

Lesson 1: The Importance and Nature of Evidence

I. Evidence versus proof

- A) Evidence (Random House Dictionary): *noun* 1. Ground for belief; that which tends to prove or disprove; proof. 2. Something that makes evident; an indication or a sign.
- B) Proof (Random House Dictionary): *noun* 1. Evidence sufficient to establish a thing as true or believable.
- C) Proof is *synonymous* with evidence. It is false to assume that our faith in God or in the Bible is not based upon evidence—a common argument from the world. The evidence in the Bible and in nature is proof of God's existence—IF that evidence is conclusive. We'll show that it is indeed conclusive.

II. Who or what is an apologetic?

- A) Apologetics (Random House Dictionary): *noun* 1. The branch of theology concerned with the defense or proof of Christianity
- B) Apologia (Random House Dictionary): *noun, literature* 1. a work written as an explanation or justification of one's convictions, motives, or acts. Direct transliteration of the Greek word *apologia*. Also means a verbal defense.
- C) In short, apologetics is a technical term for the study of evidence. In your personal search for the truth, you have studied biblical evidence and found that the preponderance of evidence proves that God exists, that Christ exists and that the plan of salvation is the only road to walk. By definition, we all are apologetics.
 - 1. 1 Peter 3:15 uses the word *apologia* where we are told that we are to always be ready to give a defense (answer, *apologia*) for the reason of the hope within us.
 - 2. Philippians 1:16-17 also uses it where Paul said he was set for the defense of the gospel.
 - 3. Jude 3 tells us we must contend earnestly for the faith.
- D) People will pervert, mock, abuse and denigrate those who have the faith we share. We must be ready to contend and apologetics is a method to learn *how* to contend earnestly.
- E) This class is necessarily introductory
 - 1. There is an overwhelming amount of evidence (proof) so we cannot hope to study it all. We'll hit some of the highlights and go in depth some places, but the real hope is that it will whet your appetite for in-depth personal study.

III. The study of evidence does not imply a lack of faith. God does not fear man's wondering. Rather, He has given us sufficient proof (evidence) to believe that He Is and that His Word is true. Whether we believe is up to us.

- A) Blind faith—that is, belief in something without knowing why one believes it—is clearly a bad thing.
- B) Biblical faith is not blind—if it were, why would God provide the evidence he has? God provides evidence (proof) so that we avoid that dangerous trap.
- C) We will become familiar with common attacks against the faith and will learn how to defend against them. We will be better able to offer that defense Peter commands.

IV. Christ also recognized the importance of proof

- A) He told John the Baptist's disciples to go and tell John what they saw and heard—in other words, evidence—when they were sent to inquire whether Christ was the One for whom they looked.
- B) Christ consistently pointed to the evidence He had shown throughout His ministry—see

John 10:31-38, for example.

C) Of course, Hebrews 2:1-4 and Mark 16:20 state that the miracles and signs enabled by the Holy Spirit were meant, in part, to confirm the words being spoken/taught.

V. There are generally two kinds of evidence: scientific and historical (or legal). There are key differences between these types.

A) Scientific evidence: this is evidence that can be independently tested and observed, whether in a laboratory or in a natural setting.

1. Science can be defined as systematized knowledge derived from observation and experiment carried out in order to determine the principles underlying what is being studied.

2. The “scientific method” connotes a carefully-run experiment where the scientist “fiddles” with one or more “knobs” to see how the thing being studied responds to different stimuli. It begins with a hypothesis and the experimentation is meant to support or refute that hypothesis.

3. The main point is that science deals in the natural realm, and more specifically, with what can be observed or tested. That's often why psychology, psychiatry, and the like are called “soft sciences”—they deal with the natural realm, but *direct* observation of most or all responses cannot be observed or measured directly. These sciences must necessarily infer things based upon indirect observation (How do you “measure” how you “feel” about something?)

4. Science has at least five limitations in the study of Biblical evidence:

a) It is limited to what can be observed with the five senses.

b) It is limited to the present—science cannot test the validity of past events.

c) It is limited to *how* something works (i.e., cause and effect) but it cannot tell us *why* (what *is* the purpose of the appendix, anyway?)

d) It is limited to amoral (non-moral) questions. It is incapable of making value judgments, something more atheist scientists should remember.

e) It is limited to those natural things that are dependable and repeatable at will. Thus, it cannot deal with such things as miracles—or an unobserved, one-time “primordial soup” from which all life is purported to have sprung, something else more atheist scientists should remember.

5. We cannot scientifically “prove” the Bible—nor should we try. The facts of science are in harmony with the Bible, but we cannot run an experiment to show that God parted the Red Sea to allow Israel to cross on dry land, nor can we observe multiple, independent tests of miracles at will.

B) Historical and legal evidence: this kind of proof is used in courts of law and is just as powerful as scientific evidence. If an accused killer's DNA is found on a weapon, but the accused was in jail at the time of the murder, what is the outcome? Though scientists may not like to admit it, we often give equal weight to historical/legal evidence as we do scientific evidence.

1. Historical evidence involves such things as eyewitnesses, written documents and records, and archaeological finds. In-depth research and investigation is needed before a conclusion can be drawn.

2. Its importance cannot be understated—Jesus was an historical figure. If one cannot trust historical truths, one cannot trust the Bible. Thus, we must believe that the Bible as history is truthful.

a) “Christianity is a historical religion and a Christianity wholly unrelated to historical occurrences is just no Christianity at all. Christianity, then, stands or falls with the

historical facts which, we do not say merely accompanied its advent into the world, but have given it its specific form as a religion. These historical facts constitute its substance and to be indifferent to them is to be indifferent to the substance of Christianity.”

3. Of significant importance is the testimony of eyewitnesses. An eyewitness is one who has seen something first hand—an extremely powerful form of proof. Of course, the scriptures are confirmed by eyewitnesses:
 - a) Luke 1:1-4.
 - b) Acts 1:3
 - c) John 21:24
 - d) 1 John 1:1
 - e) 2 Peter 1:16
4. The truthfulness of the claims of the Jesus, the miracles, and all other biblical events can be historically researched and verified—none should be ruled out without examination. They must be examined as historical events that can only be verified through historical investigation.

Lesson 2: Faith's Relationship with Evidence

- I. As stated in the first class, there is an inexorable relationship between faith and evidence.
 - A) Faith is not opposed by reason and fact—it is based up them and, in a sense, amplifies them
 - B) In fact, Christians and Unbelievers alike—though especially unbelievers—misunderstand this
 1. Quote from John Gribbin in the book *In Search of the Double Helix: Quantum Physics and Life*:
 - a) “Ask devout Christians whether they believe that Christ died and rose again, and they will say that of course they do. Ask them for evidence, and they will be baffled by the question. It is not a matter of evidence, but of belief; asking for evidence indicates doubt and with doubt there is no faith.”
 - C) Of course, the implication is that all faith is blind and that there is no real evidence that Christ died and rose again.
- II. Now, to be fair, the basic idea of faith is trust. When we believe in God and are willing to show that we trust Him by keeping His commandments the we have shown our faith.
 - A) But, we often misuse the word believe—which is closely related to faith—when we say things like “I believe that Fourth Avenue is four blocks down from here.” What we really mean by that statement is that we're unsure. This is not the kind of belief or faith that a Christian ought to have.
 - B) Christian faith—biblical faith—really means that we would be astounded if we were wrong—we're banking our entire eternity on it!
 - C) Biblical faith has three important traits:
 1. There must be an understanding of what we claim to believe. According to Acts 17:22-31, I must have some understanding of who God is in order to have faith in Him.
 2. We must be ready to act according to our belief. We cannot convince someone we have that strong a conviction without acting accordingly. Faith and obedience are often tied together in Scripture (Rom 10:16, Heb 3:7-4:11).
 3. And, we must have some reason for that belief. There is no doubt that many in the religious world have the kind of faith that our physicist friend highlighted in his book. To give the reason “Just because” when someone asks us why we believe what we believe, then we are clearly not ready to “give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15).
 - D) In short, true faith—biblical faith—is achieved when we know *what* we believe, *why* we believe it, and are ready to *act* on our convictions.
- III. Faith and its importance as defined in the Bible
 - A) “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1)
 - B) “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and the He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” (Hebrews 11:16)
 - C) We must believe that “God Is” and there is ample evidence—proof—to that end:
 1. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.” (Psalms 19:1). These are not just glorifying words. Evidence/proof from nature is such that those who do not believe are “without excuse” according to Romans 1:18-22. In other words, our faith that God Is is based upon evidence—proof—that God Himself supplied!

2. We believe that God will reward those who diligently seek Him because the Bible itself is a testimony to the faithfulness of God. Hebrews 6:13-20 highlights how God gave and kept His promise to Abraham. Critics will question the infallibility of the Bible—we'll cover that in a later lesson.

IV. Faith and its relationship to proof (John 20:24-31)

- A) The basis for believing because of direct evidence, John 20:24-29: “Doubting Thomas” refused to believe the eyewitness testimony he had heard concerning Christ's resurrection—even testimony from Jesus' closest disciples. After Thomas touched Jesus' nail-scarred hands and spear-damaged side, he believed. Jesus allowed him to deepen his faith with direct physical evidence.
- B) The basis for believing with indirect evidence is found in John 20:30-31:
 1. Immediately following his discussion with Thomas, Christ proceeded to state that belief can come without seeing. “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” We are expected to believe without seeing. We have not touched His hands or His side, we have not seen God, and yet we believe. We have written eyewitness testimony and we believe.
- C) It is significant that these verses immediately follow the recounting of Thomas' encounter with the resurrected Christ. We are expected to believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God based mostly upon the evidence He presented while on Earth.
- D) Jesus is an historical figure. We now can only study indirect evidence. How do we know George Washington was the first President? How do we know that Abraham Lincoln lived? How do we know Aristotle was a real person? They are all historical figures and history records them having lived—those historical records are based, in part, upon eyewitness testimony that they lived and we also have things they themselves have written. Just because Christ claims to be the Son of God, doesn't make Him any less of an historical figure. The Bible contains eyewitness accounts of His having lived on this Earth. There are also uninspired historical works who describe a man named Jesus from Nazareth who was condemned on a Roman cross. For example, this is in Book 18, Chapter 3 in “The Antiquities of the Jews” by Flavius Josephus
 1. “Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works—a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.”
- E) This is exactly the point in 2 Corinthians 5:7 where it says we walk by faith and not by sight. We do not need to have seen Christ to believe—we can believe based upon the testimony of others and the testimony of nature.

V. Faith does not, however, require a complete and perfect understanding of everything of deity. We cannot know, for example, everything there is to know of God—we can only know what He has told us.

- A) 1 Timothy 6:16 says that God dwells “in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see,”
- B) Isaiah 55:8-9 tells us that God's ways and thoughts are higher than man's.
- C) There are simply some things beyond our ability to comprehend about God, yet He expects

us to put our trust in Him anyway!

VI. Faith also does not require us to understand why God has done things the way He has.

A) When Abraham obeyed God by faith, he didn't know where he was going (Heb 11:8).

B) Faith should be easy! We don't understand everything there is to know about the engine in our car, but we put faith in that engine every time we turn on the key—we believe that it will work, based upon our past experience with it. And, from time to time, we have probably all experienced our engine failing us. If we can put faith of sorts into an ordinary, imperfect thing that fails, how much easier should it be to put our true faith into the One that will never fail?

VII. Consequences of faith:

A) Our faith in God gives us reason to live, to love one another, to give, to grow in knowledge of the scriptures and to have hope. Ephesians 2:12 describe those without faith as “having no hope and without God in the world.”

B) Acts 8:35-38. True faith makes us act—as we have heard many times, our faith should cause us to obey. That obedience enables salvation. So, understanding evidences, through increasing our faith, will help us “gird ourselves” to work out our salvation!

Lesson 3: God Is—Evidence from the Cosmos

- I. The question of whether there is a God is a fundamental, universally human question that has significant consequences, both for this life and the one to come (that is, if you believe there is a life to come)
 - A) During the next two lessons, we're going to study, in part, some very powerful pieces of evidence for the existence of God.
 - B) Today, we'll introduce the "Cause and Effect" argument
 - C) Next time, we'll contrast Random Events with Intelligent Design
- II. Note that, in accordance with what we learned in the first two classes is that, while some of the evidence we'll consider today considers scientific facts, mathematical arguments, and natural objects, we are not scientifically proving the existence of God. "Science" is a manmade creation and the created cannot be greater than the Creator, but we can use what I'll call scientific reasoning to raise questions about science that have significant theological ramifications.
 - A) This is not to say that we are simply talking human philosophy. Rather, the questions that we'll raise have answers that belong in a realm that is different than the scientific realm. Call it theology, call it philosophy or call it truth, the name doesn't matter. As long as we understand that we are not scientifically proving the existence or non-existence of God
 - B) There are many real things that we believe—without doubt—exist. Can you measure the love you have for your children or your spouse? Can you reproduce its effects in the laboratory? Does that make it any less real?
- III. The Cosmological Argument (AKA the Cause and Effect Argument)
 - A) The argument is relatively simple: We humans exist. Our universe exists. There must be some reason that we exist.
 - B) In short, what Christians call creation is the effect. This argument raises the question what *caused* that effect?
 - C) What are the possible causes?
 1. The universe itself is eternal
 2. The universe spontaneously created itself
 3. The universe was created by something or someone
 - D) Is the universe eternal?
 1. For something to exist eternally, two conditions are necessary. First, it must have always existed in the time before now. Second, it must always exist in the time after now. We have a natural law—the second law of thermodynamics—that states this cannot be the case.
 2. What is thermodynamics? Simply put, it is the study of the laws that govern the conversion of energy from one form to another. For example, the two most familiar forms of energy are potential energy and kinetic energy. An egg sitting on top of your counter has a small amount of potential energy because it is slightly farther away from the center of the earth than if it were on the floor. If you knock the egg off the counter, gravity causes it to accelerate—until it smashes on the floor. While the egg is falling, it has kinetic energy—kinetic meaning it is produced by motion.
 3. Now, the 2nd law states that, in any isolated system (such as our universe), the state of disorder (the technical term is entropy) must increase with time. This is a direct result of the fact there are many more states of disorder than there are states of order. Hawking in his book *A Brief History of Time* uses an illustration of shaking up a completed jigsaw puzzle in a box. Each time you shake it, the pieces become more and more randomly

displaced—it no longer makes the picture represented by the single ordered state. Our universe is becoming more and more disordered. Shiny new metals rust or tarnish. Ice melts into water which evaporates into vapor. The disorder, or entropy, in those two systems has increased during those processes.

4. But, it's not just about disorder. Related to entropy is a so-called “arrow of time,” which demands that time “proceed” in a certain direction—the arrow of time points in the direction in which things tend to become more disordered. If this were not the case, we could, for example, remember the future. Because time *must* go in the direction it is going and because the universe itself is becoming more disordered, the implication is that the universe must have both a beginning (when perfect order ruled) and an end (when “perfect” disorder must rule). Of course, having a beginning and an end is, by definition, finite rather than eternal.

E) Did the universe spontaneously create itself?

1. We can look to the medical profession and to microbiology for the answer to this question. Even as late as the middle 1800's, most medical doctors believed that disease-causing organisms could spontaneously generate. Louis Pasteur showed in his experiments that microorganisms were present *in the air* but were not *created* by the air.
2. This and other experiments by other well-known scientists led to the germ theory of disease, which is touted as the single most important contribution to the practice of modern medicine. This, in turn, led to the field of microbiology, a field in which we'll find our answer.
3. Cell theory simply states that all organisms are composed entirely of similar units of organization called cells. Until the mid-1800's, cell theory said that cells spontaneously generated. The idea that all cells arise from pre-existing cells was formalized in an 1858 book, and this fact, combined with the experiments by Pasteur and others obliterated the notion of spontaneous generation.
4. We now know that there is no known natural process—chemical, physical or otherwise—through which matter can spontaneously generate itself. As T.D. Moyer states, it is axiomatic that from nothing, nothing comes.

F) Therefore, the universe must have been created by some thing or some being. Essentially, some “uncaused cause” effected the beginning/creation of the universe.

1. Theoretical physicists and cosmologists believe that the universe was created in a Big Bang. The big bang simply states that, at the beginning of time, the entire universe was contained in an infinitesimally small point—a so-called “singularity”. The universe experienced rapid expansion and is continuing to expand today. Much of the field of cosmology is geared toward measuring how quickly the universe is expanding today and many theoretical physicists are consumed with trying to ascertain whether the universe will continue to expand, whether it will slow down and begin to contract, and the like.
2. It's all a somewhat amusing pursuit, that is if you're a nerd like I am, but there is one question that, for all the bluster and hot air these guys are producing, they cannot answer. And that is, what happened right before the Big Bang? That is, how did a singularity suddenly come into being a decide to explode?
3. Of course, we know the reason they cannot answer it is because the act of creation—the act of God speaking the universe into existence—was a supernatural event that cannot be explained by man's description of science and nature. Physicists have a more “techno-speak” sounding reason.
4. Do you recall from our discussion of whether the universe is eternal the so-called “arrow of time?” The direction in which time must proceed (that is, from the past to the future) is inextricably linked to the direction in which disorder increases. The instant of the Big

Bang was, in physicists terms, a time of very high order—a time when the puzzle was arranged into its picture—thus, before that time, it would, of course, follow that the universe could not be more ordered than at that instant. Therefore, the time before the Big Bang becomes, by definition, undefined. They cannot see past that event because time has no meaning—in our terms, the “period” before the universe was created was part of eternity. Thus, physicists are forced to assume that this Big Bang singularity just existed. Even before becoming a Christian, that always smacked to me of spontaneous generation, doesn't it to you? How did that “singularity” get there in the first place? God says He made it. I believe Him.

5. Background radiation and Creation—in 1965, two American physicists working at Bell Telephone Laboratories were testing a very sensitive microwave detector. They became concerned because the sensor was picking up more microwave noise than it ought to. After some troubleshooting, they concluded nothing wrong with the sensor and began to look for other explanations. The puzzle became more interesting when they discovered that the noise was the same in every direction, day or night, every day of the year. The noise didn't vary by more than 1 part in 10,000. Because of this, they concluded (and physicists now also conclude) that the radiation was coming from outside our solar system, and even outside the Milky Way. In fact, they say, it is coming from a remarkable uniform universe—a universe that looks the same, regardless of the direction you are looking (and, presumably, from whatever corner of the universe you happen to be in).
 - a) Now, the Big Bang theory holds that at the moment of the Big Bang, the universe was very, very hot—so hot that it glowed visible light. And, if that were true, that light should still be visible today, though changed in frequency due to the velocity at which the universe is expanding (Doppler shift, exactly the same physics the police use to “shoot radar” and catch speeding cars).
 - b) Physicists have since shown that the microwave noise first detected in 1965 is indeed that “left over” light from the moment of the creation of the universe. This is very powerful evidence in favor of a moment of creation, which most do not like, because it substantiates claims that the universe is not eternal.
 - c) However, the story does not stop there, and the implications are equally profound. For this background radiation to be as uniform as we measure it to be today, mathematics shows two things. First, the initial temperature of the universe at the moment of the big bang had to be exactly the same everywhere. Second, the universe has also to be expanding at a certain—and exact—critical rate, which calculations show that it is.
 - d) Let's let Stephen Hawking comment on that subject: “This means that the initial state of the universe must have been very carefully chosen indeed if the hot big bang model was correct back to the beginning of time. It would be very difficult to explain why the universe should have begun in just that way, except as the act of a God who intended to create beings like us.”

Lesson 4: God Is—Evidence against Darwin

I. What is the Theory of Evolution?

- A) It says that all life has a common origin and that enough time has passed for natural evolutionary change (that is, innumerable small changes over a large period of time) to explain the staggering array of different life forms on the earth. This is, by definition, macroevolution because we're considering changes that lead to separate species, not just variation within a species.
1. "According to neo-Darwinian theory, the process that accounts for the evolution of all life is that of random mutations shaped by natural selection. The theory says that evolution is built up by a long series of many steps. In each step many random changes occur in the hereditary storage of organisms. If one of these random changes should by chance happen to make the organism better adapted to its environment, then natural selection will spread that change through the population. Each of these changes is said to be small, but the accumulation of a long series of them is said to account for large changes in populations adapting them to their environment. This process is assumed to work, and on the basis of that assumption evolution is said to account for the development of all life. Experiments have also been performed to show that the process of selection does indeed work under the right conditions. Moreover, random mutations have been observed that do improve the adaptiveness of the organism under certain conditions. From these observations, evolutionists have extrapolated to say that random mutations and natural selection can account for the development of life."
- B) The theory maintains two tenets as its foundation. First, there must have been just exactly the right conditions for the spontaneous generation of life from ordinary, nonliving matter. Evolutionary biologists will try to impress us by using the term abiogenesis, but we call it spontaneous generation. The second tenet is that there had to be a transition from simple organisms to complex organisms. Again, they'll expert you to death and call it transmutation, but what it really means is that two things occur to every living organism. First, natural selection essentially makes the creme rise to the top. Cavemen and cavewomen with lots and lots of body hair were better equipped to survive harsh winters, thus they remained around long enough to reproduce. Evolutionary biologists would say, then, that those cave children would likely exhibit similar characteristics as the parents, thus the cycle would continue. Second, random changes to the DNA in life forms occasionally occur. In other words, you might wind up with a yellow rose on a red rose bush because that flower's DNA underwent a random mutation that altered what color it exhibited.
- C) Of course, we've already let other scientists show what spontaneous generation is—it's a fanatsy that goes against ALL natural law. But, there are some theories that attempt to explain it. Most of them either involve alien life forms or they involve a "primordial soup" a very, very long time ago that contained all the right conditions for that to occur. In other words, both time and chance appear to favor Darwinism. But, do they? Let's let two committed Darwinists, and who are world-renowned experts in the field, speak for themselves:
1. Harold Klein, once the chairman of the National Academy of Sciences, said this after reviewing origin of life research: "The simplest bacterium is so complicated from the point of view of the chemist that it is almost impossible to imagine how it happened."
 2. Francis Crick, the scientist who discovered the double-helix form of DNA said "The origin of life appears to be almost a miracle, so many are the conditions which would have had to be satisfied to get it going."

3. Now, let's examine some of the chemistry experiments that, on the surface, appear to make the primordial soup theory at least plausible.
 - a) Stanley Miller, after giving some thought to the fact that hydrogen is the most abundant element in the universe, and also considering that oxygen, nitrogen and carbon are relatively abundant on earth now, tried to come up with chemicals that were likely abundant on the ancient, lifeless earth. When hydrogen reacts with those other three elements, it forms methane, ammonia, and water. So, Miller then decided to see what chemicals—specifically, what precursor materials for lifeforms—could be produced in a simulated atmosphere using methane, ammonia, water vapor and hydrogen. This simulated atmosphere would be unreactive, so he knew that, in order to start pumping out interesting chemicals, he would have to supply some energy into the system. So, what energy source would have been available on an ancient earth? How about lightning? That's what Miller thought, too, so he put together a lightning simulation apparatus and began pumping energy into the gaseous mix. After a week of doing this, the pool of water had become reddish brown and, after a chemical analysis, Miller announced that the mixture contained several types of amino acids, which are proteins used by nearly every lifeform. It appeared as though electricity passing through inanimate matter could perhaps produce life.
 - b) Other experimenters rushed to build on Miller's work, where they altered the makeup of the simulated atmosphere, used UV radiation or strong pressure pulses instead of electricity, and more sophisticated chemical analyses were developed that could detect other proteins in the soup that were previously undetectable. This sustained effort by a number of researchers eventually paid off—almost all of the twenty naturally occurring amino acids were produced in such a manner.
 - c) Other successes occurred, too, in generating substances like adenine, which is a component of one of the building blocks of nucleic acid and the sugar ribose, which forms part of RNA.
 - d) So, why would a researcher, Klaus Doolittle, conclude the following, in light of this research? “More than 30 years of experimentation on the origin of life in the fields of chemical and molecular evolution have led to a better perception of the immensity of the problem of the origin of life on Earth, rather than to its solution. At present, all discussions on principal theories and experiments in the field either end in stalemate or in a confession of ignorance.”
 - e) It's primarily because these chemical experiments gloss over a plethora of problems that can only be appreciated when you consider how these building blocks that are admittedly benign generated in a lab really form a life.
 - f) Making the molecules of life is rather easy—any competent chemist can buy some chemicals, weigh them in the right proportion, dissolve them in a solvent, heat them in a flask and purify the desired chemical away from unwanted chemicals generated from side reactions. Not only can amino acids and nucleotides—the building blocks—be made, but so can the buildings themselves: proteins and nucleic acids. This process has been automated and machines that mix and react chemicals to produce them can be had commercially. A careful undergraduate can produce a long piece of DNA in a day or two.
 - g) But, there were no chemists four billion years ago. No chemical supply houses, distillation flasks, nor any of the other modern devices chemists must use to produce adequate results. A convincing origin of life scenario requires that no intelligent direction be used in the construction of those buildings. Thus far, no such scenario

has been put forth.

- D) In other words, time and chance do not, in reality, solve the dilemma posed by trying to get around natural law. A simple thought experiment can help us get our minds around this. Suppose you have ten poker chips, on which the numbers 1 through 10 are written. Put those chips in a bag and draw them out one at a time. The probability of drawing those ten chips out in the correct numerical sequence 1-2-3, etc., is about 1 in 10 billion. The probability that just the right conditions to occur for abiogenesis is hundreds of orders of magnitude smaller than that. That is, for all practical purposes, it is impossible for it to occur. Atheists will argue that the probability is yes, very small, but not zero. Given enough time, almost anything can happen. How I counter this is to assert that, if it is reasonable to believe the Darwinist view of the origin of life with a mathematical probability that is infinitesimal, then it must also be reasonable that all three of the largest pyramids in Egypt were constructed, one sand particle at a time, by nothing but the wind and the rain (in a desert!).
- E) Transmutation is the other keystone to this puzzle—that is, there is a transition in life from the simple to the complex. This transition is most easily recognized by the words “survival of the fittest.” The fittest members of a species survive and have offspring (natural selection) and some member of species are often much better adapted through a chance happening in their DNA. Some portion of this fittest member's genes have mutated.
- F) Natural selection has been shown time and again that it does work, at least within a species. The Finches that bear Darwin's name and that acted as triggers to spark the thought of evolution in his mind are but one example. These finches live all over the Galapagos Islands, living off the food that is available to them. Some live in trees, some live on the ground, others in and around cactii—and they all vary in size to some extent. The interesting thing is that the beaks of these finches change drastically, depending upon where they primarily live and what their diet consists of. The some 13 different species are difficult to tell apart, as cross breeding does occur and the fact that size and coloration of birds that are this closely related is not very granular. A large-sized medium ground finch will be hard to distinguish from a small-sized large ground finch, for example. The assertion is that all 13 species have a common ancestor and that natural selection has caused the differentiation. This is, by definition, microevolution, and it is something we can witness today. I don't have a problem with natural selection within a species.
- G) The kink in the microevolution chain—at least with how it relates to macroevolution—is that I do not believe that all variations within a species (finches, for example) are a result of mutations—that is, random alterations of genetic material. To say that ignores the biological realities of chromosomal dominance and recession. You may recall from your biology class when you studied genetic reproduction and inheritance that, because each parent of an offspring donates some genetic material to the offspring, combinations of both parents' traits often show up. For example, people have remarked that Jason looks a lot like me, but Ryan looks a lot like Deborah. That is a result of genetic dominance—in Jason's case, the genes that control how he looks are dominated by my genes, and Ryan's genes are dominated by Deborah's genes.
- H) So, then let's examine mutation itself—what is mutation:
1. “In the process of [copying] DNA...the two halves of DNA separate and new halves are made. Because [the two halves must match in specific ways] the...information [from the offspring's parents] is copied exactly. Despite this, *rarely*, a mistake occurs...This changes the sequence of amino acids in a protein. This is mutation, the raw material of evolution.”
- I) What happens when a mutation occurs?

1. “The consequences of mutation are varied. Due to the redundancy built into genetic code many mutations have no effect upon DNA functions. Genes describe how to make proteins. As a result of mutation a protein may not be produced, may be produced but act abnormally, or remain fully functional. Only a few mutations improve the organism's performance and are therefore favored by natural selection.”
 2. “It is nature's intention that the exact genetic information from both parents will be seen in the offspring's DNA in the critical stages of fertilisation. However, it is possible for this genetic information to mutate, which in most cases, can result in fatal or negative consequences in the outcome of the new organism.”
 3. Tay-Sachs disease, a fatal genetic disorder usually in infants that is a progressive destruction of the central nervous system, is an example of an offspring inheriting two mutated genes—one from each parent. There are literally hundreds of genetic diseases, many of which preclude, one way or the other, reproduction. How could mutation, in general, be beneficial for microevolution, much less macroevolution?
- J) These facts highlight the subtlety that is absolutely crucial for Darwin's theory to hold true. Namely, for macroevolution to work, the random mutations must not only make the lifeform better adapted to its environment—that is, some trait of that lifeform must both function and function better than other examples in the population. This is a primary key to understanding the Intelligent Design theory.

Lesson 5: God Is—Evidence for Design

I. The Intelligent Design argument

A) Is Intelligent Design science? Of course, there have been several recent court cases involving ID, with all of them resulting in keeping ID out of the classroom. I can see both sides of the argument, as we've talked about in previous classes. There does indeed come a point in the ID argument that insists that there must be a Creator—which, by definition, is theology, not science.

1. However, this is not to say that ID is unscientific, because it does raise definitive scientific spectres that will ultimately defeat Darwin.

2. Also, just because the courts say that it shouldn't be taught in classrooms does not keep us from teaching it to our own children ourselves, whether at home, in bible classes and in sermons. I hope that this lesson will give you the tools you need to be able to teach it to your children or to other adults who may not be aware of what it is.

B) Intelligent Design says that life is so complex and so intricate that it must have been created by a Designer.

C) The arguments for Intelligent Design are not new, but the evidence—the proof—is. Michael Behe, a Biochemist at Lehigh University wrote about “irreducible complexity” and offered several examples of it.

D) Dr. Behe explains it thus:

1. “By *irreducibly complex* I mean a single system composed of several well-matched, interacting parts that contribute to the basic function, wherein the removal of any one of the parts causes the system to effectively cease functioning. An irreducibly complex system cannot be produced directly (that is, by continuously improving the initial function, which continues to work by the same mechanism) by slight, successive modifications of a precursor system, because any precursor to an irreducibly complex system that is missing a part is by definition nonfunctional. An irreducibly complex biological system, if there is such a thing, would be a powerful challenge to Darwinian evolution. Since natural selection can only choose systems that are already working, then if a biological system cannot be produced gradually it would have to arise as an integrated unit, in one fell swoop, for natural selection to have any thing to act on.”

E) Others have also recognized it

1. "Genes and enzymes(proteins) are linked together in a living cell - two interlocked systems, each supporting the other. It is difficult to see how either could manage alone. Yet if we are to avoid invoking either a Creator or a very large improbability, we must accept that one occurred before the other in the origin of life. But which one was it? We are left with the ancient riddle: Which came first, the chicken or the egg?" **Robert Shapiro, Origins, 1986, p135**

2. "DNA cannot do its work, including forming more DNA, without the help of catalytic proteins, or enzymes. In short, proteins cannot form without DNA, but neither can DNA form without proteins." **Horgan, John, "In the Beginning," Scientific American, vol. 264 (February 1991), pp. 117-125.**

F) Darwin himself recognized it, even if he didn't name it:

1. "...if it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down."

II. A mouse trap as an irreducibly complex entity—it has five parts, all of which are required to function properly. It has (1)a wooden platform that acts as a base; (2)a metal, u-shaped hammer

that actually traps the mouse; (3) a spring that provides the power to the hammer as it unloads; (4) a sensitive catch that triggers the hammer when pressure is applied; and (5) a holding bar that holds the hammer back until the catch is released. Now, the question of whether something is irreducibly complex is simple: can any part of the mouse trap be missing and the mousetrap still work? Clearly, the answer is no.

A) Now, a second concept to understand is the concept of physical precursor. For example, I could use a BB gun to kill a mouse, or I could trap one alive in a cage and then release it into the wild. Both of those methods would do the job of getting that mouse, one way or the other, out of my house. They are conceptual precursors of the mouse trap, but the key distinction to make is that neither of them are physical precursors to the simple mouse trap like we described. In order for them to be physical precursors, in the biological sense, would mean that nature could transform a BB gun, step by Darwinian-step into a mouse trap, which, of course, cannot be done.

B) A third concept that distinguishes irreducibly complex things is the idea of minimal function. Returning to the mousetrap example, how well would the mousetrap work if the usually wooden base were made from a few sheets of paper? What would happen if the catch didn't release unless it took the weight of a really fat cat to trigger it? What if the usually metal hammer was made of sewing thread? Obviously, in all these cases, the mousetrap would not function—that is, you would still have something that resembled a mouse trap, but it wouldn't actually kill a mouse. It simply would not have the necessary functionality. Minimal function simply means that whatever system is under consideration must accomplish its intended task under physically realistic circumstances.

III. Our challenge? A single, simple(!) example. The answer: cellular cilium

A) Some cells swim using a cilium, which is a simple structure that resembles a hair and beats like a whip. Do you remember the beginning of the movie *Look Who's Talking?* Those digital sperm were using cilia to move—real life ones, do, too. If a cell is in a liquid, it uses its cilia to move itself around in the liquid like a boat. If a bunch of cells with cilia are lined up against each other, the beating cilia move liquid over the sheet of cells—that's exactly how the cells that line our respiratory tract work. The coordinated beating action of hundreds of cilia removes foreign particles—dust, pollen, whatever—that were accidentally inhaled.

B) The electron microscope was a necessary invention for biologists to understand the parts that make up a cilium. I won't attempt to explain all of it in detail, I'll just try to cut to the bare minimum. You can see in the figure two pictures. The one on top is a cross section of a cilium—think of that as looking at the end of a hair that has been cut. The two circles in the middle is what we want to concentrate on the most. Those two protofilaments are shown from the side in the bottom half of the figure. We'll return to the figure in a moment.

1. A basic strategy of biochemistry is to take apart molecular systems and try to put them back together. During the process of reassembly, you stop at several intermediate points to find out which components are critical for proper function and, more basically, to find out whether functionality has been restored.
2. This procedure has been carried out with cilia and some interesting things have been found. It turns out that cilia can be separated from cells by vigorous shaking. After shaking, thousands of cilia-equipped cells, you can spin the concoction rapidly to cause the heavier cellular particles to separate from the lighter, now-separated cilia, so that you wind up with a test tube full of isolated cilia.
3. Now, you can strip the membrane off the cilia and supply the remaining portion of the cilia with a chemical form of energy called ATP. In doing so, a biochemist can cause the cilia to beat in the whiplike fashion they do when fully sheathed in their membrane

and attached to a cell. The implication is that the motor to power the cilia lies within the cilia itself. We applied the ATP to provide a “chemical” electric current to some, for now, unknown motor within the cilia and not within the separated cell (or the membrane that we stripped off, for that matter).

4. The next clue for how cilia works comes from when we chemically remove the Dynein arms. If the rest of the cilia is left intact, removal of the Dynein arms paralyzes the cilia. Then, adding fresh Dynein to the stiff cilia restores motive ability to them
 5. One final clue comes from removing the Nexin linkers. You can use a special enzyme to cut the linkers from the body of the cilia and then apply the ATP to see what happens. When we removed the Dynein, the cilia were paralyzed. In this instance, when the Nexin linkers are removed, the individual microtubules slide past one another much like you can extend a radio or TV antenna. In fact, the microtubules continue to slide until they are about ten times their original length.
 6. So, these clues have led to a model for how a cilia works—refer to the bottom of the figure now. Imagine several cans of tuna stacked one on top of the other, with a little arm connecting two adjacent stacks. That little motor arm can push down on the opposing stack. In this case, when the motor arm pushes down, the other previously slack connections at the top and bottom of the stacks go taut. As they tighten, the stack of tuna cans must bend. Then, the little motor arm stops pushing on the opposing stack and, because the connectors, or linkers, are flexible, both stacks rebound to their original position, where the process starts all over.
 7. Okay, so now that we have a model for how a cilium works, you have to ask yourself “which parts are needed for the cilium to work?” The microtubules are necessary, as they make up the sliding strands. The motor—the Dynein arm—is necessary, otherwise the cilia are stiff and remain motionless. It also requires the linkers to tug on neighboring strands to convert linear motion into bending motion. In short, all of the parts are required for proper cilium function.
 8. Thus, as we did with the moustrap, you conclude that the cilium is irreducibly complex. So, the next question is, how did the cilium arise? Is there a physical precursor to the cilium that could have been transformed through Darwinian evolution? The short answer is, no. There are no known physical precursors to the cilium and, though evolutionary biologists have tried to explain possibilities for their arrival, none are satisfactory. This is true because even if, for example, you had some chemical stew in which you had a bunch of microtubules, lots of Dynein and some Nexin thrown in for good measure, it is essentially impossible to derive a sequence in which both swimming might actually occur and where the intermediate steps were an improvement for the cell such that natural selection would favor the change.
 9. After completing a thorough literature search for journal articles describing the evolution of cilia, Behe had this to say: “The amount of scientific research that has been and is being done on the cilium—and the great increase over the past few decades in our understanding of how the cilium works—lead many people to assume that even if they themselves don’t know how the cilia evolved, *somebody* must know. But a search of the professional literature proves them wrong. Nobody knows.”
 10. In fact, even our simple model doesn’t tell the whole story. Analysis shows there are more than two hundred different kinds of proteins in a cilium, so its actual complexity is far greater than we have considered.
- C) There are many other examples from microbiology, according to Behe.
1. The bacterial flagellum
 2. The clotting of blood

3. Lysosomes, the garbage collecting mechanism within animal cells
 4. Several, if not most, portions of our immune systems (factory B cells, for example)
 5. Vision/eyesight
- D) The evidence is simply overwhelming in support of Intelligent Design

Lesson 6: Jesus Christ—Historical Evidence

I. Introduction

- A) There have been radical claims through the years that explicitly state Jesus never existed:
1. Philosopher Bertrand Russell in his essay “Why I am not a Christian” makes the following statement: “Historically it is quite doubtful whether Christ existed at all, and if He did, we do not know anything about him.”
 2. A Marxist political candidate made the following claim in her opening statements at a debate with Josh McDowell: “Historians today have fairly well dismissed Jesus as being historical.”
- B) These two “deep thinkers,” and others like them (there aren't many), couldn't be farther from the truth. Even the American Revolutionary Thomas Paine, who held Christianity in contempt, had this to say: “[Jesus Christ] was a virtuous and an amiable man. The morality that he preached and practiced was of the most benevolent kind...” Paine shrugs off Jesus' claim to deity as mythological, but he does not doubt that Jesus lived.
- C) In fact, there is so much extra-biblical evidence for Jesus having walked the earth that you would be hard pressed to find a competent historian that does not believe Jesus was real. F.F. Bruce, who is the Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis at the University of Manchester, had this to say: “Some writers may toy with the fancy of a 'Christ-myth,' but they do not do so on the grounds of historical evidence. The historicity of Christ is as axiomatic for an unbiased historian as the historicity of Julius Caesar. It is not historians who propagate the 'Christ-myth' theories.”
1. Howard Clark Kee, professor emeritus at Boston University, makes the following conclusions from the sources outside the New Testament: “The result of the examination of the sources outside the New Testament that bear directly or indirectly on our knowledge of Jesus is to confirm his historical existence, his unusual powers, the devotion of his followers, the continued existence of the movement after his death at the hands of [Pilate] in Jerusalem, and the penetration of Christianity into the upper strata of society in Rome itself by the later first century.”
 2. After using 20,000 words to describe Jesus in the Encyclopedia Britannica (1974 edition)--more words than used for Aristotle, Cicero, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Buddha, Confucius, Mohammed, or Napoleon Bonaparte—the author concludes thus: “These independent accounts prove that in ancient times even the opponents of Christianity never doubted the historicity of Jesus, which was disputed for the first time and on inadequate grounds by several authors at the end of the 18th, during the 19th, and at the beginning of the 20th centuries.”
- D) In this lesson, then, we'll examine part of a large body of evidence from secular and Jewish sources placed as closely to the time of Jesus as we can. As usual, this will just be a sampling of the evidence, though also the strongest.

II. Early Secular Sources

- A) These references to Jesus are powerful for a couple of reasons. First, they tend to come from Roman historians, who are well regarded as thorough and unbiased in terms of recording historical events as they happened, sans “spin.” Second, though they lack a lot of the bias we might encounter today, they were generally antagonistic toward Christianity—recall the sport of feeding Christians to the lions that happened in the Roman Coliseum. Antagonistic sources are powerful pieces of evidence.
- B) Cornelius Tacitus (circa A.D. 55-120) was a Roman historian who lived through six emperors. He was a senator, a consul and ultimately a Governor in Asia. Scholars seem to

agree that, in general, Tacitus was a very reliable historian who was trustworthy, critical of his sources and usually accurate. The following excerpt is an independent recounting of the fact that Jesus lived, that Judea was the primary region from which Christianity spread, and of the fact that Jesus died at the hand of Pontius Pilate.

III. In his book *Annals*, Tacitus mentions the death of Christ and Christians being in Rome, while discussing Nero's reign: "But not all the relief that could come from man, not all the bounties that the prince could bestow, nor all the atonements which could be presented to the gods, availed to relieve Nero from the infamy of being believed to have ordered the conflagration, the fire of Rome. Hence to suppress the rumor, he falsely charged with the guilt, and punished with the most exquisite tortures, the persons commonly called Christians, who were hated for their enormities. Christus [Christ, JDS], the founder of the name, was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the reign of Tiberius: but the pernicious superstition, repressed for a time, broke out again, not only through Judea, where the mischief originated, but through the city of Rome also."

1. The "pernicious superstition" may be an allusion to Christ's resurrection from the dead, and we'll see a similar statement in other historians' words.

B) Lucian of Samosata was a Greek satirist from the latter part of the second century. He spoke scornfully of Christ and of Christians, never assuming or arguing that Christ was not real.

1. Lucian said in his book *The Death of Peregrine*: "The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day—the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account...You see, these misguided creatures start with the general conviction that they are immortal for all time, which explains the contempt of death and voluntary self-devotion which are so common among them; and then it was impressed on them by their original law-giver that they are all brothers, from the moment that they were converted, and deny the gods of Greece, and worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws. All this they take quite on faith, with the result that they despise all worldly goods alike, regarding them as mere common property."

C) Suetonius was another Roman historian who was also a court official under Hadrian and an annalist of the Imperial House.

1. In his book *Life of Claudius*, Suetonius says: "As the Jews were making constant disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus [another variation of Christ, JDS], [Claudius] expelled them from Rome." Note that Acts 18:2 says the same thing!

2. In another of his books, *Lives of the Caesars*, he says: "Punishment by Nero was inflicted on the Christians, a class of men given to a new and mischievous superstition." This is not only another reference to Nero implicating Christians in the fire of Rome, but also another reference to this superstition. Two independent sources now appear to have referenced early Christian belief in the resurrection of Christ. That portion of our faith, then, did not simply appear in the Bible during its transmission through the ages. Belief in the resurrection was a core belief for early Christians and was prominent enough to be noticed by at least two Roman—antagonistic—historians. That is significant!

D) Pliny the Younger was Governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor and is famous for a large number of letters—both personal and professional—that he published and others published after his death. One letter he wrote to the Emperor Trajan tells of the persecution of Christians he carried out and also gives details into some of their worship habits. Note also two more references to a superstition. What else could it be, other than the belief in Christ's resurrection?

1. *It is a rule, Sir, which I inviolably observe, to refer myself to you in all my doubts; for who is more capable of guiding my uncertainty or informing my ignorance? Having*

never been present at any trials of the Christians, I am unacquainted with the method and limits to be observed either in examining or punishing them. Whether any difference is to be made on account of age, or no distinction allowed between the youngest and the adult; whether repentance admits to a pardon, or if a man has been once a Christian it avails him nothing to recant; whether the mere profession of Christianity, albeit without crimes, or only the crimes associated therewith are punishable in all these points I am greatly doubtful. In the meanwhile, the method I have observed towards those who have been denounced to me as Christians is this: I interrogated them whether they were Christians; if they confessed it I repeated the question twice again, adding the threat of capital punishment; if they still persevered, I ordered them to be executed. For whatever the nature of their creed might be, I could at least feel no doubt that contumacy and inflexible obstinacy deserved chastisement. There were others also possessed with the same infatuation, but being citizens of Rome, I directed them to be carried thither. These accusations spread (as is usually the case) from the mere fact of the matter being investigated and several forms of the mischief came to light. A placard was put up, without any signature, accusing a large number of persons by name. Those who denied they were, or had ever been, Christians, who repeated after me an invocation to the Gods, and offered adoration, with wine and frankincense, to your image, which I had ordered to be brought for that purpose, together with those of the Gods, and who finally cursed Christ none of which acts, it is said, those who are really Christians can be forced into performing these I thought it proper to discharge. Others who were named by that informer at first confessed themselves Christians, and then denied it; true, they had been of that persuasion but they had quitted it, some three years, others many years, and a few as much as twenty-five years ago. They all worshipped your statue and the images of the Gods, and cursed Christ. **They affirmed, however, the whole of their guilt, or their error, was, that they were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god, and bound themselves by a solemn oath, not to any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble to partake of food but food of an ordinary and innocent kind.** Even this practice, however, they had abandoned after the publication of my edict, by which, according to your orders, I had forbidden political associations. I judged it so much the more necessary to extract the real truth, with the assistance of torture, from two female slaves, who were styled deaconesses: **but I could discover nothing more than depraved and excessive superstition.** I therefore adjourned the proceedings, and betook myself at once to your counsel. For the matter seemed to me well worth referring to you, especially considering the numbers endangered. Persons of all ranks and ages, and of both sexes are, and will be, involved in the prosecution. **For this contagious superstition is not confined to the cities only, but has spread through the villages and rural districts;** it seems possible, however, to check and cure it. 'Tis certain at least that the temples, which had been almost deserted, begin now to be frequented; and the sacred festivals, after a long intermission, are again revived; while there is a general demand for sacrificial animals, which for some time past have met with but few purchasers. From hence it is easy to imagine what multitudes may be reclaimed from this error, if a door be left open to repentance.

IV. Early Jewish Sources

A) There are references to Christ's crucifixion in the Babylonian Talmud. It reads:

1. "It has been taught: On the eve of Passover they hanged Yeshu. And an announcer

went out, in front of him, for forty days (saying): 'He is going to be stoned, because he practiced sorcery [a reference to Jesus' miracles, JDS] and enticed and led Israel astray. Anyone who knows anything in his favor, let him come and plead in his behalf.' But, not having found anything in his favor, they hanged him on the eve of Passover."

2. Another version of this text reads "Yeshu the Nazarene," which, given that Yeshu translates through Greek to English as Jesus, makes the connection to Jesus even stronger. Clearly, the hanging referred to is the crucifixion, as Paul did in Galatians 3:13 (which itself is a further explanation of Deuteronomy 21:23).
 3. What's more, a comment in the Jewish text from the 3rd century reads: "*Would you believe that any defence would have been so zealously sought for him? He was a deceiver, and the All-merciful says 'You shall not spare him, neither shall you conceal him.'* It was different with Jesus, for he was near to the kingship." It is not obvious what "near to the kingship" means, but it may be speaking of His descent from King David.
- B) There are also references to Christ having disciples in the Babylonian Talmud. A passage asserts that "Yeshu had five disciples—Mattai, Nakkai, Netzer, Buni, and Todah." Other than Mattai perhaps being a reference to Matthew, there is no way of knowing who the other names refer to. The number of disciples is a bit troubling, but other Rabbis mentioned in the Talmud also had five disciples, so it may be the explanation for the specific number (disciple envy??). One thing is clear, however. Rabbinical tradition maintains that Jesus (Yeshu) had disciples. That's hard to swallow if, in fact, Jesus were not a real person. Jews would love to dismiss Him as a fable, but they can't.
- C) There are also attempts to discount the virgin birth in the Talmud.
1. One passage states: "*R. Shimeon ben Azzai said [concerning Jesus]: 'I found a genealogical roll in Jerusalem wherein was recorded, Such-an-one is a bastard of an adulteress.'*"
 2. Another passage states: "*His mother was Miriam [an etymological relative to Mary—JDS], a women's hairdresser. As they say...this one strayed from her husband"*
 3. Still another says that Mary "*who was a descendant of princes and governors, played the harlot with carpenters.*" Clearly Luke's lineage of Christ shows Mary having descended from royalty and the carpenters is an obvious reference to Joseph.
 4. Again, if Jesus were not a real person, there would be no need to try to explain the circumstances of his birth, whether miraculous or otherwise.
- D) We have already introduced one passage in the works of Josephus, but there are some important things to understand about that passage. There is also another passage in his works that we can read for ourselves.
1. That passage that we read in an earlier class states: "*Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was the Christ, and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to the alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians so named from him are not extinct at this day.*" There is considerable debate concerning whether later Christian scribes perhaps embellished this passage—there are things written that an orthodox Jew (Josephus was not a Christian as far as we can tell) simply would not say (least of all that Jesus was the Christ, as we'll see in the next passage). Again, though, Josephus at least believed that Jesus was real and clearly references a principal figure in the

crucifixion, Pilate.

2. The second passage is not controversial and reads more like what an orthodox Jew would write: “...so he assembled a council of judges, and brought before it the brother of Jesus the so-called Christ, whose name was James, together with some others, and having accused them as lawbreakers, he delivered them over to be stoned.”
- E) These are only a few of the Jewish sources that refer to Jesus. It is simply inconceivable that Jews would perpetuate the myth of a Christ-imposter if he had never existed.

Lesson 7: Jesus Christ—Evidence from Prophecy

1. Estimates place the completion of the books of Law and the Prophets in ~450 years prior to Christ living on Earth. The Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, was initiated in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, who reigned from 285 to 246 B.C. Thus, there are *at least* 250 years between the completion of the Old Law and Christ's birth. This of course means that apparent prophecies fulfilled by Christ were not a result of doctoring the books of the Old Law. It also means that the books in which the prophecies are written were complete—that is, they weren't still being written in the time of Christ. Predictions from 250-450 years prior to His birth that come true must, by necessity be either coincidence or prophecy. There is *no* middle ground.
2. The sheer number of prophecies—which number around 300 or so—make coincidence statistically impossible. Peter Stoner in his book *Science Speaks* estimates the probability of a mere 8 prophecies being fulfilled on one person as a matter of coincidence as being 1 chance in 10^{17} or 1 million billions! For just 48 prophecies, that probability drops to 1 chance in 10^{157} . That's a really small probability. You're about as likely to win every PowerBall Lottery from now until you die, than for those 48 prophecies to be fulfilled by a random person.
3. We're going to look at only a few of the prophecies fulfilled by Jesus, most of them are familiar to us, some are perhaps not so familiar. But, the review will help focus our faith that Jesus truly is the Messiah!
4. Prophecies concerning Christ's birth and lineage
 - A) Isaiah 7:14 “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”
 - a) Immanuel literally means “God with us”
 - b) The Hebrew word used that we translate as virgin is *almah* which literally means a young woman of marriageable age. The other word in Hebrew is *bethulah* which means a virgin maiden, which does not necessarily connote a female at a marriageable age. More compelling evidence for the correct meaning of the passage (that is, confirming that a literal virgin birth is what is meant, not merely a birth by a young woman who is married) comes from the Septuagint. A literal virgin in the ancient Greek is given by the word *parthenos*, which combines the ideas of a young woman of marriageable age and a woman who has not known a man. That is the word used in Isaiah 7:14 in the Septuagint—which was finished prior to Jesus' birth. It is doubtful that Christian apologetics were somehow able to alter those—even then very old—writings to fit some mythical view as purported by modern Jews and liberal “Christians”
 - c) Of course, Luke chapter 1 records Mary as being a literal virgin when she is visited by Gabriel and told that she would conceive a child and that she would name him Jesus. Not only is the word in verse 27 *parthenos*, but

Mary makes it clear with her question 'How can this be, since I do not know a man?'

- B) Genesis 22:18 "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."
 - a) God declares that through Abraham's seed all nations of the earth shall be blessed. Matthew 1 and Luke 3 record Jesus' lineage that includes Abraham.
 - b) Galatians 3:16 reads "Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, 'And the seeds,' as of many, but as of one, 'And to your Seed,' who is Christ." Paul clearly identifies the fulfillment of this scripture.
 - c) This prophecy dictates that the Messiah was to come from the Hebrew race.
- C) Genesis 21:12 "But God said to Abraham, 'Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called.'"
 - a) Remember that the promise in Genesis 22:18 is a result of Abraham's willingness to obey God by sacrificing Isaac. The two passages, then, make it clear that the lineage of Isaac is also necessary for the Christ.
 - b) Of course, Matthew 1 and Luke 3 also record Jesus' lineage through Isaac.
 - c) Romans 9:8 states, in part, "...but the children of the promise are counted as the seed" as referenced to Gen 21:12. Christ was the first seed, but we all are seeds because we also are children of the promise.
 - d) This promise eliminates fully half of Abraham's lineage.
- D) Numbers 24:17, a prophecy of Balaam (his fourth) "I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A Star shall come out of Jacob, A Scepter shall rise out of Israel, And batter the brow of Moab, And desotry all the sons of tumult."
 - a) Again, Matthew 1 and Luke 3 record Jesus as being a descendant of Jacob.
 - b) In the time of Hadrian (A.D. 132) the Jews revolted against Rome again, and they called their leader Barkochba "The Son of the Star" because they believed Balaam's oracle was being fulfilled in him and that, through him, God would destroy the Romans.
 - c) This prophecy eliminates half of Isaac's lineage.
- E) Genesis 49:10 "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people."
 - a) Jesus is recorded to be a descendant of Judah in Matthew and Luke.
 - b) Hebrews 7:14 reads "For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning Priesthood."
 - c) God eliminated 11/12 of the tribes of Israel from which the Messiah would come.
- F) Isaiah 11:1 "There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a

Branch shall grow out of his roots.”

- a) A Jewish source, the Targum Isaiah says this about the passage: “And a King shall come forth from the sons of Jesse, and an Anointed One (or Messiah) from his son's sons shall grow up. And there shall rest upon him a spirit from before the Lord, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord.” Clearly even the Jews give the passage Messianic import.
- b) Jesse is in the lineage of Christ recorded in the N.T.
- G) Jeremiah 23:5 “Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A king shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the land.”
 - a) The Messiah as being referred to as the Son of David is scattered throughout the Talmuds.
 - b) We know Jesus descended from David from Matthew 1 and Luke 3, among numerous other places.
 - c) Jesse had at least 8 sons, and the Lord eliminated all but one from the possible line of ascension of Christ.
- H) Micah 5:2 “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the Thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose going forth are from of old, From everlasting.”
 - a) Matthew 2:1, of course, states that “Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judah.” (See Matt. 2:4; Luke 2:4-7 and John 7:42 also)
 - b) In Matthew 2:6 the scribes told Herod with great assurance that the Christ would be born in Bethlehem.
 - c) God now eliminates all the cities in the world, save for one: lowly little Judah.
 - d) Notice also, though, that this Messiah would be very special: He was One who's “going forth are from old, From everlasting”--the Messiah would be eternal and thus Deity!
- I) Jeremiah 31:15 “Thus says the Lord: 'A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted for her children, Because they are no more.'”
 - a) The Holy Spirit Himself, through Matthew, records that this prophecy was fulfilled when Herod commanded that all male children ages two and younger to be killed in Bethlehem and its surroundings. See Matthew 2:16.
- J) Read Psalm 72 in its entirety—it is clearly a Messianic Psalm.
 - a) Verse 15: “And He shall live; And the gold of Sheba will be given to Him...”
 - b) This is a prophecy concerning the wise men from the East (the Magi) that asked Herod “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.” After consulting with the scribes and finding out that Bethlehem was the place

they sought, they journeyed there and, upon seeing Jesus, fell down and worshipped Him. They then presented Him with their gifts which, of course, included gold.

K) Judges 13:5 “ 'For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.’”

a) Matthew records this as being fulfilled in Jesus, even though the context of Judges 13 concerns the coming birth of Samson (Matt 2:23)

L) At this point, a review is in order. Through prophecy, God has said that the Messiah would be a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Jesse, and David, and would be born in the city of Bethlehem. Upon His birth, He would be presented with gold and many children would be slaughtered. How many people could possibly fit that description? Jesus is the only One to whom all these prophecies can be ascribed as fulfilled. He was the only son of Mary and Joseph born in Bethlehem—remember they fled to Egypt until Herod was dead and then returned to Israel, and then was warned by God in a dream not to return to Judah, but to go to Nazareth instead—which itself is another prophecy fulfilled.

5. Prophecies concerning Christ's Ministry

A) The Messiah's ministry would be preceded by a messenger:

a) Isaiah 40:3 “A voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.’”

b) Malachi 3:1 “ 'Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming,' Says the Lord of hosts.’”

c) Of course, John the Baptist is that messenger, as Matthew 2:3 (Isaiah fulfillment) and Mark 1:2-3 (Malachi fulfillment) both state.

B) The Messiah's ministry would include wondrous acts, miracles

a) Isaiah 35:5-6 “Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. Then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb will sing for joy”

b) Matthew 9:35 “And Jesus was going about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.”

c) Obviously, there are many other examples of His miracles—we'll study those in the next lesson.

C) His teaching would include parables

a) Psalm 78:2 “I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old.”

b) Matthew 13:34 “All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them.”

- D) He would enter the temple
 - a) Malachi 3:1 “And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come into His temple”
 - b) Matthew 21:12 “Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple.”
 - E) He would enter Jerusalem on a donkey
 - a) Zechariah 9:9 “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, humble, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey”
 - b) Read Luke 19:30-38—the Jews of those day clearly saw this as a fulfilled prophecy! Note also that Jesus told his disciples exactly where they'd find the colt and also told them exactly what to say when they were asked why they were untying it!
 - F) He would be a stumbling block to the Jews
 - a) Psalm 118:22 “The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.”
 - b) 1 Peter 2:7 “Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.' “
 - G) He would be a light to the Gentiles
 - a) Isaiah 60:3 “The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.”
 - b) Acts 13:47-48 “For so the Lord has commanded us, 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.' Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord.”
 - H) These prophecies would require a great deal of pre-planning and near perfect execution to “get right” if Jesus were not the Messiah!
6. Prophecies fulfilled in Jesus' last 24 hours before His crucifixion
- A) He would be betrayed by a friend
 - a) Psalm 41:9 'Even my familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.’”
 - b) Matthew 10:4 “Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.”
 - c) Matthew 26:49-50 “Immediately he went up to Jesus and said 'Greetings, Rabbi!' and kissed Him. But Jesus said to him 'Friend, why have you come?' Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him.”
 - d) John 13:18 “I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled 'He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.' “
 - e) John 13:25-26 “Then, leaning back on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, 'Lord, who is it?' Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread

when I have dipped it.' And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.”

- B) He would be sold for thirty pieces of silver
 - a) Zechariah 11:12 “Then I said to them, 'If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages; and if not, refrain.' So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver.”
 - b) Matthew 26:15 “ 'What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?' And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver.”
- C) That silver would be *thrown* into the Temple and ultimately given to a potter
 - a) Zechariah 11:13 “So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord for the potter”
 - b) Read Matthew 27:5-10
 - c) Note that it would be impossible for Jesus to conspire with the chief priests and elders to get them to give Judas 30 pieces of silver. There weren't 29 pieces and it was not gold. Judas *threw* the money down in the temple where it was given to a potter. How could Jesus have effected that series of transactions without Him being who He said He was and without those prophecies being true?
- D) He would be forsaken by his disciples
 - a) Zechariah 13:7 “Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.”
 - b) Mark 14:50 “Then they all forsook Him and fled.”
- E) He would be accused by false witnesses
 - a) Psalm 35:11 “Fierce witnesses rise up; they ask me things I do not know.”
 1. Note the KJV uses “False witnesses...” The Hebrew word there is “chamac” which comes from the root that means “wrong.”
 - b) Matthew 26:59-60 “Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none.”
- F) He would be silent before His accusers
 - a) Isaiah 53:7 “He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth.”
 - b) Matthew 27:12 “And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing.”
- G) He would be wounded and bruised
 - a) Isaiah 53:5 “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.”
 - b) Zechariah 13:6 “And one will say to him, 'What are these wounds between your arms?' Then he will answer, 'Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.' “ Note that the word “arms” there could be translated “hands.”
- H) He would be smitten and spat upon

- a) Isaiah 50:6 “I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.”
- b) Matthew 26:67 “Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands.”
- c) Luke 22:63 “Now the men who held Jesus mocked Him and beat Him.”
- I) He would be mocked
 - a) Psalm 22:7-8 “All who see Me ridicule Me; They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, 'He trusted in the Lord; let Him rescue Him; let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!' “
 - b) Matthew 27:29 'When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand; and they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' “
 - c) Matthew 27:43 “ 'He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him.'”--a near quotation of Psalm 22:8. How did Jesus cause them to say that?
- J) His body would be pierced
 - a) Psalm 22:16 “They pierced My hands and My feet.”
 - b) Zechariah 12:10 “And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced.”
 - c) Luke 23:33 “And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him.” Nails in the hands and feet were part and parcel of crucifixion.
 - d) John 19:37 “And again another Scripture says 'They shall look on Him whom they pierced.' “ This is the piercing of Jesus' side.
- K) He would be crucified with criminals
 - a) Isaiah 53:12 “Because He pured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors.”
 - b) Matthew 27:38 “Then the two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left.”
- L) He would make intercession for His persecutors
 - a) Isaiah 53:12 “And He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”
 - b) Luke 23:34 “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”
- M) His friends would stand afar off
 - a) Psalm 38:11 “My loved ones and my friends stand aloof from my plague, and my relatives stand afar off.”
 - b) Luke 23:49 “But all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.”
- N) People would wag (shake) their heads in contempt
 - a) Psalm 109:25 “I also have become a reproach to them; When they look at

- Me, they shake their heads”
- b) Matthew 27:39 “And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads.”
- O) He would be stared at
- a) Psalm 22:17 “I can count all My bones. They look and stare at me.”
- b) Luke 23:35 “And the people stood looking on.”
- P) His garments would be parted and lots cast for them
- a) Psalm 22:18 “They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.”
- b) John 19:23-24 “The soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took is garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. They said therefore among themselves 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be,' that the scripture might be fulfilled which says 'They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.' “
- Q) He would suffer from thirst
- a) Psalm 69:21 “...and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.”
- b) John 19:28 “After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, said “I thirst.”
- R) Both gall and vinegar would be offered to Him
- a) Psalm 69:21 “They also gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.”
- b) John 19:28
- c) Matthew 27:34 “They gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink.”
- S) He would be forsaken by God
- a) Psalm 22:1 “My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?”
- b) Matthew 27:46 “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani?' that is, 'My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?' “
- T) He would commit Himself to God
- a) Psalm 31:5 “Into Your hand I commit My Spirit.”
- b) Luke 23:46 “And when Jesus had cried out with a loud vouce, He said, 'Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit.' “
- U) His bones would not be broken
- a) Psalm 34:20 “He guards all his bones; not one of them is broken.”
- b) John 19:33 “But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.”
- c) John 19:36 “For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, 'Not one of His bones shall be broken.' “
- V) There would be darkness over the land
- a) Amos 8:9 “‘And it shall come to pass in that day,' says the Lord God, 'That

I will make the sun go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in broad daylight.' “

b) Matthew 27:45 “Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land.”

W) Obviously, the sheer number of prophecies in the last 24 hours alone (we've recounted 22!) would be impossible for one person to “get right,” even if conspiring with others. What's more, many of the accomplices would have had to have been “fake enemies”--how would Jesus get the soldiers to do what they did, or get the Romans to crucify Him with criminals, or to get the people saying the things they said? How about darkness over the land?

7. The big takeaway from this lesson: we've recounted only 40 prophecies, and, yet, the probability of one person fulfilling all of them accidentally are astronomically low. There are, perhaps, another 260 (or more) prophecies we haven't covered. How could a mere human being contrive and conspire with others to simply *appear* to have fulfilled them all? What would be his motivation, since it led him to be killed by a most gruesome death? How would he get those who hated him to conspire with him? The answer is, of course, is that Jesus was no mere human being. He truly came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets. He is the Son of God. Period.

Lesson 8: Jesus Christ—Evidence from the Resurrection

1. Why study the resurrection?
 - A) An empty tomb, by itself, does not prove a resurrection any more than a body missing from a morgue would
 - B) However, the resurrection is the key miracle that underpins our faith—Romans 1:4 says that Christ was “declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”
 - a) Without the resurrection, ours would be just another one of many belief systems
 - b) There are only four major world religions that rely upon an historical figure as its founder—that is, they are not merely philosophical systems
 1. Those four religions are Christianity, Judaism, Islamism and Buddhism.
 - c) ONLY Christianity claims that its founder was raised from the dead
 1. Muslims stream to Medina every year to visit Mohammed's tomb (he died on June 8, 632 A.D.). You can still visit it today.
 2. Jews understand that Abraham is dead (he died circa 1900 B.C.), No resurrection of Abraham has ever been claimed
 3. Buddhists likewise understand that Buddha died “with the utter passing away in which nothing whatever remains behind,” a quote from one of the earliest accounts of Buddha's death. By necessity, for Buddha to be reincarnated (which Buddhists do claim), he had to first have been dead. Only his spirit is said to be in another earthly body.
 - d) The resurrection of Christ sets our faith apart entirely.
 1. Imagine what would have happened had Christ not been resurrected—the early disciples witnessed his torture and execution. They likely would have remained crushed and broken men and women. The cross would have forever remained the shameful end of Jesus' ministry.
 2. Christ's being raised from the dead was His crowning proof to His claim of being equal with the Father, that is, of being Deity.
2. The significance of the physical resurrection of Christ's body
 - A) Some critics—believers who have alternate views, unbelievers dismiss the resurrection altogether—claim that Christ's body after the resurrection was not actual living matter (that is, it was spirit only)
 - a) This view undermines Christ's Deity—it merely becomes an “incarnation” or something along those lines. There would have been no way to prove that Christ was actually resurrected.
 1. Here's a mind game to help you see this—there are claims that a 13-year old Buddhist somewhere in the East is the 11th reincarnation of Buddha himself (or some such number). He has spent weeks on end in a trance-like state, meditating, without food or water (supposedly). He claims it, his parents claim it, and many Buddhists believe it, apparently. But, it is

merely a claim—where's the proof? Do you believe he is the reincarnation of some dead guy from 15 or so centuries ago? I don't, but I would have difficulty proving that to a Buddhist. Anyone can make a claim to be someone they are not.

b) In stark contrast, Christ both claimed and offered direct proof that He was resurrected in the very body in which He died and the very body which was laid in that tomb.

1. Recall when Christ appeared among the disciples to give Thomas an opportunity to touch His side and put his fingers on the print of the nails
2. Just as the Buddhists' claims ring hollow, so too would ours if we did not have that direct physical proof.

c) Furthermore, if we can show and believe that the resurrection is true, then we can believe that all the other claims Jesus made are true

1. Recall that He foretold of His death and His resurrection—even the Jews were clear on that point, since they asked for His tomb to be guarded (see the end of Matthew chapter 27, for example).
2. To my simple mind, it is far easier to grasp turning water into wine or feeding a multitude with almost no food to begin with
3. The resurrection, however, is a different thing entirely. People saw Him die. People saw Him after He was raised. It's too incredible not to contemplate at some great length—which we will do today.

3. Proof of His death

A) This may seem silly, but in order for someone to be resurrected, he must first die.

a) There is a theory out there that claims Jesus did not actually die on the cross, he merely “swooned.” That is, because there was not great medical knowledge at the time of Christ, people didn't recognize that He was merely in shock and unconscious from the loss of blood. The cool air in the tomb revived Him and He got up and walked out. This theory first appeared in the 1800's—which itself is significant. All of the earliest attacks on the Christian faith, according to historians and apologists, were emphatic about Jesus' death.

B) Where's the proof?

a) First, it is important to understand that crucifixion was common within Rome's territories and certainly not uncommon even in Palestine. It is quite likely that the soldiers attending the crosses that day had been involved in other crucifixions. They knew a dead man when they saw one.

1. The soldiers' commanding officer, a Centurion, recognized Jesus as dead. Mark 15:37-39 reads “And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last. Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. So when the Centurion, who stood opposite Him [that is, Christ], saw that He had cried out like this and breathed His last, he said,

'Truly this Man was the Son of God!' “

2. The soldiers themselves also recognized that Jesus was dead. In John 19:30-33 says “So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.”
3. Just to make doubly sure that Jesus was really dead, one of the soldiers, of course, thrust a spear through Jesus' side. Not only would this piercing have done extensive damage in and of itself, but Jesus surely would have reacted to this had He not already been dead. No reaction was observed—had there been, they likely would have carried out their orders to break His legs, too. It evidently was unnecessary.
 1. The blood and water coming out of Jesus' side has significant medical implications as well. The spear probably perforated His lung (the source of the water, the asphyxiation that occurs on the cross is caused by the lungs filling up with bodily fluids, which is primarily water) and His pericardium and heart (obviously the source of the blood).
4. The centurion certified to Pilate that Jesus was already dead. Read Mark 15:43-45. Clearly Pilate was sufficiently convinced by the centurion's word.
5. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus both knew Jesus was dead. Joseph had to work up the courage to ask Pilate for the body, then they both prepared the body by wrapping it in linens with spices, and ultimately put the body in the tomb hewn out of rock.
6. The Jews who remained Christ's enemies also knew Him to be dead, otherwise, why would they allow Him to be put in a tomb over which they asked for guards to be placed?
7. The two Marys also believed Him to be dead. Why would they follow Joseph and Nicodemus to the tomb to observe how He was laid if they believed there was any chance of Him still being alive. Would you allow someone you thought to be alive to be wrapped in burial cloths and placed in a sealed tomb?
8. The guards over the tomb had to have believed Him to be dead—He was regarded as a criminal worthy of death. It is unlikely they would have allowed the job to go unfinished if there was any doubt in their minds. Further, Roman guards stood around that tomb for three days. The tomb would not have been very big (it was, after all, hewn out of solid rock).

A person alive inside would have died from carbon dioxide poisoning anyway, even if he had not endured the suffering that Christ did.

9. Even Christ's disciples knew Him to be dead. For example, Thomas would not have required the proof he did if there was a shred of doubt in his mind Christ had died to begin with. Why would Peter and John run to the tomb to see for themselves it was empty, if they didn't know He had died?
 - b) The historical evidence is clear that Jesus was truly dead when He was put into His tomb. Even honest skeptics admit that the "swoon theory" is nonsensical.
 1. A quote from skeptic David Strauss: "It is impossible that a being who had stolen half dead out of the sepulchre, who crept about weak and ill, wanting medical treatment, who required bandaging, strengthening and indulgence, and who still at last yielded to his sufferings, could have given to the disciples the impression that he was a conqueror over death and the grave, the Prince of Life, an impression that lay at the bottom of their future ministry. Such a resuscitation [from a "swoon", JDS] could only have weakened the impression which he had made upon them in life and in death, at the most could only have given it an elegiac voice, but could by no possibility have changed their sorrow into enthusiasm, have elevated their reverence into worship."
 2. In other words, the disciples' belief itself was proof that Christ had died. They would not have been enthusiastic for long had Jesus not actually died.
4. Proof of His Empty Tomb
 - A) There are only four possibilities that explain the empty tomb.
 - a) The Romans removed His body and hid Him
 - b) The Jews removed His body and hid Him
 - c) The disciples removed His body and hid Him
 - d) God resurrected Him
 - B) Roman removal and hiding:
 - a) Refuting this starts rather simply: ask the question "What was their motivation?" The Romans, in general, did not care about the goings-on in Jewish religious life beyond the problems it caused them in terms of Jewish uprisings. Recall that Pilate both literally and figuratively washed his hands of the whole affair shortly before Jesus was taken and crucified. When the Jews requested guards to watch the tomb, Pilate said "You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how."
 - b) Beyond simple Roman apathy toward the Jews, remember that Pilate was likely spooked about whom he was dealing with.
 1. In Matthew 27:19, we see the first reason for his fear: "While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife [that is, Pilate's wife] sent to him,

saying 'Have nothing to do with that just man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of him.' “

2. John 19:7-9 “The Jews answered him [again, Pilate] 'We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.' Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid, and went again in to the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, 'Where are you from?' But Jesus gave him no answer.”
 3. Exactly what Pilate was thinking is pure speculation, but clearly he saw or believed something was quite different about this man. Remember also that Herod was glad when Pilate sent Jesus to him, because he was hoping Jesus would perform a miracle for him—read Luke 23:7-8. It is unlikely that Herod had heard all these things about Christ but Pilate had not.
- c) Remember also that Pilate was, first and foremost, a politician. The Roman Caesars were not known for their patience or their mercy, so it is unlikely that Pilate would have provoked the Jews by stealing off with the body, allowing this new “Sect of the Jews” to gain momentum by being able to claim a resurrection. Pilate (as did all procurators and governors before and after him) had tremendous difficulty keeping peace in the region. Beyond the needling we see in the gospel accounts, Pilate would not have provoked further controversy.
 - d) The Jews themselves didn't believe that the Romans had anything to do with the whole affair. Recall the reassurances they gave the guards when they cooked up the lie about the disciples stealing the body when the Roman guards were asleep. Read Matthew 28:10-15. The Jews hated the Romans. If they believed, even a little, that the Romans had moved the body, they would have been the first to cry about it. We have no record of that accusation.
 - e) The Roman guards would not have taken it upon themselves to do such a deed. Recall they would likely have been in considerable trouble if Pilate believed they had fallen asleep while on watch—some writers claim that the penalty for such an infraction would have been death, though I have not been able to confirm that—otherwise, why would the Jews have to intervene on the guards' behalf to keep them “secure?”
- C) Jewish removal and hiding
- a) This one is even easier. Their motivation was to refute the “In the tomb three days and nights” prophecy, not help to perpetuate it. The last thing they would have done was moved the body. They went to great lengths to insure it remained right where they put it—recall it was the Jews who asked for the guards, specifically because of that prophecy! They didn't want the disciples to steal the body themselves!
- D) Disciple removal and hiding

- a) Clearly, this is the one that is easiest to swallow. The disciples, if Christ hadn't been who He said He was, would have been motivated to move the body so they could claim the resurrection had occurred. As we read in Matthew 28:10-15, that was exactly the story they helped spread. So, could it have happened that way?
- b) In truth, the story the Jews cooked up is totally nonsensical if you apply a little logic. The Jews themselves insured that by insisting that the tomb should be both sealed with a rock and guarded. Let's suppose the guards really had fallen asleep. How could they possibly have stayed asleep as someone rolled a large rock out of the way? The Talmuds mention the particular kind of stone used for tombs, and it was large enough that it required several men to roll it along its groove. In fact, the Bezae Codex records Mark 16:4 as reading "And when He was laid there, he [Joseph] put against the tomb a stone which twenty men could not roll away." Now, one could argue that this phrase was added by copyists later in order to refute the story the Jews circulated. However, recall that the gospels record Joseph as looking for the coming Kingdom of God. He knew the prophecy Jesus had made (he was a member of the council, after all), so it is just as logical that he would have used an extra large stone to help show that the resurrection was real, and not some manufactured story. Either way, there is simply no way to believe that these guards stayed asleep as the rock were being moved—this ain't Harry Potter and they didn't have invisibility cloaks!
- c) Thus, the disciples would have to have some way of buying the guards' silence. It is doubtful that most of the disciples would have enough money. After all, they were generally poor, many being fishermen or shepherds. It is not clear how wealthy Luke was being a doctor, but only Joseph of Arimathea is described as a rich man. Nicodemus was probably rich, too, being described as a leader of Israel. The 100 pounds of myrrh and aloe he brought to bury Jesus with would have been very expensive, too. They had the money to buy the guards off, but there are two problems with this.
1. First, they would have no reason to. Remember that they were both members of the council, among the religious elite in Jewish society, yet they both believed in Jesus and both were looking for the coming of the Kingdom of God. Nicodemus confesses that Jesus must come from God because of the miracles He was doing (John 3) and Joseph was a secret disciple for fear of the Jews (John 19:38). Being on the council, they would be well aware of the prophecies which had the Jews so upset. Their faith in Jesus and understanding of the meaning of His prophecy would negate that motivation.
 2. On a more practical note, however, when Joseph volunteered to take Jesus down and bury him in his own tomb, the rest of the council then

knew that he was a disciple (Nicodemus was “out of hiding by then” according to John 19:39). He or Nicodemus could not afford to give the guards the assurance they would have needed to say that they fell asleep for by having to intervene to their boss would have given away their role in the plot—thus foiling their attempt to “help” the prophecy come true.

- E) Thus, you must conclude that the resurrection was exactly as Jesus foretold. It was a miraculous act of God.
- a) However, Jesus' appearance after His resurrection is further proof. Even if you can somehow explain away the empty tomb, you cannot explain away appearing alive after death!
 - b) He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James, Joanna, Cleopas and Salome, among others—they reported the news to the other disciples.
 - c) Later He appeared to the eleven and rebuked them for their unbelief (Mark 16:14).
 - d) He appeared to the eleven a second time, and allowed Thomas to feel His wounds (John 20)
 - e) And a third time, where Peter jumped into the sea to swim to Jesus (John 21)
 - f) Later, He appeared to over five hundred people at once (1 Corinthians 15:6). He also appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts, 1 Corinthians)
 - g) Now, the skeptic could say that these eyewitnesses were lying. It is true, they could have been lying, but other evidence doesn't support that. Namely, the persecution—often resulting in death—of Christians separated the wheat from the chaff. What motivation would say, Paul, have had to go through the tribulations he did if he were lying? What glory or motivation is there in being shipwrecked, being beaten, being under house arrest and ultimately (apparently) dying for his faith? What about other eyewitnesses? What was their motivation? There was ample opportunity for them to recant a lie, but the fact that innumerable Christians (many of whom would have been eyewitnesses) died for their belief in Christ's resurrection is enough proof for me.

Lesson 9: Reliability of the Bible

1. Thus far, we have looked primarily at corroborating evidence that supports Biblical narrative. That is important and, frankly, the amount of extra-biblical evidence is extraordinary. However, at some point, we must conclude that the Bible is the inspired Word of God for us to get any benefit from it. To conclude that, you must be comfortable with the fact that the Bible is reliable. It is reliable from a scientific point of view: that is, it does not contradict any laws of science. It is reliable from an historical point of view: we know of no historical items in the Bible that have been disproved by historians—in fact, there are ample occurrences of facts in the Bible that historians have vehemently refuted, and that only later have been proven correct (modern rediscovery of the Hittite nation is but one example). It is reliable from an archaeological point of view: as with historical facts, archaeology continues to “dig up” and confirm things we can read about in the Bible. And, most importantly, it is reliable from a spiritual point of view. But, how do we know that?
2. The corroborating evidence we've studied to date (and a lot more that we haven't broached) is one way. Another way is to study the unique nature of the Bible in terms of its recording and transmission and to study how we got the canon. That's what we'll do in this lesson.
3. The Uniqueness of the Bible—the Bible stands alone among all other books, religious or secular. The following is an incomplete list of ways in which the Bible is absolutely different.
 - A) It is unique in its continuity:
 - a) It was written over a period of over 1400 years, by more than 40 authors from vastly different walks of life, during times of both war and peace.
 1. Moses was a political leader and judge who was trained in the Egyptian educational system.
 2. David, of course, was a shepherd boy turned King, and was a musician and a poet.
 3. Amos was a herdsman.
 4. Joshua was a valiant military leader.
 5. Nehemiah was a cupbearer to a pagan King.
 6. Daniel was a leader in the Babylonian government during the captivity of Judah.
 7. Luke was a doctor and an historian.
 8. Peter was a fisherman.
 9. Matthew was a tax collector.
 10. Paul was a rabbi.
 - b) It was written on three continents (Africa, Asia and Europe) and in many types of locales
 1. Moses wrote in the wilderness.

2. Jeremiah wrote from the captivity.
 3. Daniel wrote from a hillside and in a palace.
 4. Paul wrote from inside prison walls.
 5. Luke wrote while traveling extensively.
 6. John wrote while in exile on the island of Patmos.
- c) It was written in three languages (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek)
1. Hebrew is used for practically all of the Old Testament.
 2. Daniel 2 through Daniel 7 and most of Ezra 4 through Ezra 7 are in Aramaic. Note that Aramaic was the “common language” of the near East until the time of Alexander the Great (~4th century B.C.) and is linguistically very close to Hebrew and similar in structure.
 3. Greek is used for practically all of the New Testament and was the lingua franca—the international language spoken by a vast majority of peoples—during the time of Christ. This was a primarily a result of Alexander the Great.
- d) It was written in a wide variety of literary styles.
1. Poetry (Psalms, Proverbs)
 2. Historical narrative (Chronicles, Kings)
 3. Song (Psalms, Song of Solomon)
 4. Romance (Esther)
 5. Didactic treatise—that is, moral instruction (The whole Bible)
 6. Personal correspondence (Paul's letters, Peter's letters)
 7. Memoirs (Acts, Gospels)
 8. Satire (portions of the Psalms, portions of the Prophets)
 9. Biography (Gospels)
 10. Law (Deuteronomy)
 11. Prophecy (Daniel, Jeremiah, etc.)
 12. Parable (Gospels)
 13. Allegory—that is, the representation of abstract ideas by characters, events and figures in dramatic form (Revelation, Daniel, Jeremiah)
- e) It addresses thousands of subjects, hundreds of which are controversial:
1. Marriage, divorce and remarriage
 2. Homosexuality
 3. Adultery
 4. Murder
 5. Obedience and submission to authority
 6. Parenting
- f) However, despite all of this variety, the Bible is extraordinarily singularly themed and harmonious. It represents the slow unfolding of God's plan of redemption and God is *always* the central character. Norman Geisler and William Nix put it this way in their book *A General Introduction to the Bible*:

1. "The 'Paradise Lost' of Genesis becomes the 'Paradise Regained' of Revelation. Whereas the gate to the tree of life is closed in Genesis, it is opened forevermore in Revelation."
2. There are absolutely no contradictions in doctrine anywhere in the Bible and many of the other so-called "discrepancies" in facts can reasonably be explained. New Testament writers relied upon the writings of the Law, the Prophets and the Historical books and never contradicted them.
3. Compare the Bible's harmony with that of the compilation of Western classics called *Great Books of the Western World*. It includes over 450 works by more than 100 authors and spans about 25 centuries. It contains works by Homer, Plato, Dante, Shakespeare, Tolstoy and Darwin. These authors display an incredible diversity of views on most subjects—this diversity is often manifested with contradictory positions. Usually, more modern "thinkers" go out of their way to critique and refute the ideas of their earlier predecessors.

B) It is unique in its circulation

- a) The best selling fiction books, such as *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Gone with the Wind*, and *Catcher in the Rye*, have all sold more than 10,000,000 copies worldwide since their release.
- b) Dr. Seuss books have sold somewhere around 100,000,000 worldwide.
- c) Of course, most people are aware that the Bible is the highest selling book in all of history, but the numbers, frankly, are staggering. Between the years 1816 and 1992, estimates say the number of Bibles sold is on the order of 6,000,000,000! It has been translated into 2000 languages already and sometime in the next 15 years, the Bible will be available in every language on the face of the earth. No other book comes close. Not even the Koran or Chairman Mao's *Little Red Book*, which was mandatory for every Chinese adult to own between 1966 and 1971.

C) It is unique in its survival

- a) Despite using fragile and perishable materials and being hand copied for tens of centuries, the Scriptures have never faced extinction. Compared with other ancient writings, the Bible has vastly more manuscript evidence to support it than the next top ten pieces of classical literature *combined*.
 1. Bruce Metzger, a Princeton professor and one of the world's leading Biblical text critics once said "...the textual critic of the New Testament is embarrassed by the wealth of his material."
- b) The Jews had a remarkable system to ensure correct preservation of the Old Law text. They literally counted every letter, syllable, word and paragraph and copies that did not satisfy that count were destroyed, not re-written or corrected. Another textual critic said "They had special classes of men whose sole duty was to preserve and transmit these documents with practically perfect fidelity—scribes, lawyers, and massorettes. Who ever

counted the letters and syllables of Plato or Aristotle? Cicero or Seneca?"

4. The canon itself is testimony of the Bible's reliability.

A) The word canon comes from the root word "reed," which was used in early times as a measuring rod and thus, came to mean "standard."

B) Origen, a third century "church father", said he used the word "...canon to denote what we call the 'rule of faith,' the standard by which we are to measure and evaluate."

C) Note that the church (whether Christ's church, the catholic church, or any other body of religious Christ believers) did *not* create the canon and it did *not* determine which books would be called scripture and which would not. The earliest Christians discovered, through reasonable tests, which books were inspired and which were not. Early Christians, then, simply accepted books that were the Word of God—this is not the same as declaring a book as the Word of God simply because it was accepted by the church. That's an important distinction to make! God gives each book its divine authority and, through the help of the Apostles and their "students," divine inspiration was discovered and accepted.

a) Here are the tests for inclusion:

1. Was the book written by a prophet of God? That is, did that prophet's predictions *always* come true? If so, you had a true prophet and, thus, an inspired book.

2. Was the writer confirmed by acts of God? Miracles were used throughout the Old Law and New Testament stories to confirm what the speaker said was true.

3. Did the message tell the truth about God? God cannot tell a lie and will not contradict Himself. If the book was in harmony with other accepted books of the canon, it passed this test.

4. Does the book come with the power of God? God's message transforms lives (1 Peter 1:22-23) and is given by God's inspiration (2 Tim 3:16). If a book does not provide that life-changing power, it cannot be from God.

5. Was the book accepted by the people of God? The best people to know of the inspiration of a particular are those people who knew the prophet or apostle. In other words, definitive evidence is a result of its original acceptance by contemporary believers. For example, Acts 2:41-43 shows this in action. To pass the apostolic test did not necessarily mean that an apostle was the author—it also includes the idea of apostolic authority or approval.

1. 2 Peter 3:14-16 is another clear example

D) There were several very practical factors that resulted in the canonization of the New Testament

a) The books were prophetic—they were written by an apostle or prophet of

God, so they were valuable. Since they were valuable, they should be preserved. Paul's epistles were collected and circulated very early in the history of the church for this very reasoning.

- b) The varied churches scattered throughout Asia and Europe needed to know which books should be read and studied. These churches had many problems to address (reference the church in Corinth!) and this needed assurance regarding which books would or should serve as their source of authority. Also, because these churches were in different parts of the world and a lot of missionary work was happening (it took less than 35 years for the church to spread from Jerusalem to Rome!), the inspired books needed translating. Thus, translators needed to know which books and letters to translate!
- c) Heretics attempting to change the gospel arose very early. As early as A.D. 140, the heretic Marcion developed his own incomplete canon and began to propagate it—thus the church needed to counter his influence. Other churches in the East also used books that were counterfeit.
- d) The church began to be persecuted very early, but the edict of Diocletian, in A.D. 303, called for the destruction of the sacred books of the Christians. Who would die for books that they did not know to be inspired?
- E) Athanasius of Alexandria, in A.D. 367, was the first to list the canon as we know it today in a letter to the churches:
 - a) “Again it is not tedious to speak of the books of the New Testament. These are the four gospels, according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Afterwards, the Acts of the Apostles and Epistles (called Catholic), seven, viz. of James, one; of Peter, two; of John, three; after these, one of Jude. In addition, there are fourteen epistles of Paul, written in this order. The first, to the Romans; then two to the Corinthians; after these, to the Galatians; next, to the Ephesians; then to the Philippians; then to the Colossians; after these, two to the Thessalonians, and that to the Hebrews; and again, two to Timothy; one to Titus; and lastly, that to Philemon. And besides, the Revelation of John.”
- F) Jerome and Augustine published the same list shortly after Athanasius.
- G) Polycarp, in the early 2nd century, and Clement of Alexandria, in the early 3rd century, as well as other church fathers refer to New Testament books with the phrase “as it is said in these scriptures,” just as they referenced the Old Law.
- H) Irenaeus, who was a disciple of Polycarp (who himself was a disciple of John), provides solid evidence of the almost total acceptance of the fourfold gospel throughout the kingdom. He also shows similar acceptance of most of the other books—his canon included 22 of the 27 books in the canon today, with no other books that were later removed.
- I) Thus, the “church councils” in A.D. 393 and A.D. 397, merely recorded the previous canonicity of the 27 books of the New Testament. They did not

confer anything to those books (e.g., authority) that hadn't already been accepted by the church in the previous centuries. It would be similar if you gathered 100 highly trained classical musicians and asked them to “decide” whether Mozart and Beethoven were world-class composers. They have already been accepted as such, so the meeting of the minds in that instance would be simply to acknowledge that fact.

5. What about the New Testament Apocrypha?

A) There are about 17 widely known books that address Christian ideals and thoughts, but have been rejected as canon. There are many others, but the following list represents the most well-known books.

- a) Epistle of Pseudo-Barnabas (~A.D. 70-79)
- b) Epistle to the Corinthians (~A.D. 96)
- c) Second Epistle of Clement (~A.D. 120-140)
- d) Shepherd of Hermas (~A.D. 115-114)
- e) Didache, Teaching of the Twelve (~A.D. 100-120)
- f) Apocalypse of Peter (~A.D. 150)
- g) The Acts of Paul and Thecla (~A.D. 170)
- h) Epistle to the Laodiceans (4th century?)
- i) The Gospel According to the Hebrews (~A.D. 65-100)
- j) Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians (~A.D. 108)
- k) The Seven Epistles of Ignatius (~A.D. 100)

B) Why were they rejected?

- a) None of them enjoyed any more than a temporary or local recognition.
- b) Most of them never did have anything more than a semi-canonical status, being appended to several manuscripts or mentioned in tables of contents.
- c) No major canon or church council ever included them as inspired books of the New Testament
- d) The limited acceptance of most of these books was a result of them being attached to references in canonical books (e.g., Col. 4:16) or their alleged apostolic authorship (e.g., the Acts of Paul and Thecla).
- e) In all, there was little doubt in the early church that these books were not canonical.

6. The Old Testament Canon

A) The council of Jamnia, in A.D. 90, is often incorrectly attributed as finally establishing the Old Testament canon. However, it appears that council questioned the right of a *few* of the books already in the Old Testament canon to *remain* there—not whether this book or that one should be added. In addition, that council was quite informal—we know only that a few of the rabbis discussed these questions. No formal decisions or declarations were made because of the discussions.

B) The evidence supports the claim that the Hebrew canon was established between ~350 and 150 B.C. From the 4th century on, Jews themselves were

convinced that the voice of God (that is, His prophets) was silent. No word from God clearly implies no *new* word from God.

- C) Intertestamental books record this fact. 1 Maccabees 14:41 tells of the appointment of Simon as a leader and priest until such time “as a trustworthy prophet should arise.” Earlier it describes the sorrow throughout Israel because prophets had ceased appearing to them.
 - D) The Greek Septuagint appears with the same books that we have today (though it is divided differently). The Septuagint was written sometime between 400 and 150 B.C. Because it is a translation from the Hebrew, the necessary inference is that there was a Hebrew canon to start with!
 - E) Of course, Christ Himself pointed to all the books of the Hebrew canon during His ministry. Most of those points were directly to verses within specific books in the Septuagint. For example, when Christ said in Luke 11:51 'From the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah,' He was providing witness of the Hebrew canon, since Abel was martyred in Genesis and Zechariah, also martyred, appears last in the Hebrew Old Testament order.
7. In short, there is very little question among scholars about whether the Old Testament and New Testament canons are complete. The evidence appears overwhelming.