

# Proclaiming the Truth of Jesus to a Postmodern World

Allen Quist

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**Forward: - p 3****Chapter 1: Two Sides - p 5****Chapter 2: Who is this Man? - p 8**

- a. Historical documents
- b. Eyewitness testimony
- c. An Important historical artifact—the Shroud of Turin
- d. Fulfillment of prophecy
- e. Jesus the master teacher

**Chapter 3: Answering Objections—Darwinian Evolution - p 34**

- a. Genetic deterioration
- b. Irreducible complexity
- c. Missing links—still missing
- d. Haeckel's embryos
- e. The *Glacier Girl*
- f. The Antarctic ice cap
- g. Dinosaurs

**Chapter 4: Answering Objections—Postmodernism - p 58**

- a. Proclaiming Christianity to postmodernists

**Chapter 5: Conclusion - p 76****Appendix: Apologetics Study Document of the Doctrine  
Committee of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod - p 81****About the Author - p 83**

## Forward

“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have” (1 Peter 3:15, NIV 1984). Allen Quist has spent his life carrying out this commission God gave to Christians. He knows that the gospel of Jesus Christ, alone, has the power to give faith and transform lives. Quist also knows, though we cannot bring people to faith by persuasive reasoning, we can remove obstacles in the way of their coming to faith. He recognizes there are preconceived ideas about Christianity which lead people to ignore the message of the Gospel. Quist offers this book as a way to equip people for sharing the Gospel in a postmodern world.

First of all, Quist speaks of Christ, the focal point of our witnessing. Who is Christ? What has He done for our salvation? Are the Bible’s accounts concerning Jesus reliable? Quist points to internal testimony in the Bible which answers these questions. The Gospels were written by eye-witnesses, who traveled with Jesus and saw Him risen from the dead. Quist lists the Old Testament prophecies concerning Jesus and demonstrates their fulfillment. He also records testimony of people outside the Bible concerning Jesus. Some of this testimony comes from unbelievers; some comes from disciples of the apostles. All confirm that the message of the Bible concerning Jesus is reliable. The Bible is clear: Jesus is God’s Son Who came into this world to save sinners. Jesus accomplished His mission and proved He had secured forgiveness for all by His resurrection from the dead. The biblical accounts concerning Jesus are reliable and accurate.

Secondly, Quist addresses a number of hypotheses raised by evolutionists which attack the person of Christ and the reliability of the Bible. Evolutionists would have us believe the Bible is myth and evolution is fact. However, Quist points out it is the other way around. The Bible presents fact. Evolution is based on human speculation and assumptions. Evolution is anything but fact. It is, in fact, blind faith. Quist does not seek to prove the Bible through science. Rather, he points out the evolutionist’s faulty reasoning in the interest of replacing it with the message of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. Belief in evolution is greatly responsible for people’s rejection of the Christian faith today. Our age is

saturated with the teaching of evolution. Christians do well to note the logical fallacies of evolution in the interest of proclaiming God's message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

Finally, Quist addresses what we should know about sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ in a postmodern age. He accurately and succinctly describes the worldview of postmodernists. They deny truth exists. They say all is relative. They believe there is no such thing as truth that is objective and reliable. "Your truth is yours and may not be mine." Quist puts his finger on how we will want to evangelize in the midst of postmodernism. We proclaim Jesus Christ, Who is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), Whose Word is truth (John 17:17).

All, who have the desire to share the message of the gospel of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, will benefit from reading Quist's book. It will help you "be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Peter 3:15, NIV 1984).

by Lyle Lange,  
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## Chapter 1

# Two Sides

When was the last time you saw or heard the word “truth”? When did you last hear it on the evening news? Or see it in the newspaper or on the internet? Most of us don’t see or hear the word “truth” very often. Look at the index of any school textbook in any subject and for any grade, K-college. Is the word “truth” included in the index of the textbook? The word “truth” is usually not there, and if “truth” is not in the index, then the word is never used in the book.

In marked contrast to the avoidance of the word “truth” in our time, the trial of Jesus the Nazarene before Pilate included this exchange:

“You are a king, then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”<sup>1</sup>

Notice how Jesus described the two sides in this trial—the side of truth versus the other side. Picturing the two sides this way—one side following truth and the other side opposing it—may sound strange to those of us today who rarely see a focus on truth. Many today even see truth in terms of what is “true for you.” They don’t see truth as being universal and absolute. They can’t imagine that an important drama can be divided into those who are on the side of truth versus those who are not.

But Jesus spoke of his trial before Pilate exactly this way, and he spoke of truth as being real and universal. He said that his reason for entering our world was to speak the truth. Specifically, as noted above, he said: “In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this reason I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.” Jesus here meant real truth, universal truth. He was speaking of truth that is genuine, absolute and the same for everyone—what we might call “true truth.”

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<sup>1</sup> John 18:37, NIV, 1984.

John's gospel uses the word "truth" 22 times (KJV), as in John 8:32: "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (NIV).

In contrast to Jesus, who stood on the truth, those who brought him to Pilate came on the basis of lies and misrepresentations. They told Pilate, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar" (John 19:12). This was a lie, and Pilate knew it was a lie. Jesus did not oppose Caesar. So Pilate was forced to make a choice of siding with the truth versus siding with lies. As we know, he made the wrong choice.

We have the same choice today—following the truth versus following that which is false. To put our faith in Jesus the Christ is to commit ourselves to following the truth. Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6). The message that Jesus is the path to life is also the message that his words are true. To say that Jesus is the truth and to say that Jesus is the resurrection and the life, as stated in John 11:25, should be saying one and the same thing.

In addition, the New Testament evangelists who wrote about Jesus frequently gave their listeners good reasons for recognizing that their message was true. The Apostle John made reference to some of these reasons when he wrote, "Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:30).

Jesus emphasized the necessary connectedness between his death for us and the truth when, as stated above, he said, "I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). To know Jesus is to know the truth; to receive this truth is to receive eternal life.

#### Discussion questions and recommended reading:

1. How should "truth" be defined?
2. Were the enemies of Jesus interested in telling the truth? See Matthew 28:11-15.

3. Is the account of Elijah versus the prophets of Baal (I Kings 18) an example of following truth versus following falsehood?
4. For further study, see Gene Edward Veith. *Postmodern Times: A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1994.

## Chapter 2

## Who is this Man?

Two thousand years ago, a man named Jesus lived in the nation of Israel. He was known as Jesus, the carpenter's son. He was known as Jesus, the son of Joseph and Mary. He was also known as Jesus the Nazarene.

The man Jesus has been the subject of more scrutiny, discussion and debate than any other person who has ever lived, and more people in the world today identify themselves as followers of Jesus than identify as followers of any other person.

The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life reported in 2010 that 32% of the World's population considers itself Christian—far more than any other religion.<sup>2</sup> The Pew Forum also reported that 79.5 % of U. S. citizens consider themselves Christian.<sup>3</sup> This doesn't mean, however, that all these individuals are believers of the Christian message. Many of them are not, but they are, nonetheless, willing to associate themselves with the man called the Christ.

The intense interest in Jesus and association with him are the result of extraordinary and important claims made by him and about him. C. S. Lewis described the nature of these claims when he said:

Then comes the real shock. Among these Jews there suddenly turns up a man who goes about talking as if he was God. He claims to forgive sins. He says he has always existed. He says he is coming to judge the world at the end of time. Now let us get this clear. Among Pantheists, like the Indians, anyone might say that he was a part of God, or one with God: there'd be nothing very odd about it. But this man, since he was a Jew, couldn't mean that kind of God. God, in their language, meant the Being outside the world who had made it and was infinitely different from anything else. And when you have grasped that, you will see that what this man

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<sup>2</sup> *Pew Forum on Religion & public Life*, December 18, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*



said was, quite simply, the most shocking thing that has ever been uttered by human lips.<sup>4</sup>

In addition the New Testament writers said that the life, death and resurrection of Jesus offer us the opportunity to be members of his everlasting kingdom. The Apostle John recorded that Jesus said the following about himself: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

Not everyone agrees that Jesus is God, of course. Followers of religions other than Christianity as well as atheists and agnostics typically say that Jesus was a great teacher and a great moral leader, but was a mere human being like all the rest of us.

Jesus, however, did not leave this option open to us. Either he was the person the Gospel writers say he was or otherwise he was a liar, a manipulator, a cult leader or worse. Someone who said what Jesus said could not have been a great man and nothing more.

Considering the intense scrutiny that has been made of Jesus over the past 2,000 years, and especially in the past several hundred years, shouldn't it be possible to know the truth about who he really was? The answer to that question is an emphatic “yes.” Because of the extensive historical and other research that has been done about Jesus the Nazarene, we can know the truth about him. Today, based on a wealth of information available to us, we can without hesitation say that Jesus is the person whom the Bible says he is.

This book focuses on the question of what we know to be true about Jesus the Nazarene. It deals with what the available information says about Jesus and based on that information, what we can know to be true. If Jesus has any relevance to the world today and to our own lives, it is because there are important things about him that are true and can be known to be true.

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<sup>4</sup> C. S. Lewis, *The Case for Christianity*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1975), p. 44.

Discussion questions and recommended reading:

1. What do Muslims believe about Jesus?
2. Is that a reasonable position?
3. Other people throughout history have made claims somewhat similar to those made by Jesus. Are any of those people taken seriously today?
4. Recommended reading: the Gospel of John gives a powerful and accurate description of who Jesus is. Reading John's Gospel is highly recommended.

## **Historical documents:**

Even non-Christian historians establish the fact that Jesus is a well-known figure of history. The prominent first century Jewish historian Josephus (AD 37-101), wrote that a man named "James" had been condemned to death by the Jewish council known as the Sanhedrin. He also wrote that this James was "the brother of Jesus the so-called Christ."<sup>5</sup> The New Testament book of Galatians confirms that James was indeed the brother of Jesus (Galatians 1:9).

Josephus was a prominent historical figure of his time and is today regarded as a highly competent historian. Josephus was a high profile Roman citizen, and he was also Jewish. He grew up in Israel and had been a high ranking military leader in Israel. He was commissioned by Rome to write the history of the Jews, and because of his standing, he would have had access to the relevant historical records and would have additionally been able to interview contemporaries of Jesus—those who had firsthand information about many of the important events involving him.

In one of his historical accounts, Josephus wrote:

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<sup>5</sup> Josephus' *Antiquities*, book 20, Ch. 19.

At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. And his conduct was good and [he] was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive; accordingly he was perhaps the messiah concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders.<sup>6</sup>

This statement from Josephus establishes the following historical facts about Jesus:

1. A man called “Jesus” lived in Palestine in the early First Century.
2. He was known to be a good and virtuous man.
3. Many people, both Jews and Gentiles, became his followers.
4. He was sentenced to death by crucifixion by Pontius Pilate.
5. The movement he began continued after his death.
6. His disciples claimed he had risen from the dead.
7. Some people believed he was the promised Messiah.

The Apostle Paul appealed to such well-known historical facts when he spoke to King Agrippa. Paul said: “The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner” (Acts 26:26).

Perhaps the most significant fact established by Josephus is that it was Jesus’ own disciples who claimed he had risen from the dead. They said that he was, therefore, the Messiah. They were the eyewitnesses of the important events, those who were personally there, those who were in a position to know what had happened because they had firsthand knowledge, who said he had risen and that he was God in the flesh, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

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<sup>6</sup> *Antiquities* 18: Chapter 3, Arabic version.

Is there any reason to doubt the historical accuracy of these eyewitnesses? There really isn't, especially when we consider that many of them faced death rather than change their story. People don't die for what they know is a lie.

The Roman historian Tacitus (AD 55-117) also referred to Jesus and his followers. (Cornelius Tacitus was a Roman historian who lived from 56-120 AD. He was also a Roman Senator, a Consul, and was Governor of Asia.) Tacitus said:

Nero fastened the guilt [for the fire of Rome in 64 A.D.] and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome...<sup>7</sup>

This account by Tacitus is totally consistent with the records of Josephus and the New Testament writers. Other writers who substantiate much of the New Testament include Tertullian (150-225 AD), Justin Martyr (100-165) and the Roman historian Suetonius, (69-122 AD). There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of any of these historical documents. The reasonable conclusion is that the books of the New Testament are reliable historical records as well as being books of the Bible. Being included in the Bible doesn't in any way reduce the historical value of the documents.

The Biblical author Luke clarified that he was writing carefully researched history. In the introduction to his first book, he emphasized that he had personally investigated his subject matter as a competent historian would. Luke began his first book by saying:

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated

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<sup>7</sup> Tacitus, *Annals* Book XV. Ch. 44. paragraphs 2-8.

everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught (Luke 1:1-4).

Luke said he “carefully investigated everything from the beginning” as he focused on the accounts of those “who from the first were eyewitnesses” of the important events. That is, Luke wrote genuine history that he had carefully and personally researched. As will be explained later, the accuracy of his writings has been confirmed on numerous historical and geographical details. We have good reason to be confident in the truthfulness of what he wrote.

Based on these historical documents, there is no doubt that a man named Jesus lived in Judea in the early first century. There is no doubt that he was well-known, that he was killed by crucifixion under sentence of Pontius Pilate and that his followers claimed he had risen from the dead. The only question left to be answered is: did it really happen?

#### Discussion questions and recommended reading:

1. Is Christianity based on history?
2. Are other religions based on history in a manner that substantiates their truth claims?
3. Some skeptics say that we can't know for sure if the man Jesus even existed. Is that a reasonable position?
4. For further study, see John Warwick Montgomery, *History and Christianity*, Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1971.

### **Eye-witnesses testimony:**

What does it mean to be a “witness”? Jesus told his disciples: “You are witnesses of these things” (Luke 24:48), and, “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

When Jesus told the Apostles they would be “witnesses,” he meant they would be eyewitnesses. They would be witnesses in the sense that people are brought into courts of law to be witnesses—persons who can give firsthand information regarding what they have personally seen and heard.

The disciples of Jesus themselves frequently emphasized that they were eyewitnesses of the risen Jesus and of all the other important events they described in their written histories. In keeping with this emphasis, John told his readers, “We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard” (1 John 1:3). And Peter explained, “We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty” (1 Peter 1:16).

The Apostle Paul similarly stressed the reality and importance of their being eyewitnesses to the resurrected Christ. Said Paul:

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born (1 Corinthians 15: 3-7).

Notice that Paul said Jesus “appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.” Why is this important? There is no serious doubt that this letter was written less than thirty years after the crucifixion, within the lifetimes of many of the people Paul was referring to, as he himself said. Paul was providing important evidence that substantiated his message. Why was it important to point out that most of these five hundred people were still alive? Because if there was any question about the accuracy of what Paul was saying about the resurrection, numerous eyewitnesses of the risen Christ were still living, and anyone could check with them and inquire as to whether they had actually seen the risen Jesus. Paul was saying: There are

hundreds of people who saw Jesus alive after the crucifixion. If you doubt what I am saying, just ask them.

We, however, are living 2,000 years later. How can we be sure that the historical documents we possess actually are the written testimonies of the eyewitnesses themselves? How can we tell if the documents are reliable and authentic, not fabrications put together by second century Christians eager to justify their personal convictions?

In answer, the New Testament documents are all grounded on eyewitness testimony, either written by the eyewitnesses themselves (Matthew, John, the letters of Paul, Peter and John, and the Revelation of John) or books based on the accounts of eyewitnesses (Mark, Luke-Acts, and perhaps James, Jude and Hebrews). What evidence do we have to indicate that these books actually do provide us with eyewitness testimony?

In the first place, we know the books to be historically, geographically and culturally accurate. The following statement exemplifies the archaeological confirmation of the accuracy in Luke's historical accounts:

There are literally hundreds of archaeological finds that support specific persons, events and facts presented in Luke-Acts, including many that were once thought to be incorrect. Especially noteworthy is Luke's correct usage of official titles. He calls the rulers of Thessalonica "politarchs," Gallio the "Proconsul of Achaia," the one in Ephesus a "temple warden," the governor of Cyprus a "proconsul" and the chief official in Malta "the first man of the island," a title confirmed in Greek and Latin inscriptions.

Likewise, Luke is known to be correct in chronological references. His reference to "Lysansias the tetrarch of Abilene" at the time John the Baptist began his ministry (A.D. 27), once thought to be incorrect, is now known by Greek inscriptions to be correct. Lysansias was tetrarch between A.D. 14 and 29. Other

chronological references are known to be correct including those to Caesar, Herod, and even Gallio (Acts 18: 12-17).<sup>8</sup>

This statement provides a small sample of the vast amount of specific details in the New Testament which have been confirmed through modern research. No such details have been found to be inaccurate. The most reasonable way to account for such accuracy is to recognize that the books contain reliable, firsthand information.

We additionally have credible historical records which attest to the eyewitness character of many of the New Testament books. Papias (AD 60-135), a disciple of the Apostle John, for example, stated:

The Elder (John) used to say also: "Mark, having been the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately all that he mentioned, whether sayings or doings of Christ, not however, in order. For he was neither a hearer nor a companion of the Lord; but afterwards, as I said, he accompanied Peter, who adapted his teachings as necessity required, not as though he were making a compilation of the sayings of the Lord. So then Mark made no mistake, writing down in this way some things as he [Peter] mentioned them; for he paid attention to this one thing, not to omit anything that he heard, not to include any false statement among them."<sup>9</sup>

Papias also said, "Matthew recorded the oracles in the Hebrew tongue."<sup>10</sup> And Irenaeus, who was Bishop of Lyons in A.D. 180 and a student of Polycarp who in turn was a student of the Apostle John, said:

Matthew published his Gospel among the Hebrews in their own tongue, when Peter and Paul were preaching in Rome and founding the church there. After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, himself, handed down to us in

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<sup>8</sup> Norman Geisler, *Christian Apologetics*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), p. 325.

<sup>9</sup> Eusebius. *Ecclesiastical History*, III. 39, as quoted by Colin Chapman in *An Erdmans Handbook: The Case for Christianity*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Erdmans Co., 1981) p. 234.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.



writing the substance of Peter's preaching. Luke, the follower of Paul, set down in a book the gospel preached by his teacher. Then John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned on his breast himself produced his Gospel, while he was living at Ephesus in Asia.<sup>11</sup>

Such statements, along with similar remarks by other leaders in the New Testament church, give powerful testimony to the authenticity of our Biblical documents. Notice the mention Papias makes of Mark's not having been a "hearer nor a companion of the Lord." Since Mark did not personally have that eyewitness experience, it was necessary for him to have received his information from someone who did have firsthand information, in this case Peter. Such statements make it crystal clear that the New Testament church would accept a book as being authoritative only if it contained the testimony of eyewitnesses.

It is also significant that an apostle was recognized as such only if he was an eyewitness of the risen Christ. This principle was clearly evident when it became necessary to replace the late Judas with another apostle. Peter explained:

Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from John's baptism to the time Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection (Acts 1:21.22).

It is evident, therefore, that the New Testament documents we possess are either themselves eyewitness accounts or are based on the eyewitness testimony of those who had first-hand information of the events they described. Once again, there is no reason to doubt the historical accuracy of what these documents say.

#### Discussion questions and recommended reading:

1. How important are eyewitnesses in a court of law?

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<sup>11</sup> Irenaeus. *Against Heresies. III*, as contained in Ante-Nicene Christian Library: *Translations of the Writings of the Fathers*. Vol. I, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Co., 1869) pp. 258-259.

2. Following are some important historical events that are essential to Christianity. For which of them do we possess eyewitness accounts? (a) the Exodus, (b) the virgin birth, (c) the crucifixion and resurrection of the Christ, (d) the ascension into heaven, (e) Pentecost, and (f) the Second Coming?
3. If the evidence for the truth of Christianity is so compelling, why do many people refuse to believe? (See Acts 7:51.)<sup>12</sup>
4. For further study, see F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1960.

### **An important historical artifact—the Shroud of Turin:**

The Shroud is a rectangular linen cloth measuring 14.3 feet long by 3.7 feet wide. Some scholars believe that this artifact is the actual linen cloth that covered the body of Jesus from the time of his burial until his resurrection. It is often said that the Shroud is the most intensely studied artifact in all human history.

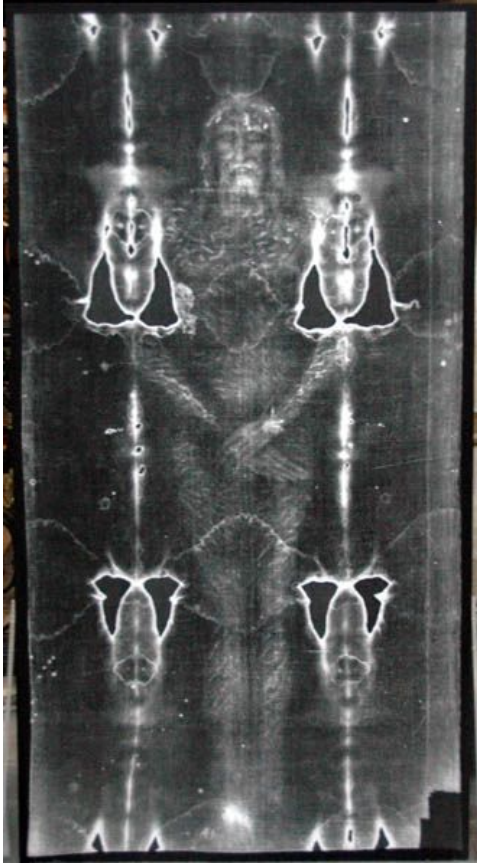
The evidence for the authenticity of the Shroud is really quite overwhelming. It is evident that on the linen cloth known as the Shroud we have an actual photograph of Jesus in the tomb—a photograph that appears to have been taken at the moment he rose from the dead and looks to have been produced by an energy source unknown to modern science, energy coming from inside the body itself, energy that was released when the body of Jesus was transformed from a dead body into




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<sup>12</sup> “You always resist the Holy Spirit!” (Acts 7:51).

a living body with far different qualities than it had previously. There is no known scientific explanation for how the image on the Shroud was formed, or even how it could have been formed.



*National Geographic/Getty Images*  
[Used by permission.]

All four gospels say that a linen cloth was used to wrap the body of Jesus after the crucifixion. Luke, for example, said:

He [Joseph of Arimathea] took it [the body] down and wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid (Luke 23:53).

(The Shroud is referred to as the “Shroud of Turin” because it is housed at Turin, Italy, in the chapel of the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist.)

The linen cloth bears the image of a man who was killed by crucifixion. And it is significant that the image on the Shroud is

much clearer in black-and-white negative than in its natural sepia color.

This negative image of the Shroud was first observed in 1898, on the reverse photographic plate of photographer Secondo Pia, the first person to photograph the Shroud and who did so while it was being exhibited in the Turin Cathedral.

There are compelling reasons to recognize the Shroud as the actual burial cloth of Jesus. Some of the reasons follow:

1. As Secondo Pia was developing his negatives, he was amazed to see a positive image emerge from his film. (A negative of a negative photograph gives a positive image.) Since it would have been impossible to fake a photographic negative long before the world had any knowledge of photography, there can be no doubt that the Shroud contains an actual negative, an actual photograph. As a result, the position that the Shroud is some sort of painting or fake is now known to be false.
2. The Shroud demonstrates that the person was crucified with nails through his wrists, not hands. It has only recently become known that the flesh in a person's hands cannot bear the weight necessary for crucifixion; for that reason nails were driven through the wrists. This means that the Shroud is historically accurate regarding the practice of crucifixion even though all the paintings and other art works of the crucifixion made during the middle ages and up until only a few years ago are inaccurate in this regard. (The Greek and Hebrew words for hands can also refer to the wrists.)
3. The energy source for the photograph must have come from within the body itself, one reason being that there are no shadows on the photograph, as would have happened with external lighting. There are other significant scientific indications that the energy that produced the image on the shroud must have come from within the body.<sup>13</sup>
4. Close inspection of the image on the Shroud reveals that it is an X-ray image as well as a photographic image. Skeletal features can be observed. Again, the energy source for the image must have come from within the body, and the source of this energy has no known scientific explanation.
5. Pollen grains on the Shroud match plants that only existed in and around Jerusalem, also pictured on the Shroud. They bloom at the time of the

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<sup>13</sup> Antonacci, Mark, *The Resurrection of the Shroud*, New York, New York: M. Evans and Company inc., 2000, p. 252.

crucifixion. No other location in the world is known to have all these clearly identified plants growing there.

6. Written records of the Solarium (the linen cloth that was used to cover Jesus' head from the time of his death to his burial) go back to the first century and to Jerusalem. The Gospel of John states that after the resurrection, there were two cloths—that must have been the Shroud and the Solarium—seen left there in the tomb [John 20:6,7]. Scientific study of these two linen cloths has revealed that they are stained with same blood type and that the stains are the same shapes and are in the same places on both cloths. These two linen cloths must have covered the same body.
7. Some of the pollen grains on the Shroud are from a plant that grows in Palestine known for its sharp thorns. Those pollen grains are especially numerous around the head of the image on the Shroud, apparently left there by the crown of thorns.
8. The Solarium and the Shroud have separate histories, but the blood type and pattern of blood stains and other body fluids all match. For this reason it is evident that we have two independent but complementary lines of historical records that confirm the authenticity of the Shroud.

There are numerous other factual indications of the Shroud's genuineness in addition to those briefly mentioned above. Many books, periodicals and internet sites describe this evidence in considerable detail. Suffice it to say, as mentioned above, that the evidence for the authenticity of the Shroud is quite overwhelming.

Experts at Italy's National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Development, for instance, have concluded that the image on the Shroud could not be a fake. The agency said:

The Double image (front and back) of a scourged and crucified man, barely visible on the linen cloth of the Shroud of Turin, has many physical and chemical characteristics that are so particular

that the staining which is identical in all its facets, would be impossible to obtain today [even] in a laboratory.<sup>14</sup>

A few years ago, however, a carbon 14 test was done on a small piece of the Shroud which indicated that its origin only goes back to the 14<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. Further analysis of the portion of the cloth that was tested, however, revealed that the piece of cloth tested was actually from linen material that had been spliced in to repair damage to the Shroud resulting from a fire that occurred in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. For this reason the carbon 14 dates are now dismissed as being inaccurate, as stated by *National Geographic*: “But new tests show that the piece that was tested is of a different material from the rest of the shroud, says chemist Raymond Rogers—it was a patch added in medieval times.”<sup>15</sup> As a consequence, those who follow the scientific evidence surrounding the Shroud are now agreed that the carbon 14 test is meaningless.

It is fair to say that at this time, all the known evidence strongly suggests the Shroud is authentic. The evidence is totally one-sided, so one-sided that attorney and former agnostic Mark Antonacci described the evidence as follows:

In the case of the Shroud of Turin, however, we have an archeological object that contains direct evidence of the crucifixion and resurrection of the historical Jesus Christ. It also contains evidence that specifically confirms the exact circumstances such as time, place location, participants, et cetera, of the written historical accounts of these events.

All of this evidence is of a very sophisticated nature, containing extensive scientific and medical evidence published independently in numerous scientific journals and other periodicals. If we were to study an important event in history, whether it be Caesar’s crossing of the Rubicon, the posting by Martin Luther of the 95 theses on the door at Wittenberg, or practically any other historical event prior to this century, we

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<sup>14</sup> “Jesus! Was the Shroud of Turin created by a supernatural ‘flash of light’”? Patricia Calhoun, [http://blogs.westword.com/latestword/2011/12/shroud\\_of\\_turin](http://blogs.westword.com/latestword/2011/12/shroud_of_turin).

<sup>15</sup> *National Geographic*, October 28, 2010.

would not find such extensive scientific evidence to prove their occurrences.<sup>16</sup>

Discussion questions and recommended reading:

1. Miracles are commonly defined as supernatural events for which there is no known scientific explanation. Does the image on the Shroud meet this definition?
2. Miracles, however, did not even convince many of those who lived at the time and place of Jesus himself. Accordingly, Jesus said, "...if they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead." As we noted previously, people are free to reject the message of Christ. But what enables people who believe the message to do so? See I Cor. 12:3b.<sup>17</sup>
3. An excellent video summarizing what is known about the Shroud is available on YouTube: [Jesus and the Shroud of Turin](#). This video, among other observations, pictures the remarkable similarity between the image on the Shroud and the many paintings of Jesus. The video suggests that this may be because one or more very early artists had access to the Shroud. After watching the video, comment on these similarities.
4. For further study see: Mark Antonacci, *The Resurrection of the Shroud*, New York, New York: M. Evans and Company inc., 2000.

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<sup>16</sup> Antonacci, Mark, *The Resurrection of the Shroud*, New York, New York: M. Evans and Company inc., 2000, p. 252.

<sup>17</sup> "... no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit."

## **Fulfillment of prophecy:**

Luke, the Biblical writer and historian, recorded for us Paul's missionary speech given to King Agrippa. Part of that speech reads as follows:

“King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do.”  
Then Agrippa said to Paul, “Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?” Paul replied, “Short time or long—I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains” (Acts 26:27-29).

Paul was saying to Agrippa that Jesus' fulfillment of numerous Old Testament prophecies provides powerful evidence that he is the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. Following are some of the Messianic predictions made by the Old Testament prophets as compared to the fulfillment of these prophecies by Jesus of Nazareth.

### **The Messiah would be God himself.**

PROPHECY: “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

FULFILLMENT: “In the beginning was the Word [Jesus], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1).

### **The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.**

PROPHECY: “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel whose origins are from of old, from ancient times” (Micah 5:2).

FULFILLMENT: “Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea” (Matthew 2: 1).

### **The Messiah would be born of a virgin.**



PROPHECY: “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel” [“Immanuel” means “God with us”] (Isaiah 7: 14).

FULFILLMENT: “Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 1:18).

***The Messiah would work many sensational miracles.***

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

FULFILLMENT: “The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor” (Matthew 11:5).

***The Messiah would enter Jerusalem on a donkey colt.***

PROPHECY: “Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (Zechariah 9:9).

FULFILLMENT: “They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road. When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: ‘Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord’” (Luke 19:35-38).

***The Messiah would be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver.***

PROPHECY: “So they paid me thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said to me, ‘Throw it to the potter’ — the handsome price at which they priced me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord to the potter” (Zechariah 11: 12, 13).

FULFILLMENT: “So they counted out for him thirty silver coins. ... So Judas threw the money into the temple. ... So they decided to use the money to buy the potter’s field ...” (Matthew 26:15; 27:5, 7).

***The Messiah would be killed by crucifixion.***

PROPHECY: “They pierced my hands and my feet” [The Hebrew word for “hand” refers to the hand and wrist] (Psalm 22:16).

FULFILLMENT: “They crucified him” (John 19:18).

***The Messiah would be patient and silent under suffering.***

PROPHECY: “He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth” (Isaiah 53:7).

FULFILLMENT: “When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate asked him, ‘Don’t you hear how many things they are accusing you of?’ But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge — to the great amazement of the governor” (Matthew 27:12-14).

***The Messiah would be numbered with the transgressors.***

PROPHECY: “He poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:12).

FULFILLMENT: “They crucified two robbers with him, one on his right and one on his left” (Matthew 15:27).

***They would divide his clothes by casting lots.***

PROPHECY: “They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing” (Psalm 22:18).

FULFILLMENT: “When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots” (Matthew 27:35).

***The Messiah would make intercession for his murderers.***

PROPHECY: “For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors” (Isaiah 53: 12).

FULFILLMENT: “Jesus said, ‘Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing’” (Luke 23:24).

***The Messiah would be forsaken by God.***

PROPHECY: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Psalm 22:1).

FULFILLMENT: “About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Eloi. Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ — which means, “My God, my God, Why have you forsaken me?”(Matthew 27:46).

***None of his bones would be broken.***

PROPHECY: “He protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken” (Psalm 34:20).

FULFILLMENT: “But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ... that the Scripture would be fulfilled: ‘Not one of his bones will be broken’” (John 19:33,36).

***The Messiah would be buried with the rich.***

PROPHECY: “He made his grave with the rich in his death” (Isaiah 53:9).

FULFILLMENT: “There came a rich man. . . named Joseph.... he asked for Jesus’ body. ...and placed it in his own new tomb” (Matthew 27:57-60).

***The Messiah would rise from the dead.***

PROPHECY: “You will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay” (Psalm 16: 10).

FULFILLMENT: “He is not here; he has risen!” (Luke 24:6).

***The Messiah would sit at the right hand of God.***

PROPHECY: “The Lord says to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right hand’” (Psalm 110:1).

FULFILLMENT: “He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven” (Hebrews 1:3).

There are numerous other Messianic prophecies which Jesus fulfilled, but those mentioned above should enable us to recognize that the fulfillment of prophecy by Jesus provides powerful evidence that he really is the promised Messiah. Jesus’ fulfillment of prophecy also allows us to understand what the historian, Luke, was explaining when he said that the evangelist Apollos “refuted the Jews in public debate, proving from the Scriptures [Old Testament] that Jesus was the Christ” (Acts 18:28).

The only way Jesus the Nazarene could have fulfilled all these prophecies is to be exactly who he said he was—the promised Messiah, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the glorious heavenly king who became a man and rode into Jerusalem on a donkey instead of a highly decorated and majestic horse that kings normally rode.

Discussion questions and recommended reading:

1. Describe how did the early disciples used Jesus’ fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies in their mission work. See, for example, Acts 2: 22 – 36.
2. How were true prophets identified by the Old Testament Israelite nation? See Jeremiah 28:9, “The prophet who prophesies peace will be recognized as one truly sent by the Lord only if his prediction comes true.”
3. What if a prophet was incorrect in his predictions? See Deuteronomy 18:21-22, “You may say to yourselves, ‘How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?’ If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously, so do not be alarmed.”
4. The Israelites were given other objective criteria for identifying true prophets versus false. See Chapter 8 in *Many Convincing Proofs: A Biblical Approach to Christian Apologetics*, by Allen Quist, Mankato, Minnesota: Lutheran Synod Book Company, 2008.

## Jesus the master teacher:

As mentioned above, Jesus could not have been just a great man. He was either the person the Gospel writers say he was, or otherwise he was a liar, a manipulator, a cult leader or worse. C. S. Lewis said it this way:

"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronising nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. ... Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God.<sup>18</sup>

Could Jesus have been a liar or someone living in fantasy? Evaluating the way he taught his listeners will help answer that question. Luke, the historian, described for us the following account which reveals who Jesus was as a teacher:

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

"What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

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<sup>18</sup> Lewis, C.S., *Mere Christianity*, London: Collins, 1952.

“You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise” (Luke 10:25-37).

This parable, as told by Jesus, along with the accompanying narrative, establishes him as a master teacher. Notice that the expert in the law asked Jesus two questions, not just one—the first being: “Teacher, what I must I do to inherit eternal life?” The second question was: “And who is my neighbor?” In the parable Jesus at first appeared to be answering the second question, but he was actually answering both questions at the same time, and his primary focus was on the first and most important question, namely: “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” (An “expert in the law” was someone who was an expert in the first five books of the Bible, commonly referred to as “the Law” by the Jews of Jesus’ time.)

Notice that the expert in the law was not genuinely looking for an answer to either question—he was putting Jesus to the test, that is, he was looking for a way to criticize and discredit him. Jesus, however, answered him anyway, but did so indirectly and in a very skilful manner.

How does Jesus' parable answer the two questions? The parable does so by advancing three principles. They are: (1) The heart and center of the moral law is love to God and love to our neighbor. Both Jesus and the expert in the law agreed on this principle in theory, but because the man left to die in the parable is not identified in any way, Jesus clarified that our neighbor is anyone and everyone. Every person is our neighbor. In contrast, the Jewish leaders of this time were selective in who they considered to be a “neighbor” and who was not. Jesus also clarified that the moral law must be followed, not just understood. The implied question that Jesus effectively raised is whether the expert in the law had successfully kept this moral law or not. Jesus said to him, “Do this and you will live,” and “Go and do likewise.” The expert in the law didn't care to say if he had kept the moral law or not. He, instead, proceeded to his second question, “And who is my neighbor?”

The second principle is clarified in the parable itself. Jesus constructed the parable so that the two men who looked the other way, the priest and the Levite, were members of the Jewish religious establishment—people like the expert in the law himself. With which person in the parable would the expert in the law have associated himself? He would not have identified with the Samaritan because the Jews despised Samaritans. (The expert in the law even refused to speak the word “Samaritan” when Jesus asked him who was neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of thieves. He instead answered, “The one who had mercy on him.”)

So as the expert in the law listened to the parable and as he associated himself with the priest and the Levite, he should have seen the second principle involved in answer to his questions, namely, that he could not inherit eternal life by keeping God's moral law—the reason being that he had not done so! Jesus emphasized this truth by twice telling the man to “Do this.” Knowing the moral

law doesn't satisfy it. The moral law requires that we live by it, not just be able to describe what it is.

Finally, Jesus was masterfully pointing the expert in the law to the third and most important principle. Where did his failure to keep the moral law leave the expert in the law? The Jewish religious leaders of this time thought they were successfully keeping the moral law. Jesus showed them they were not. Where could he go from there? In answer, the parable focuses on the one person who in the parable did keep the moral law—the Samaritan.

Who is the Samaritan? Who is the person who had mercy on the man left to die? Who is the man who took care of the helpless victim at the side of the road? Who paid in full the price for healing the man? Who asked for nothing in return? Who was this man considered to be an outcast by the Jewish leaders of that time?

The Samaritan symbolizes Jesus himself. Jesus pointed the expert in the law, and all others listening, to himself as the Savior and the substitute for all who haven't kept the moral law themselves. That is, Jesus points the man and others listening to himself—the Redeemer of all mankind. That is how Jesus answered the man's question "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" The answer is to put your trust in the Samaritan, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

John Newton described this all-important truth in his hymn, "How Kind the Good Samaritan," which begins as follows:

How kind the good Samaritan  
To him who fell among the thieves!  
Thus Jesus pities fallen man,  
And heals the wounds the soul receives.

This is the third principle in the parable and it answers the first and most important question, "How can I inherit eternal life?" The answer is in the man telling the story—Jesus Himself. Jesus, the master teacher who gave indirect—and brilliant—answers to the two questions. He is no fool. He is no imposter, no



charlatan. He can only be the person that Luke and the other gospel writers say he is—the promised Messiah and Lord of all.

This is why Jesus the Nazarene has had such a profound impact on human history!

Discussion questions and recommended reading:

1. Jesus answered both questions of the expert in the law, but did so indirectly. Why do you suppose that his answers were indirect?
2. The parable of the Good Samaritan has inspired sculptures, poetry, songs, stained glass windows and numerous paintings (including one by Rembrandt), and has provided all or part of the name for many hospitals, nursing homes and charitable organizations. What does this recognition and admiration of the parable suggest about its author?
3. Most people see the parable as an example of how we should live (morality). Is that its primary meaning?
4. For further study see: Lewis, C. S., *Mere Christianity*, New York, New York: MacMillan Publishing House, 1960.

## Chapter 3

## Answering Objections—Darwinian Evolution

In Western culture, Darwinian evolution appears to present the biggest objection to orthodox Christianity at this time. Some evolutionists even say that Darwinism is no longer a theory, but is now a proven fact. Anyone committed to Naturalistic Darwinian evolution has a huge barrier to accepting the message of Jesus the Christ.

It should be recognized that, like Christianity, Darwinism requires a major step of faith. We haven't personally seen someone raised from the dead, as Christianity claims, and none of us have seen life arise from non-life as Darwinism claims. Christians believe that life came from the act of a Creator God. Darwinists believe that life came from non-living matter. Both are steps of faith. Both are contrary to the laws of natural science as we understand them.

In addition, Darwinists have knowingly falsified much of the supposed evidence for their claims for verification of evolution. At least some of these misrepresentations are well documented. Several examples of these falsifications are included in this chapter.

The center of Charles Darwin's theory is that all life can be traced back to a single, living, common ancestor that mysteriously came into being. He said that the different species of living things came about as the product of many millions of years of gradual changes resulting from small "mutations" (genetic errors) and "natural selection" which gave organisms with positive mutations a better chance to survive and reproduce. He called this process "survival of the fittest." As these genetic alterations accumulated over time, said Darwin, new species were created—thereby producing the myriad of different kinds of insects, fish, plants and animals that now inhabit our planet or have done so in the past.

Darwin recognized that the fossil record did not support the theory very well because numerous "transitional fossils" had not yet been found. Missing transitional fossils included the missing links between reptiles and birds, between primates and man, and in numerous other areas. Darwin said these gaps would be

filled as research continued. The search for such missing links, however, has proven to be spectacularly unsuccessful.

Nevertheless, in Western culture some kind of evolution is commonly accepted as being true. A recent Gallup poll found that 46% of Americans believe in creationism, 32% believe in theistic evolution, and 15% believe in Naturalistic evolution.<sup>19</sup> This being the case, how should Christian people deal with this significant barrier to the Christian faith? Following are some reasons for being skeptical of Darwinism, reasons why Darwinism should be viewed as a hypothesis that is far from having been scientifically verified.

## **Genetic deterioration:**

Today, far more is known about genetics than was the case in Darwin's time. For example, on November 12, 2012, *Science Daily* and numerous other media outlets printed a story that has caused considerable consternation for those who believe in Darwinian evolution. *Science Daily*, in its headline, said: "Humans Are Slowly but Surely Losing Intellectual and Emotional Abilities." This headline summarized the recent work and comments of geneticist Dr. Gerald Crabtree M.D. who is Professor of Pathology and Developmental Biology at Stanford University School of Medicine. The article in *Science Daily* said:

Based on calculations of the frequency with which deleterious mutations appear in the human genome and the assumption that 2000 to 5000 genes are required for intellectual ability, Dr. Crabtree estimates that within 3000 years (about 120 generations) we have all sustained two or more mutations harmful to our intellectual or emotional stability. Moreover, recent findings from neuroscience suggest that genes involved in brain function are uniquely susceptible to mutations. Dr. Crabtree argues that the combination of less selective pressure and the large number of easily affected genes is eroding our intellectual and emotional capabilities.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> June 1, 2012, Gallup poll.

<sup>20</sup> *Science Daily*, November 12, 2012.

Dr. Crabtree also said in *Trends in Genetics*:

I would wager that if an average citizen from Athens of 1000 BC were to appear suddenly among us, he or she would be among the brightest and most intellectually alive of our colleagues and companions, with a good memory, a broad range of ideas, and a clear-sighted view of important issues.<sup>21</sup>

Needless to say, these articles put Darwinian evolutionists on the defensive. After all, the heart and center of Darwinian theory is that the genetic code (“genome”) of the various forms of life is steadily improving. But Dr. Crabtree says the genetic code—in that arena where it is most important to us, human intelligence—is actually in decline. If Gerald Crabtree is right, then the central explanatory paradigm of Darwinism is false.

Several years ago, the author conducted a simple but revealing exercise to illustrate how genetic deterioration works. 25 photocopies of a printed sheet of paper were made, but instead of making all those copies from the original, one copy of the original was made, then the copy was copied and so on to make 25 copies. By the 10<sup>th</sup> copy, the wording was becoming fuzzy. By the 20<sup>th</sup> copy, the print was difficult to read, and by the 25<sup>th</sup> copy the wording was no longer legible.

This is how genetic deterioration (“genetic entropy”) operates. With every new generation, the genome is copied. The copy is very good, but it is never perfect. (The more significant genetic mistakes are called “mutations.”) The genetic code is then copied again with the next generation. These copies are not made from the original; they are all copies of copies. Because the copying process is never exact, the genome accumulates more and more errors with every generation.

Darwin hypothesized that nature would eliminate those organisms where damaging mutations had entered the genetic code, and nature would sustain those organisms where the mutations by chance actually made the genetic code better

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<sup>21</sup> *Trends in Genetics*, March, 2013, p 127.

for survival. For that reason, said Darwin, the genetic code would gradually improve.

Unfortunately for Darwin, we now know it doesn't work that way. Organisms inheriting damaging mutations in the genetic code are usually able to survive and reproduce, thereby passing the genetic mistakes on to the next generations. For this reason, we now carry vast arrays of mutations that limit us in significant ways, but normally don't kill us or render us unable to reproduce (even though fertility in our country is in steady decline). Such mutations include arthritis, some mental illnesses, hemophilia, several heart diseases, sickle cell anemia, perhaps autism and numerous other maladies.

This deterioration of the genome is accepted within the field of genetics. Geneticists also know that favorable mutations are extremely rare, even though they do occur. The few favorable mutations that take place are completely overshadowed by the vast array of unfavorable mutations.

As the prominent geneticist John Sanford has said, even though natural selection tends to favor positive mutations, the process of natural selection cannot begin to keep up with all the damaging errors accumulating in the genome because the negative mutations are many times more numerous. According to Sanford, the research on the genome done over the past few years has made it clear that the human genome is going downhill—the exact opposite of the supposed process that Darwin said explains all life. This means, says Sanford, that Darwinism has been disproven. The significance of this truth is difficult to overstate. Modern genetics has disproven the Darwinian theory, and few have bothered to inform the public of what has happened.

As Sanford puts it, the lynch-pin of Darwinism is the thesis that the genome is steadily improving because of favorable mutations and natural selection. That thesis is now known to be false. Most members of the science community are unwilling to come to grips to what geneticists know to be true. And as Ben Stein documented in his extraordinary film *Expelled*, Darwinists are extremely defensive and closed-minded when it comes to substantial flaws in their theory.

As the human genome deteriorates, human brains are simultaneously shrinking in size. National Public Radio reported:

... scientists say our brains are actually getting smaller... the brains of our ancestors reversed course and started getting smaller — and they've been shrinking ever since.

Cro-Magnon man, who lived in Europe 20,000 to 30,000 years ago, had the biggest brains of any human species. In comparison, today's human brain is about 10 percent smaller. It's a chunk of brain matter "roughly equivalent to a tennis ball in size" ...

The experts aren't sure about the implications of this evolutionary trend. Some think it might be a dumbing-down process. One cognitive scientist, David Geary, argues that as human society grows increasingly complex, individuals don't need to be as intelligent in order to survive and reproduce.<sup>22</sup>

While the dates given above are questionable, it is well-known that human brain size has decreased over the years. Not only did Cro-Magnon people have larger brains than we do, but Neanderthal man did as well. Neanderthals were an early race of people that were superior to us in both brain size and physical strength. (The apparent disappearance of this race is no longer a complete mystery in that modern genetics has determined that we carry a significant number of Neanderthal genes, demonstrating that the Neanderthal race intermarried with the Cro-Magnon race and modern people are at least partially the result of this genetic history.)

While there are many aspects of genetic entropy that we have yet to understand, it is clear that the decline in both brain size and muscular strength are primarily a result of changes in the human genetic code.

Discussion questions and recommended reading:

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<sup>22</sup> NPR, January 2, 2011, 1:40 PM.

1. The central principle of Darwinian evolution is that the genetic code is gradually improving. We now know, however, that it is steadily deteriorating. Why don't modern evolutionists abandon Darwinism when the theory is no longer scientifically viable?
2. What implications, if any, does being a creationist have on the way we see ourselves and on the way we live?
3. Do you or people you know carry any detrimental genetic defects that you are aware of? Do you think there may be some genetic defects you are not aware of?
4. It is often predicted that our life span will soon be extended to an average of 100 years, then 120, and so on. Does this seem likely in view of what is now known about genetics?
5. For further study, see: John Sanford, *Genetic Entropy & The Mystery of the Genome*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Waterloo, New York: FMS Publications; 3rd edition, March, 2008. See also numerous videos of Sanford and his work available on YouTube, such as: [Dr. John Sanford Interviewed](#) and [Dr. John Sanford: Genetic Entropy](#).

## **Irreducible Complexity:**

Darwin said that all life can be explained by the gradual adaptation of living creatures to their environment. This adaptation, said Darwin, enhanced the organism's ability to survive and reproduce and ultimately explains the creation of new species. It should be recognized, however, that some features of living things are so complex and so unique that they could not have developed gradually through adaptations. Prominent biochemist, Michael Behe, called this phenomenon "irreducible complexity." Features of living things that are irreducibly complex would have had to appear fully formed to have any survival value. One such feature of living things is the feather.

The origin of birds has always been a major problem for Darwinism, and even today Darwinists have no explanation for the supposed evolution of birds. Indeed, one of the most difficult issues concerning bird evolution is the evolution of feathers. Feathers are highly complex and intricately designed structures that

are necessary for birds to fly. Feathers are found only on birds—a truism not only today but also for the fossil record. This fossil record reveals a total absence of any evidence of feather evolution. There are no transitional species.

Feathers are intricate in structure and are extremely light in weight. At the same time, they are beautifully designed and have amazing diversity in size, shape, colors, and texture. Not surprisingly, they have been used by people of numerous cultures throughout history to decorate themselves in various ways.

A swan has 25,000 feathers, and small birds like wrens have over 1,000. Most birds lose their feathers every year, a process called “molting” that occurs gradually so that no bare spots develop. The feathers are lost and replaced in pairs, one from each side, so the bird’s balance is maintained. A feather has a shaft that forms its center. On the shafts are vanes made of small, threadlike strands called “barbs.” Each barb has thousands of smaller strands attached to it called “barbules.” The barbules are connected to barbicels with microscopic hook-like devices called “hamuli.” Each strand is hooked to an opposing strand, just like the hooks on a zipper.

So how could feathers possibly develop by chance? A partially formed feather would have no survival value whatsoever. One feather, even fully formed, would have no survival value. Partially formed feathers would have a negative survival value. What are the chances that a random mutation could occur that would clothe a reptile with over a thousand fully formed feathers arranged in such a way so that the reptile could fly?

Charles Darwin recognized the difficulties in explaining feathers; he also recognized the difficulty in explaining the human eye and numerous other features of modern organisms that appear to be impossible to explain by gradual changes. Darwin additionally recognized that the fossil record failed to include transitional fossils for such changes. His proposed solution to the problem was that further research would discover the needed transitional fossils. One important test for a scientific theory is its ability to predict future discoveries. Have these needed transitional fossils been discovered?



One of the most prominent scientists of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Sir John Eccles (1903–1997) from Melbourne, Australia, won the Nobel Prize for his research on the transmission of nerve impulses from one cell to another via the synapse. On several occasions, Eccles made extraordinarily significant statements regarding the various missing links.<sup>23</sup> He said there are two great mysteries in the development of life on earth. One of these mysteries is the origin of life; the other, said Eccles, is the origin of man.

Dr. Eccles said that from the perspective of science, we have no idea how life came about. Additionally, he said, we have no idea how life even could have come about. We know, of course, that life is real, and we know quite a bit about how it behaves, but we honestly have no idea how to explain its origin, he said.

Similarly, he said, we have no idea how mankind came to be. Recognizing that textbooks following Darwinian evolution commonly show drawings of the supposed ascent of man from earlier primates, Eccles said such drawings are totally inaccurate. He said we could place all the evidence for primates to man evolution on the top of a card table—and have half our table space left over! He emphasized that significant evidence for some kind of evolutionary development from ape to man simply doesn't exist. The missing links, he said, have not been found because they do not exist.

As Dr. Eccles suggested, the big question regarding evolutionary theory is this: Can you explain life as having arisen from non-life by means of nature alone? Or do you need to rely on a creator-God to explain life? Eccles was convinced that a creator-God is necessary to explain life.

There are many examples of irreducible complexity; the feather is simply one of the most obvious. One doesn't have to be a scientist to understand the matter. And it is perfectly reasonable to suggest that only a supernatural intelligent designer could produce the feather and other examples of irreducible complexity. As Paul said, "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being

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<sup>23</sup> Dr. Eccles made these statements at the Nobel Symposium held in St. Peter, Minnesota, at Gustavus Adolphus College in 1968.

understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse” (Romans 1:20). It is irrational to say that feathers are the product of chance. Despite all its sugar-coating, Darwinism is fundamentally a leap of faith that goes well beyond what science should be.

Discussion questions and recommended reading:

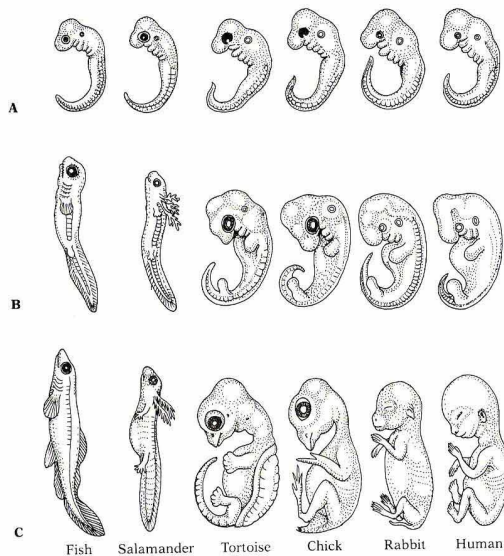
1. What do you think the chances might be that feathers developed gradually from reptile scales over millions of years?
2. Why do most scientists subscribe to Darwinian evolution? (Dr. Sanford said that for most of his scientific career, he never questioned evolution because everyone he worked with assumed it was correct.)
3. Darwinism may be described as one of the greatest heresies of our time. Do you agree or disagree?
4. Are you aware of other examples of irreducible complexity?
5. For further study, see: Michael Behe, *Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution*: New York, New York, Free Press (Simon and Schuster), 1996.

## Haeckel's embryos:

Haeckel's famous drawings of embryos have been commonly used in biology textbooks to illustrate Darwinian evolution. The textbooks don't bother to tell the students, however, that the drawings are known to be fakes.

## Haeckel's embryos

[drawings from [www.tiede.fi](http://www.tiede.fi)]



Ernst Haeckel said that his drawing of embryos—with a fish embryo on the upper far left developing into a fish in the lower left and a human embryo in the upper right developing into a human baby on the lower far right—illustrate how all vertebrate embryos at the embryonic stage of development are essentially the same and then evolve into different organisms during their gestation. Haeckel and other evolutionists called this process “recapitulation”—the theory

that organisms retrace their evolutionary history during their pre-natal development.

Are Haeckel's drawings an accurate illustration of genuine evolution? They are not. First of all, it is well-known in the field of embryology that the drawings are inaccurate. Haeckel falsified the drawings to make the embryos look similar when they actually are not. Noted British embryologist Michael Richardson, after his extensive study of the embryos, said: “These famous images

are inaccurate and give a misleading view of embryonic development.”<sup>24</sup> Richardson also said, “It looks like [Haeckel’s embryos are] turning out to be one of the most important fakes in biology.”<sup>25</sup>

In 1997, Michael Richardson and his colleagues published photographs comparing actual embryos with Haeckel's drawings in the journal *Anatomy and Embryology*. This was reported in the journal *Science*, Sept. 5, 1997, under the headline: "Haeckel's Embryos: Fraud rediscovered."

Secondly, we know from our modern understanding of genetics that the genetic information in a fish embryo is radically different from the genetic information in a human embryo. When it comes to what determines the nature of the different forms of life, genetics is everything. So even if the embryos actually looked similar, which they do not, the evolutionary notion of organisms retracing evolution in their embryonic development is known today to be total nonsense.

So why do biology textbooks commonly include Haeckel’s embryos when they are known to be fakes? The reason is that evolutionists have nothing better to illustrate evolution. The peppered moth study, another commonly used illustration, is also faked. And even if the peppered moth study was legitimate, it would only illustrate normal adaption which is not evolution.

Similarly, the sketches of the supposed evolution from primates to man are fakes, as are the sketches of the supposed evolution of the horse. There are no genuine illustrations of evolution that can be included in textbooks, so the writers insert fabrications instead. Education should be about genuine knowledge and what is known to be true. Unfortunately, indoctrination in Darwinian evolution is a higher priority in our schools than writing what is true, and those who wish to promote Darwinism are willing to rely on falsehoods to do so.

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<sup>24</sup>These quotations, along with scholarly and extended analysis of the embryos, are included in chapter 5 of *Icons of Evolution: Science or Myth*, by Jonathan Wells (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 2000).

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

Interestingly, when evolutionists are asked to defend using falsified materials in textbooks, they commonly answer that the materials are useful illustrations even though they are not accurate. What they are really saying is that it's acceptable to mislead students in order to indoctrinate them in Darwinian evolution.

Discussion questions and recommended reading:

1. Evolutionists now commonly say that adaption is evolution. Is that a defensible position? What is the difference between adaption and evolution?
2. Why might evolutionists want to define adaption as evolution?
3. By selective breeding dairy farmers have developed cows that produce more milk than those in production some years ago. Is that evolution? Can new species be developed by selective breeding?
4. For further study, see: Jonathan Wells, *Icons of Evolution: Science or Myth*, Washington D. C., Regnery Publishing: January, 2000.

## **The *Glacier Girl*, ancient maps and ice core dating methods:**

The *Glacier Girl* is one of several Lockheed P-38 fighter planes that were forced to land on the Greenland ice cap during the Second World War. It has been restored to operable condition after being buried under the Greenland ice for nearly fifty years.

Between 1977 and 1988, eleven different teams tried and failed to find and recover one of these aircraft. The teams were unsuccessful largely because they had followed the information given them by various members of the scientific community who said the plane would be, at most, 50 feet under the ice. The assumption was that 50 feet of ice would have accumulated over the plane in 50 years, one foot or less per year. It was not until 1988 that two explorers sponsored by the Greenland Expedition Society finally found the lost plane at a surprising 268 feet below the surface of the ice, which had accumulated over the plane in the 50 years it had been there.

### **The *Glacier Girl* resting under 268 feet of ice.**



### **The *Glacier Girl* flies again.**



Why are these facts about the *Glacier Girl* important? They are important because ice core samples from Greenland and Antarctica are used by the world's scientific community for dating a wide variety of climactic changes and other events in the Earth's history. The information and assumptions used for this kind of scientific dating predicted that the plane would be 50 feet below the surface at most. The plane turned out to be 268 feet below the surface. This means that the assumptions and/or formulas correlating ice cores from Greenland with various historical dates are completely off the mark.

This also means that ice has been accumulating on Greenland at the rate of some over 5 feet per year. At this rate, how long would it take to build up an ice sheet one mile thick? About one thousand years. This number matches what we know about Greenland 1,000 years ago, because at that time, there were 5,000 or more Norwegian settlers living on Greenland. We also know that the reason these settlements were successful was that Greenland in 1,000 AD was far warmer than it is today.

How was Leif Erickson able to sail to Newfoundland in AD 1,000? Two important reasons he could do so were that 1,000 years ago, the Earth was much warmer than it is today, allowing the Viking ships access to North America and many other locations; second, he could sail from Greenland, which is a distance only 1/3 as far as sailing from Norway. Historians today recognize that Leif Erickson was in North America in AD 1,000, five hundred years before Columbus, and that a Norwegian settlement was established in Newfoundland at about that time. The reasons these feats were possible are typically ignored by modern historians. Unfortunately, political correctness has a huge influence on what our history books are willing to say. Accuracy and truthfulness often take second place. The point is that the use of ice cores from Greenland to date key events in the earth's history should not be taken seriously.<sup>26</sup>

Ice cores from Antarctica are similarly being used for dating the Earth's history. It is commonly said in the scientific community that the ice cores from Antarctica correlate with various atmospheric events going back as much as 800,000 years. The Antarctic ice cap is commonly said to be at least one million years old. How accurate are such statements relating to ice cores taken from Antarctica?

The truth of the matter is that statements like these relating to Antarctic ice cores are inconsistent with available historical documents. Such documents are of two kinds: written records and drawings such as maps.

In the past 80 years, a number of sensational ancient maps have come to light that should revolutionize much of our understanding of world history if we are willing to acknowledge the implications of what they say. These extraordinary maps are largely ignored by our history books, however, likely because they disagree with the politically correct timelines generally accepted by modern history and modern science.

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<sup>26</sup> See also "The Vikings in America and Greenland" by Allen Quist at <http://cmods.org/Unit2Module6.html>.



Three of the ancient maps actually picture Antarctica without the kind of ice cap that it contains today. One such map was located in the Library of Congress, Washington D. C., by Charles Hapgood in 1960. The map was drawn by French cartographer Oronteus Finaeus in 1531. Finaeus is a well known historical figure and was an expert in cartography (map making), astronomy, mathematics and military weaponry. Antarctica is clearly shown on his map, and is pictured as being free of ice at least on the coastline—with flowing rivers and identified mountain ranges. Some of the mountain ranges pictured on the map have only been recently discovered.

## The Oronteus Finaeus map of 1531.



This portion of the Finaeus map pictures the globe from the perspective of the South Pole. (The other half of the map, which is not shown, pictures the globe from the perspective of the North Pole.) Continents and islands clearly pictured on the map include Antarctica (center), South America (lower right), Africa (lower left, Madagascar (between Africa and Antarctica) and Australia (upper left). No serious questions have been raised concerning the authenticity of this map.

There are numerous sensational features of this map—one of them being the fact that it obviously pictures Antarctica and did so long before our history books say it was “discovered” in 1820. Much of Antarctica is depicted as free of ice. This means that some of the source maps were drawn before the mile-thick ice cap was formed. This should not be surprising because another map, the famous Zeno map of the North Atlantic (1380 AD), pictures Greenland as being ice-free. The amount of ice on Greenland 600 years ago would have had some similarity to the amount of ice on Antarctica at the same time. One of the Viking settlements on Greenland still existed in 1380 AD even though the climate was rapidly getting colder at that time. As noted above, various source maps used by Finaeus had to have been drawn when the earth was much warmer than it is today and before the mile-thick ice cap existed on Antarctica.

Another sensation feature of the Finaeus depiction of Antarctica is its extraordinary accuracy—so accurate that modern mapmakers are mystified as to how it could have been drawn with such amazing precision. The coastline of Antarctica on the Finaeus map actually matches the current coastline when it is pictured without ice, known by means of modern sonograms first taken in the 1950s. Again we see that the source maps used by Finaeus had to have been made when the coast was ice free, and the map-making ability of earlier people (perhaps the Phoenicians), including their skills in mathematics and geometry, was far superior to what has been imagined by people in modern times.

The Finaeus map, and others like it have significant implications for what we know about the history of the world. The map demonstrates that Antarctica was extensively explored and mapped long before it was even known to the Western world. In addition, Antarctica was far warmer with far less ice than we see today. Dating methods relying on the ice cores of Antarctica should be recognized as having been completely discredited.

We see an extraordinary disconnect between available historical documents regarding the climatological history of the world over the past several thousand years versus the dates resulting from the assumptions and formulas of modern science. One of the accepted principles of historical research is to give the benefit of any doubt to genuine historical documents. There is no serious question about the genuineness of the Finaeus map or others like it. These historical documents raise serious questions about accepted dates and dating methods as they relate to the history of the world. And if the accepted dates for phenomenon like the Antarctic ice cap aren't accurate for the most recent several thousand years, there is no reason to trust them for dates that go back even further.

The bottom line is this: We have historical records (written documents and maps) relating to dates and events on the earth that go back only a few thousand years. Trying to establish dates that go beyond that is more speculation than anything else.

Discussion questions and recommended reading:

1. There is no doubt that the earth was far warmer 1,000 years ago than it is today. Why, do you suppose, is this truth so little-known?
2. Similarly, there is no doubt that at least one ancient civilization was far more sophisticated in its ability to navigate and map the globe than has been commonly recognized. Why is this factual date so little-known?
3. Is it possible that people were living on the coastline of Antarctica several thousand years ago?
4. For further study, see “Ancient Maps” by Allen Quist at [www.cmods.org/unit2.html](http://www.cmods.org/unit2.html).

## Dinosaurs:

One of the supposed facts of modern science is that dinosaurs have been extinct for 65 million years. Similarly, Super-croc, a cousin and contemporary of dinosaurs, is also said to have been extinct for 65 million years. Once again, these dates are inconsistent with available historical records.

The best known skeleton of Super-croc, scientific name “*Sarcosuchus Imperator*,” was unearthed in 2008 in a dry river bed in the Sahara Desert. This specimen would have weighed about 8 tons—ten times larger than the biggest contemporary crocodiles. The skeleton is said to go back 110 million years.<sup>27</sup>

Because of its size, it is thought that Super-croc ate dinosaurs as well as large fish. Super-croc is the largest known land-dwelling carnivorous creature, being significantly larger than even *Tyrannosaurus Rex*.

**Sarcosuchus Imperator:** Image form [themontaguefamily.blogspot.com](http://themontaguefamily.blogspot.com).



It is highly unlikely, however, that Super-croc became extinct 65 million years ago since we have a written document that describes it clearly and that goes back a mere 4,000 years or so. Job Ch. 41 reads as follows (It should be noted that the word “Leviathan” is a transliteration of the Hebrew word, in that earlier translators were not able to identify this creature. With the discovery of Super-croc, however, we can now identify the creature being pictured without difficulty. It should also be noted that words like “fire”

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<sup>27</sup> *National Geographic*, September, 2008.

and “smoke” are used symbolically, just like the words “flashes of light,” used to describe the noises the creature made.) :

<sup>1</sup>Can you pull in Leviathan with a fishhook or tie down its tongue with a rope? <sup>2</sup>Can you put a cord through its nose or pierce its jaw with a hook? <sup>3</sup>Will it keep begging you for mercy? Will it speak to you with gentle words? <sup>4</sup>Will it make an agreement with you for you to take it as your slave for life? <sup>5</sup>Can you make a pet of it like a bird or put it on a leash for the young women in your house? <sup>6</sup>Will traders barter for it? Will they divide it up among the merchants? <sup>7</sup>Can you fill its hide with harpoons or its head with fishing spears? <sup>8</sup>If you lay a hand on it, you will remember the struggle and never do it again! <sup>9</sup>Any hope of subduing it is false; the mere sight of it is overpowering. <sup>10</sup>No one is fierce enough to rouse it. Who then is able to stand against me? <sup>11</sup>Who has a claim against me that I must pay? Everything under heaven belongs to me. <sup>12</sup>“I will not fail to speak of Leviathan’s limbs, its strength and its graceful form. <sup>13</sup>Who can strip off its outer coat? Who can penetrate its double coat of armor? <sup>14</sup>Who dares open the doors of its mouth, ringed about with fearsome teeth? <sup>15</sup>Its back has<sup>lel</sup> rows of shields tightly sealed together; <sup>16</sup>each is so close to the next that no air can pass between. <sup>17</sup>They are joined fast to one another; they cling together and cannot be parted. <sup>18</sup>Its snorting throws out flashes of light; its eyes are like the rays of dawn. <sup>19</sup>Flames stream from its mouth; sparks of fire shoot out. <sup>20</sup>Smoke pours from its nostrils as from a boiling pot over burning reeds. <sup>21</sup>Its breath sets coals ablaze, and flames dart from its mouth. <sup>22</sup>Strength resides in its neck; dismay goes before it. <sup>23</sup>The folds of its flesh are tightly joined; they are firm and immovable. <sup>24</sup>Its chest is hard as rock, hard as a lower millstone. <sup>25</sup>When it rises up, the mighty are terrified; they retreat before its thrashing. <sup>26</sup>The sword that reaches it has no effect, nor does the spear or the dart or the javelin. <sup>27</sup>Iron it treats like straw and bronze like rotten wood. <sup>28</sup>Arrows do not make it flee; slingstones are like chaff to it. <sup>29</sup>A club seems to it but a piece of straw; it laughs at the rattling of the lance. <sup>30</sup>Its undersides are jagged potsherds, leaving a trail in the mud like a threshing sledge. <sup>31</sup>It makes the depths churn like a boiling caldron and stirs up the sea like a pot of ointment. <sup>32</sup>It leaves a glistening wake behind it; one would think the deep had white hair. <sup>33</sup>Nothing on earth is its equal — a creature without fear. <sup>34</sup>It looks down on all that are haughty; it is king over all that are proud.”

This is a picture-perfect description of Super-croc. Indeed, there is no other creature that comes close to matching the description. Similarly, Job chapter 40 describes one of the large plant-eating dinosaurs such as Apatosaurus. Job Ch. 40, beginning with verse 15, reads as follows:

15 Look at Behemoth, which I made along with you and which feeds on grass like an ox. 16 What strength it has in its loins, what power in the muscles of its belly! 17 Its tail sways like a cedar; the sinews of its thighs are close-knit. 18 Its bones are tubes of bronze, its limbs like rods of iron. 19 It ranks first among the works of God, yet its Maker can approach it with his sword. 20 The hills bring it their produce, and all the wild animals play nearby. 21 Under the lotus plants it lies, hidden among the reeds in the marsh. 22 The lotuses conceal it in their shadow; the poplars by the stream surround it. 23 A raging river does not alarm it; it is secure, though the Jordan should surge against its mouth. 24 Can anyone capture it by the eyes, or trap it and pierce its nose?

We once again have a perfectly clear description—in this case a description that is easily identified as that of a large herbivorous dinosaur such as Apatosaurus. As with the word “Leviathan,” because early translators could not identify this creature, they transliterated the Hebrew title “Behemoth” into English and left it at that. We can now easily identify the creature, however, as being a dinosaur. No other creature matches the description, and a dinosaur is a perfect match.

Is there any reason to doubt that a Super-croc and a dinosaur are pictured in the selections above from Job? There is not. The only supposed reason for doubt is that Super-croc and dinosaurs have supposedly been extinct for 65 million years while mankind supposedly goes back only about 200,000 years. Such dates are obviously in error, and other substantial evidence is now emerging that dinosaurs and people lived at the same time.

Some of this evidence involves a large number of art works from the distant past that clearly picture dinosaurs. One such art work is a relief that was carved into a stone of an ancient temple in Cambodia. The temple is known as Angkor Wat and was constructed in the early 12 century. The temple had been hidden in the Cambodian jungle for several hundred years. The relief is pictured below;

The creature above is one of many carved in stone at this location and is obviously a stegosaurus—the only creature that had large fins on its back. Some paleontologists think the fins were used for cooling the dinosaur, much like the fins on an air cooled engine. The important observation for us is that the artist would not have known what a stegosaurus looked like unless he had seen one or had access to descriptions of them or other works of art which revealed their appearance.



[Picture taken from [The Interactive Bible](#).]

The evidence that people lived at the same time as Super-croc and dinosaurs is strong. When written records and historical artifacts say one thing and scientific theory says something quite different, the benefit of the doubt should then be given to the historical records and artifacts. There is no reason to be skeptical of these records and artifacts. This means that the dates for dinosaurs, Super-croc and other related dates as commonly offered by the scientific community should not be taken seriously.

Most importantly, there is no genuine scientific knowledge that stands in the way of accepting the message of Jesus the Christ. Christian people should boldly proclaim Jesus even to those who have adopted Darwinian evolution because the objections that Darwinism has to the Christian faith is unconvincing and can be effectively answered. At the same time it should be recognized that the power to reach people for Christ is in the message of Christ itself, not in the refutation of Darwinism.

#### Discussion questions and recommended reading:

1. Some creationists have suggested that the Leviathan of Job 41 is a tyrannosaurus rex. Does the description in Job fit that dinosaur?
2. From the context of Job, it is clear that God is comparing him to two of his creatures that would make Job look rather small and insignificant. Should it surprise us that God would use the largest of his land dwelling creatures and the most fearsome of his carnivorous creatures to do so?



3. What is the theme of the Book of Job? Does this theme apply to the world of science in our time?
4. For further study, see: <http://cmods.org/Unit2Module7.html> by Allen Quist.

## Chapter 4

## Answering Objections—Postmodernism

A second significant contemporary challenge to Christianity is the philosophy known as postmodernism, a relatively new and influential worldview that now plays a major influence on contemporary life in the Western world. Postmodernism has had a significant impact on how the Western culture views the world.

Not many years ago, Americans saw themselves as living in the modern era. Huge advances were being made in the sciences, technology and medicine. These advances were making our lives very different, and in many ways, much better. We were entering the age of computers, email, the internet, organ transplants, cloning, genetic engineering, I-pods and smart phones. An improving standard of living helped make these breakthroughs available to large numbers of people.

The modern era included an optimistic view of human reason and human progress. We were confident of our ability to discover new information and to use this information for making substantial improvements in our lives.

Now, however, confidence in human rationality and our ability to make improvements in our lives is being eroded. Critics of modernism are taking center stage. These critics don't see progress as much as they see unequal access to progress, and they don't see opportunity nearly as much as they see oppression of vulnerable classes of people.

The critics are largely the postmodernists. They are the new relativists. Modernists saw science, technology, laws of economics, and mathematics as being real and true. Modernists, however, saw morality and other values as being relative. Postmodernists see themselves as going beyond modernism and taking the next step. They not only see morality as being relative; they see truth as being relative, as well. Postmodernists believe that what we think is true is merely defined as true by our culture and that other cultures see truth differently.

Postmodernism is indeed the next step beyond modernism. If what we think is the result of a Naturalistic conditioning process, as the premier modernist B. F. Skinner said, then we have no reason to believe that what we think is actually true. Our thinking becomes strictly a matter of the luck of the draw—whatever forces happened to impinge on us have determined how and what we think. Modernistic determinism leaves no room for right or wrong, nor does it ultimately leave room for knowing what is true.

The center of postmodernism is the view that there is no real truth, that people in different cultures see things certain ways because their culture has conditioned them to see things that way. One group's view of truth must then be just as valid as any other group's view. Contemporary evangelist Pastor Dick Tripp of New Zealand described the prevalence of this postmodern view in today's culture when he said:

A recent Barna Research Group survey on what Americans believe asked the question, "Is there absolute Truth?" Sixty-six percent of adults responded that they believe that "there is no such thing as absolute truth; different people can define truth in conflicting ways and still be correct."<sup>28</sup>

These 66%—who said that one group's view of truth is just as true as the next—have adopted the central tenet of postmodernism. They interpret the world, not in terms of what is true, but rather in terms of what particular groups think is true. "Truth" for them is not genuine truth; it is simply a point of view. Truth becomes what postmodernists call "constructs." What people believe is true is viewed as their "perspective" and nothing more.

Postmodernists argue that the real danger to civilization is neither ignorance nor error, but intolerance. Every group's views must be treated as equal to every other group's views. Diversity is valued, not truth. The villains are defined as those who believe they know what is true or what is right. The true believer is the real danger. History, they say, tells us that when men think they are right—when they are dogmatic—that dogmatism leads to wars, persecutions,

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<sup>28</sup> "Exploring faith today," pamphlet by Dick Tripp, reprinted at <http://christianity.co.nz/truth1.htm>.

racism, xenophobia and sexism. The postmodernist message is to realize that no one can claim to have genuine truth or the right morality. The operating strategy, in turn, in dealing with “absolutists,” is not to argue that believers are wrong, since truth is not relevant, but rather to call them names such as “hateful,” “narrow-minded” and “bigoted.”

Postmodernist thinking is now a major influence, if not the major influence, in our colleges and universities. University of Minnesota law school professors, Suzanna Sherry and Daniel Farber said:

Over the past decade, some radical law professors have been ... claiming that there is no such thing as truth or knowledge or merit or reason. All these things ... are simply a mask for racism, sexism, and other pathologies. ... According to the radicals ... there is no truth, just individual perspectives based on race, gender and the like—and everyone’s perspective is equally valid. Indeed, they argue, there is no such thing as objective reality. Reality is “socially constructed” by the powerful.<sup>29</sup>

Postmodernism has had a huge influence at all levels of education. The trendy postmodern view of history, for example, holds that “History is nothing more than a form of literature,”<sup>30</sup> and the new math, also called “integrated math,” is based on the postmodern assumption that mathematics is merely a construct and is not real. One-third of U.S. students are now schooled in postmodern math and as a consequence are ill prepared for college-level math.<sup>31</sup>

The author taught for years at a Christian college and often asked his class this question, “How many of you believe there is absolute truth?” Never once did a majority of students raise their hands. The students were then asked, “How

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<sup>29</sup> *Star-Tribune*, 2-19-98.

<sup>30</sup> Matthew Frank, “Construction Deconstructed,” *National Review Online*, 7-3-06

<sup>31</sup> Allen Quist, *America’s Schools: Battleground for Freedom*, 2005, Ch 2.

many of you think gravity affects different people differently?” No one ever raised their hand. The students were then asked, “So there is absolute truth after all, right?” By this time the student’s heads were spinning from the obvious inconsistency in their thinking, and they had no idea what to say.

There are three broad themes that define postmodernism. They are:

1. Truth does not exist, or at least is unknowable. Postmodernists say that one culture defines truth one way and another defines truth differently; so it’s all a matter of your point of view. The author once had an email exchange with a high school student who said her class studied the Battle of Pearl Harbor by first watching a video of the event produced by Americans and then watching another video of the event produced by the Japanese. She stated the conclusion of the study by saying, “so it’s all a matter of your point of view.”

Postmodernists, like this student, are half-right in what they say. Different cultures do have differing points of view on important historical events and on most everything else, but the question is not whether various cultures have differing points of view. The question is whether truth and knowledge exist at all. In the example above, the author proceeded to ask the student if the Japanese Air Force did, in fact, attack the U.S. forces at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. At that point, the student stopped the conversation. While there are differing points of view on Pearl Harbor, it is a fact of history, a truth of history, that there was a battle of Pearl Harbor and that it began on December 7, 1941, with an attack on U.S. forces by the Japanese Air Force.

The author, however, commonly encounters students who responded to important information by saying that we may see the world that way, but other cultures see things differently. These students have adopted the postmodern world view, usually without realizing they have done so. Much of multicultural education is really indoctrination in postmodernism, as Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey pointed out when they said:

Postmodernism rejects any notion of a universal, overarching truth and reduces all ideals to social constructions shaped by class, gender and ethnicity. ... Multiculturalism is not about appreciating cultures; it's about the dissolution of the individual into the tribal group. In postmodernism, there is no objective, universal truth; there is only the perspective of the group, whatever the group may be: African-Americans, women, gays, Hispanics and the list goes on. In postmodernism, all viewpoints, all lifestyles, all beliefs and behaviors are regarded as equally valid.<sup>32</sup>

Our challenge is this: Any individual who has adopted postmodernism will have major obstacles to believing the Christian Gospel. Postmodernists reject the notion of universal truths, including the truth that there is a God and that there is only one way of salvation, that being through the blood sacrifice of Jesus the Christ. The Christian and the postmodernist will have difficulty finding sufficient common ground to even allow meaningful dialogue on spiritual matters. The postmodernist will accept what the Christian says as being “true,” but only in the sense of depicting his cultural and personal experiences.

2. What people believe are true and right are really social constructs. The idea is that different cultures organize and interpret the world in certain ways that they think are true and right, but these interpretations and principles are actually nothing more than the way powerful people want vulnerable and exploited people to think in order to keep them under control.

Postmodernists see the Bible and Christian doctrines just this way—written by powerful white males for the purpose of keeping everyone else under their control. This is largely why some politicians see the Ten Commandments as a barrier to be overcome in their desire to fundamentally transform our world. Many see the U.S. Constitution the same way.

As another example, we think that words like “husband” and “wife” are perfectly good terms, but postmodernists see such words as means by which men keep women under their control. This is one reason why “husbands” and “wives”

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<sup>32</sup> *How Now Shall We Live*, 1999, p. 23.

become “significant others.” And there are no “waitresses” and “waiters” anymore, only “servers.” Similarly, we have no “stewardesses,” only “flight attendants.” Our postmodern culture doesn’t want our language to imply that men and women might have differences that are real—only differences that are constructs may be recognized, and they exist to be eliminated (deconstructed).

Similarly, postmodernists see marriage as an institution created by powerful men to keep women under subjection. Consequently, the postmodern left is willing to have welfare programs designed to discourage marriage, and this is why the new health care law persecutes married people as well. Postmodernists want to eliminate marriage because they see it as a construct that is repressive to women and to societal freedom. And if marriage is a construct, it can be changed (deconstructed) at any time.

The same holds true for sexual morality and abortion. The ill effects of promiscuity and killing the unborn are seen as irrelevant to the postmodern goals of personal freedom and making men and women the same. Women must be liberated from the burden of pregnancy. Gay marriage is viewed the same way. The immoral aspects of homosexuality are not considered genuine anyway, so there can be no preference given to heterosexuality over homosexuality. The many perversions that accompany homosexuality must be ignored or legitimized.

Postmodernism has easily incorporated the feminist and sexual revolutions into its ideology, as stated below by David Noebel:

[Postmodernism embraced] the sexual and feminist revolutions that began in the sixties [that] were intent on correcting the wrongs perpetuated by Western culture, especially the “puritanical” United States. What was wrong was identified as white, European, male, heterosexual, and Judeo-Christian.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> *Understanding the Times: The Collision of Today’s Competing Worldviews* (Rev. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed), David Noebel, Summit Press, 2006, reprinted at <http://www.allaboutworldview.org/postmodern-politics.htm>.

According to postmodernists, all these old constructs must be eliminated. Whether it be in our language with words like “waitress”; whether it be in societal organizations with structures like marriage; whether it be in morality that forbids adultery, pornography, abortion, sodomy, slander, theft and the like; whether it be in law that uses words like “husband” and “wife”; whether it be in religion with claims like truth or moral right and wrong; all the old ways of thinking, evaluating and acting—all the old constructs—must be eliminated.

Even gender is viewed as a construct to be reconstructed. The author is aware of a public school teacher who was reprimanded for referring to a pre-school male child as a “boy.” Children must now choose their gender, and they can choose any gender they wish—with no limits on the choices they can make.

3. Social justice is the answer—which calls for the transformation of society so that everyone is the same. Postmodernists see “social justice” as the action plan for their brave new world. They view social justice broadly to encompass virtually all of life. Social justice is defined not as equal opportunities, but as equal outcomes where “equal” means being the same, not just equivalent.

The author once heard another teacher explain that at the beginning of each class, he asked his students if they wanted to be graded as a class, where each member would be given the same grade, or if they wanted to be graded individually. The vast majority of students always wanted to be graded individually, the teacher reported. Social justice, in contrast, holds that everyone must have the same outcome regardless of their accomplishments. (This is a primary reason for the overemphasis on group projects in modern education.)

The famous Harvard psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg, said that people mistakenly think that justice and equality mean that people should be treated the same. Justice and equality really mean, said Kohlberg, that people’s legitimate claims should be treated the same. In class work some students have legitimate claims for an “A” grade, others for a “B” grade, and so on. Students are actually graded equally and justly when they receive the grade their accomplishments deserve.



Social justice, in contrast, is not real justice and is not real equality because it insists that individuals and groups be allocated the same results regardless of their merit. This means income must be redistributed to eliminate or at least minimize the differences between the rich and the poor. It means that all religions must be seen as equally valid. Members of different races and gender must have equal numbers in leadership positions as well as being the same in income, sports participation, occupations and everything else. Allowing churches to preach against homosexual activities, or limit clergy positions to males, or ultimately even be against abortion, prostitution, promiscuity and adultery, can't be allowed.

Gay marriage must be seen as being in all respects equal to normal marriage, including the right to adopt children. Some nations can't be superior to other nations (with regard to their governing principles or the degree to which they are free, or in their per capita incomes). America can be seen as exceptional only in the sense that it is exceptional to Americans while South Africa is seen as exceptional to South Africans. Income redistribution between nations, and within nations, is the order of the day.

Truth and morality are meaningless to the social justice advocates. Even though manmade global warming is highly suspect, that doesn't matter to them because income redistribution must occur, and whatever it takes to bring that about is viewed as being good (utilitarian ethics). Perpetrating lies about what science has determined is similarly justified since the end result of equality among the nations requires any means necessary to get there.

*Christianity Today* summarized this social justice mentality when it said:

... *postmodernism* refers to a renewed attention to "the other," "the marginalized." Many streams of postmodern thought are animated by the desire to do justice to the claims of those whom the dominant culture has excluded politically, economically, and (probably not least of all from the postmodern perspective) rhetorically. That is, they've simply been omitted from the discourse within Western intellectual life. So women, non-

northern Europeans, gays, lesbians, and the poor all loom large in the postmodernist consciousness as hitherto unrecognized groups who deserve the same kind of historical and philosophical attention as their polar opposites, which would be wealthy, white, heterosexual men.<sup>34</sup>

This doesn't mean that we shouldn't end unfair discrimination, nor does it mean that we shouldn't help those in need. We should. We should also help other people and other nations become more successful. But we don't help people by transferring wealth to them that other people have worked for and rightly deserve. We don't help people or groups by enabling them to live in self-destructive and immoral life styles. We don't help people by reducing them to members of groups as opposed to viewing them as individuals. And there is a time-worn adage that says: Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime. Genuine benevolence is helping people learn how to be productive and successful, not doing for them that which they can properly do for themselves. And it is certainly not transferring wealth from those who have earned it to give it to those who have not.

Postmodernism is trendy, but it is not internally consistent. No one can truthfully say that truth does not exist or is unknowable. Postmodernism actually replaces one set of truth claims—that of modernism—with another set of truth claims. Postmodernist thought, when applied to itself, is merely a set of constructs that provide one way of interpreting and organizing the world, but postmodernism is no more defensible or convincing than any other worldview. The old existentialists were far more honest when they admitted they were making a blind leap of faith in adopting their philosophy.

Postmodernists assert that they want everyone to be equal, but they do not see themselves that way. They put themselves on a pedestal as being the ones who really understand the world while the rest of us are seen as being totally misled. The leaders see themselves as the elite few who genuinely understand the world, as is evident in *The Matrix* (1999), a film written and directed to define

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<sup>34</sup> *Christianity Today*, November 13 2000, Vol. 44, No. 13, reprinted at <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2000/november13/8.76.html>.

and illustrate postmodernism where an inner circle of elitists understand reality, but where none of the other people are privy to what the world is really like (much like the Gnostic heresy of two millennia ago. See the next chapter.) Arrogance resides comfortably within the postmodern elite.

No one can consistently live with a postmodern philosophy just as no one can consistently live with a modernist philosophy. (See *That Hideous Strength* by C. S. Lewis for an entertaining critique of how attempts to live with a modernist worldview are doomed to failure.) The truth is that everyone necessarily interprets his own experiences as genuine in order to function in the world, and even postmodernists can be reached by the power inherent in the transformational message of Jesus the Christ.

### **Proclaiming Christianity to postmodernists:**

How, then, can Christian people bring the message of Christ to a world that is largely postmodern in its thinking? Perhaps we should take a lesson from Paul's letter to the Colossians. In that letter Paul found it necessary to confront the false teaching that was troubling the Colossian congregation at that time—the heresy known as “Gnosticism, the belief that denied the incarnation of Christ, that denied that Jesus was both fully God and fully man. The Gnostics believed that Jesus couldn't be fully man because they thought, human beings were essentially sinful. For that reason, being human would make Jesus sinful also. Later Gnostics denied the divinity of Jesus. The Gnostics also believed that salvation was a consequence of their superior knowledge, not a consequence of the vicarious death of Jesus on the cross.

To combat the Gnostic heresy, Paul said:

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross (Colossians 1:15-20).

In this way, Paul stressed four doctrines of Christianity that directly refuted Gnosticism. They are:

- 1) Jesus is fully God and fully man.
- 2) Creation was the work of God himself and not some evil force.
- 3) Jesus, as fully God and man, died on the cross and rose from the dead (some Gnostics denied that God could die on a cross or any place else).
- 4) We are reconciled to God by means of Jesus' death on the cross, not by some kind of superior knowledge on our part.

The Apostle John dealt with the Gnostic heresy the same way—by emphasizing that it was God who created the world, not some evil force, and by stressing both the humanity and the divinity of Jesus. Said John: “The Word [Jesus] was made flesh and made his dwelling among us” (John 1:14). And again: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made” (John 1:1-3). Similarly, the early church wrote the Apostle’s Creed largely to combat the Gnostic heresy. The Creed states that Jesus is both God and man, the incarnate Christ who died for us and rose again on the third day.

As is evident from Colossians, the Gospel of John and the Apostles Creed, the proper way to refute Gnosticism and all other heresies is to proclaim those Biblical truths that directly confront the heresy and to boldly and clearly declare who Jesus is and what he has done.

If we follow these examples—Colossians, the Gospel of John, the Apostle’s Creed and we could add many more Biblical examples—we will combat postmodernist thought by emphasizing both the content of the Christian message and its truthfulness, thereby directly refuting postmodernism. Postmodernists will recognize that truth exists by first realizing that Christianity is true. That means we must help them see that the message of Jesus the Christ is true in the sense of being really true, not just true for us, but true for everyone—universally true in the absolute sense.

To demonstrate that Christianity is true, we do well to stress the substantial evidence which shows it to be true, especially the evidence for the resurrection of our Lord. We should follow the strategy of the Apostle John who said, “Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:30,31).

A useful point of contact between the Christian and the postmodernist is recorded for us in the Gospel of John, a record that we should emphasize is genuine history and which records for us an instructive portion of the dialogue between Jesus and Pilate. It reads as follows:

“You are a king, then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.” “What is truth?” retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him” (John 18:37-38).

We might say that Pilate was the first postmodernist. He looked at truth in the face and refused to accept it. But he couldn’t deny this truth, so he avoided it instead. He dodged the question before him—should he accept what Jesus just said, “Everyone on the side of truth listens to me,” or should he reject it? Pilate avoided the all-important message of Jesus by questioning whether truth itself was real or knowable. Postmodernists should take a lesson from Pilate.

Questioning the reality of truth is to run away from it—to avoid the truth staring you in the face.

We need to approach the postmodern skeptics the same way Paul approached the skeptics of his world—by emphasizing the evidence which shows the Christian message to be true. Paul said to Agrippa: “I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen—that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles.” After Paul then answered the accusation of being insane, he continued by emphasizing: “What I am saying is true and reasonable. The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do.” Then Agrippa said to Paul, “Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?” Paul replied, “Short time or long—I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains” (Acts 26:22-29).

As we can see, Paul spoke to skeptics in such a way as to emphasize the evidence which demonstrated that the Christian message is true, the evidence showing that Jesus is the promised Messiah. Agrippa clearly understood that Paul was using this evidence in the hope of persuading himself and all the others listening to accept the Gospel message of the Risen King.

We should also learn from the example of how Paul approached his listeners at Athens (Acts 17). In that setting, Paul never once quoted the Scriptures. He did, however, quote an inscription at a Greek religious site, and he did quote a Greek poet. Paul started with common ground that he had with the Athenians, and he then proceeded to argue for the existence of a creator God to whom we are all personally responsible. Paul first used as evidence those observations where he and his listeners would be likely to agree, and only then did he present the message of Christ, the message that did create faith in some of his listeners.

We don't need to immediately challenge the denial of all truth by the postmodernists, but we do need to find common ground as a starting point, and we do need to proclaim the message that Jesus is the truth, real truth, truth that is substantiated by real evidence. Jesus himself spoke in a manner that emphasized and demonstrated that he was the truth. The power to change lives is in the proclamation that Jesus is the truth. From that proclamation follows the rest of the story—truth must exist after all.

We should also observe that in proclaiming the truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Apostles didn't restrict themselves to what other believers said. Peter told his listeners, "Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know" (Acts 2:22). That is, Peter appealed to the various reports by Christians and non-Christians alike, of which his listeners were aware, to verify his statement that Jesus had performed miracles. As noted above, Paul also appealed to non-Christian sources when he said to Agrippa, "What I am saying is true and reasonable. The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner (Acts 26:25&26). In our postmodern world, we need to make use of both Biblical and secular evidence. The power of the gospel message is in the gospel itself, in its proclamation as truth, for this is how the Holy Spirit works: "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit'" (I Cor.12:3b).

Christianity stands or falls as being real history, true history. It needs to be proclaimed as such.

In doing so, we need to remember that the moral code is written in the genetic code of all people (Romans 2:14-15). This means that postmodernists, at some level of their being, understand the universal moral code to which all are accountable. Evangelism would not happen without this instinctive knowledge of the moral law.

Preaching Christ to a postmodern world requires five steps. We should:

1. Establish common ground with our readers or listeners for a starting point as Paul did on Mars Hill (Acts 17:16-34) and as he did everywhere else for that matter.
2. Emphasize that the Christian Gospel message is true, and that it is true, not just for Christians, but that it is true, really true, for everyone.
3. Demonstrate that compelling evidence reveals the Christian message to be true. Emphasize that Christianity is based on history, real history, real events that are well-documented and that actually happened at times and places certain.
4. Explain that God's moral law is also true for everyone and that no one has kept this moral law. Paul said, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3: 23-24).
5. Most importantly, emphasize that being a member of Jesus' kingdom is the result of believing the message, of making a faith commitment, as John said, "Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of this disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:30). Point out that every person is invited to receive this message in faith and become a member of Jesus' kingdom.

This step of faith is based on evidence, but it is far more than that. Faith is receiving the invitation to be part of the body of the Risen King. It is asking forgiveness for all we have done wrong, for all our violation of God's holy law, and accepting the forgiveness offered us freely by the Savior. Faith is saying "yes" to the invitation to be united to the King of Kings.

We need to keep in mind that the power of God is in his message of Jesus, the Christ, as Paul said: "I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16). When we proclaim the message of Jesus, that message contains the same power that God



used to call the Heavens and Earth into existence. Our task is to proclaim it and to do so as clearly and as persuasively as possible.

Postscript to Chapter 4:

Paul Jacobson, in *The American Thinker*, describes postmodernism as having the following nine tenets:

- 1) Rejection of universal, objective truth and meaning.
- 2) Rejection of universal moral absolutes.
- 3) Rejection of rationality.
- 4) Rejection of language as a way to convey objective information from author to reader. Postmodernism informs us that the reader is now in charge of deciding what the text says.
- 5) Rejection of individualism. An individual's concept of truth and rules of morality are determined solely by the group to which he "belongs," from which there is no exit.
- 6) "Truth" and "morality" are "social constructs" that vary from one group to another.
- 7) One group's "truth" and "morality" are as worthy and valid as another's.
- 8) Historical prevailing truth and morality are merely the opinions of the group in power and are designed to serve their goal of oppressing the powerless, the victims.
- 9) Because "truth" and "morality" are relative and "reason" is a futile delusion, victim groups must resort to raw power and, if necessary, deceitfulness to throw off the oppressive shackles imposed on them by the powerful. Lies, propaganda and bullying, sometimes

even physical violence, are necessary armaments in the arsenal of the oppressed.<sup>35</sup>

Discussion questions and recommended reading:

1. Is truth by its very nature absolute?
2. Humanists, in their statement of faith in 1973, called “Humanist Manifesto II,” said morality was strictly self-chosen and relative.<sup>36</sup> By 1980 in their statement of faith, however, called “A Secular Humanist Declaration,” they had changed their position and said that many moral values are universal, not relative.<sup>37</sup> Does this suggest that it is difficult, if not impossible, to live with the view that all morality is relative?
3. Is postmodernism internally consistent?
4. Do humanism and postmodernism put a person at odds with his conscience?
5. For further study, see: Gene Edward Veith: *Postmodern Times: A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1994.

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<sup>35</sup> <http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/09the-postmodern-party.html>

<sup>36</sup> <http://conspiracywiki.com/documents/humanist-manifesto-II.pdf>

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.secularhumanism.org/?section=main&page=declaration>

## Chapter 5

# Conclusion

Erick Erikson made the following comments as part of his 2012 Thanksgiving Day blog. Erikson runs the Red State blog and is also a radio talk show host. The quotations from Erikson's blog are included here as an example of preaching Christ in the postmodernist 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Erikson said:

... I reject evolution for the sake of evolution and reject that life on this planet, let alone the existence of this universe, is some random act. I reject that we are little better than the animals we evolved from because I reject that we evolved from anything other than God's own mind. We were created in his image. We did not evolve into it. The only people certain in their belief on this matter are those who accept theory as fact and Truth as mythology.

Faith and science do not have to be mutually incompatible. I am a big believer in both Christ and science. The only people who are pushing to insist that one is incompatible with the other are the secularists who've substituted science for God ...

Yes, I believe there was an Adam and I believe there was an Eve.

Yes, I believe there were two cities named Sodom and Gomorrah and yes I do believe they were destroyed for rampant sin including deviating from God's intentions sexually.

Yes, I believe there was a man named Noah who spent 100 years building a giant boat and I do believe there was a great flood and the survivors of which were all on that boat.

And yes, I do believe there was a man named Jonah who was swallowed up by a great big fish and survived.

Above all those things, I do believe God came down to Earth in the form of Jesus who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried: He descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. ...

I believe in Heaven and Hell and the battle that rages between the two on a higher plane than we can often see.

**Meanwhile, these secularists and atheists cannot even be honest about when life begins.**

Many of the things I believe are miracles. ...

Take the miracle of Jonah. The secularists of this world would have us believe that no man could ever be swallowed by a giant fish and survive. They would be right. That would be precisely the point. No man could *and yet it happened*. It is one of the many miracles of the Bible. ...

While I think science and reason and religion can most often be reconciled, if you do not believe in the miraculous, you are not a Christian; it is as simple as that. ...

Even now in the 21st century after the birth of Christ, there is still true Good and there is still true Evil and there is still true Truth.

Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.” ...<sup>38</sup>

Erikson has an audience far greater than most of us, and he took advantage of having this audience as an opportunity to proclaim Jesus the Christ to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century postmodern world. Notice how he emphasized the Christian message as being the truth. He said, “Even now in the 21st century after the birth of Christ, there is still true Good and there is still true Evil and there is still true Truth. Jesus answered, ‘You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me’” [emphasis added].

Notice also that Erikson said there is no genuine conflict between scientific knowledge and the truth of Christ even though there is a conflict between Christianity and Naturalism—the atheistic worldview which assumes the miraculous doesn’t exist and which masquerades as science even though it is really a religious position (see Ch 3). Christians can’t accommodate themselves to Naturalism; they must oppose it. Naturalism must be confronted in no uncertain terms.

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<sup>38</sup> Erick Erickson, Red State Blog, November 25, 2012.

In his Thanksgiving message, Erikson directly confronted the objections to the truth of Jesus the Christ—the objections of Darwinism and postmodernism—while he clearly proclaimed the message of Christ as truth. This is the task of Christian people. Christians should take up this mission with the boldness and confidence that comes from knowing that they speak the truth and speak it to a world that desperately needs to know and have this truth.

Christians do so knowing they are members of the body of the Risen King. They rely on him knowing that his is the power, the glory, and his is the victory. Jesus said, “I am coming soon. My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he had done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. Blessed are those who have washed their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:12-14).

“Then one of the elders asked me, ‘These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?’ I answered, ‘Sir, you know.’ And he said, ‘These are they who have come out of the great tribulation: they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb’” (Revelation 7:13-14).

“He who testifies to these things says, ‘Yes, I am coming soon.’ Amen, come Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s people, Amen” (Revelation 22:20-21).

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## Appendix:

### **Apologetics Study Document of the Doctrine Committee of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod**

#### **Confess and Defend: ὁμολογία and ἀπολογία**

1. The New Testament establishes that each Christian is to stand ready to defend (ἀπολογέομαι/apologeomai) the faith (Lk 12:8-11, 1 Pet 3:15, Jude 3). The term “apologetics” refers to the defense of the Christian faith. Defending the Christian faith may include an explanation of the basic beliefs of Christianity. It may also include giving grounds or reasons for accepting the Christian gospel message as true or a refutation of criticisms of the faith, as well as exposing inadequacies in alternative religions and worldviews.
2. “Apologetics” is used in either a narrow or a broad sense. It is used in a narrow sense when referring to the presentation of rational arguments and historical evidence in defense of the truthfulness of Scripture against attacks, including the historicity of the events of the Old and New Testaments, especially the events of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In its broad sense, “apologetics” includes the use of the law to show the folly of unbelief, and also the use of the gospel in giving the reason for Christian hope. These theses primarily speak of apologetics in the broad sense.
3. The New Testament also commands that each Christian is to confess (ὁμολογέω/homologeō) the faith (1 Tim 6:12, 2 Cor 9:13, Rom 10:9,10, 1 Jn 4:1,15, Phil 2:11, Lk 12:8-11). Ὁμολογέω means “to speak the same thing,” i.e. to agree, assent, acknowledge, or profess.
4. Jesus’ words in Luke 12:8-11 connect “confess” (ὁμολογία v.8) and “answer/defend” (ἀπολογία v. 11). Therefore we hold that “confess” and “defend” (ὁμολογία/ὁμολογέω and ἀπολογία/ἀπολογέομαι) speak of closely related activities, both of which are commanded by Christ and the apostles.
5. All of Scripture is the infallible and inerrant word of God and belongs to the faith for which the Christian is to contend (1 Pet 3:15, Jude 3). The heart of Christian confession and defense is the gospel itself—the revelation of Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God made flesh and his sacrificial atonement by which God justifies the sinner. As we can see from the apostles’ activity in the book of Acts, when Christians are called upon to defend the Christian faith or the gospel itself, they will always confess the person of Jesus Christ and his work and give witness to the gospel (Acts 2, 4, 19, 22, 26 etc.).

6. The Holy Scripture is the word of God and therefore is inherently powerful and self-authenticating. Historical and other external evidence and argument from sources apart from Scripture are a useful and important part of Christian apologetics in that they lay bare and condemn the presumption of unbelief and skepticism, but they neither verify nor authenticate Scripture as God's revelation.
7. Human reason is a gift of God (First Article in Luther's Small Catechism), even though it is corrupted by human sin. We distinguish between a ministerial and a magisterial use of reason. Reason is used ministerially—as a servant—when it is an instrument in presenting and apprehending the gospel, and when it is used to show the foolishness of unbelief. Reason is used magisterially—as a master—when it stands in judgment over Scripture and its teachings, or when it reinterprets or dismisses clear teachings of Scripture to agree with human reason and experience. We reject the magisterial or critical use of reason applied to the teachings of Holy Scripture.
8. The cause of conversion or regeneration is not to be sought in the human presentation of evidence and argument, as important as they are, but only in the inherent power of God's word of the gospel (2 Cor 4:6; Eph 2:8,9; 2 Tim 3:15; 1 Pet 1:23).
9. The Christian confession and defense will always be done with the understanding that regeneration is only the work of the Holy Spirit working through the means of grace, word and sacrament, and is not aided or effected by man. The absolute predominance of sola fide, sola gratia, and sola Scriptura (solus Christus) will always be made clear in carrying out the apologetic task.
10. Since the apologetic task is engaged not only in confessing the faith, but in using the law to reveal the presumptuousness of unbelief, care will be taken not to confuse the law and the gospel or to make the law a part of the gospel presentation, instead of a necessary adjunct to it. Christian confession and defense will always keep in mind C. F. W. Walther's exposition *The Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel*, especially the final thesis: "The Word of God is not rightly divided when the person teaching it does not allow the Gospel to have a general predominance in his teaching."

## About the author:



Allen Quist holds a B.A. from Gustavus Adolphus College, an M.A. from Minnesota State University, Mankato, and B.D. from Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary. He currently serves as a member of the Doctrine Committee of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

Allen was Professor of Psychology at Bethany Lutheran College from 1968 to 1982. He served three terms in the Minnesota House of Representatives from 1983 to 1988. While in the Legislature, he served as Chair of the Social Services Subcommittee and as Vice-Chair of the Health and Human Services Committee. Allen was the author of numerous bills including the bill that created Minnesota's Department of Jobs and Training.

Allen also served on the Education Committee in the Minnesota House of Representatives and has frequently been a featured speaker at national education conferences. He was the Republican –endorsed candidate for Governor of Minnesota in 1994. In 1997 Allen made a public issue of a radical new state-required education policy in Minnesota called the “Profile of Learning.” This policy was subsequently repealed in 2001.

Allen is the author of five previous books, one of them being a best seller with sales of over 10,000 copies. In 2009 he discovered and made an issue of the huge marriage tax hidden in the Affordable Care Act.<sup>39</sup> This punitive marriage tax has subsequently received major national attention and criticism.

Allen and his wife, Julie, live in rural St. Peter. They have 10 children and 41 grandchildren.

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<sup>39</sup> CitizenLink.com. December 12, 2009.