

Evidence for the Christian Faith

Dr. Robert C. Newman



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Evidence of the Christian Faith

A survey of major evidences for the truth of Christianity, drawn from God's activity in nature (general revelation), in Scripture (special revelation) and in his people (redemption), together with some discussion of various objections commonly encountered against Christianity.

Schedule:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
4: Course Introduction	5: Evidence from General Revelation: Created Universe	6: Evidence from General Revelation: Created Universe	7: Evidence from General Revelation: Created Life
11: Evidence from General Revelation: Created Humanity	12: Evidence from Special Revelation: Preknowledge of Science	13: Evidence from Special Revelation: Fulfilled Prophecy	14: Evidence from Special Revelation: Jesus
18: Evidence from Special Revelation: Jesus	19: Evidence from Redemption: Redeemed Individuals	20: Evidence from Redemption: Redeemed Society	21: Final Exam

Outcomes: What knowledge, attitudes and skills should the student develop as a result of this course?

- Knowledge:** The student should come to know many of the basic sorts of evidence for the truth of Christianity, what books give good presentations of this evidence, and some good examples he or she can use in helping others see that Christianity is not just superstition, wishful thinking or a leap in the dark.
- Attitudes:** The student should come to realize that God has provided quite adequate evidence that he exists, that he wrote the Bible, and that he is most fully revealed in Jesus. The student should be able to feel increasingly more confident discussing Christianity with outsiders, and not feel intimidated by opponents.
- Skills:** The student should be able to interact with non-Christians, to learn what they believe and why, and what objections they may have to Christianity. The student should be able to share with them some evidences that are personally convincing.

Reading:

Read either:

- John W. Montgomery, ed., *Evidence for Faith* (Probe-Word, 1991); or,
- both of Robert C. Newman, ed., *Evidence of Prophecy* (IBRI, 1998) and Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ* (Zondervan, 1998).

Due by final. There will also be a printed course syllabus from which most of the exam material will be taken.

Other Assignments:

1. Make a list of at least ten objections you have heard to Christianity. Due 2nd class session, Tuesday 5 September 2006.
2. We will post the ten most common objections on our Discussion Board. You are to make two presentations to post on our Discussion Board during the course on how to answer two of these, and make four brief responses to presentations by others. First presentation due Monday September 11, and two responses Wednesday September 13; second presentation due Monday September 18, and responses Wednesday September 20.
3. Write a jargon-free presentation of the Gospel in one or two pages. You should target a particular individual or category of individual as your audience. Tell me briefly about your target audience. Due Thursday 7 September in class.
4. Interview an unbeliever to find out what he or she believes and why, and what objections they have to Christianity. Try to respond briefly, and present some positive evidences. Write up a summary of this session afterwards, telling how you felt and how you think it went. Due three weeks after end of course, i.e., Thursday 12 October 2006.

Grading:

1. A final exam will cover the material discussed in class, including both evidences for Christianity and objections against it, with proposed responses. This will be part objective (multiple choices, short answer, cross-matching) and part essay. Counts 100 points. You will be asked whether you have completed the assigned reading, which will count as part of your final exam grade.
2. The list of objections and the jargon-free Gospel will be graded for completeness and being on time. We will discuss these in class, both in small groups and as a whole. Counts 100 points.
3. The postings on the Discussion Board will count 30 points each for the two presentations, and ten points each for the four responses, totaling 100 points.
4. The interview and report will be graded for content quality and must be completed on time in order to receive credit for the course. Counts 100 points.

Contents: Evidence for the Christian Faith Syllabus

I. Evidence from General Revelation	1
A. Created Universe.....	2
1. Scriptural Warrant (2)	
2. Some Possible Lines of Argumentation (2)	
a. Existence of the Universe Itself	
b. Design in the Inanimate Universe	
c. Design in the Animate Universe	
3. The Origin of the Universe (3)	
Good Books (7)	
Power-Point Talk: the Cosmos and the Bible (8)	
4. Inanimate Design in the Universe (15)	
Power-Point Talk: <i>Cosmos</i> and <i>Contact</i> (15)	
Good Books (23)	
B. Created Life.....	23
1. Scriptural Warrant (23)	
2. Some Possible Lines of Argumentation (25)	
a. High level of order in life & mankind	
b. Existence of Ainitiative@ in mankind	
c. Level of intellect in mankind	
d. Structure of rationality in mankind & universe	
e. Existence of moral standards in mankind	
f. Existence of pleasure for mankind	
g. Existence of futility for mankind	
3. The Problem of an Evolutionary Explanation for Life & Mankind (27)	
Power-Point Talk: Creation-Evolution Debate (27)	
Good Books (31)	
II. Evidence from Special Revelation	32
A. Preknowledge of Science.....	32
1. Scriptural Warrant (33)	
2. Lines of Argumentation (33)	
Genetics	
Astronomy	
Hygiene and Medicine	
Agriculture	
3. Problems in Using Internal Evidence (35)	
4. Argument in Detail (35)	
Power-Point Talk: Astronomy in the Bible (35)	
Bibliography (38)	
B. Fulfilled Prophecy	38
1. Scriptural Warrant (39)	
2. Lines of Argumentation (39)	

- Detailed prophecy far in advance
- Predictions about Israel & surrounding nations
- Predictions about Messiah
- 3. Some of the Better Examples (40)
 - Prophecies about the Messiah (40)
 - Prophecies about Israel (40)
 - Prophecies about the Nations (41)
 - Paired Cities (41)
- 4. Advantages of this line of evidence (43)
- 5. Power-Point Talk: Prophecy Ancient and Modern (43)
- 6. Power-Point Talk: Israel, Evidence of God in History (44)
- Bibliography (45)

C. Jesus	46
1. Scriptural Warrant (46)	
2. Lines of Argumentation (46)	
The uniqueness of Jesus	
The fulfillment of prophecy in Jesus	
Corroboration by historical tests	
The resurrection of Jesus	
3. The Uniqueness of Jesus (47)	
4. Fulfillment of Prophecy in Jesus (47)	
Power-Point Talk: Jesus, the Testimony of Prophecy & History (47)	
Power-Point Talk: Fulfilled Prophecy: Nostradamus and the Bible (49)	
5. The Resurrection of Jesus (49)	
Power-Point Talk: Evid of Resurrection from Prophecy & History (50)	
Bibliography (54)	

III. Evidence from Redemption..... 55

A. Redeemed Individuals	55
1. Scriptural Warrant (55)	
2. Lines of Argumentation (55)	
Personal experience is consistent w/ biblical teaching	
A Christian is a changed person	
3. The Importance and Force of this Argumentation (56)	
B. Redeemed Society	57
1. Scriptural Warrant (57)	
2. Lines of Argumentation (57)	
Phenomena of OT and NT history	
Phenomena of history in general	
Phenomena of present	
3. Some Bibliography on Redeemed Society (59)	
4. A Sketch of Schmidt's <i>Under the Influence</i> (59)	

EVIDENCE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

We here wish to consider what evidences God has provided to help us in evangelizing others. These can be useful for (1) removing stumbling blocks that keep people from Christ; (2) strengthening Christians in their faith; and (3) stopping the mouths of opponents. We shall discuss Christian evidences under three major subdivisions, organized by the source of the evidence provided:

- (1) General Revelation - evidence from nature
- (2) Special Revelation - evidence from Scripture
- (3) Redemption - evidence from regeneration

Regarding the question of whether evidences are valuable, conclusive, etc., we refer you to two quite different works which make (I think) a strong case for Christian evidences:

David P. Hoover, *The Defeasible Pumpkin: An Epiphany in a Pumpkin Patch* (IBRI, 1997). In this delightful story, the now middle-aged characters of Charles Schultz's well-known comic strip *Peanuts* are reunited at the request of Charlie Brown to rescue Linus from his belief in the Great Pumpkin. While Charlie is a Christian, he finds himself in a dilemma, for his method of defending the Christian faith is essentially identical to the method Linus uses to defend the Pumpkin. They are *both* presuppositionalists of the Van Tillian sort, and in faithfulness to their common method, both find their views equally vindicated. The setting of the dialogue is an all-night vigil in a pumpkin patch.

John Warwick Montgomery, *Tractatus Logico-Theologicus* (Bonn: Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft, 2002). The culmination of Montgomery's many books during a long and productive apologetics career, this short book organizes his evidential apologetic under about 1800 propositions in logical sequence, including logic, literature, history, myth, science, philosophy, jurisprudence, political theory, and theology.

I. Evidence from General Revelation (GR)

What evidence has God provided from general revelation (whether external GR or internal GR) that we can use to help others see that Xy is true?

Robert Dunzweiler's definition of GR: "Divine self-disclosure in mediate, natural mode."

How does God reveal himself through what he has made, whether out there in nature, or inside ourselves? We will here confine ourselves to the evidence out there in nature.

C.S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity*, in its first section "Right and Wrong as a Clue to the Meaning of the Universe," does an excellent job on the internal evidence of conscience.

Within our area of evidence from external GR, I suggest two further subdivisions for the evidence we will consider:

- (1) Created Universe
- (2) Created Life (including Created Humanity)

We have suggested above that we will be using evidence **God** has provided. Since we are inside the universe and fallible, we may sometimes be mistaken in using or identifying this evidence, but often only time will tell us this. Like all human endeavors, we need to recognize our fallibilities and put the results in God's hands. However, if we have scriptural warrant for a particular line of evidence, we are less likely to go astray. We will thus try to present such warrant as we go along.

A. Created Universe

The existence and nature of the universe itself is evidence for the existence of the God of the Bible and indirectly for biblical Christianity.

1. Scriptural Warrant for Such Evidence

Is there Scriptural warrant to believe that the universe itself is evidence for the truth of Christianity? Yes, consider:

Psalm 19:1-4 - The heavens (astronomy, meteorology?) are telling us about God via the quality of his craftsmanship; they are telling all the time and are not limited by language barriers.

Romans 1:18-20 - Humans are without excuse for ignoring God, and in fact mishandle evidence to do so, for he has revealed his deity and eternal power in what he has made.

Acts 14:15-18 - This witness extends even to non-sophisticated people, since God does good to them in many ways, including good harvests and times of joy.

2. Some possible lines of argumentation:

General revelation differs from special revelation. We now have all the Bible we are going to have, at least until the appearance of the two witnesses in Rev 11 and probably till the second coming. We have been studying it for nearly 2000 years. But much new information turns up from general revelation every time we build a bigger telescope, a better microscope, or a device for investigating areas of nature we have never looked at before.

a. The existence of the universe itself: Since it does not seem to be eternal, something else must be. An inductive form of the cosmological argument.

b. Design in the inanimate universe: An inductive form of the teleological (design)

argument. This has been strongly resisted, but evidence has continued to accumulate in this area, and has become quite overwhelming in the past generation. We will give some detail on this also.

c. Design in the animate universe: Since Darwin, it has generally been thought this argument was no good (Richard Dawkins, “Darwin made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist”), apparent design being explained by random changes naturally selected for survival. However, serious problems for evolution are undermining this move and tending to re-establish the validity of the teleological argument from biology. We will look at this under “B. Created Life,” below.

3. The Origin of the Universe

There is strong evidence that our universe had an origin, thus pointing to a Creator. The argument is basically inductive, and looks like this:

a. The universe exists. (If the person you're arguing with doesn't believe this, then he or she is not ready for this kind of argument!)

-Shows need for common ground in argument.

-We need to listen to unbelievers to find out where they are and show them the problems of their view.

-Help them to see the Bible is right about truth suppression.

b. But the visible matter of the universe has not always existed. Most of this matter is in stars where, as they burn, it is being converted from the less stable to the more stable elements (from hydrogen and helium thru heavier elements to the elements in the vicinity of iron). Moreover 70-80% of the observable matter is hydrogen, and nearly all the rest is helium.

See references at end of this section: Schatzman 94-117; Sciama 1-14; Motz 135-63; Hoyle 321-43; J&T 151-203, 254-65.

-Like coming upon burning campfire in woods: Has it always been burning?
Look at fuel, ash, use knowledge of how wood burns.

-Must either say universe hasn't always been running,
or that there is some sort of *unknown recycling mechanism*.

c. The universe is expanding. The light coming to us from other galaxies, except the few in our own group, has its spectral lines shifted to the red, for which the only *known cause* would be the recession of galaxies from one another.

See Schatzman 128-32; Sciama 37-48; Motz 28-53; J&T 265-67.

-This will rule out theories of a static universe, which were natural alternatives to creation in the 19th century.

d. Since World War II, the principal alternative cosmologies satisfying items a-c, above, have been:

(1) Big-bang cosmologies: no creation at present; universe expanding from compressed state, some 10-20 billion years ago, called “big bang.”

-So density decreasing, universe getting thinned out, with wider spacing between objects (galaxies, etc.).

-First proposed by George Lemaitre, modified by Gamow and others.

(2) Steady-state cosmologies: continual (non-supernatural) creation; expansion of matter balanced by creation to keep density constant.

-This process is assumed to follow a natural law, so there is no need for God.

-First proposed by Herman Bondi, Thomas Gold, Fred Hoyle.

See Schatzman 225-46; Sciama 98-127; Motz 54-72; Hoyle 675-94; J&T 267-82.

e. The steady-state model (at least in its original, fairly simple form) has failed to fit recent findings:

(1) Galaxy counts suggest universe was more crowded earlier in its history. [Schatzman 238; Sciama 83; Motz 63-66; J&T 273-74]

(2) So do quasar counts, with less chance of error. [Sciama 93; Motz 67-70]

-Steady state theory expects the universe to look the same (e.g., have same density) at all places and all times.

-Looking at galaxies and quasars far away (which we see as they looked long ago) shows the universe to have been much more crowded then, when it was younger.

(3) Background radio radiation. To radio telescopes, the sky appears “gray” at night instead of “black” as for optical telescopes; the details of this radiation (almost perfect uniformity at a temperature of 3° K) fit what is expected for the remains of the big-bang “fireball.” [Schatzman 233,245; Sciama 176-84; Motz 70-72; Hoyle 680-81; J&T 274-75]

-This radiation is naturally explained (was even predicted) by the big-bang theory long before it was discovered. The steady-state theory proposes nothing of the sort.

-So we turn to the various varieties of the big-bang theory.

f. The principal varieties of the big-bang model are:

(1) Lemaitre's No-Bounce: universe created at big bang.

-Universe created at big-bang (10-20 bill yrs ago)

-Lemaitre was RC priest & astronomer; made this proposal in 1930s.

(2) Gamow's One-Bounce: universe has always existed, but bounces once in its history (at big bang).

-Big-bang was a bounce from a previous contraction.

-Universe was initially (at infinite time in past) a uniform distribution of hydrogen gas which gradually contracted to bounce just once at the big bang.

(3) Öpik's Oscillating: universe has always existed, expanding and contracting, with last bounce at (last) big bang. [Sciama 98-127; Motz 307-08; J&T 267-82]

-Until just a few years ago, this was most popular view, favored by such science popularizers as Isaac Asimov and Carl Sagan.

-The universe has always existed, expanding and contracting every 100 billion years or so forever.

-Rather close to Hindu view of cosmology, as Sagan points out in *Cosmos*.

g. The oscillating model (3) faces several problems:

(1) Stopping expansion: as yet no evidence for sufficient matter to overcome expansion and start necessary collapse. [J&T 278-81]

-If universe is to oscillate, it must stop expanding.

-Model assumes there is enough matter for its gravity to overcome expansion energy.

-Current observations (including amount of heavy H produced in big bang) suggest there is only about 10% of amount needed.

-Even more recently, it appears that the universe is now expanding faster than it was early in its history.

(2) Stopping collapse: present evidence indicates that no known force could stop collapse from becoming black hole instead of big bang. [Dicke 66-67; Jastrow 29]

-Recently Stephen Hawking showed theoretically that universe would not bounce if it were to collapse.

(3) Oscillating eternally: all known physical systems have tendency to lose usable energy, so oscillation would become smaller and smaller, damping to zero in finite time. [Schatzman 245]

-Compare behavior of bouncing ball.

h. The one-bounce model faces at least two problems:

(1) How will an almost infinitely large universe collapse to one point?

-How does all of universe “know” where to collapse to?

-Something like behavior of ripples from pebble dropped in pond if you film and then run film backwards.

(2) Why would it take an infinite time to do so?

-Know of no natural forces that start out infinitely slowly and build up in such a way as to take infinite time to accomplish finite task.

(3) Problem g(2) above, stopping collapse.

-Since this model also must have a bounce at big bang.

i. At present, only Lemaitre's no-bounce big-bang model (suitably updated; a creation model) fits the data without assuming the existence of unknown, specialized forces to solve these problems. [Jastrow 19-38; Ross gives an excellent up-to-date treatment]

-Naturally Lemaitre's view must be updated to deal with additional scientific knowledge since 1930s.

-But it is impressive that this theory (which was probably partly based on Genesis) has shot down its opponents.

- j. Current anti-theistic forces in cosmological controversy are looking at universes which pop into existence without a cause! [See Hawking, and Ross, below, and my IBRI Research Report #15 (available free on www.ibri.org)]

Good Books to Help Believers & Unbelievers re/ Origin of Universe:

- Heeren, Fred. *Show Me God: What the Message from Space Is Telling Us About God*. Wheeling, IL: Searchlight Publications, 1995. An excellent lay-level presentation of the sorts of evidence that Hugh Ross covers below in a more technical fashion. Heeren is or was a science reporter who has become a Christian. Features interviews with major figures in cosmology. Very readable. Highly recommended.
- Ross, Hugh. *The Fingerprint of God*. 2nd ed. Orange, CA: Promise Publishing, 1991. The best available work on the relation of biblical teaching about the cosmos to the latest scientific findings. Ross has a PhD in astronomy from the University of Toronto, and he is a full-time evangelist to intellectuals. Topics covered include a historical survey of cosmological theories; the recent evidence for a created universe and the God behind it; biblical evidence for long creation days; the Genesis creation account; the problem of suffering and evil; and the Gospel according to creation. Extensive references, indices, and glossary.
- Ross, Hugh. *The Creator and the Cosmos: How the Greatest Scientific Discoveries of the Century Reveal God*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1993. An excellent work on evidence of design in nature, both in the cosmos as a whole and in the enormous number of detailed features of the earth that are necessary for it to support life.
- Ross, Hugh. AA Beginner=s B and Expert=s B Guide to the Big Bang,@ *Facts for Faith* (Quarter 3, 2000): 14-32. This is the most up-to-date presentation of the evidence by an evangelical, given in a user-friendly fashion, yet with extensive references.

Additional Bibliography for Origin of Universe:

- Dicke, Robert E. *Gravitation & the Universe*. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Soc., 1970.
- Hawking, Stephen. *A Brief History of Time*. New York: Bantam, 1988.
- Hoyle, Fred. *Astronomy & Cosmology: A Modern Course*. San Francisco: Freeman, 1975.
- Jastrow, Robert. *Until the Sun Dies*. New York: Norton, 1977.
- _____ and Thompson, Malcolm H. *Astronomy: Fundamentals & Frontiers*, 3rd ed. New York: Wiley, 1977.
- Motz, Lloyd. *The Universe: Its Beginning & End*. New York: Scribners, 1975.
- Newman, Robert C. "Critical Examination of Modern Cosmological Theories," *IBRI Research Report 15* (1982). The same article appears as chapter 2.3 in J. W. Montgomery, ed., *Evidence for Faith*. Dallas: Probe/Word, 1991. Available for free download at www.ibri.org.
- Ross, Hugh. *The Fingerprint of God*. Orange, CA: Promise, 1989.
- _____. *The Creator and the Cosmos*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1993.
- Schatzman, E. L. *The Structure of the Universe*. New York: World University Library, 1968.
- Sciama, Dennis W. *Modern Cosmology*. Cambridge: University Press, 1971.

Power-Point Talk: The Cosmos and the Bible: A Critical Examination of Modern Cosmological Theories [Note: all the PowerPoint talks herein are at www.ibri.org.]

An earlier version of the text of this talk can be found in *IBRI Research Report* 15 (1982) entitled "A Critical Examination of Modern Cosmological Theories," available in hardcopy from IBRI at \$2.50 plus shipping, or downloadable free from www.ibri.org.

Cosmology: What is It?

Study of the known parts of the universe to try to describe the whole universe.
Interpreting information presently reaching earth to try to reconstruct entire history of cosmos.

Importance of Cosmology Philosophically

A waste of time! - Hannes Alfvén
Large variety of cosmological models
One of the most basic questions we can ask
Too important to be ignored

Importance of Cosmology Biblically

The universe is created.
Its Creator is a person.
The Creator will one day call us to account for our every thought and action.
The Creator has imbedded evidence in the cosmos that it is created.

Importance of Cosmology Scientifically

One of the most basic questions of science
Since World War 2 (especially recently) the scientific evidence is more extensive than ever:
radio telescopes
understanding nuclear & particle physics
artificial satellites, esp COBE and Hubble space telescope
The scientific evidence points to a created cosmos.

The Cosmos and the Bible: Overview

Scientific data relevant to cosmology
Various cosmological models
 some proposed by secular scientists
 some proposed by Bible believers
Propose a best model using both scientific and biblical data

The Nature of Stars: Our Sun as a Sample

Massive ball of gas held together by own gravity
Temperature 1000s of degrees at surface, millions in center
Heat produced by nuclear reaction like hydrogen bomb, but controlled.
Enough hydrogen in a star like sun to burn for ten billion years.

The Nature of Stars: How do we know that stars are suns?

Measuring distances to nearby stars:

The A jumping finger@

Using parallax due to width of earth=s orbit

Apparent brightness of objects decreases with the square of the distance.

So stars are as bright as the sun

Measuring masses of stars

They cover a range that includes our sun.

Stars vary in size, mass, color; the Main Sequence stars

A Miniature Universe: the Cosmology of Harold Camping (Family Radio)

The whole universe is only a few light-years across.

The parallax method shows that the thousand nearest stars are closer than the rest, but doesn=t tell us how far the background stars are.

All distance measurements used on the background stars are unreliable.

A Miniature Universe: Scientific Problems

Binary stars: compare speed in orbit with apparent size of orbit and time to make a circuit.

Dimmer stars would be too small to hold their gas.

Clusters of stars fit the main sequence:

same sort of pattern as in nearby stars

both clusters and nearby stars are explained by same energy mechanism if clusters are at great distances

Galaxies: Our Milky Way and Other Galaxies

Huge collection of stars, ranging up to many hundreds of billions of stars

Some shaped like pinwheels (spirals), most like spheres, footballs, M&Ms (ellipticals), a few rather shapeless (irregulars)

These appear to be at distances of millions to billions of light-years.

Distances to Galaxies: Various Measuring Techniques

Not by parallax, since all are too far away

Most methods depend on comparing the apparent and actual brightness of various objects:

Main sequence stars of same color have same brightness

Variable stars whose actual brightness correlates with variation period

Brightest stars and brightest (globular) clusters tend to have a fixed brightness

Likewise for brightest galaxies in a cluster

An Optically Small Universe: the Cosmology of Moon and Spencer

Some features of Einstein=s Theory of Relativity could be explained otherwise if light travels in circles of radius 5 light-years instead of in straight lines.

So perhaps our universe is just a dozen or so stars within this distance and their multiple images seen by us; compare paired mirrors in clothing store.

View has attracted little interest in secular circles, but a good deal among yonug-earth creationists.

An Optically Small Universe: Biblical Problems

Bible indicates a huge number of stars, like grains of sand on seashore.

This model doesn't solve the problem of light travel-time for young-earth model anyway, since light from objects that appear to be millions of light-years away must have made many circuits and taken millions of years to do so.

An Optically Small Universe: Scientific Problems

Model claims all stars we see are multiple images of a few stars within a few light-years, like the images we see in paired mirrors in clothing stores or amusement parks.

Look at our astronomical photos!

Too much variety in objects seen, even in stars

Too many large objects with coherent structures

Galactic Red-shifts: An Expanding Universe

Slipher and Hubble in 1920s found all but closest galaxies have their light shifted to red, and shifted by a greater amount the greater the distance.

Red-shift: dark or light lines in spectra from stars are found at longer wavelengths (redder color) than for same lines in lab on earth.

Sources of Red-shift

Gravity red-shift: light rising from gravitational field is shifted to red; stronger gravity gives more red-shift.

Motion red-shift: used in police radar to catch speeders; motion toward police car is blue-shifted, motion away red-shifted; amount indicates speed.

We have more direct experience with red-shift of sound waves of auto coming or Going.

Explanation of Red-shift

Gravity red-shift requires enormous gravitational field; sensible for specific large objects, but not for general light from distant stars.

Motion red-shift implies universe is expanding as though from an explosion, though most cosmologists think it is space expanding rather than physical movement of galaxies.

Of these two explanations, latter seems more likely, yet it too involves a very far-reaching conclusion about the nature of the universe.

The whole thing (so much as we can see) is expanding like a balloon or soap bubble!

A Static ATired Light@ Universe

To avoid an expanding universe, some suggest that our red-shift is due to some unknown mechanism by which light gets redder as it travels longer distances.

Not impossible for a finite, created universe, but it postulates an unknown mechanism without other evidence.

Problems for an Eternal Static ATired Light@ Universe

Gravity is attractive. How does the universe remain static?

Stars don't burn forever. How do they recycle?
If universe infinite in size, then it violates Olbers' paradox:
Our sky is relatively dark at night.
An eternal, infinite universe should have a very bright sky.

Olbers' Paradox: the Problem of a Dark Sky

Imagine the universe divided up into concentric spheres, with us at center (like onion).

If the stars are (reasonably) uniformly distributed, then number of stars in each layer increases with the square of the radius.

But the apparent brightness of each star back here at earth decreases with the square of the radius, so each shell contributes an equal amount of light at earth.

Thus light reaching earth from infinite universe should be infinite, or at least as bright as the surface of a star!

Olbers' Paradox: the Solution

Situation like that of seeing out of a forest. How deep must one go to see only tree trunks in all directions?

To have a dark sky, universe must not be deep enough to see only star surfaces in all directions.

Thus the universe is of finite size, or finite age (or average density of stars = zero).

A Young Created Light@ Universe

Most common view among young-earth creationists

Universe is seen as very large, but only some 10,000 years old.

Since most objects visible in our large telescopes are more than 10,000 light-years away, the light coming from them must have been created on the way.

A Young Created Light@ Universe: Problems

Astronomical objects are sending us a stream of information about their history.

For objects > 10,000 light-years away, this history must be fictitious, since they did not exist so long ago.

Given that God cannot lie, this view seems to have more problems than does the view that the Bible does not narrate a recent creation.

Setterfield's Changing Speed of Light Cosmology

To avoid these problems, suggested that speed of light infinite at creation, has recently settled down to current value.

Thus Adam and Eve could see the distant stars right away.

No need to accuse God of showing us fictitious history.

Changing Speed of Light: Problems

Einstein's equation $E = mc^2$ measures energy produced by nuclear reactions.

If humans existed when c was 100x larger, then c^2 was 10,000x larger, and sun would have vaporized earth!

If m is adjusted downward to keep E constant, then masses too small to keep air (or people) on earth's surface!

The Isotropic Radio Background

Discovered in 1960s by Penzias and Wilson, who later received Nobel Prize for this.
At radio wavelengths, sky is not black but gray (compare Olbers= Paradox).
This is very uniform, in all directions, times, and seasons, so does not come from our solar system, galaxy or cluster.
The recent observations of the COBE satellite show a perfect fit to a 2.7 degree Blackbody.

The Isotropic Radio Background: Consequences

Such a background was predicted years in advance by George Gamow as a natural consequence of a ABig-Bang@ cosmology.
In such a scheme, it would be the remains of a glow from the moment when the universe became cool enough to be transparent, about 100,000 years after its creation.
Other cosmologies have no natural explanation for this phenomenon.

Quasars: Quasi-Stellar Radio Sources

Look like stars through (optical) telescopes
Unusually bright in radio-telescopes
Have enormous red-shifts, with most of them apparently billions of light-years away

The Steady-State Cosmology of Bondi, Gold and Hoyle

Takes account of red-shifts and finite ages of stars
But seeks to preserve an infinite, eternal universe (i.e., no Creator) by having new matter pop into existence by natural causes at just the rate to keep up with expansion.
Seen as philosophically more satisfying (to atheists) in that universe looks the same at all times in its history (Perfect Cosmological Principle).

The Steady-State Cosmology: Problems

Violates virtually all known conservation laws
Doesn't have any natural explanation for 3-degree blackbody radiation
Nor for fact that quasars appear to be more common at greater distances, i.e., earlier in history of universe

The Big-Bang Cosmology: Advantages

Fits observations of expanding universe and stars of finite age
Predicts isotropic radio radiation, giving its frequency dependence exactly and approximate value of its temperature
Fits observation that quasars more frequent in early history of universe

The Big-Bang Cosmology: Varieties

No-bounce version - universe begins at big-bang event
One-bounce version - eternal universe, bounced once at big-bang event
Oscillating version - eternal universe, bounces every 100 billion years w/ a big-bang event

No-Bounce Big-Bang: George Lemaitre

Universe has not always existed
Came into existence at big-bang event
Might expand forever, might collapse back into black hole

One-Bounce Big-Bang: George Gamow

Universe has always existed
Far back in past, just a thin soup of hydrogen gas
Gradually pulled together by gravity, getting denser and hotter until it bounced at big-bang.
Since then, it has formed galaxies, stars, planets, life.
All this will end with a whimper.

Oscillating Big-Bang: Popularized by Sagan and Gamow

Eternal, like Gamow's cosmology.
But have a bounce every 100 billion years or so.
Maybe the bounce changes the basic physical constants, giving a different kind of universe each time; maybe not.
For each cycle, the universe ends with a bang.

Oscillating Big-Bang: Problems

Universe doesn't appear to have enough matter density to stop expansion; in fact, it looks like expansion may even be speeding up
A contracting universe (as in oscillating just before bounce) would collapse into a black hole instead of bouncing.
Even if neither of these were a problem, would a universe be able to expand and contract forever without irreversible changes?

One-Bounce Big-Bang: Problems

Shares problem of bounce with oscillating version.
How would an infinitesimal rate of bounce eventually produce a universe-wide big-bounce?

The Cosmos: Current Summary of Scientific Data

Still cannot specify a single model, but
The universe gives every evidence of being very large
The universe certainly looks old, but of finite age
The universe appears to be created
Some version of the no-bounce big-bang model best fits the current data

The Cosmos and the Bible: Biblical Data

The Bible pictures the universe as immeasurably large, but apparently finite in size.
The Bible says the cosmos was created at a finite time in the past by the infinite, personal God of the Bible, and that it evidences his craftsmanship.
The Bible pictures the universe as running down.
Many see the Bible as picturing the universe as only a few thousand years old.

The Universe as Immeasurably Large

AI will make the descendants of David... as countless as the stars of the sky and as measureless as the sand on the seashore@ - Jer 33:22

AWhen I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him?@ - Psalm 8:3-4

The Universe as Finite

AHe determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name@ - Psalm 147:4

The Universe as Created

AIn the beginning God created the heavens and the earth@ - Gen 1:1

ABy faith we understand that the universe was formed at God=s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what is visible@ - Heb 11:3

The Universe as Designed

AThe heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of his hands.@ - Ps 19:1

ASince the creation of the world God=s invisible qualities B his eternal power and divine nature B have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.@ - Rom 1:20

The Universe is Running Down

AIn the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded.@ - Ps 102:25-27 (also Heb 1:10-12)

Is the Universe Young?

The traditional understanding of the Bible.

Main reason for the strength of the young-earth creation movement among Bible-Believers.

Bible does not teach the earth is young.

Bible does not say the days of Genesis were literal or consecutive.

Bible does not say genealogies of Gen 5 and 11 should be added up to get a chronology.

Is the Universe Old?

See my arguments in *Genesis One and Origin of Earth*; those of Hugh Ross in *Creation and Time*; those of Alan Hayward in *Creation and Evolution*.

See also David Snoke's book *A Biblical Case for an Old Earth* (IBRI, 1998).

An earth & universe billions of years old is not taught explicitly in the Bible either, but it is not in disagreement with a fair and reasonable interpretation of the biblical creation account.

An old earth & universe seems to harmonize the data of nature and Scripture in such a way that we need not postulate fictitious history in either source.

**** end power-point talk

4. Inanimate Design in the Universe

There is even stronger evidence for God in the marvelously precise and intricate fit between various features of the universe that make it possible for it to support life. See my chapter "Inanimate Design as a Problem for Nontheistic Worldview" in Montgomery, *Evidence for Faith* and Hugh Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos*.

a. The Argument

- (1) There are numerous features in our universe which, if very slightly different, life would be impossible, either locally or universally.
- (2) These features could not have been adjusted by mutation and natural selection since they involve inanimate rather than living things.
- (3) If these things just happened by chance, then our universe is unbelievably unlikely in very non-trivial ways.
- (4) If these things were designed, then our universe is rather like one would expect, particularly if its Designer had intentionally put evidence of his existence in the structure of nature.
- (5) Therefore, these features are natural consequences of a created world, but unbelievably unlikely in a world without a designer.

b. The Details

****begin power-point talk

Cosmos and Contact: Discerning Signs of Intelligence in the Universe

Introduction

Want to talk about the religion of Carl Sagan as it is revealed in the two films and books *Cosmos* and *Contact*, making some use also of Sagan's last book *The Demon-Haunted World*.

Not just a survey of Sagan's views, but an attempt to think through the whole question of how one should decide between one worldview and another

Sagan=s Opening Statement in *Cosmos*

The cosmos is all that is,
or ever was,
or ever will be

This is not a scientific statement, but a religious one.
From this statement, it appears that Sagan believes nothing exists but the cosmos.
Does Carl Sagan have a religion?

What is A Religion@?

Webster=s New World Dictionary (1955)

Sagan doesn=t have a religion by first two meanings here, but consider the 3rd:
AAny specific belief, worship, conduct, etc., often involving a code of ethics
and a philosophy.@

Roy Clouser, *The Myth of Religious Neutrality*, 21-22:

AA religious belief is any belief in something or other as divine.@
A>Divine= means having the status of not depending on anything else.@

Sagan has a religion in this sense, as we shall see that he believes the universe has always existed.

The Big Bang (*Cosmos*, 246)

In that titanic cosmic explosion, the universe began an expansion which has never ceased. It is misleading to describe the expansion of the universe as a sort of distending bubble viewed from the outside. By definition, nothing we can ever know about was outside.

Here Sagan seems to indicate that he believes there is nothing outside the universe, or at least, that we can never know about anything beyond our universe. Is this true? How could we learn about something that we cannot reach out to with our technology? Sagan will try to address this in his sci-fi novel and film *Contact*.

How it all Began (*Cosmos*, 257)

In many cultures it is customary to answer that God created the universe out of nothing. But this is mere temporizing... if we decide [where God comes from] to be unanswerable, why not save a step and decide that the origin of the universe is an unanswerable question? Or, if we say God has always existed, why not save a step and conclude that the universe has always existed?

Here we see that Sagan is very reluctant to allow the postulation of a God to help in

understanding the universe.

Sagan=s Methodology (*Demon-Haunted World*)

- B Sagan is concerned about the rise of superstitions, @ e.g., New Age philosophies, belief in UFOs, belief in supernatural.
- B Sagan wants to be open to the evidence of nature.
- B He does not **in principle** rule out the supernatural.
- B He says he is not impressed by evidence for the supernatural he has seen.

But is it really true that we are faced with a lack of evidence for God?

Origin of Life (*Cosmos*, 39)

Sagan admits there is much we don=t understand about the origin of life, including the origin of the genetic code (the information stored in DNA molecules). He admits there are many major questions in science which have not been explained by purely natural causes. But Sagan thinks that all of these will eventually be explained without having to call in the supernatural as a cause. [a sort of promissory materialism]

Complexity of Life (Article ALife@ in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* [1970])

The information content of a simple cell has been estimated as around 10^{12} bits, comparable to about a hundred million pages of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. (13:1083B)

Sagan himself, in his article ALife@ which appeared in two editions of the EB, granted that the complexity of even the simplest known life is staggering.

Recognizing a Message from an Extra-Terrestrial

In his science fiction novel *Contact*, made into a film just a few months before he died, Sagan imagined what it would be like to receive a message from higher intelligences. How might we recognize such a message?

- B Strong signal
- B A string of a few dozen prime numbers would be decisive
- B The whole message to build the transport machine is about 50,000 pages

We want to look at a 15-minute clip from this film.

Film Clip from *Contact*

Starts with Ellie Arroway=s arrival on the planet (or spaceship?) in Vega system and her experiences there. When she returns, the powers that be on earth refuse to believe she actually made the trip. An interesting exercise on how one could prove the existence of a

higher intelligence than our own. Some very strong parallels with evidence for God and for the resurrection of Jesus!

Contact: How the Novel Ended

For some reason, the book ends very differently than the film. In the book, the hero, Ellie Arroway, comes to believe in the existence of God because she is confronted with what seems to her (and to Sagan?) incontrovertible evidence.

Ellie finds that in the infinite run of the digits of the number π , there is a place where a picture of a circle is given.

The Film Doesn't End This Way!

Why not? Did Sagan have second thoughts? Did Hollywood veto this ending? Did Sagan back away from the precipice of theism in the last years of his life? He comes closer to Christianity in this novel than in anything he wrote before or after.

I fear that part of the reason for this was that Sagan didn't like the idea of God sending messages. For if we seriously entertain this as a possibility, we may start looking for them. And if we look for them, we will indeed find them, and this would force us to reconsider our whole worldview and lifestyle.

Might God Send Such a Message?

If God exists, he certainly might!

Where would he put such a message?

Christians claim he put one such message in the Bible.

But there is good evidence that he has also put such a message in:

- B The structure of the universe itself
- B Living things

The Universe and God's Message

Several books, dating back as early as 1913, but most since the mid-1980s, have pointed to a marvelous fine-tuning in the structure of our universe:

- B Lawrence Henderson, *The Fitness of the Environment*
- B Paul Davies, *The Accidental Universe*
- B John Barrow & Frank Tipler, *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle*
- B Hugh Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos*
- B Michael Denton, *Nature's Destiny*

Fine-Tuning of the Universe

There are four known basic forces in the universe:

- B Strong Nuclear Force (strength = 1)
- B Electromagnetic Force (strength = 1/100)
- B Weak Nuclear Force (strength = 1/100,000)
- B Gravity (strength = $1/10^{39}$)

As divergent in strength as these forces are, if their strengths were only very slightly different, the results would be disastrous!

The Strong Force

The strong force is apparently the external appearance of the force that binds the so-called Quarks together. It is the strongest we know about, and has a very short range of influence, about the diameter of an atomic nucleus. Its most obvious influence is to hold atomic nuclei together.

- B 50% weaker, no stable elements in the universe
- B 5% weaker, deuterium not stable, stars won't burn
- B 5% stronger, diproton stable, stars explode!

The strong force is tuned to + or - 5% for our universe to function!

The Weak Force

The weak force is some 100,000 times weaker than the strong force, and of much shorter range. It is more obscure to the non-physicist than the other forces, but is involved in the decay of neutrons.

- few % weaker:
 - * too little helium formed in big bang, too few heavy elements
 - * heavy elements stay trapped inside stars
- few % stronger:
 - * too much helium formed in big bang, too many heavy elements
 - * heavy elements stay trapped inside stars

The weak force must be fine-tuned to a few % to have any heavy elements (carbon and heavier) outside stars where they can be used for planets and people!

Electromagnetic Force

The e-m force is very familiar to us, being involved in all our electrical devices. It is also

what makes solid objects solid.

B number of + and - charges in the universe almost exactly equal, to better than one part in 10^{40}

B protons and electrons are drastically different in mass, and froze out@ at very different times in the history of the universe

If not for this equality of + and - charges, electromagnetism (being much stronger) would overwhelm gravity, with the result that there would be no universe of galaxies, stars and planets. Electromagnetism is fine-tuned to one part in 10^{40} !

Gravity

Gravity is also very familiar, though it is the weakest of all these forces. It is the force that is mainly responsible for the movement of the galaxies, stars and planets through space.

There is a very close balance between gravity and the expansion of the cosmos:

B weaker by 1 part in 10^{60} : universe expands too quickly, no galaxies or stars

B stronger by 1 part in 10^{60} : universe collapses too quickly, no galaxies or stars

Gravity is fine-tuned to cosmic expansion at the big bang to one part in 10^{60} !

Fine-Tuned Universe

Combining these cases gives fine-tuning to one part in 10^{100} . How big is 10^{100} ? There are estimated to be 10^{80} elementary particles (protons, electrons, etc.) in our universe, so need 10^{20} universes to get 10^{100} particles.

So to explain this fine-tuning by chance, we have to imagine marking one electron (say) in all the 10^{20} universes and then trying to find it purely by guesswork! Would you want to stake your life on a chance like that?

To make such a fine-tuned universe by chance, we something like 10^{100} universes formed by chance in order to expect that just one of them would turn out with this level of fine-tuning. Do we really have any evidence for another 10^{100} universes?

Besides the four cases we examined above, Hugh Ross gives 22 more in his book *Creator and the Cosmos*. The universe gives every evidence of being designed!

Sir Fred Hoyle on a Designed Universe

A far more minor feature than the ones we have examined (the detailed spacing of nuclear energy levels for carbon and oxygen) led former atheist Sir Fred Hoyle to make the following statement:

... a superintellect has monkeyed with physics, as well as with chemistry and

Life and God=s Message

Living things are also a striking example of organized complexity. Those who believe that the cosmos is all there is have nothing but chance and survival to explain the level of order found in living things:

B Living things are by far the most complex objects yet found in the universe

B Recall Sagan=s remark about the *E coli* bacterium:

* info content = 10^{12} bits

* = 100 million pages of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*

B Human beings have trillions of cells, each of which is more complex than an *E coli* cells, and they are also coordinated

Sir Fred Hoyle and his associate Chandra Wickramasinghe spent a number of years investigating the complexity of living things. They came to the conclusion that life could not be understood in a worldview where there is no mind behind the universe. In an interview, Hoyle said:

The chance that higher life forms might have emerged [by chance] is comparable with the chance that a tornado sweeping through a junk-yard might assemble a Boeing 747 from the materials therein.

Nature (12 Nov 81): 105

Recognizing an ET Message

If we go back to the scenario visualized by Sagan in *Contact*, we find a strong analogy between the message we find in the DNA of living things and the radio message detected by Ellie Arroway and her associates. Will we try to explain this away like the villain Michael Kitz in *Contact*?

B Strong signal: seen in all living things

B Decisive: the information content is beyond the probabilistic resources of the universe

B The whole message to build an *E coli* bacterium is about 100 million pages, but to build the Vegans= transporter was only 50 thousand pages.

The Religion of Carl Sagan

B If he was really open to the universe

B If he was really willing to consider the supernatural

Why didn't Sagan respond to this sort of evidence?
Why did he draw back from the precipice of theism@?

Why indeed? Will you?

****end power-point talk

Attempts to Avoid Designer

As seen above, universe looks very designed; as this has become apparent, some strenuous attempts to avoid this:

Weak Anthropic Principle - Brandon Carter

if these not balanced, we wouldn't be here; just accident of observation: no observers if not right

but this is trivial response, not explanation:

if my parents hadn't met...
if 1000 men in firing squad hadn't missed me...

Strong Anthropic Principle - J.D. Barrow

future events cause past ones

but self-contradictory

time-machine paradox: imagine you have a time-machine; then buy gold brick, multiply it by going back in time and picking it up and putting in machine again and again

Many Worlds Hypothesis - Hugh Everett

at each moment, universe branching into many universes; we are in one of few allowing life

but no evidence for such branching

Oscillating Universe Hypothesis - John Wheeler

many worlds in succession rather than simultaneously

but problems of bounce & infinite repetition (recall our discussion under "Origin of Universe")

Conclusions

All of these make rather strong assumptions regarding the nature of unseen reality without any positive evidence.

Christianity presents corroborating evidence for its worldview in historical evidence of God's intervention, fulfilled prophecy, changed lives (which we look at later in course).

A creation model would expect that design of this sort would be present, but it is a great fluke in worldviews which have no mind behind the universe.

Good Books to Help Believers and Unbelievers re/ Design:

Denton, Michael J. *Nature=s Destiny: How the Laws of Biology Reveal Purpose in the Universe*. New York: Free Press, 1998. Probably the best book available on evidence of design in both inanimate and animate nature. The author is a theistic evolutionist, but was formerly an agnostic, and was led to theism and Christianity through his studies of biology.

Ross, Hugh. *The Creator and the Cosmos: How the Greatest Scientific Discoveries of the Century Reveal God*. Revised edition. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1995.

Additional Bibliography for Design Argument

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B. Created Life

As mentioned above, life itself (and humans in particular) are also evidence for the existence of the God of the Bible and indirectly, for Christianity. This involves both a teleological-type argument, the inability of evolution to craft the level of order seen in living things; and an anthropological-type argument (both regarding man's moral and

intellectual equipment).

1. Scriptural Warrant for Such Evidence

Besides warrant under “Created Universe,” above, is there Scriptural warrant to believe that life (particularly human life) is an evidence for the truth of Christianity?
Yes:

Mankind marvelously made: Ps 139:13-16

- Psalmist gives thanks to God for being “fearfully and wonderfully made,” “skillfully wrought”

Mankind created in the image of God: Gen 1:26-27; 9:6; 1 Cor 11:7; Jas 3:9

- Some unspecified resemblance to God
- Still retained to some degree after the Fall

Features of man as created: What is this “image”?

- Seeking parallels supported by Scripture

Spiritual being: 1 Cor 2:11

- An analogy between God and man as spirits
- As we cannot see spirit of another human, so don't know what he/she is thinking unless revealed, so with God
- Philosopher Alvin Plantinga extends this concept as argument for existence of God in *God & Other Minds*

Moral being: Rom 1:32-2:1; 2:13-15

- Not meaning we always act in accord with our moral standards
- But that we have and use “moral machinery”

Made to have dominion: Ps 8:3-8

- Ties back into Gen 1:26-30, mankind's original design

- These 3 features also true of God: spirit, moral, ruling

These features used as evidence for God:

Rom 1:18-19

- Depends on how we handle *fv*: “within” or “among”?
- If “within” then conscience seen as evidence for God, as in moral argument; supported by Rom 2.

Acts 17:29

- Paul speaking to educated Greeks
- Since we are made by God, ought not think divine nature is something **we can make.**
- Man is God-made rather than **vice versa.**

2. Some possible lines of argumentation:

a. High level of order evidenced in life & in mankind vs. evolutionary problem of explaining order by random processes (note Carl Sagan, *Dragons of Eden*, 46, 212).

- This is real dilemma even with simplest life forms.
- Great weakness in evolutionary model at this point.

b. Existence of “initiative” in mankind and other animals compared to cybernetic problem of designing a machine that can turn itself on.

- Initiative here understood as ability to begin actions without any real external cause, to be the “first cause” or self-starting.
- Cybernetics is theory of control machinery.
- Example of control mechanism which responds to outside influence: thermostat.
- Example of control mechanism which turns self off: novelty store “coffin.”
- God is only absolute self-starter, first cause.
- But mankind, in limited sense, is also a creator; creator in realm of moral activity, apparently also art, etc.
- Relates to problem of whether humans just complex machines or something more.

- See this problem in computers: a computer cannot decide to do something itself (like write a new program) without human initiative being applied. See Roger Penrose, *The Emperor's New Mind*.

c. Level of intellect in mankind seems to be far above that necessary for man in primitive conditions or even that necessary for most humans today; tension with man's competitors imagined during evolution (too much energy given to brain to compete physically?).

- Tension in evolution: if some feature much better than necessary or useful for survival, organism should be beaten out by competitor which has used that energy for something else.
- Thus man's unneeded brain power would take away nutrition from muscles, coordination, eyesight, etc..
- Suggests mankind designed for something that requires great intellect (ruling the earth), though this purpose not being well-fulfilled since the Fall.

Arthur Koestler, *The Sleepwalkers: A History of Man's Changing Vision of the Universe* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1963), 514:

This is a very curious paradox indeed. The senses and organs of all species evolve (via mutation and selection as we suppose), according to adaptive needs; and novelties in anatomical structure are by and large determined by those needs.... But it is entirely unprecedented that nature should endow a species with an extremely complex luxury organ far exceeding its actual and immediate needs, which the species will take millennia to learn to put to proper use – if it ever does. Evolution is supposed to cater for adaptive demands; in this case the goods delivered anticipated the demand by a time-stretch of geological magnitude. The habits and learning potentialities of all species are fixed within the narrow limits which the structure of its nervous system and organs permits; those of *homo sapiens* seem unlimited precisely because the possible uses of that evolutionary novelty in his skull were quite out of proportion with the demands of his natural environment.

d. Structure of rationality in mankind and universe. A strange fit between mankind and universe (see Sagan, *Dragons of Eden*, 216, 232-33: Einstein: “Most incomprehensible thing about universe is its comprehensibility”). Yet humans don't always obey their own logic!

- Man's logic appears well-designed to explain the universe.
- Can deal with all sorts of things it could never have had contact with during its supposed evolution in a primitive environment: e.g., mathematics, atomic structure, poetry, music, art.
- Einstein was amazed that man's mind (developed by mutation) should have these categories to handle all this.
- Xy can easily explain the match of mind with world as arising from a Creator who made both, designing human mind to function in and rule over nature.
- Evolution has only mutation and natural selection to explain this.

e. Existence of moral standards in mankind. See Lewis, “Right & Wrong as a Clue to the Meaning of the Universe” in *Mere Christianity*; also *Abolition of Man*

- Philosophically, we cannot derive an “ought” from an “is”; so how do we explain the origin of this realm of human activity?
- Abolition of Man* shows parallel moral standards throughout world's cultures.
- This argues against independent development of morality, and for a common source.

f. Existence of pleasure for mankind. See Loren Wilkenson's article “The Problem of Pleasure” in J. W. Montgomery, *Christianity for Tough-Minded*.

- Is all pleasure really biologically useful?
- Argues that “biologically useful” explanation not sufficient to explain variety

and strength of human pleasures.

g. Existence of futility for mankind, esp. emphasized in OT book of Ecclesiastes.

- Lewis' concept of "joy" in his *Surprised by Joy* deals with both this and previous item.
- Things after Fall are futile, as man was not designed to be what he is now ("a ruin," Buswell, *Systematic Theology* 1:255ff).
- This "frustrated design" is hard to explain by evolution, since there is no apparent reason for desires which transcend the present order of things.
- This *may* be the point of Eccl 3:11, "He has put eternity in their hearts."

We will not seek to work through all these in detail. The major opposition today to humanity and life as being evidence of God is the claim that evolution explains all these phenomena without any need for God. We will attempt to sketch what is wrong with evolution scientifically, and how the biblical picture of a Creator God solves these problems.

3. The Problem of an Evolutionary Explanation of Mankind and Living Things

****begin power-point talk

Talk: The Creation-Evolution Debate: Recent Developments

Evolution is the "creation myth" of secular humanism. It has had a controlling influence on much of the basic outlook of our secular society today.

Favorable Evidence for Evolution:

It would be a mistake to assume that evolution is nothing but rebellion against God. There is a great deal of that in it, but it is also based on a number of discoveries made since about 1800, as new pages of general revelation have come to light. These discoveries put pressure on Xns to rethink how to harmonize science and Xy, and opened opportunities for those who wanted to escape the restraints of the lifestyle commanded by the Bible.

Old earth, some billions of years

Initially no life

although period for this now seen to be very short

Then just simple life

first prokaryotic, then eukaryotic cells

Then explosion of life at beginning of Cambrian period

all animal phyla but bryozoans (Gould, *Wonderful Life*)

Then fishes, followed by amphibians, reptiles,

birds and mammals, then apes, then mankind

Similarities of biochemicals also looks favorable to evolution

So does homology, similar structures, esp. in vertebrates

So why doesn't everybody believe in evolution?

A variety of reasons, depending on person's worldview:

Some have another source of information than scientific which raises questions for them: (if one believes this world is all there is, nothing but natural forces, then something like evolution has to be true; if one believes in a God behind everything, then he may have used some other method, as similarities are a common feature of design also): e.g.,

Young-earth creationists don't think earth old enough.

Old-earth creationists think earth old, but that certain data doesn't favor evolution (more below).

Not all opponents to evolution object for religious reasons e.g., Denton, *Evolution, a Theory in Crisis*; Hubert Yockey, *Information Theory and Molecular Biology*.

Not all who have religious reservations feel that these are the decisive problems; after all, there are many theistic evolutionists who think God did it via evolution. I think the decisive problem is scientific evidence.

Could so many scientists be wrong? Consider the case of continental drift, with a sudden paradigm shift in the middle of the 20th century.

Want to look at scientific problems for evolution, particularly evolution in the "Blind Watchmaker" form, that purely random changes are made into apparently designed structures merely by natural selection, the model favored by Charles Darwin and especially emphasized by Richard Dawkins in *The Blind Watchmaker*.

Some Scientific Problems for Evolution:

1. Problems with generating order by random events merely selected for survival
2. Problems with the fossil record

1. Problems with Generating Order by Randomness & Survival

Origin of life: Mutation and natural selection will not work until one has a mechanism capable of replicating itself. The minimum complexity for this self-reproducing automaton seems beyond the probability resources of our universe over its history.

Origin of specific biochemicals: There are many thousands of examples (e.g., cytochrome c) which will not work until they have a certain level of complexity that also seems out of range of what can be accomplished with the number of atoms and length of time available.

Origin of Chemical Processes and Organs: This relates to the problem that we find

in living things many examples of large Aminimal complexity.@ How can one build a system by random processes selected only for survival that requires many features working together before it has any function?

Examples:

Rotary motor in the bacterial flagellium

Blood clotting mechanism

Intracell transport

Vision

These are well discussed in Michael Behe, *Darwin=s Black Box* and also in Michael Denton, *Nature=s Destiny*.

2. Problems with the Fossil Record

The Relative Lack of Transitional Fossils.

“The extreme rarity of transitional forms in the fossil record persists as the trade secret of paleontology.”

Stephen Jay Gould, *Natural History* 86 (1977):14

“Well, we are now about 120 years after Darwin... ironically, we have *even fewer* examples of evolutionary transition than we had in Darwin=s time. By this I mean that some of the classic cases... have had to be discarded or modified.”

David Raup, *Field Museum Bulletin* 30 (1979):25

“... despite the detailed study of the Pleistocene mammals of Europe, not a single valid example is known of phyletic (gradual) transition from one genus to another.”

Steven M. Stanley, *Macroevolution: Pattern & Process* (1979): 82

Notice we have said “relative” lack. There is no need to argue that there are no fossils that might be transitional. The problem is that Darwinian “Blind Watchmaker” evolution has only a random walk to cross the gaps between the major kinds of life. Instead the fossil record lacks transitional forms systematically above the level of the couple lowest categories in the biological classification system. Evolutionists have characteristically sought to explain this by pointing to the fragmentary nature of the fossil record; or by postulating that all significant evolution takes place in small isolated populations.

Fragmentary Fossil Record? Darwin and many since have argued that the lack of transitions in the fossil record is due to the fragmentary nature of the fossil record. The fossil record doubtless is fragmentary, but is it reasonable to believe that this accounts for hiding all the important transitions, given that some quarter billion fossils have been collected, studied and stored in university museums? By analogy, one can make an awfully detailed graphics image with 1/4 billion pixels!

The Shape of the Fossil Record.

The various forms of Darwinism (original, Neo-Darwinian, Punctuated Equilibria) all predict a spreading, cone-shaped “tree” for the development of life's variety on earth, i.e., that the tree of life will form by the divergence of species into genera, genera into families, and classes into phyla, by the accumulation of small changes. The actual shape is of a single trunk suddenly joined by a large number of bushes! For instance, all the animal phyla were formed within 10 million years at the Cambrian explosion (over 500 million years ago) and none since then, the opposite of the prediction.

Biological Classification System for the common dog

Kingdom: Animals
Phylum: Chordates
Subphylum: Vertebrates
Class: Mammals
Order: Carnivores
Family: Canidae
Genus: Canus ----- Stanley: no gradual transitions above this level
Species: familiaris

Small populations: It is true that any single mutation is more likely to become dominant in a small population than in a large one, as the size of random fluctuations from average in a small population is larger than in large ones. Compare tosses of coins for a small number of tosses vs large. The number dependency is $N^{-1/2}$. This is used by evolutionists today to argue that all the significant transitions took place in small populations, which we would not expect to show up in the fossil record.

Multiple mutations: However, to make any significant changes such as characterize differences between higher levels of the biological classification scheme, many mutations are necessary, probably hundreds or thousands for the higher levels. The relative chance of getting (say) 5 of the right mutations in a given population varies with the size of the population as N^5 , so that a large population is much more likely to have the mutations than a small one. This more than cancels out the benefit of small populations.

Punctuation. As Gould, Eldridge, et al have pointed out, the fossil record typically shows *sudden transitions* to new forms rather than gradual transitions. Geneticists have not been able to figure out how such transitions could occur. This does not favor evolution as an undirected process.

Stasis: The fossil record is also characterized by *stasis*, that is, each particular form of life appears in the record suddenly, and does not change significantly over its history in the record, either eventually becoming extinct, or surviving till today. This suggests that mutation and natural selection is basically a conservative mechanism, as confirmed by computer simulations.

Islands of function: A study of living organisms suggests that they are “islands” of function in the midst of a “sea” of dysfunction C that around each living thing are a multitude of slightly different designs that don't work. The standard theory of evolution (in which life has

gradually developed by a multitude of small changes) must postulate that these are “isthmuses” of function rather than “islands,” or that the islands are close enough together for single mutations to be able to jump from one to another. But how does one get from two-chambered to 3-chambered to 4-chambered hearts? from push-pull lungs to flow-through lungs? from black & white vision to color vision? from legs to wings? from scales to feathers? These things typically have no intermediate forms and require numerous coordinated changes for each to work.

Conclusions:

Problems Generating Order

- Origin of Life
- Origin of Specific Biochemicals
- Origin of Processes and Organs

Problems with the Fossil Record

- Relative Lack of Transitional Fossils
- Shape of Fossil Record
- Inadequacy of Small Populations to Explain Large Changes
- Punctuation and Stasis
- Islands of Function

Worldview: If you hold tenaciously that we live in a universe without a God, that there is no mind behind it all, then undirected evolution *must* be your explanation, and all appearances of design in nature *must* be merely the deceptive products of that ‘blind watchmaker,’ no matter how badly the theory works. But of course, your tenacity may be misplaced. And how could you ever find that out, if you never look at the scientific problems facing a “no-god” worldview?

If you admit that these problems indicate a Mind behind the universe, then that Mind may have worked by purely natural means or by abrupt means or by some combination thereof. But having such a Mind (God!) raises the question of what life is all about and what I am going to do about it.

****end power-point talk

Good Books to Help Believers and Unbelievers re/ Darwinism:

Behe, Michael J. *Darwin=s Black Box: the Biochemical Challenge to Evolution*. New York: Free Press, 1996. This is a delightful user-friendly presentation of the problem of irreducible complexity as a stumbling block to Darwinism. Behe is a professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University in the USA.

Denton, Michael J. *Nature=s Destiny*. See full bibliography and comments in previous section on design.

Newman, Robert C.; John L. Wiester; Janet and Jonathan Moneymaker. *What=s Darwin Got to Do with It? A Friendly Discussion about Evolution*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000. It is not kosher to give rave reviews about one=s own books, but

the diverse gifts of the authorship team has produced an excellent cartoon book designed for high school biology students.

Wells, Jonathan. *Icons of Evolution: Science or Myth? Why Much of What We Teach About Evolution is Wrong*. Washington, DC: Regnery, 2000. A nice tour of ten of the most standard “pictures” we associate with evolution.

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In summary, we suggest that the above-mentioned evidence from General Revelation points strongly to an infinite, eternal, personal God of the sort revealed in the Bible.

II. Evidence from Special Revelation (SR)

We turn now to consider evidence from special revelation, basically evidence provided by the Bible for the existence of the God of the Bible, the truth of Christianity, and the inspiration of Scripture. We will group our materials under three headings:

- (1) Preknowledge of science;
- (2) Fulfilled prophecy; and

(3) Jesus.

A. Preknowledge of Science

The idea here is that the God who made and controls the universe obviously knows a great deal more about how it works than did the people living at the time various parts of Scripture were revealed and written. Perhaps God put into Scripture hints that would come to be recognized later when our understanding of nature had advanced, thus providing evidence that the Bible is not merely the work of ancient peoples.

1. Scriptural Warrant for Such Evidence

Is there Scriptural warrant to believe that there are materials in Scripture which indicate an unusual knowledge of science in advance of what was otherwise known then, which therefore constitute a line of evidence for the truth of Christianity? Yes, though the warrant is *not so strong* as for our other areas of evidence in this course. Consider:

a. The author of Scripture is also Creator of that which science studies, as claimed in Psalm 19, Genesis 1, etc. It would not therefore be surprising that he might reveal such things, if he chose to do so.

b. Scripture contains important knowledge, some of which is otherwise unknown. Therefore God is capable of conveying new information to finite, sinful humans in their languages.

Jer 33:3: "I will tell you... things which you do not know" - context basically *prophetic* knowledge

Ps 119:97-100: through Scripture we can know more than own teachers and those w/ experience (in context, this is probably basically *spiritual* knowledge)

Deut 4:6: your obedience to God's law will demonstrate your wisdom to nations around you; i.e., when they see how much better your society is.

Prov 1:1-6: proverbs contain wisdom for both young, inexperienced and wise experienced; includes at least *moral & behavioral* information

c. Some of this appears to be scientific knowledge ("scientific" by subject matter, rather than by method).

Job 38-41: God questions Job at Job's request; definitely *scientific* information here.

Ex 15:26; Deut 7:12, 15: Israelites kept from diseases if they will obey God's laws; definitely *medical* knowledge, though nature of mediation unclear

(freedom from disease as result or as reward?).

2. Lines of Argumentation: (My thanks to Dr. John Bloom, biophysicist and theologian, Professor of Physics at Biola University and head of their masters program in science and Christianity, for some of this material.)

Evidence for (1) *the compatibility* of the Bible with science, and (2) its *uniqueness*, is hard for most people to see, as the Bible is the only ancient text that they ever read.

- a. Genetics. Two nice examples:

Sheep breeding. Gen 30:31-31:12. Note Jacob's mistaken means (putting speckled, spotted sticks in front of the ewes); the ancient Bible characters did not themselves know modern science. But note also *God's correction* in the later dream. God knows true science and is able to communicate what is needed in terms Jacob can understand. It is the kind of ram that mates with the ewe, not the sticks she sees.

Fertility. Gen 30:14-18. God's blessing of Leah counters Rachel's attempt to get pregnant with the help of mandrakes. The one that has the husband gets pregnant, not the one with the fertility potion.

Note that God is correcting the false notions of the patriarchs, his own people!

- b. Astronomy.

Size of the Universe. Jer 31:37. The heavens are immeasurable.

Shape of the earth. Job 26:10. Circular boundary between light and darkness on the earth's surface (cf. Prov. 8:27).

Support for the earth. Job 26:7. Nothing, i.e., the earth's support is non-material.

Note: I suggest that Job 26:11 "pillars of heaven" are clouds. (only occurrence of this phrase; compare Exodus 14:24)

Contrast other religions, cultures: The universe is finite, the earth flat, the sky a solid dome. The sun, moon, planets and stars are deified, their movements used for divining the future.

Some Examples of scientific problems from the Qur'an:

34 [Sheba], 9: "Drop a fragment of the sky upon them" [unbelievers]

67 [Kingdom], 5: "We have adorned the sky with lamps, and made them missiles against the devils" Meteors are stars thrown at devils who try to sneak into

the heavenly assembly. See Campbell, p. 175.

c. Hygiene and Medicine.

Quarantine. Lev. 13:46. McMillen, p. 21ff; Barfield, ch. 3-5.

Sanitation. Deut. 23:12-13.

Washing after touching unclean things. Lev. 11ff

Eighth-Day Circumcision. McMillen, p. 92.

Psychological Well-being. Most of McMillen.

Contrast medical beliefs of surrounding cultures: Sorcery, amulets, “sewage pharmacology.”

Ebers Papyrus, McMillen, p. 19.

Babylonian medical texts have “no modern medical significance at all.” (Roderick E. McGrew, “Medicine in Mesopotamia,” *Encyclopedia of Medical History* [1985], p. 186; Barfield p.189)

d. Agriculture.

Fallow fields for curbing crop disease (Lev. 25:1-6; 7th year sabbatical cycle).
Cairney, in *Evidence for Faith*, p. 133f.

3. Problems in using internal evidence.

- a. The Bible carries historical baggage from “traditional wording” associated with translations made in pre-scientific eras.

Firmament → solid sky. Follows the Greek LXX and Latin Vulgate.

Hebrew *raqia* is better translated as “expanse.” See Robert C. Newman, *The Biblical Firmament: Vault or Vapor* (IBRI, 2000).

- b. Poetic wording was/is misunderstood to have scientific content. For example:

Foundations of the earth cannot be moved (Ps. 93:1, 96:10)

→ geocentric universe.

Talking about justice and the “world order”.

The wicked say “I shall not be moved” Ps. 10:6.

“Foundations” are that which support the land masses. Earth cannot be moved from its orbit (foundation).

Translating and understanding a given passage have a subjective element. Use cautiously, evaluate criticism.

4. Argument in Detail (a power-point talk)

Astronomy in the Bible

Introduction

Is religion, like art, music or food, a matter of taste?
Each religion claims to tell us how things *really* are.
Only Christianity offers much evidence to support its claims.
Here we compare Biblical statements in 4 areas of astronomy with those of ancients and modern science.

The Size of the Universe

Bible:

Ps 8:3-4: amazing to Psalmist that God cares about man
Jer 31:37: heavens immeasurable

Qur'an:

Sura 2:19-20 - earth a bed, sky a dome
Sura 22: 64 - holds sky from falling down
Sura 34: 9 - let a part fall

Comparing Bible and Qur'an

Bible:

Immeasurably large universe
Amazing that God cares about humans

Qur'an:

A Chicken Little@ universe
Dome sky, that might fall on people below

Ancient Greek Science:

Anaximander, *About Nature*:

stars are wheel-shaped masses of air, full of fire
sun most distant object
about 28x size of earth away

Modern Science:

Don't know how big universe is; we still have not been able to measure it!
About 25 trillion miles to the nearest star (besides our sun)
About 2 million light-years (12 quintillion miles) to next large galaxy

The most distant known objects are over 10 billion light years away
(1 light year = 6 trillion miles)
No end in sight

The Number of Stars

Bible:

Gen 15:5: large number, able to count them?
Jer 33:22, Gen 22:17: uncountable, like sand

Greek Science:

Hipparchus, Ptolemy: anc. catalogues, about 1000 stars
(only about 6000 visible without telescope)
Democritus: speculated an infinite number of worlds

Modern Science:

With even a moderate telescope, can see millions of stars
Our Milky Way galaxy has perhaps 200 billion stars
Estimated to be some 100 billion galaxies in our universe

Sir James Jeans, *The Stars in Their Courses*, 137

Number of stars like number of grains of sand on earth

The Earth's Support

Bible:

Job 26:7: earth hangs on nothing

Hindu Vedas:

earth flat & triangular
7 stages: honey, sugar, butter, wine, etc.
supported by elephants

Greek mythology:

Atlas holds up the earth

Greek philosophers:

water (Thales)
air (Anaxagoras)
nothing (Anaximander, contra Aristotle)

Modern Science:

support is non-material, balance of gravity & inertia

The Earth's Shape

Bible:

Four corners? Rev 20:8

Liberal view:

Flat earth with round or angular edges

Dome sky attached to earth at edges

Attic rooms for rain and snow

Earth floats on water

Isa 40:22

Circle of earth

Spreads out heavens

Job 26:10

boundary between light and darkness on earth's surface is a circle

Luke 17:34-36

different times in different places

Greek philosophers:
flat (Hecataios)
pillar-shaped (Anaximander)
round (Pythagoras)

Conclusions on Earth's Shape
pretty good approximation to a sphere
line dividing day from night is very nearly a circle

Astronomy and the Bible: Summary

Bible sees universe as enormous, in contrast with most ancient views.
Bible says stars are uncountable, like the sand of the sea; also a rare view in antiquity.
Bible says earth is supported by nothing, also rare.
Bible seems to picture a round earth, which was rare and counter-intuitive.

Conclusions

Need very lucky guesses to avoid Biblical evidence
Contrast ancient Jewish attempts to write Scripture:
1 Enoch 72:3-7: sun's chariot, gates, winds
3 Baruch 3:6-8: bore thru heaven's dome

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B. Fulfilled Prophecy

This has been an important line of evidence for the truth of Christianity throughout church history, beginning in the New Testament. In fact, as we note below, it was also important in the Old Testament period.

Prophecy is not particularly mysterious. God simply tells people what He is going to do and then He does it. Of course, imagining how He does this can be a bit tricky!

In principle it is no more complicated than our using turn signals on an automobile, except that God has perfect control of history and we don't have perfect control even of our automobiles!

1. Scriptural Warrant

Is there Scriptural warrant to believe that fulfilled prophecy is a line of evidence for the truth of Christianity? Yes, consider:

a. The Nature of Prophecy:

Provision of the prophet: Deut 18:9-22

note reason for provision & test for true prophet

God controls history:

Prov 19:21; 16:33,9,1 - contrast humans w/ God

Isa 43:12-13 - challenge to idols (other religions)

God produces the fulfillments: Isa 44:24-28

God makes other “prophets” fail, confirms his own prophets.

b. The Evidential Value of Prophecy:

In general: Isa 41:21-24; 44:6-8

God, as if in a debate or trial, challenges the idols to tell the future, intervene in history, or even explain the significance of past events.

Messianic:

Used by Jesus: Luke 24:25-27,44

Explains how things his followers thought had disqualified him from being Messiah actually prove his Messiahship on basis of OT prophecy

Used by apostles:

Acts 2:22-31 - Peter at Pentecost

9:22 - Paul at Damascus

13:23,27-29 - Paul at Pisidian Antioch

17:2-3 Paul at Thessalonica

18:2-8 - Paul at Corinth

-Paul customarily argues with the Jews using OT

Messianic prophecy.

2. Lines of Argumentation:

- (1) **Detailed prophecy far in advance** of fulfillment implies control of future by ultimate author of Scripture.
- (2) **Predictions about Israel and the surrounding nations** show that God is concerned about his people, about the Gentiles, and about the behavior even of those who don't know or care about him.

(3) **Predictions about Messiah** not only demonstrate God's control of history, but Messiah is himself the focus and turning point of history.

3. Some of the Better Examples:

A sketch here. We give more detail on some of these below, in items ##5 and 6, or in the next section of evidence, C. Jesus.

a. Prophecies about the Messiah:

--Time of His Coming:

(see IBRI Research Report #9 or *Evidence of Prophecy*, ch 10)

Gen 49:10: to come while still king of Jews

Hag 2:6-9: while 2nd temple still standing

Dan 9:24-27: after 69 weeks

--Nature of Messiah: (see Research Report #6 or *Evidence of Prophecy*, ch 9)

OT paradoxes re/ person of Messiah solved by NT;

contrast apocalyptic, Qumran, rabbinic models

--Curse on Jeconiah: Jer 22:30

descendants not to rule again; NT solution via
virgin birth, adoption by Joseph

--Light to Gentiles: Isa 42:6; 49:6

Jesus only messianic claimant who has started world
religion among Gentiles

--Burial of Messiah: Isa 53:9

(cf MacRae "With Rich in His Death," *Moody Monthly* [Sep76]) Jesus
supposed to be buried with two criminals, but was with a rich man instead.

b. Prophecies about Israel:

--Israel's Future: Hos 3:4-5 (see *Evidence of Prophecy*, ch 7)

Many days without king or prince, sacrifice or pillar, ephod or teraphim

--Control of Jerusalem: Lk 21:24

Gentile control until time of Gentiles comes to end.

--Golden Gate: Ezk 44:1-3

Shut up because God (Jesus, at triumphal entry) has passed through.

--Status of Temple: Mt 24:2; 2 Th 2:4

Thorough destruction, later rebuilding in time for end.

--Fate of Capernaum, Chorazin, Bethsaida: Mt 11:20-24

To be destroyed for rejecting Jesus.

--Israel's Regathering: Isa 11:11-16 (see *Evidence of Prophecy*, ch 8)
Latter days, from specific countries as well as generally, one nation

c. Prophecies about the Nations:

--Tyre: Ezk 26:4,12 (contrast Sidon)
Destruction by nations, scraped clean, debris thrown in sea, place for spreading nets

--Idols of Memphis: Ezk 30:13 (contrast Thebes)
Put an end to them

--Babylon Deserted: Jer 51:42-43 (contrast Nineveh)
No one lives there, no sheep, stones not used

--Edom: Ezk 25:12-14; Mal 1:2-4; Ob 1-4
Continual destruction, vengeance by Israel

--Egypt: Ezk 29:14-15
Will become a lowly kingdom, not to rule over neighbors

d. Paired Cities:

A special case of c. Nations (above)

Twin-city prophecies function like experimental controls (e.g., use of placebo in testing medicines), because quite different pictures of their future destinies are portrayed. If the city names are switched, the predictions would not be true.

1) Memphis/Thebes, capitals of Egypt.

Memphis: Ezk 30:13. Thebes: 30:14-16.

Idols destroyed Depopulated

2) Tyre/Sidon, Phoenician sea powers.

Tyre: Ezk 26:3-14. Sidon: Ezk 28:22-23.

Spreading of fishnets Judgments

3) Babylon/Nineveh, capitals of international empires.

Babylon: Isa 13:19-22. Nineveh: Zeph 2:13-15.

Uninhabited, no grazing Desolate, but grazing flocks

Objections:

Lots of cities were destroyed. How are these prophecies special?

People wanted to have Bible prophecies come true. Maybe they fulfilled them, or wrote prophecy after event.

Responses:

Memphis:

Northern capital of Egypt.

At time of Christ, Strabo (Greek historian) describes the large city and its many temples.

Islam arrives C 7th century AD.

Conquers Egypt, but

Leaders do not want water to come between them and their homeland.

Leaders do not want soldiers to own property or settle in Egypt (too pagan and prosperous). They were forbidden to move into Alexandria or Memphis.

So conquerors remain on east side of Nile, at their encampment for the siege against Memphis.

Over the centuries, the encampment becomes Cairo, the main city in the area of Memphis, drawing people and business to it.

Memphis is used as a quarry for stone to build new buildings of Cairo.

Petrie (1910) found the site cultivated with no remains above the water table. Only one statue on/near the site today.

Thebes:

Southern capital of Egypt.

In 92 BC, withstood a 3-year siege before falling.

City destroyed during reign of Augustus.

Thebes never recovered its population: Only a collection of villages are in the area today, Luxor being the largest city.

Has "the greatest assemblage of monumental ruins in the world".

Hordes "cut off" but ruins (including temples, idols) remain.

Details from Bloom, in *Evidence for Faith*, p. 179ff.

4. Advantages of this Line of Evidence:

- a. **Shortcuts** earlier lines of evidence, pointing directly to God of Bible.
- b. **Messianic prophecy** connects OT with NT and points to Jesus as the Messiah.
- c. Does **not** require as much **technical knowledge** outside the range that a Bible college or seminary graduate would likely have. You do need to study up on ancient near eastern history.

5. PowerPoint Talk “**Prophecy: Ancient and Modern**”

Contrast biblical prophecy and fulfillment with extra-biblical competitors

a. **Tests for Confirmed Prophecy:**

How can we recognize real supernatural prediction so as to see its evidential force?

- (1) Prophecy clear enough to recognize?
- (2) Prophecy known to precede fulfillment?
- (3) Prophecy not influenced by prophet?
- (4) Prophecy sufficiently remote from fulfillment and/or detailed enough to preclude guessing?

b. **Some Examples which Fail These Tests:**

Contrast some other ancient and modern prophets:

- (1) Koran: only predicts last judgment; by then it will be too late to change religions!
- (2) Book of Mormon: not clearly written before fulfillment; easy to “predict” the past!
- (3) Nostradamus: very ambiguous; impressive when right, but hard to prove wrong!
- (4) Oracle at Delphi to Croesus: ambiguous; dangerous to stake life on unclear instructions!

c. **Edom & Petra Prophecy** (Ezk 25:12-14; Mal 1:2-4; Obad 1-4)

Edom the territory that Jacob's brother Esau wound up with; Petra comes to be one of its major and best-fortified cities.

- (1) Edom is to be desolated.
- (2) Israel is going to take vengeance on Edom.
- (3) Continual desolation; Edom unable to rebuild.
- (4) Even though Edom secure, these things will happen.

These fulfilled in centuries following, beginning about 500 BC; Edomites driven into Palestine by Arabs; conquered & forced to become Jews by Maccabees; destruction of Petra complete by Middle Ages.

d. Jeane Dixon as a Prophet (cf. Montgomery, *A Gift of Prophecy*)

Some successful predictions: deaths of Kennedy, Dulles, Nehru.

Some misses: Quemoy, Matsu invasion; Reuther for president.

Contrast Biblical principles re/ prophecy:

- (1) Not all miraculous from God (2 Thess 2:8-9).
- (2) Test to see if from God (1 John 4:1).
- (3) God's prophets can't miss (Deut 18:20-22).
- (4) Test the message (Gal 1:8).

Note that Jeane Dixon fails ##3,4.

e. Golden Gate Prophecy (Ezk 44:1-3)

Outer gate of temple complex facing East to be closed because the God of Israel has passed through.

This appears to be gate used by Jesus at his triumphal entry (based on Mark 11:1,11).

City later destroyed, rebuilt; new gate in this location walled up by Suleiman the Magnificent to keep out Christian pilgrims; still walled up today!

6. Power-Point Talk “Israel: Evidence of God in History”

The history of the nation Israel is a detailed picture of fulfilled prophecy and of the truth of Christianity.

a. The Prophecies

- (1) Blessing & Curse Passages (Lev 26; Deut 28)
disaster for disobedience
yet not destroyed (Lev 26:44-45)
scattered, no rest among nations (Deut 28:64-68)
- (2) Regathering of Israel (Isa 11:11-15)
second time (11)
names places (11)
- (3) Israel w/o Sinai Covenant & w/o Idolatry (Hos 3:4-5)
without king or prince (Davidic king or government official)
w/o sacrifice or sacred pillar
w/o ephod or idol
- (4) Israel & Messiahs (John 5:43)
not accepting Jesus' coming in Father's name

will accept another coming in own name

b. The Fulfillments

- (1) Scattering begins for No. Kingdom 722 BC, for So. King. in 587; So. people return after 537 BC, but never majority of Jews in land since 587; yet people remain to this day undestroyed; history on problems from Romans thru Crusaders to Arabs & Hitler shows little rest.
- (2) Regathering of Southern exiles in 537 and after does not show pattern of Isa 11:11, but modern regathering (19th-20th cen) does; Jews essentially cleared out of named countries right after WW 2, except for Iran, which has more recently cleared due to Koumeini.
- (3) Fulfillment very striking: no Davidic king since 587, though Maccabeans and Herodians in 2nd cen BC-1st AD; no state from AD 70 until 1948; Israel w/o sacrifice and priest since temple destroyed in AD 70; yet has not turned to pagan idolatry that was problem in OT times; looks like Hos 3:5 return may be beginning.
- (4) Jewish people followed revolt in AD 70 which may have involved Messianic pretenders; Bar Kochba revolt definitely did (135); other such include Shabbati Zvi in 1600s, who still has some followers today.

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C. Jesus

Jesus is the center of Christianity, the one mediator between God and man, the unique being who is both eternal God and mortal man. It would naturally be surprising (and

a serious problem for the truth of Christianity) if the phenomena surrounding Jesus' life and ministry were not important evidence.

1. Scriptural Warrant

Is there Scriptural warrant to believe that materials about Jesus include lines of evidence for the truth of Xy?

Jesus fulfills Messianic prophecy: See warrant under "Fulfilled Prophecy" above.

Jesus' ministry in general is warrant for the truth of Xy:

It is central to the Gospel: 1 Cor 2:2
It has historical certainty: Luke 1:1-4
It brings conviction: John 20:30-31

Jesus' resurrection in particular is warrant for Xy:

It is necessary to Christianity: 1 Cor 15:12-20
It is regularly used as evidence:
Pentecost: Acts 2:22-24,32,36 (with tongues, OT fulfillment)
Solomon's Portico: Acts 3:15ff (with healing, OT fulfillment)
Cornelius' house: Acts 10:36-43 (with news of Jesus' ministry, OT fulfillment)
Pisidian Antioch: Acts 13:16-41 (with preaching of John Baptist, OT fulfillment)
Athens: Acts 17:22-31 (with general revelation only)

2. Lines of Argumentation

a. **The Uniqueness of Jesus**

see Edwin Yamauchi, *Jesus, Zoroaster...* and below

b. **The Fulfillment of Prophecy in Jesus**

see Newman, *Evidence of Prophecy*, chs 9-11, *Evidence for Faith*, ch 4.4, and below

c. **Corroboration by Historical Tests**

see McDowell, *More Than a Carpenter*, and his recent *He Walked Among Us*; Blomberg, *Historical Reliability of Gospels*; Newman, *Evidence for Faith*, ch 5.3., discussed below

d. **Resurrection of Jesus**

see bibliography: Buell/Hyder, McDowell, Morison, Wenham, and discussion below

3. The Uniqueness of Jesus

Source: Edwin M. Yamauchi, *Jesus, Zoroaster, Buddha, Socrates, Muhammad* (InterVarsity, 1972). Dr. Yamauchi is an evangelical Christian and Professor of History at Miami University in Ohio.

The five famous founders of world religions listed in the title are compared in five areas:

1. Historical sources available to learn about them;
2. Birth and family background;
3. Life and teachings;
4. Death of each;
5. Claimed relationship to deity.

Certain similarities are found among the five:

1. Each preached against the corruption of contemporary religion.
2. Each perceived keenly the needs of fellowmen.
3. Each was so gripped by personal convictions that he tried to transmit to others what he believed to be true, even though this often aroused opposition and led to suffering.
4. Each man's deeds and words have attracted admirers and followers who have extended his impact over many continents and through many centuries.

Yet the uniqueness of Jesus shows up very clearly in several very significant points:

1. Only Jesus came out of a culture which was already monotheistic.
2. His death by crucifixion is unique.
3. Excluding later legendary and apologetic accounts, we find that early accounts attribute miracles to Jesus only.
4. Only Jesus spoke on his own unquestioned authority.
5. Only Jesus predicted he would be resurrected after his death, and only his followers rest their faith on such an event.
6. Only Jesus claimed equality with a sole, supreme deity.

4. The Fulfillment of Prophecy in Jesus

PowerPoint Talk, "Jesus, the Testimony of Prophecy and History"

This argumentation follows that of Newman, "The Testimony of Messianic Prophecy," in Montgomery, *Evidence for Faith*, ch 4.4.

If the Messiah has come, he is Jesus:

1. A Light to the Gentiles: Isa 42:6-7; 49:5-6.

This is just what Jesus has done, the only Jew claiming to be the Messiah who ever started a world religion.

2. Born yet Pre-existent: Micah 5:2; Isa 9:6-7.

This is nicely explained by NT picture of Jesus, but a real problem for Judaism and theological liberalism.

3. Humble yet exalted: Dan 7:13-14; Zech 9:9.

Jewish explanations:
miraculous donkey!
alternative comings rather than successive

But NT view fits nicely:
humble coming 1st (as child)
exalted coming 2nd (as adult)

4. Suffering yet reigning: Ps 22; Zech 12:10; Isa 53.

Jewish explanation: two Messiahs
Messiah ben-Joseph to suffer
Messiah ben-David to reign
But sufferer is pierced, rejected by Israel

Fits NT picture of Jesus beautifully!

5. King yet priest: Ps 110.

Jewish Essenes (those who copied Dead Sea Scrolls): king Messiah, priest Messiah are two different persons, since OT carefully keeps office of king and priest separate.

But NT picture fits better: one individual is both king and priest.

The Messiah has come

1. To come while Judah had its own rulers: Gen 49:10.
Last king of Jews was Herod Agrippa 1 (AD 41-44).
Jesus came just before this.
2. To come while the 2nd temple still stood: Hag 2:3-9
2nd temple destroyed AD 70.
Jesus came just before this.
3. To be “cut off” after 69th sabbath cycle starts: Dan 9:25-26.
1st cycle spans 445 BC; 69th cycle is AD 28-35.

Jesus ministry ends with his crucifixion AD 30-33.

Conclusion: Jesus is God's promised Messiah!

****do another power-point talk here, **Fulfilled Prophecy: Nostradamus and the Bible**

5. The Resurrection of Jesus

a. Some Preliminary Comments on the Shroud of Turin

Nearly all the evidence seems to point to authenticity except radiocarbon dating, which suggests it was made in 1300's.

Looks like a case of fraud, but not sure whether medieval (14th cen) by proponents of shroud or modern by opponents (20th cen).

Meanwhile, should not be used as evidence since it raises more questions than it solves.

In any case, truth of resurrection does not depend on authenticity of shroud.

b. The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Gospel Accounts

see my "Miracles and the Historicity of the Easter Week Narratives" in Montgomery, *Evidence for Faith*, ch 5.3.

also Craig Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* (IVP, 1987); and Josh McDowell, *He Walked Among Us: Evidence for the Historical Jesus* (Here's Life, 1988). An excellent recent and popular-level work is Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ* (Zondervan, 1998).

Blomberg's conclusions:

Even using modern NT critical approach, if miracle not rejected a priori, Gospels look very good.

Using secular historical methods, if miracle not rejected a priori, Gospels look very good.

c. The Alternatives Don't Look Very Good

(1) Coma Theory (Paulus, 1828)

Jesus went into coma on cross, revived in tomb; **but** unconsciousness on cross would be fatal; walking on nail-pierced feet a good trick! Jesus did not make "walking wounded" impression on disciples.

(2) Hallucination Theory (Strauss, 1835; Lake, 1907)

Jesus died, but women/disciples had grief-induced hallucinations in which they thought they saw him alive; **but** hallucinations do not produce long-term, multiple witness, multiple sense appearances;

authorities would have checked tomb as soon as story began to be uncomfortable for them.

(3) Fraud Theory (Priesthood, AD 30; Reimarus, 1775; Schonfield, 1965)
Jesus or apostles or other disciples removed body from tomb; but Schonfield's view of Jesus setting up fraud has same problems as coma theory; other versions have to ignore soldiers at tomb, willingness of disciples to die for belief, nature of disciples' conduct (see Littelton, *Observations on the Conversion & Apostleship of St. Paul*); lack of fit with the phenomena of Jesus' ministry.

(4) Nothing Happened

Evidence for existence of Jesus about as strong as for anyone in antiquity. If we know anything about him, we know he was crucified. If tomb not empty, authorities had perfect means to smash early Xy.

d. It is possible, but dangerous, to rule out resurrection because evidence for it is merely historical rather than deductive or scientific. We cannot afford to demand that God do things our way, when in fact our problem is rebellion against Him and He is graciously offering us an opportunity for pardon.

****power-point talk **Evidence for the Resurrection from Prophecy & History**

Importance of Jesus= Resurrection (according to the New Testament)

It validates Jesus= personal claims over against the charge for which he was put to death

It indicates that God accepted Jesus= death as a sacrifice to pay for the sins of those who trust in him

It points to a life beyond this one

It reminds us that we live in a world and in a course of history created and directed by One who can intervene decisively to bring about events which otherwise would never have happened

Alternative Theories (rejecting the miraculous)

Stolen Body Theory

Coma Theory

Hallucination Theory

Stolen Body Theory

The oldest alternative, just a few hours after the event

The disciples stole the body

Earliest version has problem of soldiers guarding tomb, who must testify to events which happened while they were asleep!

Later versions invariably try to get rid of the soldiers

These theories cannot explain:

Tactics of the apostles

Career of Paul

Content of the New Testament

Coma Theory

Various versions, but all agree:

Jesus becomes unconscious

Taken from cross alive

Revives in tomb

Problems:

How does Jesus get out of the tomb?

How get past the soldiers?

How convince the disciples he has conquered death?

Fatal problem: physiology of crucifixion

An unconscious person on a cross will strangle to death

Hallucination Theory

Women go to wrong tomb, mistake gardener for angel.

Disciples begin to have hallucinations of risen Jesus.

Problems:

How avoid authorities producing body when disciples begin preaching?

How mistake tomb in broad daylight?

Grief-induced (even drug-induced) hallucinations do not produce appearances:

Lasting an hour or more.

Involving multiple senses (vision, hearing, touch, messages, food).

Involving multiple witnesses.

Evidence for Jesus= Resurrection

From History

Historical evidence points strongly to Jesus= resurrection as an event which really happened.

Alternative explanations must do funny things with the data.

From Prophecy

Old Testament passages predict something of this sort for the Messiah.

These passages were written centuries in advance.

Evidence from History

Can't go back in time to see what really happened, but we do have several significant lines of evidence:

Existence of the Church

Existence of the New Testament

Testimony of the New Testament

Existence of the Church

Lots of religions have arisen based on false beliefs, but:

- The men and women who had followed Jesus were completely demoralized by his

- death.
- Within a few months they were boldly preaching Jesus in the city where he was crucified.
- Most of the apostles died as martyrs, not willing to retract their claims to have seen the risen Jesus.
- The church expanded to fill the Empire without use of military evangelism.

Existence of the New Testament

Several religions have holy books, but:

- The NT records spectacular events and comes from within a century of the events it records.
- External evidence of authorship points to two apostles and two associates as authors of the Gospels, and to a former enemy of Christianity for most of the NT letters.
- The uniform testimony of the NT is to multiple eyewitnesses, extended appearances, multiple senses for the post-resurrection appearances.
- The evidence for the reliability of the NT is as good as for any ancient history.

Testimony of the New Testament

Accounts of post-resurrection appearances occur in:

- 1 Corinthians 15:1-9
- Mark 16:1-8 (9-20)
- Matthew 28
- Luke 24
- Acts 1:1-12
- John 20-21
- Acts 9, 22, 26

Questions to Consider re/ NT Accounts & Alternative Theories

- How many appearances were there?
- How long did they last?
- When did they occur?
- Where did they occur?
- What form did Jesus take in these appearances?
- To whom did he appear?
- What was the chronological order of the appearances?

Suggested Scenario for Post-Resurrection Appearances

	1 Cor 15	Mk 16	Mt 28	Lk 24	Acts	John

Women			9			
Mary Magdalene		9				20:11-17
Peter	5			34		
2 on Road		12		13-31		
10 Apostles	5?			36-48		20:19-23
11 Apostles	5?	14?				20:26-29
7 at Seaside						21:1-22
11 on Mountain	6?		16			
James	7					
Apostles at meal	7?	14?			4-5	
Apos at ascension	7?	14?		49-51	6-8	
Paul nr Damascus	8				9;22;26	

Conclusions on NT Accounts

The NT accounts are harmonizable.

They don't look like they were contrived to fit each other.

They point to 11-13 appearances recorded, and they may have been others.

They occur from the 3rd day to the 40th, not counting later appearances to Paul.

The longer appearances last perhaps an hour each.

They occur in both Jerusalem and Galilee.

Jesus appears both to men and women.

He appears both to individuals and groups, ranging up over 500 at one time.

He is seen, touched, heard, and leaves effects in the physical world (eaten food), though his relation to our space is peculiar.

Evidence from Prophecy

Consider the major passages that point to Jesus= resurrection

Psalm 16

Psalm 22

Isaiah 53

Summary on Prophecy

Psalm 16

God will not abandon his Holy One to the grave, nor let him see decay.

Psalm 22

One pierced in hands & feet, surrounded by enemies, laid in dust of death,
clothes gambled away.
He is delivered and his rescue becomes worldwide news down thru the
generations.

Isaiah 53

Unbelievable report of servant=s exaltation
Despised by Israel, he suffers as a sin offering.
Then he will see his offspring, prolong his days.

Conclusions

The evidence for the resurrection is about as good as one could get for a controversial event in history.
Having it occur in a time of more advanced technology would not avoid objections.
Knowing God and finding out what he is like is important! We dare not go thru life assuming it doesn=t matter until we have thoroughly investigated the situation.

Importance of Jesus= Resurrection (according to the New Testament)

It validates Jesus= personal claims over against the charge for which he was put to death.

It indicates that God accepted Jesus= death as a sacrifice to pay for the sins of those who trust in him.

It points to a life beyond this one.

It reminds us that we live in a world and in a course of history created and directed by One who can intervene decisively to bring about events which otherwise would never have happened.

Bibliography for the Resurrection

- Strobel, Lee. *The Case for Christ: A Journalist=s Personal Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus*. Harper/Collins, 1998. A nice recent popular treatment using the best evangelical scholarship.
- Miethe, Terry, ed. *Did Jesus Rise from the Dead? The Resurrection Debate*. Harper & Row, 1987. Debate between Gary Habermas (evangelical) and philosopher Antony Flew (atheist) held in 1985.
- Wenham, John. *Easter Enigma: Are the Resurrection Accounts in Conflict?* Zondervan, 1984. Examines alleged contradictions between the accounts and proposes a harmonization similar to the one proposed above in our notes.
- Morison, Frank. *Who Moved the Stone?* Century, 1930. This is the classic investigation by one who studied the accounts to validate liberal ideas but came to see them as historically reliable.
- Lapide, Pinchas. *The Resurrection of Jesus: A Jewish Perspective*. Augsburg, 1983. A non-Christian Jewish scholar comes to the conclusion that Jesus really did rise from the dead!

III. Evidence from Redemption

The last of our three categories of evidence probably has some overlap with the previous ones, though the idea is fairly distinct. (1) General revelation is what God has done in the creation and preservation of nature to reveal himself. (2) Special revelation is what God has done in the messages of his prophets recorded in Scripture to reveal himself. (3) Redemption is what God has done in salvation, principally through regeneration, to reveal himself. We divide this last category into two parts: (1) redeemed individuals and (2) redeemed societies.

A. Redeemed Individuals

The changes which take place in individual people, as a result of the redemptive activity of God in their lives, are evidence for the truth of Christianity.

1. Scriptural Warrant

Is there Scriptural warrant to believe that redeemed people are evidence for the truth of Christianity?

Yes, it will be obvious at the judgment: Matt 25:31-46; 1 Pet 2:12. Note the distinction between the “sheep” and the “goats” regarding how they behaved; the “excellent behavior” of believers will cause others to glorify God on the “day of visitation,” which at the latest is the last judgment.

Yes, it will be known sometime, perhaps before the judgment: John 17:20-23; Matt 5:13-16. Jesus prays that the unity of believers may be such that the world will know that Jesus was sent by God. He characterizes believers as salt and light that others may glorify God. The time of this glorification is not specified.

Yes, it can be known even now: 1 Pet 3:1-4. The faithful behavior of a believing wife toward an unsaved husband may lead to his salvation.

2. Lines of Argumentation:

a. **Personal experience** is consistent with the Biblical teaching regarding man's nature, regeneration, and the new life in Christ.

See, for example, David G. Myers' article, “The Inflated Self,” in *Christian Century* (1 Dec 82): 1226-1230, showing experimental evidence of human depravity:

- (1) We tend to accept much more responsibility for our successes than for our failures, which are typically seen as bad luck or someone else's fault.

- (2) Most of us view ourselves as above average in any particular good trait, and a large percentage of us put ourselves in the very highest percentiles.
- (3) When we cannot deny that we did some particularly nasty thing, we are usually quite good at justifying it.
- (4) We commonly overestimate the accuracy of our judgments and the truth of our beliefs.
- (5) Most of us are unrealistically optimistic in remembering and reporting information about ourselves, and in predicting how well we will do in life.
- (6) We consistently overestimate how virtuously we would act in hypothetical situations compared with how we actually act in real ones.
- (7) Depressed people typically are more accurate in their self-appraisal and more likely to see themselves as others see them.

b. A Christian is definitely a **changed person**, though by no means a sinless person. He is not yet what he ought to be, but he is no longer what he once was.

3. The Importance and Force of This Argumentation:

- a. This is one of the most important lines of evidence because it is **present immediately** to large numbers, including those not interested in Christianity. It can cross barriers of disinterest, religion and bias.
- b. It does not depend on the (technical) **training, intellect or cleverness** of the believer involved nor of the unbeliever, so it can cross serious intellectual and social barriers.
- c. Most religions in contact with Christianity feel **compelled to compete** in this area. The mass of Christian testimony here is staggering, and often not designed as evidence. The important form which this evidence takes is the actual changed lives, not books about such, since the latter may be dismissed as fiction.
- d. To **strengthen the force** of this argument, careful preaching and teaching is necessary:
 - (1) to help people distinguish true spirituality from cheap substitutes;
 - (2) to help Christians see their responsibility to live lives of true holiness;
 - (3) to encourage Christians with their real opportunities to serve the Lord in this most important area.

B. Redeemed Society

The changes which take place in societies, as a collective effect of a significant minority of converted people, are an evidence for Christianity.

1. Scriptural Warrant

Is there Biblical warrant to believe that the influences of redemption collectively in our world are evidence for the truth of Christianity?

Israel's history is evidence:

Deut 4:5-8: God's word, put into practice in Israel, is their wisdom in the sight of the nations all around.

Church history is evidence:

John 17:20-21; 1 Thess 1:5-9: Love, unity, transformed lives in Churches are evidence

2. Lines of Argumentation:

- a. The phenomena of OT and NT history are best explained as the Bible itself explains them, as interventions of God into history for our redemption (vs. liberal plot theories, occult explanations, extra-sensory perception, ufo's, etc.).
- b. The phenomena of history in general are consistent with Biblical principles, both ethical and redemptive.

(1) **Long-Term Impact of Christianity in West.** This is also well stated in Halley, *Bible Handbook* (1962), 909 (written much earlier than 1962):

*“Hinduism has made India what it is. Confucianism and Buddhism [and now Communism] have made China what it is. Mohammedanism has made SW Asia and N Africa what they are. Roman Catholicism has made Italy, Spain and Latin America. Protestantism has made Britain, United States and Canada. **These facts speak for themselves, and speak loudly.**”*

(2) **Influence of Apostasy.** With the rise of secularism in the US, this difference has begun to decay; see George F. Will, “Three Balls, Two Strikes,” *Newsweek* (5 Jan 87): 64.

“In the 1940s a survey listed the top seven discipline problems in public schools: talking, chewing gum, making noise, running in the halls, getting out of turn in line, wearing improper clothes, not putting paper in wastebaskets. A 1980s survey lists these top seven: drug

abuse, alcohol abuse, pregnancy, suicide, rape, robbery, assault...”

(3) **Change from Roman Empire before Christianity.** A similar argument is sketched in John W. Robbins, “The Coming of Christ,” *The Freeman* 42, no. 12 (Dec 92): 452-61. The Greco-Roman world before Christ was not a nice place:

(a) Religion:

superstition, fear, astrology, divination; to avoid disaster, get help

polytheism: trying to placate numerous gods, who did not set a good moral example

ignorance: no emphasis on understanding, learning, little religious liberty

(b) War and Peace:

almost continual warfare

gods of peace had little clout

(c) Economics, Slavery, Work:

slaves about 1/4-1/3 Roman population

some worked to death, e.g., in mines

many died in gladiatorial shows

slaves viewed as naturally inferior

labor (both manual and artisan) despised

state control of economy

(d) Life and Death:

abortion, exposure of infants, infanticide, suicide all legal

exposed infants raised by others as slaves or prostitutes

(e) Law and Government:

most offenses against private individuals considered civil matters; up to plaintiff to arrest, imprison, bring suit, carry out restitution

corruption was standard feature

extortion, bribery thru all levels of govt, including army

(4) **Influence on Mission Fields.** See also Ramsay, *Bearing of Recent Discovery*, 125-6 re/ relative life-changing nature of evangelicalism vs. Roman Catholicism:

“...the Catholic missionaries [in the Congo] made 100 converts while the Baptists made one; but the one was a real convert, a man of changed character, while the hundred remained savages as they were before.”

(5) **Contrast with Socialism.** See *Tenth* (Oct 81): 32-34, re/ relative life-changing nature of Xy and socialism (secular humanism).

(6) **Influence of Bible.** See Clarence W. Hall, "The Village That Lives by the Bible," *Reader's Digest* (Nov 60), 204-208, re/ contrast of biblical Xy with paganism.

(7) **Prosperity and Paganism.** See Luis Bush on "10/40 Window": the belt across Africa and Asia from 10-40 degrees N latitude:

- 97% of people in least evangelized countries in 10/40
- the major Muslim, Hindu & Buddhist countries in 10/40
- 82% of the poorest of the poor in 10/40
- 84% of the people w/ poorest quality of life in 10/40

Luis Bush, "Getting to the Core of the Core: The 10/40 Window" *Partners International*, 1470 N. 4th, San Jose, CA 95112.

c. The phenomena of the present seem to show a real (and disconcerting!) fit with Biblical predictions of the last days.

See Hal Lindsey, *Late, Great Planet Earth* and other works of this genre; also Newman PowerPoint talks "How Near is the End?" and "the Birth Pains of the Messiah."

3. Some Bibliography on Redeemed Society:

Thomas Cahill, *Desire of the Everlasting Hills: The World Before and After Jesus*. New York: Doubleday, 1999.

D. James Kennedy and Jerry Newcombe, *What if Jesus had never been born?* Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1994.

Alvin J. Schmidt, *Under the Influence: How Christianity Transformed Civilization*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001.

Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries*. HarperSanFrancisco, 1997.

4. A Sketch of Schmidt's *Under the Influence*:

Chapter 1: People Transformed by Jesus Christ

Starts with Jesus' disciples, then Stephen and Paul, then the early martyrs, some emperors, and some twentieth-century transformations.

Chapter 2: The Sanctification of Human Life

How early Christianity countered infanticide, abandonment of infants, abortion, gladiatorial shows, human sacrifice, suicide, and encouraged burial rather than cremation.

Chapter 3: Christianity Elevates Sexual Morality

Christianity rejects promiscuity, homosexuality, bestiality; its impact on sex and marriage.

Chapter 4: Women Receive Freedom and Dignity

The low status of Greek, Roman and Hebrew women; Christ accords women freedom and dignity; the apostolic church welcomed women; some anomalies; Christ's way prevails; a new family standard; bridal freedom; removal of the veil; polygyny nullified; widows honored, not burned alive; Chinese foot binding abolished; clitoridectomy banned.

Chapter 5: Charity and Compassion: Their Christian Connection

Christian charity vs. Greco-Roman giving; Compassion: a Christian innovation; charity and compassion for orphans and the aged; Christian charity via voluntary associations; American charity; Child labor laws; from Christian charity to state welfare.

Chapter 6: Hospitals and Health Care: Their Christian Roots

Jesus, healer of body & soul; the pagan void; hospitals (?) in antiquity; the first Christian hospitals; hospitals in the new world; mental institutions; medical nursing, a Christian innovation; the Red Cross.

Chapter 7: Christianity's Imprint on Education

Early Christian education; education for both sexes; beyond class and ethnicity: universal education; tax-supported public schools; compulsory education; graded education; the Kindergarten concept; education for the deaf and blind; Sunday schools; the Christian origin of universities; the origin of colleges and universities in America.

Chapter 8: Labor and Economic Freedom Dignified

Labor honored and dignified; the dignity of work reinforced; work as a calling; the laborer is worthy of his wages; dignity of labor produces a middle class; the protestant (Christian) work ethic; property rights and individual freedom; economic freedom dignified; its relation to capitalism; the profit motive is honorable; economic freedom, the Gospel, and 1492; socialism fails in Jamestown and Plymouth; Christianity's concept of time.

Chapter 9: Science: Its Christian Connections

Christian presuppositions underlying science; Christians: the pioneers of science: Occam's razor; human physiology & biology; astronomy; physics; chemistry; medicine.

Chapter 10: Liberty and Justice for All

No one is above the law; natural law and natural rights; the American declaration of independence; the Constitution of the United States; freedom and rights of the individual; freedom of religion; equality of individuals; separation of church and state.

Chapter 11: Slavery Abolished: A Christian Achievement

Early Christian opposition to slavery; some erring Christians condoned slavery; the British revival of slavery and its abolition; slavery and its abolition in America; Christianity sustained the slaves; the first antislavery proclamation; American civil rights and the Christian connection.

Chapter 12: Christianity's Stamp on Art and Architecture

Early Christian art; Christian art in the Middle Ages; Gothic church architecture; Byzantine church art and architecture; Renaissance artists and their art; from the sublime to the irrational; the decline of modern church architecture.

Chapter 13: The Sound of Music: Its Christian Resonance

Music in the early church; musical innovations in the Middle Ages; Reformation and post-reformation music; some great hymns and songs; the church as patron and promoter of music; modern music's revolutionary notes.

Chapter 14: Hallmarks of Literature: Their Christian Imprint

Literature in the early church; some literary hallmarks: early Middle Ages to 2000.

Chapter 15: Additional Influence: Holidays, Words, Symbols and Expressions

Holidays; common words and symbols; verbal expressions and sayings; Christian names.