue in our section on this very issue of The Tale of Two Destinies.

In the last chapter we looked at the 1st question that skeptics seem to ask when dealing with eternal matters, and that’s the question, “Is There Life After Death?” And there we saw that we can know for sure that we will not only
continue to exist beyond the grave but also that it will either be spent in everlasting life or everlasting torment. And so now we’ll look at the 2nd question that skeptics seem to ask when dealing with eternal matters, and that’s the question, “What Happens When You Die?”

So I ask you the reader, “Can we know for sure specifically “What Happens When We Die?” Absolutely! The Bible is very specific about the details of the afterlife. However, before we take a look at that, we need to dispel some of the false teachings out there concerning the afterlife.

The first and one of the most popular false teachings on the afterlife is none other than evolution. This theory would have you and I believe that we came from nothing, we are nothing, and as far as a future, we have none for we just go back to the ground to become worm bait, that is, we cease to exist. Is it any wonder that kids are acting like animals when this is what they are told they came from? Is it any wonder that there is no respect for life when we are taught that there is no reason for it in the first place? Nonetheless, as you can see, what evolution basically says concerning what happens when we die is that our soul is temporary and not eternal and thus ceases to be. However, the Bible is quite clear that we do not cease to be but rather that we will continue to exist in either one of two places.

1 Corinthians 15:53 “For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.” (NAS)

Another false teaching on the afterlife is the belief that we become gods. However, anyone who is using their brain can see that this is a logical absurdity. How can a being that had a beginning become a being (God) that by definition never had a beginning? Also, how can a being that was created become a being (God) that by definition was never created?
Then there are those who say about the afterlife that, “Okay maybe we don’t become gods but rather we are god. Again, as long as we have had a beginning we cannot fit the definition of a Supreme Being. Every birthday you have should serve as a reminder of this fact of life. Also, the Bible is very clear that there is only one God, not many.

**Isaiah 44:6** “Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: ‘I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me.”

Yet another favorite response today to the question, “What Happens When We Die?” is reincarnation. This false teaching would have you and I believe that we get cosmically recycled into different beings through many lifetimes and that depending upon what we do “good or bad” in this life will reflect in our existence in the next one. For instance, if I was mean and rotten to other people in one life then I’ll come back in the next as a person who is treated mean and rotten by another. Or, I might come back as an animal for other various reasons as well. This is called the “law of karma.” But the Bible most certainly does not teach the “law of karma” but rather the Law of Jehovah that we only live once and that after this we have to face not another chance to reform ourselves, but God Himself.

**Hebrews 9:27** “And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.” (NAS)

Then there are those who say that what we’ll be doing in the afterlife is taking a big cosmic nap our what’s also known as soul sleep. This false teaching would have you and I believe that What Happens When We Die is that we merely fall into a long sleep and await the day to be resurrected. However, this error is derived from an abuse of Scripture where it talks about those who have “fallen asleep” which was merely one of many different ways the Bible uses to
describe the passing of one of God’s children from this world into the next. This will be discussed a little later in this chapter. Besides, the Bible is clear that when we die we go to be with Jesus who by the way is not asleep but in heaven at the right hand of the Father.

2 Corinthians 5:8 “We are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.” (NAS)

Finally, there are those who would have you and I believe that What Happens When We Die is that we go to a holding pen somewhere in limbo where we get to “purge our sins” through fire and suffering so we can then make it to heaven. Of course, I’m talking about the mythical place called purgatory, which by the way can nowhere be found in the Bible. Besides, this clearly denies what we have already seen that when we die as believers we go to be with Jesus, not a “holding pen.” Furthermore, this would deny the atonement of Christ in that when we give our lives to Him and ask Him to forgive us of our sins that He forgives all of them for all time. Thus, there are no sins we need to “purge” to get into heaven because Jesus bore them all on the cross.

Hebrews 10:14 “For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.” (NAS)

Now that we have dispelled some of the myths out there, let’s get down to specifics. Let’s start off with the first obvious question that applies to everyone, that is, What Happens When We Die “physically?” Well, to answer that we turn once again to Near Death Experiences. Now as we saw in the last chapter, not all that NDE’s say can be trusted because the later portions of their testimony can contradict each other and the Bible as well. However, the early portions of their testimony seem to basically be in unison and thus might be able
to specifically shed some light on What Happens When We Die physically. Let’s take a look at the various early stages of death.

The 1\textsuperscript{st} phase that seems to take place when a person dies physically is that they hear the news that they’re dead.

“A young man who was thought dead following an automobile accident says, ‘I heard a woman who was there say, ‘Is he dead?’ and someone else said, ‘Yeah, he’s dead.’” \textsuperscript{2}

The 2\textsuperscript{nd} phase that seems to take place when a person dies physically is that they hear a noise.

“A woman tells how as she lost consciousness she heard ‘a loud ringing. It could be described as a buzzing. And I was in a sort of whirling state.’ I have also heard this annoying sensation described as a loud click, a roaring, a banging, and as a ‘whistling sound, like the wind.’” \textsuperscript{3}

The 3\textsuperscript{rd} phase that seems to take place when a person dies physically is that they travel through a “tunnel” or “valley.”

“Suddenly I was in a very dark, very deep valley. It was as though there was a pathway, almost a road, through the valley, and I was going down the path. Later, after I was well, the thought came to me, ‘Well, now I know what the Bible means by the ‘valley of the shadow of death,’ because I’ve been there.’” \textsuperscript{4}

The 4\textsuperscript{th} phase that seems to take place when a person dies physically is that they travel out of the body.

“I could feel myself moving out of my body and sliding down between the mattress and the rail on the side of the bed – actually it seemed as if I went through the rail – on down to the floor. Then, I started rising upward, slowly. On my way up, I saw more nurses come running into my room. I drifted on up past the light fixture and then I stopped, floating right below the ceiling, looking down. I felt almost as though I were a piece of paper that someone had blown up to the ceiling.” \textsuperscript{5}

“I thought I was dead, and I wasn’t sorry that I was dead, but I just couldn’t figure out where I was supposed to go. My thought and my consciousness were
just like they were in life, but I just couldn’t figure all this out. I kept thinking, ‘Where am I going to go? What am I going to do?’ and ‘My God, I’m dead! I can’t believe it!’ Because you never really believe, I don’t think, fully that you’re going to die. It’s always something that’s going to happen to the other person, and although you know it you really never believe it deep down.”

Now that last person had no idea where they were going to go when they died. Yet, whether they realized it or not, if they had not come back, they were headed in either one of two directions, either up or down. And the sad thing is that we do not have to leave this earth wondering about our eternal destiny. Rather we can know for sure where and what we’ll be doing in the afterlife. Yet this comfort is only reserved for the Christian. To show you this truth, let’s now turn to specifically, What Happens When We Die “as a Christian.”

Well, as a child of God there is absolutely no need to fear let alone doubt What Happens When We Die. In fact, the Bible declares that to those who give their lives to Jesus, death is not only to be looked upon as a reward but as a pleasant transition as well. Let’s now look at how the Bible likens the death of one of God’s children.

Luke 9:28-31 “Some eight days after these sayings, He took along Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while He was praying, the appearance of His face became different, and His clothing became white and gleaming. And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.” (NAS)

As we’ve just read, the 1st way the Bible likens death to is as a Departure. Now, the word departure here in the Greek is where we get the word “exodus.” And so the picture that’s painted for us here is that just as Moses led the Israelites out of bondage from Egypt so our Lord Jesus has departed first through death’s door, and now leads us out into the eternal promised land called heaven.
The 2nd way the Bible likens death for a Christian is as a **Restful Sleep**.  
**Luke 8:52** “Now they were all weeping and lamenting for her; but He said, “Stop weeping, for she has not died, but is asleep.” (NAS)

How many of you have been really, really tired? Or maybe had a rotten night’s sleep followed by a long and extremely exhausting day and you just couldn’t wait to get home and go to bed? This is the picture that is painted for us here, that when we die, we will leave this tired ol’ body and earth behind as if we went to sleep, only to discover that we awakened in the restful arms of our wonderful Lord Jesus.

The 3rd way the Bible likens death for a Christian is as a **Collapsing Tent**.  
**2 Corinthians 5:1** “For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” (NAS)

If you look around you’ll notice that some of our tents are pretty torn and tattered, aren’t they? And the picture that’s painted for us here is that there will come a day when we, the believer, will pull up stakes, and our tent will come down, and we’ll go to our mansion that awaits us in heaven, prepared by God Himself.

The 4th way the Bible likens death for a Christian is as a **Sailing Ship**.  
**Philippians 1:23** “But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better.” (NAS)

The Greek word that Paul uses here for “depart” literally means, “the loosing of an anchor.” It is a shipping term. Therefore, the picture that is painted for us here is that upon death, when our loved ones, still on earth, are still saying their good-byes, as we have loosed our anchors to this earth, and sailed away into
the horizon, and passed out of their view, that their will be a host of other heavenly beings on the other horizon welcoming us home.

The **5th way** the Bible likens death for a Christian is as a **Permanent Home**.

**John 14:2-3** “In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.” (NAS)

How many of you have every worried about your home where you live? There always seems to be something to concern us about our homes, isn’t there? Whether its bugs to kill, bills to pay, or the thing burning down. But not so for the Christian. The picture that is painted for us here is that there will come a day when we’ll never have to worry about our home again. Our heavenly home will be **permanent**. You see, for the Christian, when we die, it’s not so much the lights going out, as it’s the lights are coming on. Upon death, we step into the true light, the eternal light, and into our permanent home in heaven.

As you can see, we can know **specifically** just **What Happens When We Die**. And the good news is that to those who entrust their lives to Jesus, there is no need to fear or doubt when we make that journey, that each one of us here must one day pass. People of God, the Bible really does weave a **Tale of Two Destinies**. Therefore, we need to make sure before leaving this earth just what is the **right way** in which one gets to go to heaven unlike this guy.

“A minister dies and is waiting in line at the Pearly Gates. Ahead of him is a guy who’s dressed in sunglasses, a loud shirt, leather jacket, and jeans.

Saint Peter addresses this guy, ‘Who are you, so that I may know whether or not to admit you to the Kingdom of Heaven?’

The guy replies, ‘I’m Joe Cohen, taxi-driver, of New Yawk City.’
Saint Peter consults his list. He smiles and says to the taxi-driver, ‘Take this silken robe and golden staff and enter the Kingdom of Heaven.’

The taxi-driver goes into Heaven with his robe and staff, and it is then the minister’s turn. He stands erect and booms out, ‘I am Peter Finnster, pastor of Saint Michael’s for the last forty-three years.’

Saint Peter consults his list. He says to the minister, ‘Take this cotton robe and wooden staff and enter the Kingdom of Heaven.’

‘Just a minute,’ says the minister. ‘That man was a taxi-driver and he gets a silken robe and golden staff. How can this be?’

‘Up here, we work by results,’ says Saint Peter. ‘While you preached, people slept; while he drove, people prayed.’

Unfortunately, that joke reminds me of the popular attitude of most people in our world today, that we can somehow earn our way to heaven. Yet the Bible is clear, Jesus said,

**John 14:6** “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” (NIV)

**What Happens When We Die?** Well, it all depends on what you do with Jesus’ statement here. Again, notice that Jesus didn’t say that He was one of the many ways, one of the many truths, or even one of the many avenues of life. He was very clear in what He told us, that He is the only way, the only truth, and the only life. People, if there is one thing that you do not want to get wrong, it is where you will spend eternity. Our last breath here is our first breath in either heaven or hell and we’re going to be dead a lot longer then we are alive. And so the question you must ask yourself as you read this chapter is, “Are you ready for the journey? Have you made adequate preparations? Are you sure that if you were to die today, that you’d go to heaven and not hell?”
Well, if you’re reading this book and you’re not sure, then don’t delay. Once you’ve gone, you’re not coming back and there is no second chance. Please, I encourage you today, give your life to Jesus now, while He may still be found. God loves you and has made a wonderful provision for you to spend eternal bliss with Him in heaven. But you must make that eternal decision that will decide your ultimate destiny. Please, give your heart to Jesus. Reach out and accept His love and forgiveness of your sins before it’s too late. Don’t leave this earth without Him. Please, go to heaven, don’t go to hell!
George Bernard Shaw once said, “The statistics on death are quite impressive. One out of one people die.” 1 And you know, even though we’re all quite aware of this fact of life, unfortunately some people still think that they are in control when it comes to the afterlife, like this guy.

“A stingy old guy who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness was determined to prove wrong the saying, ‘You can’t take it with you.’ After much thought and consideration, the old miser finally figured out how to take at least some of his money with him when he died.

He instructed his wife to go to the bank and withdraw enough money to fill two pillow cases. He then directed her to take the bags of money to the attic and leave them directly above his bed. His plan was that when he passed away, he would reach out and grab the bags on his way to heaven.

Well, several weeks after the funeral, the deceased man’s wife was up in the attic cleaning when she came upon the two forgotten pillow cases stuffed with cash.

She exclaimed, ‘Oh, that old fool. I knew he should have had me put the money in the basement.’” 2
Yes, as you can see, many people still think they are in control when it comes to the afterlife, don’t they? But you know, try as we might, not one of us will escape from having to leave this earth behind. However, there is one element of control that we do have in death and that is we are given two options to choose from. It’s either up or down. Nonetheless, there’s no need to fear, because we can know for sure where we will spend eternity. And the reason why we can know this for sure is that the Bible weaves the same tale for every one of us. It’s a Tale of Two Destinies. Each one of us here is currently headed for eternal bliss in heaven or eternal torment in hell.

Yet in our skeptical world today, people laugh and scoff at this clear Biblical teaching. And think of the sad and rude awakening that awaits those who knew the truth but refused to heed its warning. Therefore, to dispel any doubts of where we’ll spend eternity and to lovingly warn those who may indeed be headed in the wrong direction, were going to continue in our section on this very issue of The Tale of Two Destinies.

We’ve already looked at the first two questions that skeptics seem to ask when dealing with eternal matters, “Is There Life After Death?” and “What Happens When You Die?” And so in this chapter we’ll take a look at the 3rd question that skeptics seem to ask when dealing with eternal matters, and that’s the question, “Is There Really a Hell?”

So I ask you the reader, “Is There Really a Hell?” Absolutely! The Bible is very clear on this subject. Let’s take a look at just one of many passages dealing with the existence of hell.

Luke 16:19-31 ““Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, and longing to be fed with the
crumbs which were falling from the rich man’s table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores.

Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.’

But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. ‘And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.’

And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father’s house for I have five brothers in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’ But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’

But he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!’ But he said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.’“

(NAS)

As you can see, it’s quite obvious that a place of eternal torment really does exist. And keep in mind, we just read an account concerning the existence of hell from Jesus Himself. In fact, if you look at the Gospels, you would find that Jesus spoke more about eternal punishment and hell then He did about heaven. Thus, I think we can conclude that Jesus considered hell a very important topic. Therefore, in order to make sure that we don’t gloss over this teaching of hell that Jesus clearly emphasized and constantly warned about then I think it would behoove us to take a look at just a few of the characteristics of hell. Keep in mind that this is not an exhaustive study but I think it will be clear
that hell is one place you don’t want to be. What kind of a place is it? Take a look.

Hell is...

1. A Place of Torment
   A. **Luke 16:23** “In hell where he was in torment…” (NIV)

2. A Place of Weeping & Gnashing of Teeth
   A. **Matthew 13:42** “They will be thrown into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (NIV)

3. A Place of Thirst
   A. **Luke 16:24** “So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’” (NIV)

4. A Place of Worms
   A. **Mark 9:47-48** “…and be thrown into hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.” (NIV)

5. A Place of Fire
   A. **Revelation 20:14** “Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire.” (NIV)

6. A Place of No Return
   A. **Luke 16:26** “And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.” (NIV)

7. A Place of Remembrance
   A. **Luke 16:25** “But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things” (NIV)

Well, as you can tell, hell is one place you **never** want to go to, not even for a minute, let alone for all eternity. And no wonder Jesus spoke about it so much. In fact, the word that Jesus used to describe hell was “gehenna.” This sent
a clear message to our Lord’s audience as to the dreadfulness of this place, that is if you understand just what gehenna was back in those days.

“The word hell translates from Gehenna, the Greek form of the Hebrew phrase that means ‘the vale of Hinnom’—a valley west and south of Jerusalem. In this valley, the Canaanites worshipped Baal and the god Molech by sacrificing their children in a fire that burned continuously. In the time of Jesus, the Valley of Hinnom was used as the garbage dump of Jerusalem. Into it were thrown all the filth and garbage of the city, including the dead bodies of animals and executed criminals. To consume all this, fires burned constantly. Maggots worked in the filth. When the wind blew from that direction over the city, its awfulness was quite evident. At night wild dogs howled as they fought over the garbage.

Jesus used this awful scene as a symbol of hell. In effect He said, ‘Do you want to know what hell is like? Look at Gehenna.’ So, hell may be described as God’s ‘cosmic garbage dump.’ All that is unfit for heaven will be thrown into hell.”

Because of the horrible eternal fate that awaits those who end up there, it only makes sense that our loving Lord would out of love for you and I, clearly warn us of the danger that lies ahead. However, sadly, even though we can see that There Really Is a Hell and that Jesus clearly warned about it, some people still ignore what the Bible plainly teaches. Instead of taking heed to what God has recorded for us in His Word about hell, many skeptics put forth various objections to hell as to why they say it cannot be true. Therefore, let’s now look at a few of the popular objections to hell that are out there and see if they indeed hold water or merely fall flat on their face. Maybe you’ve heard or even thought of a few of them yourself.

The 1st objection to hell that people bring up is called Universalism. This false teaching would have you and I believe that everybody will universally be saved regardless of their actions or beliefs. Thus nobody goes to hell. However, if this were true then why do we need to share the gospel? If everybody’s going to heaven then why evangelize? Also, this would mean that
the devil would eventually go to heaven. But the Bible says that Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil not save him. However, most importantly, this denies the clear teaching as we’ve already read concerning two eternal places, heaven and hell, not one.

The 2nd objection to hell that people bring up is that if there is a hell, it’s only temporary. Thus people will eventually be able to get out of hell at some time and escape eternal torment. However, the Bible clearly teaches, Matthew 25:46 “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.” (NIV)

How long is eternal life? Forever, right? How long is eternal punishment? Just as long, isn’t it? No, hell is not temporary. It’s forever just like the Bible says.

The 3rd objection to hell that people bring up is called Annihilationism. This false teaching would have you and I believe that if hell does exist, then the people who go there are merely annihilated, or cease to be. However, the Bible clearly teaches that the beast and the false prophet are still conscious in hell 1,000 years after being thrown into it. Also, annihilation would not be a punishment but a release from all punishment and since the Bible declares that hell is a place of punishment, annihilation cannot be true.

The 4th objection to hell that people bring up is the question, “Why doesn’t God reform people?” However, the Bible clearly teaches that God does reform people but the time of reformation is called life. But after the time of reformation or one’s life then comes a day of reckoning. Hell then is only for the unreformable and unrepentant.

The 5th objection to hell that people bring up is the question, “Isn’t eternal damnation a bit overkill?” However, the Bible clearly teaches that hell
couldn’t just be a long imprisonment but must exist as long as a Righteous God
does against whom all hell is opposed. Also, only eternal punishment can suffice
for sins against an Eternal God. Besides, without eternal separation there could
be no heaven for evil is contagious and cannot be in heaven.

The 6th objection to hell that people bring up is that **Hell has no
redeeming value.** However, the Bible clearly teaches that it is hell that satisfies
God’s justice and glorifies it by showing how great and fearful a standard it is.
Awful punishment fits the nature of an awe-inspiring God. Those who give God
no glory by choice during this life will be forced to give Him glory in the
afterlife.

The 7th objection to hell that people bring up is that **Hell is life on earth.**
Besides, if there is a hell, I’ll get to party with all my buddies. However,
anyone who looks at the characteristics of hell can see its no party. Dr. Mal
Couch makes this sobering observation concerning one’s existence in hell.
“Picture a time that just continues to tumble on and on forever, never ending,
ever slowing down, the same years and decades of torment, regret, sorrow, pain,
blanketed darkness, nights never ending, constant consciousness, lostness,
aloneness, loneliness, rumblings from the pit, groans, torturing fire, choking
smells, unending and unending, no letting-up, no relief, no comfort, never
resting, never ceasing, never relenting, no end in sight, one hundred years rolling
into another one hundred years, slowly turning over into a thousand years,
painstakingly evolving into another thousand years, and finally into a million
years, the same grinding pain, the continual bone-racking agony, screams upon
screams, weeping upon weeping, echoing sighs upon sighs!”

As you can see, people in hell will wish it was only as bad as life on
earth and there will be no partying.

The 8th objection to hell that people bring up is that **Only “rotten”
people go to hell.** However, the Bible clearly teaches that **all people** are
currently headed for hell and that there is no “neutral” position.
John 8:42,44 “Jesus said to them, If God were your Father, you would love Me; for I proceeded forth and have come from God. You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father.” (NAS)

1 John 3:10 “By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.” (NAS)

As you can see, we either belong to God or we belong to the devil. Sadly, many people think that there is a “middle road” in which they walk down the path of life. And those who think this will outright say that they certainly don’t belong to the devil for they aren’t a devil worshipper but neither have they completely “made up their minds” as to whether they want to surrender to Jesus. Unfortunately, they have bought into the lie that they are in a “neutral” position when all the time they not only still belong to the devil but they are still headed with him to hell.

The 9th objection to hell that people bring up is that It’s unfair. A good and loving God would never allow for such a place. However, the Bible clearly teaches that it is precisely because God is good that He must judge all. First of all, hell was originally created for the devil and demons. Matthew 25:41 “…Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” (KJV)

However, for those who refuse to take God’s hand and be rescued, they themselves will have made their decision to spend eternity without God and His holy angels. Secondly, God must punish wickedness; otherwise He couldn’t be loving or good. For instance, would it be loving if God allowed people to get away with murder, rape, torture, etc., that we all know never makes it to court or even gets found out. Would it be loving or good for God to allow Hitler or the 9/11 terrorists to enjoy eternal bliss in heaven without having to deal with their
wicked deeds? Finally, it is also **precisely because** God is good and loving that He not only will judge all, but He has also provided a way of escape (keep in mind that He didn’t have to) from a helpless situation. Unfortunately, many people still refuse to be rescued by God’s obvious attempts like this guy.

“There once was a flood and everyone had reached safety except for one man. He climbed to the top of his house with the water lapping at his feet. A helicopter flew over his head and hung down a rope for him to climb, but the man was deeply religious and said, ‘It’s all right! The Lord will save me!’

So the helicopter flew away. The water continued to rise and a boat came to him but, once again, the man shouted, ‘No! Go AWAY! The Lord will come and save me!’ and, once again, the boat sped off.

The water was getting dangerously deep by now so the helicopter came back and, on cue, the man repeated, ‘I don’t need saving! My Lord will come’

Reluctantly, the helicopter left. The rain continued to pour, the water continued to rise and the man drowned. At the gates of heaven, the man met St. Peter.

Confused, he asked, ‘Peter, I have lived the life of a faithful man. Why did my Lord not rescue me?’

St. Peter replied, ‘For pity sake! He sent you two helicopters and a boat.’”

You know that joke reminds me of a lot of people. They get mad at God for allowing the existence of an eternal hell yet refuse to take His hand and be rescued from it. People of God, as we’ve just seen, **There Really is a Hell.**

Therefore, you need to ask yourself, “Are you going to deal honestly with reality or continue to deny it & face the horrible consequences like this guy?”

“An Arab man in the desert awakened in the middle of the night and was very hungry. He lit a candle and began to eat the dates beside his bed. He took one, held it up to the light, and saw that a worm was in it. So he threw it out of the tent.
He took a second, held it up to the light, saw another worm, and threw it away. The same thing happened a third time. Finally, he blew out the candle. Grabbed the dates and stuffed them into his mouth, not wanting to face reality.”

Please, I encourage you today, deal with reality, don’t deny it. There Really Is a Hell and you don’t want to be there. God loves you and has made a wonderful provision for you to spend eternal bliss with Him in heaven. But you must make that eternal decision that will decide your ultimate destiny.

Please, if you already haven’t, give your heart to Jesus. Reach out and accept His love and forgiveness of your sins before it’s too late. Don’t leave this earth without Him. Please, go to heaven, don’t go to hell!
Chapter Sixteen

Is There Really a Heaven?

C. S. Lewis once said, “Aim at heaven and you will get earth thrown in. Aim at earth you and will get neither.” 1 Hmmmm. Makes sense, doesn’t it? Unfortunately, many people often realize this fact of life too late. In fact, I’ve noticed that you can tell, to a certain degree anyway, whether or not a person had learned this valuable lesson in life before they left this earth. You see, what a person writes for their epitaph on their tombstone is quite revealing, like these were.

1. In a Ribbesford, England, cemetery: Anna Wallace: The children of Israel wanted bread And the Lord sent them manna, Old clerk Wallace wanted a wife, And the devil sent him Anna.
2. Ruidoso, New Mexico, cemetery: Here lies Johnny, Yeast Pardon me For not rising.
3. Margaret Daniels grave at Hollywood Cemetery, Richmond, Virginia: She always said her feet were killing her but nobody believed her.
4. Anna Hopewell’s grave in Enosburg Falls, Vermont: Here lies the body of our Anna, Done to death by a banana, It wasn’t the fruit that laid her low, But the skin of the thing that made her go.
5. Harry Edsel Smith of Albany, New York: Born 1903--Died 1942 Looked up the elevator shaft to see if the car was on the way down. It was.
6. In a Thurmont, Maryland, cemetery: Here lies an Atheist, All dressed up And no place to go.

7. Dr. Fred Roberts, Brookland, Arkansas: Office upstairs

8. Uniontown, Pennsylvania cemetery: Here lies the body of Jonathan Blake, Stepped on the gas Instead of the brake.

9. In a Georgia cemetery: “I told you I was sick!”

10. Indiana cemetery: Pause Stranger, when you pass me by, As you are now, so once was I. As I am now, so you will be, So prepare for death and follow me.

11. Then an unknown passerby read those words and underneath scratched this reply: To follow you I’m not content, Until I know which way you went.

Yes, as you can see, a person’s epitaph can be quite revealing can’t it? Especially that last one because I think that is a question that we all need to ask ourselves before we leave this earth, “Which way are we headed?” And actually it’s not that hard to figure out. You see, we are given two options to choose from. It’s either up or down. Nonetheless, there’s no need to fear, because we can know for sure where we will spend eternity. And the reason why we can know this for sure is that the Bible weaves the same tale for every one of us. It’s a **Tale of Two Destinies**. Each one of us here is currently headed for eternal bliss in heaven or eternal torment in hell.

Yet in our skeptical world today, people laugh and scoff at this clear Biblical teaching. And think of the sad and rude awakening that awaits those who knew the truth but refused to heed its warning. Therefore, to dispel any doubts of where we’ll spend eternity and to lovingly warn those who may indeed be headed in the wrong direction, were going to conclude our series and book on this very issue of **The Tale of Two Destinies**.

We’ve already looked at the first three questions that skeptics seem to ask when dealing with eternal matters, “Is There Life After Death?” and “What Happens When You Die?” and “Is There Really a Hell?” And so in this final chapter we’ll take a look at the 4th and final question that skeptics seem to ask
when dealing with eternal matters, and that’s the question, “Is There Really a Heaven?”

So I ask you the reader, “Is There Really a Heaven?” Absolutely! The Bible is also very clear on this subject. Let’s take a look at just one of many passages dealing with the existence of heaven.

Revelation 21:1-4 “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a beautiful bride prepared for her husband.

I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, ‘Look, the home of God is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. He will remove all of their sorrows, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. For the old world and its evils are gone forever.’” (NLT)

As you can see, it’s quite obvious that a place of eternal bliss really does exist. However, as we saw last time that while almost all skeptics will boldly deny the existence of hell, very few deny the reality of a heaven. By the way, “one who is interested in proving that there is no hell generally has a personal reason for doing so,” ⁴ Nonetheless, there are still those out there who do deny both places of eternal existence, heaven or hell, and they would have us believe that when we die, we merely cease to be, and return to the ground for worm bait. Yet, “what the caterpillar calls the end, God calls a butterfly.” ⁵ “Is death the last sleep? No, it is the final awakening.” ⁶ Each one of us will continue to exist either in eternal torment or eternal bliss. You see, “when you are born, you cry and people rejoice. When you die, people cry, and if you are saved, you rejoice.” ⁷ In fact, “if we knew as much about heaven as God does, we would clap our hands every time a Christian dies.” ⁸ You see, it is by understanding this important truth now in this life, of just how incredible heaven really is and that our Heavenly
Father is watching us from above, that will literally transform how we live the rest of our time here on earth, like this boy did.

“Some years ago Columbia University had a great football coach by the name of Lou Little. One day Lou had a boy try out for the varsity team who wasn’t really very good. But Lou noticed that there was something unique about him – while he wasn’t nearly good enough to make the team, he had such irrepressible spirit and contagious enthusiasm that Lou thought, This boy would be a great inspiration on the bench. He’ll never be able to play, but I’ll leave him on the team to encourage the others.

As the season went on, Lou began to develop a tremendous admiration and love for this boy. One of the things that especially impressed him was the manner with which the boy obviously cared for his father. Whenever the father would come for a visit to the campus the boy and his father would always be seen walking together, arm in arm, an obvious indication of an exceptional bond of love between them. They could always be seen on Sunday going to and from the university chapel. It was obvious that theirs was a deep and mutually shared Christian faith. Then, one day, a telephone call came to Coach Little. He was informed that the boy’s father had just died – would he be the one to tell the boy? With a heavy heart Lou informed the boy of his father’s death, and he immediately left to go home for the funeral.

A few days later, the boy returned to the campus, only two days before the biggest game of the season. Lou went to him and said, ‘Is there anything I can do for you? Anything at all?’ And to the coach’s astonishment the boy said, ‘Let me start the game on Saturday!’ Lou was taken aback. He thought, I can’t let him start – he’s not good enough. But he remembered his promise to help and said, ‘All right – you can start the game,’ but he thought to himself, I’ll leave him in for a few plays and then take him out. The day of the big game arrived. To everyone’s surprise the coach started this boy who had never played in a game all season. But imagine even the coach’s surprise when, on the very first play from scrimmage, that boy was the one who single-handedly made a tackle that threw the opposing team for a loss. The boy went on to play inspired football play after play. In fact, he played so exceptionally that Lou left him in for the entire game; the boy led his team to victory and he was voted the outstanding player of the game.
When the game was finally over Lou approached the boy and said, ‘Son, what got into you today?’ And the boy replied, ‘You remember when my father would visit me here at school and we would spend a lot of time together walking arm in arm around the campus? My father and I shared a secret nobody around here knew anything about. You see, my father was blind – and today was the first time he ever saw me play.’”

Yes, understanding this important truth now in this life, of just how incredible heaven really is and that our Heavenly Father is watching us from above, will literally transform how we live the rest of our time here on earth. Therefore, in order that we may not miss this valuable lesson in life let’s now get acquainted with the characteristics of heaven, the final dwelling place for the believer in Jesus Christ. Just what kind of a place is it? Let’s find out. The first characteristic of heaven is that we will have a new heavenly abode. Here, see for yourself.

Heaven is…

1. The Dwelling Place of God
   A. Psalm 2:4 “He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them.” (NAS)

2. The Dwelling Place of Angels
   A. Matthew 18:10 “See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven.” (NAS)

3. A Heavenly Country
   A. Hebrews 11:16 “But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.” (NAS)

4. A Place of Rest
A. Revelation 14:13 “And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, Write, ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!’ Yes, says the Spirit, so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them.” (NAS)

5. A Paradise
   A. 2 Corinthians 12:2,4 “I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago – whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows – such a man was caught up to the third heaven, caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.” (NAS)

6. A Holy Place
   A. Isaiah 57:15 “For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, ‘I dwell on a high and holy place.’” (NAS)

7. A Place Where The Wicked Are Excluded
   A. Revelation 22:15 “Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.” (NAS)

8. A Place of Happiness
   A. Revelation 7:16-17 “They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes.” (NAS)

9. A Place Of No More Death, Mourning, Crying, or Pain
   A. Revelation 21:4 “And there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.” (NAS)

10. An Everlasting Place
A. 2 Corinthians 5:1 “For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” (NAS)

You see, because we live in such a dark and sinful world and that this is the only existence we have ever known, it is hard for us to fully grasp the awesome characteristics of heaven. Especially that last one about heaven being eternal. In fact, many people, even Christians, have a hard time understanding how God views time, like this guy apparently struggled with.

“A man walked to the top of a hill to talk to God. The man asked, ‘God, what’s a million years to you?’ And God said, ‘A minute.’

Then the man asked: ‘Well, what’s a million dollars to you?’ and God said, ‘A penny.’

Then the man asked, ‘God.....can I have a penny?” And God said, ‘Sure.....In a minute.’” 10

Yes, our new heavenly abode may sound too good to be true and sometimes hard to fully comprehend, yet it really is what awaits every Christian. And as you can tell, heaven, as opposed to hell, is one place you really want to go to. Also, keep in mind, this is just the tip of the iceberg concerning our new heavenly abode. No wonder the Bible describes it as a place that is hard to even begin to fathom.

1 Corinthians 2:9 “That is what the Scriptures mean when they say, ‘No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him.’” (NLT)

Oh, but it gets even better. You see, not only will our new heavenly abode be a home of unspeakable bliss, but also even our very bodies will be changed in order to enjoy this reward from God. Let’s now look at the second
characteristic of heaven, that of our new **heavenly body** that we will receive as Christians.

**1 Corinthians 15:42,44** “It is the same way for the resurrection of the dead. Our earthly bodies, which die and decay, will be different when they are resurrected, for they will never die. They are natural human bodies now, but when they are raised, they will be spiritual bodies. For just as there are natural bodies, so also there are spiritual bodies.” (NLT)

As you can see from this passage of Scripture, we **will not** continue to exist in heaven as we do now, but rather we **must out of necessity** be changed to partake of our new surroundings. The first thing we notice is that our new **heavenly body** will be **imperishable**. Simply put, it will never die, rot, decay, break down, or age. No more back aches, no more broken bones, no more disease, and yes, to the joy of many women out there, no more anti-aging creams.

“A two-year-old walked into the bathroom while her mother was putting on make-up.

‘I'm going to look just like you mommy!’ announced the little girl.

‘Maybe, when you grow up,’ her mother told her.

‘No mommy, tomorrow,’ asserted the little girl. ‘I just put on that ‘Oil of Old Lady’ you always use.’” 11

That’s right, there will be no more “Oil of Old Lady” creams in heaven for our bodies will cease to wear down. Then, as if that wasn’t cool enough, our bodies will not only be imperishable, but they will also be **spiritual** in nature. This means that our body will be like Jesus’ body after He was raised from the dead. And if you study the characteristics of Jesus’ resurrected body you see that He was **not affected by matter**. He could walk through doors. Then we see that Jesus’ body **could travel instantly anywhere**. And yes, for those of you who were wondering, we will still have the **ability to eat food** for Jesus ate fish with
the disciples after His resurrection. However, there will be one exception. That is, that there will apparently be no harmful side effects with food like this guy unfortunately realized too late.

“This 85 year old couple, having been married almost 60 years, had died in a car crash. They had been in good health the last ten years mainly due to her interest in health food, and exercise. When they reached the pearly gates, St. Peter took them to their mansion which was decked out with a beautiful kitchen and master bath suite and Jacuzzi.

As they ‘oohed and aahed’ the old man asked Peter how much all this was going to cost. ‘It’s free,’ Peter replied, ‘this is Heaven.’

Next they went out back to survey the championship golf course that the home backed up to. They would have golfing privileges everyday and each week the course changed to a new one representing the great golf courses on earth.

The old man asked, ‘What are the green fees?’ Peter’s reply, ‘This is heaven, you play for free.’

Next they went to the club house and saw the lavish buffet lunch with the cuisine’s of the world laid out.

‘How much to eat?’ asked the old man. ‘Don’t you understand yet? This is heaven, it is free!’ Peter replied with some exasperation. ‘Well, where are the low fat and low cholesterol tables?’ the old man asked timidly.

Peter lectured, ‘That’s the best part...you can eat as much as you like of whatever you like and you never get fat and you never get sick. This is Heaven.’

With that the old man went into a fit of anger, throwing down his hat and stomping on it, and shrieking wildly. Peter and his wife both tried to calm him down, asking him what was wrong.

The old man looked at his wife and said, ‘This is all your fault. If it weren’t for your prunes and bran muffins, I could have been here ten years ago!’” 12
Yes, people often realize too late the wondrous existence that awaits for God’s children in heaven, don’t they? Our new **heavenly bodies** are prepared especially for our new **heavenly abode**. But God is not only faithful on the other side, I’ve noticed that He will also be there with us as we make the necessary transition. Let’s now take a look at the **third** characteristic of heaven, that is our **heavenly transition** from this world into the next. But again, this assurance is only for the believer in Jesus Christ. Let’s now take a look at some people’s last words as they made the journey into eternity.

1. I wish the whole human race had one neck and I had my hands on it. (Carl Panzram: murderer of 23 people)
2. Oh, God, here I go. (Max Baer: Boxer)
3. O my God! I have come to the end of it, the end, the end. To have only one life, and to have done with it! To have lived, and loved, and triumphed, and now to know it is over! One may defy everything else but this. (Queen Elizabeth I)
4. My God. What’s happened? (Princess Diana)
5. All is now lost; finally, irrevocably lost. All is dark and doubtful. (Edward Gibbon)
6. What blood, what murders, what evil counsel I have followed! I am lost; I see it well! (Charles IX, King of France)
7. I would give worlds, if I had them, if the Age of Reason had never been published. O Lord, help me! Christ, help me! Stay with me! It is hell to be left alone! (Thomas Payne)
8. I am abandoned by God and man! I shall go to hell! O’ Jesus Christ! (Voltaire) 13, 14

As you can see, apart from Christ, death, the transition from here to eternity is not a pleasant experience. However, what about the Christian? What can they expect at that final hour on earth? Will God be there ushering us home? Of course, He will! Let’s take a look at just two actual examples.

“Reverend A. D. Sandborn called on a young Christian woman who was seriously ill when she bolstered up in bed, almost in a sitting position, looking off in the distance, whispered, ‘Now just as soon as they open the gate I will go in.’
Then she sank upon her pillow in disappointment. ‘They have let Mamie go in ahead of me, but soon I will go in.’

Moments later she again spoke, ‘They let Grampa in ahead of me, but next time I will go in for sure.’

No one spoke to her and she said nothing more to anyone, and seemed to see nothing except the sights of the beautiful city. Reverend Sandborn then left the house because of the press of other duties.

Later in the day, the Pastor learned that the young woman had died that morning. He was so impressed with what she had said that he asked the family about the identity of Mamie and Grampa. Mamie was a little girl who had lived near them at one time but later moved to New York State. As for Grampa, he was a friend of the family and had moved somewhere in the southwest.

Reverend Sandborn then wrote to the addresses given to him to inquire about these two individuals. Much to his astonishment he discovered that both Mamie and Grampa had died the morning of September 16, the very hour that the young woman herself had passed into glory.”

And now here is probably my all time favorite true account that Peter Marshall shares of what a believer can expect when we make our ascent into glory.

“In a home of which I know, a little boy, the only son, was ill with an incurable disease. Month after month the mother had tenderly nursed him, read to him, and played with him, hoping to keep him from the dreadful finality of the doctor’s diagnosis – the little boy was sure to die. But as the weeks went on he gradually began to understand that he would never be like the other boys he saw playing outside the window. Small as he was, he began to understand the meaning of the term death, and he too knew he was to die.

One day his mother was reading him the stirring tale of King Arthur and his knights of the Round Table, of Lancelot and Elaine the lily maid of Astelot, and about the last glorious battle where so many fair knights met their death.
She closed the book as her little son sat silent for an instant, deeply stirred. Then he asked the question weighing on his childish heart, ‘Mama, what is it like to die? Mama, does it hurt?’ Quick tears sprang to her eyes and she fled to the kitchen, supposedly to tend to something on the stove. She knew it was a question with deep significance. She knew it must be answered satisfactorily. So she breathed a hurried prayer that the Lord would keep her from breaking down before the boy and that she would be able to tell him the answer; the Lord did tell her. Immediately she knew how to explain it to him.

‘Kenneth,’ she said to her son, ‘do you remember when you were a tiny boy how you used to play so hard all day that when night came you were too tired to even undress and you’d tumble into your mother’s bed and fall asleep. That was not your bed, it was not where you belonged. You would only stay there a little while. Much to your surprise you would wake up and find yourself in your own bed in your own room. You were there because someone had loved you and taken care of you. Your father had come with big strong arms and carried you away.’

‘Kenneth darling, death is just like that. We just wake up some morning to find ourselves in the other room. Our room where we belong, because the Lord Jesus loved us and died for us.’ The lad’s shining face looking up into hers told her that the point had gone home and there would be no more fear, only love and trust in his little heart as he went to meet the Father in heaven. He never questioned again. Several weeks later he fell asleep just as she said and Father’s big, strong arms carried him to his own room.” 16

Be rest assured, that as a Christian, we will not only have a new heavenly abode with new heavenly bodies to enjoy it in, but our faithful Lord will also be there, as we make our heavenly transition.

People of God, as we’ve just seen, There Really is a Heaven. Therefore, you need to ask yourself today, are you ready for the journey? Have you made adequate preparations? As we have seen in a previous chapter, it is only through Jesus Christ that one goes to the Father in heaven. And now this fact is further emphasized in that it is also only through Jesus Christ that one obtains victory over death.
1 Corinthians 15:55-57 “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. How we thank God, who gives us victory over sin and death through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (NLT)

Once we’ve gone, there is no second chance and there is no coming back, and no matter what we try to do to, we will not be successful in delaying the inevitable, like this little girl found out.

“A woman became very ill. After a time of hospitalization she returned home, but was confined to bed. Her eight-year-old daughter was not aware of the terminal status of the illness.

This little girl stood outside the bedroom door one afternoon as the doctor, along with her father, visited her mother. She overheard the doctor say, ‘Yes, I will be frank with you. The time is not too far off. Before the last leaves have gone from the trees you will die.’ The little girl’s presence was not detected.

Sometime later the father came to the breakfast table to find that his little girl was not there as he had expected. After searching for her he saw her out in the front yard. His heart was broken as he watched her picking up leaves that had begun to fall. She was using thread to tie them back onto the limbs of the tree.” 

Did you know that we are going to be dead a lot longer then we are alive? And there’s absolutely nothing we can do to change this reality. The Bible really does weave a Tale of Two Destinies. Each one of us here is going to make that journey, some sooner then others. So ask yourself, “Are you sure that if you were to die today, that you’d go to heaven and not hell?”

Well, if you’re reading this and you’re not sure, then don’t delay. Please, I encourage you today, deal with reality, don’t deny it. There Really Is a Heaven and you really want to be there! Remember, God loves you and has made a wonderful provision for you to spend eternal bliss with Him in heaven. But you must make that eternal decision that will decide your ultimate destiny.
Please, give your heart to Jesus. Reach out and accept His love and forgiveness of your sins before it's too late. Don’t leave this earth without Him. Please, go to heaven, don’t go to hell!
How to Receive Jesus Christ:

1. Admit your need (I am a sinner).

2. Be willing to turn from your sins (repent).

3. Believe that Jesus Christ died for you on the Cross and rose from the grave.

4. Through prayer, invite Jesus Christ to come in and control your life through the Holy Spirit. (Receive Him as Lord and Savior.)

What to pray:

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that you died for my sins. I want to turn from my sins. I now invite You to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow You as Lord and Savior.

In Jesus’ name. Amen.
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Is There Really a Hell?
Chapter Sixteen  

Is There Really a Heaven?

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15. Erwin W. Lutzer, *One Minute After You Die*,
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17. James S. Hewett, *Illustrations Unlimited*,
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