

Study Notes and Outline

Defending the Faith

Practical Apologetics

"...sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence."

1 Peter 3:15

About These Notes:

The following notes and comments are gleaned from other studies, commentaries, and books - incorporated with my own insights, as gained over forty years of Bible study. This is not an exhaustive commentary, but rather a synopsis of ideas and lessons taught during the current live study. Where applicable, I have cited sources used. General references are provided in the Sources Section of the notes. As with any study, I am indebted to the work and careful study of others who have come before; and above all, to the Holy Spirits for the insights He gives as we are diligent to study His Word.

J.Gifford, 2016

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Like most men and women of my generation, we grew up being Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. The official Scout Motto was, "Be Prepared". To keep that motto, we learned to tie knots, build camps, identify animals and plants, help others in need, explore the creation around us and to work together as a team.

The Apostle Peter's admonition to the believer is much the same as that of the Scouts (they may have gotten it from him anyway). Peter tells us to be ready (prepared) to give and answer (defense) to anyone who asks for an account (logical argument) as to why we believe in Christ. He knew that we would be asked. Indeed, God Himself knew and promised to provide such opportunities (Ephesians 2:10). As such, He intends we make full use of those opportunities (Ephesians 5:16; Colossians 4:5). To do so, we must be prepared. Like the Scouts, we need to know what is around us, learn skills and gain understanding so that we can provide suitable answers when the time comes.

This course is designed to provide tool that equip the Saints to be ready to give an answer to those who ask. May the Lord find us worthy of the calling and privilege He has given us to preach the Gospel and to be His witnesses.

OUTLINE OF PRACTICAL APOLOGETICS

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INTRODUCTION TO APOLOGETICS

“Apologetics” – from the Greek word *apologia* - to make a defense (1 Peter 3:15)

1. Questions, Questions, Questions!

- a. They are unavoidable – we all get them, we all have them
- b. Nature of the Question
 - i. IF - THEN
 1. “If God loves me then why did He [_____]?” (Mary and Martha after the death of Lazarus – Jn 11:21)
 2. Question of Evil in the world - “If God is good then He is not omnipotent. If He is omnipotent, then He is not good”
 - ii. Presupposition – assuming facts that are not necessarily true
 1. “The scientific discovery [_____] shows that the Bible is wrong”
 2. “All religions lead to God” – 5 blind men and an Elephant.
 3. Sadducees question on resurrection (**Matt 22:23-33**) (BTW, Jesus answer highlights the reason for most theological questions)
- c. Answering the Questions
 - i. A direct answer to the question
 - ii. The “I don’t know” answer
 1. I will find out – do some research and return with an answer (Walter Martin – “The Bible Answer Man”)
 - iii. Masking the Question - the real question behind the question.
 1. Discernment comes from the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:18; **1 Cor 2:6-16**)
 2. Bringing the real question to light (Woman at the Well [**John 4:7-26**]; Nicodemus [Jn 3: 2,3]; the Pharisees [Matt 22:35-46])
 - a. Answering a question with a question – (Matt 21:23-27; Lk 24:19-26)
 - iv. There is no answer. There are things beyond our understanding.
 - a. Knowing the answer may not solve the puzzle (Job 38-41)
 - b. Your testimony is powerful, “I was blind, but now I see.” (Jn 9:25)

2. Let Us Reason

- a. We are designed to use common sense (Prov 1:7; Isa 1:18; Rom 12:3; 2 Tim 12:7). We don’t need to check our brain at the Church door to be a Christian.
- b. Do we need to have the answers to all our questions to believe? Absolutely not!
 - i. Thomas (Jn 20:25-29) – should have believed based on the preponderance of the evidence.
 - ii. Peter (**Jn 13:7**) – knowledge will be revealed in time (also see **Jn 16:13**)
- c. We make decisions about important matters every day without having all the answers.
 - i. We use our God-given ability to reason – gather information, assemble the information and apply the information to the question (Ex 31:3; Prov 2:6)
 - ii. No one can answer the question, “Will my 401k be worth more in 10 years?” But, we conclude that it will increase in value (otherwise, why do we put more money in?). We apply logic to make a decision regarding uncertain outcomes:

“I believe in everything - a little bit”
Marilyn Monroe

- Knowledge – gathering facts, data -- **Inductive** – (major premise)
- Understanding – assembly of pertinent facts - **Deductive** – (minor premise)
- Wisdom – proper application of understanding - **Answer** – (Conclusion)

Syllogism:

Fact: **All cows drink milk**
 Deduction: **Bessie is a cow**
 Conclusion: **Bessie drinks milk**

Fallacies are a misapplication of logic. “All cows drink milk; John drinks milk; John is a cow”

- There is no connection between the subject, cows, and John. Thus the conclusion is invalid.
- The same kind of fallacy occurs when someone says, “Innocent people suffer; God knows innocent people suffer; God doesn’t care about suffering.”

The answer to every question resides in the truth

“**I Am ... the Truth...**” – Jesus of Nazareth

3. Nature of Truth -- *Truth is reality, the ground of being, it is what Is* (Ex 3:14)

- It Exists** -- It is self-defeating to deny the existence of truth. “*There is no absolute truth*” is a self-defeating statement.
- It is Unchangeable** -- What was true is true and will remain true both now and forever (Mal 3:6, Heb 13:8)
- It is Eternal** -- Even if every created thing ceases to exist, Truth will continue to exist. The truth is not subject to time or space.
- It is Exclusive** – The opposite of true is false. There is not variation of truth. “*What is true for you is not true for me*” is a false statement.

4. Hindrances to Knowing the Truth - Paradigms and Perception

- Our Worldview** (paradigm) is influenced by perception through:
 - Our Experiences – set our expectations – what will happen
 - Our Background – sets our context – why things happen
 - Our Education – sets our perspective – how things happen
- Lack of Information** - What we know about the world is a small subset of reality.
 - 100 years ago all the leading scientist were sure that the universe was eternal and infinite. Today they know that neither is true.
 1. Microcosm – digital
 2. Macrocosm - finite
- Some Knowledge Cannot be Learned though Logic Alone** (Col 2:8; 2 Tim 3:7)
 - Logic is based on experiential evidence - Which is subject to perception.
 - Our perception is limited to the time and space domain of this Universe.

Can't or Won't Believe?

is a matter of the heart, not just the mind. Simply believing something, or not believing something, does not make it true or false. One can be sincere in their belief and still be sincerely wrong. Ω

DOES GOD EXIST?

“For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.” Romans 1:20

1. Fingerprints in Creation (Jn 3:8a)

a. The Universe Had a Beginning

i. In 1905 every prominent scientist was convinced that the Universe was infinite and eternal.

1. Einstein’s Theory of Relativity ($E=mc^2$) changed the way we see time and space –of its many implications was:

- a. All *matter, space* and even *time* had a beginning. (Gen 1:1)
- b. Everything must have come into being from *nothing* since no time, space or matter could have existed at the time of creation (Heb 11:3).

ii. Laws of Physics

1. *First Law of Thermodynamics* – The amount of matter and energy in the universe is constant; you can convert one to the other (Einstein’s equation), but you cannot add or reduce the total. (Gen 2:1,2)
2. *Second Law of Thermodynamics* – everything goes from order to disorder – entropy (Rom 8:20-22)

iii. Nothing comes from nothing – there must be a **first cause**.

1. Every observation of science shows a cause for every effect – no exceptions. (Gen 1:2; Ps 8:3).

iv. Intelligent Design – Anthropic Principal (Ps 104:24) all “natural” parameters are finely tuned so that any minute variation would make life impossible.

1. Relative strength of the Four Fundamental Forces (gravity, electromagnetism, strong and weak forces). If the gravity ratio were altered by 10^{-37} , no life would be possible.
2. Ratio of Proton to Electron mass (1,836:1)
3. Matter vs Antimatter – the enigma of 10^{10} :1.

Syllogism of Design

- Every Design has a Designer
- The Universe has a Highly Complex Design
- The Universe has a Designer

2. The Nature of God

a. That first cause cannot be part of the creation – it must occur outside time and space – supernatural. (Jn 4:24)

i. It must be independent of creation and its effects.

b. It must be infinitely powerful (omnipotent) – it cannot be limited because it would have to be limited by “something” where nothing else exists. (Gen 18:14; Lu 1:37)

i. The effect cannot be greater than the cause (Newton’s third law – equal action/reaction).

c. It must be eternal – outside, beyond time. (Ps 90:2; Ex 3:14)

d. It must be infinite – outside, beyond space. (1 Kgs 8:27; Eph 1:23)

Einstein On Design

The harmony of natural laws... “reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection”

Albert Einstein, *Ideas and Opinions – The World as I See It* – 1931)

- e. It must be all knowing (omniscient) based on the wisdom of design.
- f. It must be a person - have volition and will as evidenced by anthropic design.

3. Made in the Image of God

- a. Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA – Watson and Crick discovery 1953)
 - i. A digital blueprint for constructing, repairing and reproducing living organisms. Exceedingly complex (Ps. 139:13-16).
 - ii. Each cell contains enough information to fill 500,000 pages of text so small it would take a microscope to read it.
 - 1. DNA strand is 6 feet long – if the nucleus of your cell was the size of a basketball, the dual DNA string would be 125 miles long.
- b. Irreducible Complexity
 - i. Our body systems could not have evolved because each was interdependent upon the other. Evolution requires small changes over very long periods of time. Each mutation would need to find a useful purpose or be discarded in subsequent generations – The human eye is an all-or-nothing mechanism.
 - ii. Darwinian scientists had a very simplistic model of the cell.
- c. Nonlocality and Entanglement
 - i. Quantum Mechanics theory of connection between two different particles outside of time and space.
 - ii. Further research theorizes that consciousness emanates from outside the physical body. The mind is “nonlocal”.
 - iii. The brain is a transceiver, sending data about the physical world and receiving instructions from the mind (volition and will). (Matt 15:16-20; 2Cor 5:1-8)

“DNA is like a computer program, but far, far more advanced than any software we’ve ever created.” Bill Gates

4. Does God Speak to His Creation?

- a. Speech is the transmission of information –
 - i. Natural world - discovery of the laws of nature are a form of language from God (Ps 19:1-3) about His power, intelligence, and eternal nature.
 - ii. It cannot tell us of His will, love, purpose in creation or our destiny.
- b. Why doesn't God just show up and talk to us? We answer that in the next session.

Key Points – God Exists

1. The Universe had a beginning and, as such, had a first cause.
2. That first cause could not be part of the natural Universe.
3. The evidence is overwhelming that the Universe shows intelligent design.
4. The natural laws of the Universe are finely tuned to allow life to exist.
5. The findings of Quantum Mechanics indicate that information is transmitted in dimensions beyond time and space.

THE BIBLE – WE CAN TRUST IT

1. Inspiration and Communication

a. The Nature of Information

- i. Non material, originates from a mind – has no mass.
 1. Matter cannot create non-matter (1st Law of Thermodynamics).
We create ideas, only the non-material can create the non-material.
 - a. The spirit of man, made in the image of God (Gen 1:16) and is thus not material.
 - b. A spirit is not subject to time, space, matter or energy.
 2. First Cause – ideas, concepts, desires, plans (Matt 15:19; Gen 6:5; *God's thoughts* Jer 29:11 cf. Jn 4:24) arise from the “heart” (spirit).
- ii. Information is transmitted, imbedded in material media.
 1. Computer programs, like DNA, are a physical (space-time) representation of information reduced to digital form.
 2. Computer hardware, like the brain, is *designed*. It is a highly sophisticated system to process data and provide a depiction in logic formats.

Syllogism of Communication No. 1

> Every communication system has a designer.

> DNA is a communication system.

>>> DNA has a designer

b. Communication takes place within the known creation.

- i. Internal – digital data is transmitted and received internal to biological systems.
- ii. External - Biological systems communicate using language by and between species.

Syllogism of Communication No. 2

> Created beings communicate.

> The Creator is greater than created beings.

>>> The Creator can communicate.

2. Message from Outside Time and Space

a. The creator is able to communicate with His creation.

i. Physical

1. Design of the Universe (Gen 1:1)
2. Perceived speech (1Kgs 19:13; Dan 4:31; Mk 1:11; Jn 12:28; Lk 9:35).
3. Written word (Ex 34:1, 27; Isa 8:1; 30:8; Jer 30:2; 36:2; Hab 2:2; Rev 1:9; also note Rev 10:4)

ii. Nonphysical

1. Dreams (Gen 37:5; Dan 2:19, 22, 28 ; 4:13; Joel 2:28)
2. Visions (Gen 15:1; Num 12:6; Ezek 11:24; Dan 7:2; Acts 9:12; 10:3)
3. Angelic Messengers (Gen 31:11; Dan 9:23; Zec 4:4; Act 8:26)
4. Mind to mind, spirit to spirit (Neh 2:12; Ps 44:21; 1 Jn 3:20; 1Cor 2:9-14; Heb 10:16).

- iii. Writers of both Old and New Testament Books claim inspiration by God (2Pet 1:20,21; also see Jer 20:9).

- b. Nature of the Message –
 - i. Outside of time – knowing the end from the beginning.
 - 1. Predictive prophecy (Isa 44:7,8; 46:9,10).
 - 2. Predictive prophecy is unique to the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. Over 300 prophecies fulfilled in Christ's first coming.
 - a. Probability that 8 would be fulfilled by one man = 1 in $10^{17(1)}$.
 - 3. Only One outside of time can predict the future, not man and not any so called gods (Isa 41:21-24).
 - a. *Note: Satan is a created, finite being. He may be smart and powerful, but he cannot foretell the future (1 Cor 2:7,8). Thus, false religions cannot tell the future either.*
 - ii. Science and the Bible
 - 1. Nature Creation (Gen 1).
 - a. Made from nothing (Gen 1:1 – *ber'shiyth bara elohiyim*)
 - b. Without form, void (Gen 1:2 – Heb. *tohû vābohû* “a waste and a void”); ordered (by the Holy Spirit – Heb. *rachaph* – flutter, vibrate) over the “deep” (Heb *tehowm* – tumultuous roar, noise -- also see Ps 42:8 “wave”).
 - i. Background radiation confirms that the Universe was “fine-tuned” to make formation of matter possible.²
 - c. Light – including all the visible and invisible spectrum created first – then matter.³
 - d. Progressive order (Gen 1:26 [creation] (Ex 20:11; 31:17).
 - e. Expanding in all directions (Isa 40:22; 42:5; 45:12,13; 51:13).
 - f. Innumerable number of stars (Gen 15:5).
- c. Historical Reliability
 - i. No archeological find has ever contradicted the Bible.⁴ Luke was a first-rate historian.⁵
 - ii. Book of Daniel is so precise that critics said it must have been written no earlier than 200 BC. The book and author are cited in Ezekiel 14 (650 BC) and included in the Septuagint version (350 BC).

3. The Problem of Translations

- a. From one language to another
 - i. The original text (Autograph) was written in several different languages: Paleo Hebrew (pre Babylonian exile); Classic Hebrew (post exile); Aramaic and Greek (Daniel 4 may have been in Persian cuneiform).
 - ii. Translation problems include: structure, idioms and expressions, sarcasm (including hyperbole).
- b. Bible translations fall into one of three categories. Each has its own merits.
 - i. Literal (word for word) – KJV, NKJV, NASB, ESV, AMP
 - ii. Intended meaning (thought for thought) – NIV, RSV
 - iii. Paraphrase (thought for thought with contemporary language) – NLT.

4. Inerrancy

- a. The Bible claim inspiration by God. Thus, we should expect that the original autographs are without error and wholly true in everything they affirm (Ps. 138:2; Jn 17:17; **2 Tim 3:16**; 1 Thess 2:13; Heb 6:18).

5. Transmission of the Text - We have no original texts; so how do we know that we have an accurate copy of the original writing?

- a. Hebrew veneration of their writings
 - i. Five Books of Moses kept in the Tabernacle, then the Temple. Other writings were added and kept by scribes (**Deut 31:24-26**)
 - ii. Post-captivity, establishment of Synagogues – where groups of Jews could meet and read scripture. Compiled by Ezra on return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple.
 - 1. Masoretic Scribes (500 AD – 1000 AD)
 - a. Fastidious copying – counting letters of each line; the middle letter of each Book, etc.
 - 2. Witness of the Dead Sea Scrolls – Isaiah best existing copy was from about 900 AD – Complete copy of Isaiah from DSS dated 100 BC.
- b. Manuscripts, Codices, Fragments, Oh My!
 - i. Gospels and Epistles circulated through the Churches.
 - 1. Copies made by converted Masoretic Scribes. Same veneration.
 - 2. Scholars have more than 5,000 Greek manuscripts and parts of the NT dating to about 100 AD. Plus, many quotes from early Church Fathers from 100-300 AD.
 - a. Codices are complete copies of the OT and NT. Three major from about 400-500 AD: *Sinaiticus*, *Vaticanus*, *Alexandrinus*.
 - b. *Textus Receptus* (1633) and the *Majority Text* (*Westcott & Hort -1881*) – compilation of fragments and Codices of the NT intended to correct copyist errors.

Which Greek Manuscript is Correct?

Differences in manuscripts are minor and do not change any essential teaching or doctrine of the New Testament. Any differences are far, far outweighed by the agreement of the texts.

6. Testimony of the Writers

- a. The Word is better than personal experience. (2 Pet 1:15-21).
- b. His Word will abide forever. (Ps 119:89; Isa 40:8).
- c. His Word is Truth (Ps 119:160; **Ps 138:2** – the Word is esteemed by God above His Name; Jn 17:17; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 2:15).
 - i. Is a weapon against error and deceit (Eph 6:17).
- d. Cannot be ignored (Num 22:38 [Balaam]; Jer 20:9; 23:29).
- e. It will do its work, whether believed or not. (Isa 55:11; cf Dan 7:10; Rev 20:12).
- f. Reveals the intents of the heart of Man (Heb 4:12).

7. Some Answers to Critics

- a. *If the Bible is God's Word, then why are there so many translations that disagree?*
- i. Answer. The Bible was translated from Greek (NT) and Hebrew (OT). Different translations try to get as close to the original meaning as possible. (See #3 above, "The Problem of Translations")
 - ii. They don't *disagree*, they approach the difficulty in translation as either: (i) word-for-word, or; (ii) matching the sense and meaning of the text.
 - iii. Fallible interpretations do not mean fallible revelation. Nor do errors in copies equate to errors in the original.
- b. *Is everything in the Bible true?*
- i. Answer. Everything is *accurate*. There are quotes and sayings by a variety of people who were liars, or just wrong (Satan for one). What they said is accurately recorded. Where God speaks, it is true.
- c. *Since we know that miracles don't happen, aren't miracles in the Bible just myths and legends?*
- i. Answer. No. This question presupposes that God cannot do miracles (divergence from the usual order of things) (also see "Presupposition Questions" above; pg 3, 1.a.ii). However, since we know that the Universe was created by a supernatural act (outside space and time) then we can rightly conclude that God is able to perform miracles.
- d. *Isn't the Bible full of contradictions?*
- i. Answer. "Give me an example" (a lot of people use this argument without really knowing any contradictions).
 - ii. What seems like a contradiction is just a different perspective on the same event or action (Gospel accounts of the Resurrection; 1 Angel [Matt 28:5-7] or 2 Angels [Jn 20:12]). Both accounts are true.
- e. *Aren't there scientific mistakes in the Bible?*
- i. The Bible is not a science book. It was not intended to give answers to every science question. However, where it speaks about scientific things, it is accurate. Examples, see 2.b.ii on page 8 above.
 - ii. *What about 1 Kings 7:23? Isn't the measurement of the circle wrong?*
 1. The measurement is an approximation. The Bible uses figures of speech (Sun rising, setting) just like we do today. And, it uses approximate values and generalities. (However, details of the text in 1 Kgs 7:23 show an intriguing knowledge of the value of pi.)

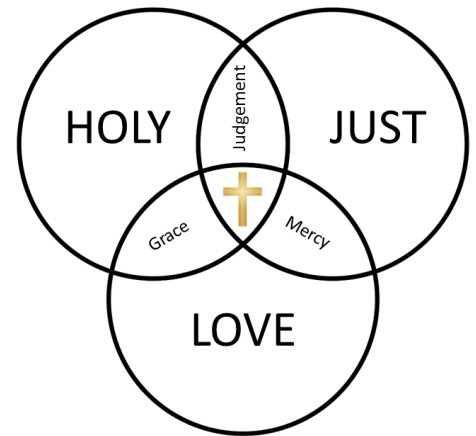
*"The grass withers, the flower fades,
But the word of our God stands forever."*

Isaiah 40:8

UNIQUENESS OF CHRISTIANITY

1. The Attributes of God

- a. **What God is** may be logically inferred by observation of the known Universe (**Ps 19:1-3; Rom 1:20**): that He is eternal, infinite, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent.
- i. We can also infer that He has volition and will (since He brought creation into existence)– a Person who reasons and thinks, having great intelligence (evidenced by incredibly complex design).
- b. **Who God is**, His character, can only be known by revelation. He has chosen to reveal who He is by the Word of God – both the written Word (The Bible) and the Word becoming flesh (Incarnation). Knowing God’s character is indispensable in knowing His plan, purpose and destiny for mankind.
- i. **Holy** – separate and distinct from all others; it signifies perfectly pure, immaculate and complete in moral character. (Ex 15:11; 1 Sam 2:2; **Ps 24:3-5**; Isa 6:3-5).
 - ii. **Just** – He must always act in conformity with His nature – He must judge that which is contrary to His holiness (2 Chr 19:7; Ps 1:5; 9:7,8; Isa 9:7; Dan 7:9; Matt 5:44; **Jn 5:30**; 8:16; **16:8**; Acts 10:34,35; Rom 1:32; 2:6; Col 3:25; Rev 16:7).
 - iii. **Love** - God has (infinite and eternal) deep affection for His own – unconditional, unselfish, undying. God’s love demands that He act on behalf of those loved (**Isa 49:15**; Jer 31:3; Jn 3:16, **Rom 5:8; 8:28 -39**).
- c. **God cannot change** who or what He is. Each element of His character is equal and balanced (Ex 33:19 with 34:5-7; Jer 9:23).
- i. Most theological error occurs when we emphasize one aspect of His character above the others.



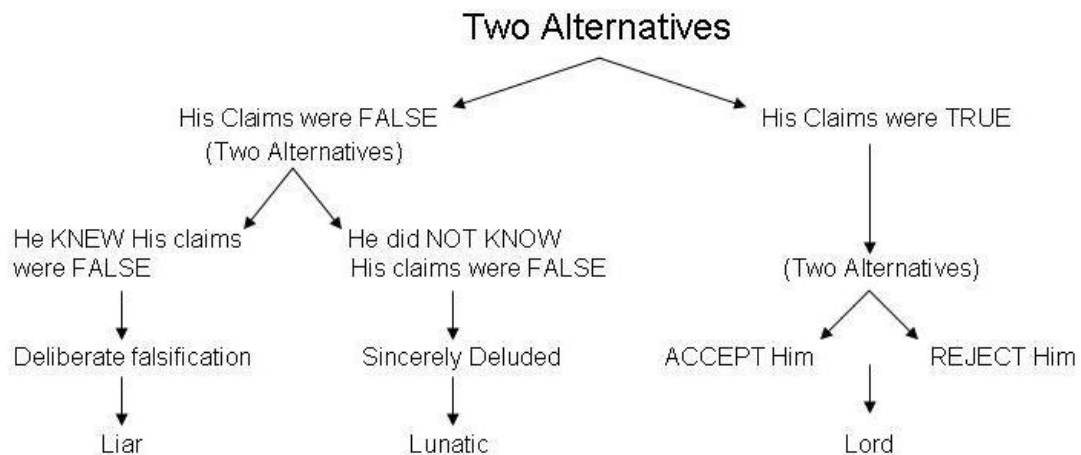
2. Uniqueness of the Message - Only Christianity’s message correctly presents the Attributes of God as inferred by nature and revealed by the Word of God.

- a. *We all fall short of the glory of God (holiness)* - His nature requires that His creation match Him in holiness (Lev 22:21; **Ps 101:6**; 24:3,4; Matt 5:48). **But we cannot.**
- i. We were born into sin (Ps 51:5; Rom 3:10,23; 5:12).
 - ii. The Law of Moses was given to show the exceeding sinfulness of mankind – that they did not measure up to the full stature of holiness (Ps 14:3; 53:3; Rom 3:19,20; 7:8,9; Gal 3:10; 19, 22).
 1. No one can keep the Law as it was intended (Gal 2:16; cf. Sermon on the Mount [Matt 5]).
 2. To break one commandment is to break all (Gal 3:10-12; Jas 2:10)

- b. *We are all condemned to judgment and eternal separation from God.* His just nature requires that judgment be passed on the sinner (Gen 2:17; Ezek 18:4;20,30; Joel 3:2; Matt 23:33; Heb 2:2,3; 12:25).
 - i. The offending soul must be separated (death) from Him – eternally (Dan 12:2; Matt 25:41; Rev 14:11).
- c. *God has taken it upon Himself to, make a way of escape.* His love requires that he act to save mankind – in keeping with his holiness and justice.
 - i. God is not willing that anyone should be separated from Him forever.

3. Liar, Lunatic or Lord – Some people consider Jesus to be a great teacher or one of many prophets sent into the world. Some even believe He is an Archangel come in human form. His claims do not allow any of these interpretations. Christ either deceived mankind by conscious fraud, or He was Himself deluded and self-deceived, or He was Divine. There is no getting out of this trilemma. It is inexorable. His claims include:

- a. Equality with the Father - "I and my Father are one" (Jn 10:25-33) - making Himself equal to God (Jn 5:17,18)
- b. He receives honor due only to God (Jn 5:23, 24) including worship: By a leper (Matt 8:2); Blind man (Jn 9:35-39); Disciples (Matt 14:33); Thomas (Jn 20:27-29); Angels (Heb 1:6; Ps 97:7).
- c. In John 8:56-9, Jesus presents himself as the "I AM" [*ego eimi*]. When challenged by some Jewish leaders regarding His claim of seeing Abraham (who lived some 2000 years earlier), Jesus replied, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I AM." Those Jewish leaders understood that Jesus was claiming to be YHWH (Ex 3:14). This is clearly established when they tried to stone Him to death for what they considered blasphemy under Jewish Law.
- d. He claimed that all that the Father was, He was - "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn 14:8,9)
- e. He forgave sins (Mk 2:5-7)
- f. Claimed to be "Life" (Jn 14:6; 17:3; cf 1 Jn 5:11, 12)
- g. Said He would raise from the dead after three days (Matt 26:61; 27:63; Mk 8:31).



- h. Objections by the Critics
 - i. If Christ were God, how could he die?
 - 1. Error of the false premise. They assume that “death” means cessation of consciousness and being (Heb 2:9; cf Matt 22:29).
 - ii. Didn't Jesus say “My Father is greater than I”?
 - 1. “Greater” not “better” - describes being under authority. (Jn 5:19, 30)
 - iii. Paul said Jesus was the firstborn of all creation. (Col 1:15)
 - 1. “*prototokos*” First in position, not time. (cf Gen 48:14; Jer 31:9). Note verses 16-17 - He is before (*pro*) all things.
 - iv. Jesus said he was the beginning of the creation of God. (Rev 3:14)
 - 1. “*arche*” origin, active cause. (cf Jn 1:3; Col 1:16, 17; Heb 1:2)

4. One Way? or One of Many?

- a. It is popular to take the position that there are many ways to God – it's the old “All roads lead to God” doctrine (cf. Acts 16:17,18). However, when we examine the requirements necessary to meet the revealed nature and character of God, we can narrow the list down to the following:
 - i. The debt of sin must be paid by a man (Rom 5:18,19).
 - ii. That man who pays the debt cannot be from Adam's seed because of original sin (Gen 3:15; Matt 1:18; Lk 1:35; also see Isa 7:14; Lk 1:26-35, virgin birth, and 1 Jn 4:9, only begotten [Gr. *monogenes* – only one of His kind]).
 - iii. That man must be without sin – perfect in holiness (Isa 9:6; Jn 1:1; Rom 9:5; Phl 2:6-11; 1 Pet 1:19; Rev 5:6-9).
 - iv. He must pay the price in full – physical and spiritual death (separation from the body, separation from God) (Ps 22:1; Mk 15:34; Lk 23:46; Eph 4:9; Phl 2:8; 1 Pet 3:18,19).
- b. Jesus allowed for no other way (Jn 14:6). There is no other person, alive or dead, who could have paid the price – except Jesus of Nazareth. And He proved His claims by rising from the dead (Rev 1:18; 2:8).
- c. The Narrow Door
 - i. One way to be saved
 - 1. One Name (Acts 4:12)
 - 2. One door (Jn 10:9)
 - 3. One Way (Jn 14:6)
 - 4. One sacrifice (Heb 7:27; cf. Num 20:11,12)
 - ii. Are All Saved? No, to force all would be to violate free will and the character of the creator (Mk 10:45; Jn 3:16; 10:1-14; Matt 26:42; Gal 2:21).
 - 1. Universalism – heretical doctrine, everyone will be saved – eventually
 - iii. Duration of Time – Forever
 - 1. The new life is everlasting (Jn 3:36; 4:14; 6:40, 47)
 - 2. Sealed by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13; 4:30)
 - 3. Kept by the power of God (Jn 10:28, 29) None are lost (Jn 6:37-40)
 - 4. Saved to the “uttermost” (Heb 7:25 – *pantelēs* from *pan* (all, complete) and *telos* (last in a series, end, completion)).

d. How Are We Saved?

i. By Faith

1. In Christ and His work ALONE – we have no intrinsic holiness. It must be imputed to us by judicial decree from God (Rom 4:22-25)
 - a. Not by works - Our works cannot add one iota to the salvation the He has provided (cf Eph 2:9; Phl 3:9). Jesus was asked, “*What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?*” His answer? “*This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.*” (Jn 6:28, 29).
 - b. We have died (in Christ) and are dead to the Law.
 - c. We walk in newness of life – every day (Col 2:6)

ii. Why by Faith?

1. No one can meet the righteous standard of God’s holiness by trying to be holy through good works. (Matt 5:21-48; Rom 3:20; Gal 2:16).
2. As we fell into sin by not believing God’s Word (Gen 3; Rom 5:19) so we must come to Him in faith, believing His Good News (Mark 1:15; Rom 1:17; 3:22; 4:5; Gal 5:5; Phl 3:9)

5. The Resurrection – Who Moved the Stone?

a. Central Doctrine of the Christian Faith

i. Unique Event

1. No other religion points to a resurrection. If it is false, Christianity is a hoax. If it is true, Christ is God and absolute truth.

ii. Testimony of the Disciples

1. Central message of the Gospel

- a. Message of Peter (Acts 2:22-36; 3:13-18; 4:10-12, 33; 5:29-32; 10:37-43)
- b. Message of Paul (Acts 13:27-37; 17:23, 30-32; 23:6; 24:14-16; 25:19; 26:68, 22-23)
- c. You could not be an Apostle unless you witnessed the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:22; 1 Cor 9:1)
- d. Seen by more than 500 disciples (1 Cor 15:1-8)

2. Without the Resurrection, there is NO Salvation (1 Cor 15:17)

b. Nature of the Resurrection

i. A physical Resurrection of the Body

1. Recorded in all Four Gospels
2. Cited by historians: Tertullian (160-220) ANCL, 95; Josephus (*Antiquities*, 18.3.3)
3. Many infallible proofs (Acts 1:3) Gr. *tekmerion*, demonstrable proof.

c. Critics of the Resurrection – Now Believers

i. Simon Greenleaf (1783-1853) Harvard Law Professor

1. Wrote the Laws of Evidence.
2. Examined the Gospels from an evidentiary perspective
 - a. Concluded: “*If their testimony was not true, there was no possible motive for its fabrication.*”

- ii. Frank Morison [Albert Henry Ross] – Investigative Journalist; *Who Moved the Stone?*
- iii. Lee Stroble - Investigative Journalist; *The Case for Christ*
- d. Circumstances of the Resurrection
 - i. Scourging and Crucifixion
 - 1. Beatings by the Jews (Matt 26:67; Lu 22:63-65; Jn 18:22)
 - 2. Beatings by the Romans (Matt 27:24-31; Mk 15:15-20; Lu 23:23-25)
 - 3. Crucifixion –
 - a. Bones out of joint (Ps 22:14) Hands and feet pierced (Ps 22:16;) and His side pierced by a spear (Jn 19:34; Lk 24:39, 40)
 - 4. Certified as dead by Roman Centurion (Mk 15:39) by Pilate (Mk 15:44)
 - ii. The Tomb
 - 1. Hewn out of stone with a large rock door (Matt 27:60)
 - 2. Sealed by Pilate with a Roman Guard (Matt 27:64-66)
 - iii. The Stone is Rolled Away
 - 1. By an Angel – why moved, why by an Angel?
 - 2. Guard is terrified – flees; penalty of death
 - 3. Seen by Mary Magdalene (Jn 20:13-16), then by the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-34) then to Peter and the Apostles (Lk 24:36; Jn 20:19-23), then Thomas (Jn 20:26-28); then by 500+ believers (1 Cor 15:1-8) and finally by Paul (Acts 9:1-7) and James (1 Cor 15:7)
- e. Facts of the Resurrection
 - i. No refutation by the Jews in Jerusalem
 - ii. Transformed Lives of the Disciples
 - iii. Transformed Lives of millions over 2000 years of History
- f. Critics of the Resurrection – Will be Believers (Eventually)
 - i. Swoon Theory – That Jesus did not die, merely passed out.
 - 1. Inconsistent with eye witnesses (unbelievers); the nature of His injuries; the testimony of the Roman detachment.
 - 2. Who moved the stone?
 - a. Jesus? After the scourging, the cross and three days in a cold tomb? Then presents Himself as the Lord of Life. Really?
 - ii. They Stole the Body
 - a. The disciples? Fought their way through the Roman guards?
 - b. They all died for a lie? (2 Pet 1:16)
 - c. Saul of Tarsus
 - iii. Hallucination Theory – they all imagined it.
 - 1. They saw Him (Matt 28:17); they knew Him (Lk 24:31); they thought He was a spirit (Lk 24:39, 40) cf 1 Jn 1:1.
- g. Conclusion
 - i. Confucius' tomb – occupied; Budda's tomb – occupied; Mohammed's tomb – occupied; Jesus' tomb – empty – He is Risen; He is Risen Indeed!

INTRODUCTION TO THE CULTS

And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many." Matthew 24:4,5 (NKJV)

1. Dialogue on the Doorstep

- a. Deception – Satan’s primary weapon against mankind is to slant, twist or outright deny the truth (Jn 8:44; 2 Cor 11:3; Gal 1:6; 2 Pet 3:16).
 - i. Mass deception is a sign of the last days (Matt 24:4,5; 2 Tim 4:3,4).
 - ii. Galatians, Colossians and Jude were primarily written to counter heresy.
 - iii. Truth mixed with error is still error (Matt 4:6; Acts 16:17; 2 Cor 11:3,4; Gal 1:6-9).
 - iv. Your defense is to know the truth – the whole truth (Jn 8:31,32; Acts 17:11; 20:27; 2 Tim 2:15; 3:13-17; 1 Jn 2:21; cf Ps 1).
- b. Understanding Terminology - “*A rose by any other name would smell as sweet*” – Not this time.
 - i. The cults have appropriated Christian terms; God, Christ, salvation, faith – but attach different meanings. We may *appear* to be in agreement about essential doctrines but the *definitions* are very different (see “What They Believe” below).
 - ii. Another (Gr. *heteros* – another of a different kind) Jesus, Gospel, Spirit (2 Cor 11:4; also see Gal 1:6-9)
- c. Our Approach is Key
 - i. We contend against ideas, not people (Eph 6:12; 2 Tim 2:24-26).
 1. With gentleness and humility – they believe they have the truth too (2 Tim 4:2).
 2. With patience – your role is to plant the seeds of truth. You may never see the result; others may complete what you have started (Mk 4:3,14; 1 Cor 3:6).
 3. Putting on the Whole Armor of God (Eph 6:10-18).
 - a. You cannot defend the truth unless you know the truth (Jn 8:31,32).
 - b. Cults have built their organizations on “nominal” Christians: Those who know little about what they believe, or those who are Christians in name only.
 4. Don’t be offended. Cults almost invariably teach their followers not to listen to outsiders and to depend on the cult authority structure to tell them what to believe without any personal reflection at all.

Truth & Error

“Of one thing we can be sure: Where we find truth, often in close proximity we also find a way of thinking that distorts and faults. In fact, the philosophical method of the central figures in cults is to take a partial truth – such as a verse used as a proof-text – and blend it with an untruth so that the mix has the appearance of interpretation but in reality is systemically false.”

Ravi Zacharias

2. The Watchtower Bible & Tract Society – Jehovah’s Witnesses

a. History

- i. Founded in 1896 by Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916).
- ii. Headquartered in Brooklyn, NY – 1908. Primary publications: *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* (1950, revised 1951, 1961, 1984); *Awake Magazine*; *The Watchtower*; *Reasoning from the Scriptures* (1989).

b. What They Believe

i. Holy Scripture

1. The Bible is God’s (Jehovah’s) Word – *but only as translated by the Watchtower organization*. All others are mistranslated.
 - a. Only the Watchtower Society can properly interpret the scriptures. Jehovah’s Witness are strongly cautioned NOT to study the Bible on their own.⁶
 - b. *The New World Translation* changes significant passages of Scripture to match the Watchtower’s doctrinal positions (cf. Col 1:16-19 – “other things” 4x)
 - c. Five “scholars” who translated: 4 only High School educations and none could not read Hebrew or Greek.

ii. Nature of God

1. Jehovah (YHWH – tetragrammaton [JHVH]) only true name for God.
 - a. The Father – is Jehovah God.
 - i. Is the I AM (Ex 3:14); the only true God (Isa 44:8).
 - b. Christ – a created being – Michael the archangel.
 - i. Jehovah used Jesus to create the universe.
 - ii. Has “god-like” properties (Jn 1:1 *a god*) but is not divine. “There was a time when the Son was not”⁷
 - c. The Holy Spirit – impersonal force, radar beam. “Gods active force” - Power emanation from Jehovah.
 - d. The Trinity – “The obvious conclusion, therefore, is that Satan is the originator of the Trinity doctrine”.⁸

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד

Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one

iii. Means of Salvation

1. Salvation (eternal life on the New Earth) is gained by joining “Jehovah’s organization [The Watchtower Society]”⁹ and by serving God as part of it. Service includes loyally advocating his Kingdom rule (Watchtower Society) to others.¹⁰
2. Atonement – Christ’s death on the cross [stake] only covers the original sin of Adam.
 - a. Faith – is in Christ’s atonement as it wipes the slate clean to allow one to work toward ultimate salvation *earned* by good works and adherence to the Watchtower Society.

- c. **Down the Rabbit Hole** -- Jehovah's Witness will take you on a wild ride through the Bible to establish their doctrine. Key: focus on Jesus, *Who* is He and *What* did He do?

Who Is Jesus? Created Being or God Almighty?

- i. Paul said Jesus was the firstborn of all creation. (Col 1:15)
 1. "prototokos" First in position, not time. (cf Gen 48:14; Jer 31:9). Note verses 16-17 - He is before (*pro*) all things.
 2. "all [*other*] things" is inserted by the NWT and is not in the Greek.
 3. Creator can only be God Himself (cf. [Isa 44:24](#))
- ii. Didn't Jesus say "My Father is greater than I"? (Jn 14:28)
 1. "Greater" not "better" - describes being under authority. (Jn 5:19, 30)
 2. As an expression of His humanity (cf. [Phl 2:6-9](#) - "being in" [Gr. *hupoarcho* - exist and continue to exist] "form" [Gr. *morphe* - essence, outward expression of an inward, unchanging nature] cf. Matt 17:2). As the *Logos*, he is equal; as the *Son*, he is submitted.
- iii. Jesus said he was the beginning of the creation of God. (Rev 3:14)
 1. "*arche*" origin, active cause. (cf. Jn 1:3; Col 1:16, 17; Heb 1:2). Same as God in Rev 1:8; 21:6; 22:13.
- iv. God or "a" god? (Jn 1:1) - translational problems (Matt 5:9; Lk 1:35;

En archē ēn ho Lógos, kai ho Lógos ēn pros ton Theós, kai Theós ēn ho Lógos

Before the beginning, the Word already was. And the Word was face to face with God. And God was the Word. [Lit]

1. YHWH - *Shua* - the LORD our Salvation. Contracted to *Yeshua* - Gr. "Jesus". The LORD who revealed Himself as YHWH in the Old Testament is revealed as *Yeshua* (Jesus) in the New Testament. In John 8:56-59, Jesus presents himself as the "I AM" [*ego eimi*].
2. Of whom are we witnesses? Jesus (Acts 1:8; 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 13:31)

What did He do?

- v. Did He only pay for Adam's sin (original sin) (Rom 5:12-21)?
 1. No, Adam was a type - by him *the* sin came *upon* all.
 2. By one man, Christ, all are *made* righteous - those who believe.
- vi. Isn't grace just the opportunity God gives to "work out your own salvation" (Phl 2:12)?
 1. No, we are saved by grace, through faith. Not by works - Our works cannot add one iota to the salvation the He has provided (cf Eph 2:9; Phl 3:9). Jesus was asked, "*What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?*" answer: "*This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He [the Father] sent.*" (Jn 6:28, 29).
 2. We are justified by faith alone. No one can meet the righteous standard of God's holiness. (Matt 5:21-48; Rom 3:20; Gal 2:16)
 3. As we fell into sin by not believing God's Word (Gen 3; Rom 5:19) so we must come to Him in faith, believing His Good News (Mark 1:15; Rom 1:17; 3:22; 4:5; Gal 5:5; Phl 3:9).

4. By Him, I am a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17; cf. Gal. 5:6; 6:15; Eph. 2:10). I have God's perfect righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Cor. 1:30; 6:11). I have sanctification and am counted [presently] as holy (1 Cor. 1:2; 1:30; 6:11).

d. The Holy Spirit Is God

- i. Equated with God: Acts 5:3-4; 2 Cor. 3:17-18
- ii. Has the immutable attributes of God: Eternal (Heb. 9:14); Omnipresent (Ps. 139:7); Omniscient (1 Cor. 2:10-11).
- iii. Involved in all the works of God: Creation (Gen. 1:2; Psa. 104:30); Incarnation (Matt. 1:18, 20; Luke 1:35); Resurrection (Rom. 1:4; 8:11); Salvation (Rom. 8:1-27).
- iv. Is a person
 1. We are to baptize in His name (Matt 28:19); note that here, in conjunction with the Father and the Son, He must be used of a person.
 2. Is *another* Helper (Jn 14:16, cf. 1 Jn 2:1) note that "another" is (Gr. *allos* – one of the same kind – same as who? Two choices, Jesus or the Father – both are persons).
 3. Is sent in Jesus' name, to teach: John 14:26.
 4. Will arrive, and then bear witness: John 15:26-27.
 5. Is sent by Christ to convict of sin, will speak not on his own but on behalf of Christ, will glorify Christ, thus exhibiting humility: John 16:7-14.
 6. He is the **Holy** Spirit, in contrast to unholy spirits (which are personalities): (Mk 3:22-30, cf. Matt 12:32; 1 Tim 4:1; 1 Jn 3:24-4:6).
 7. Speaks, is quoted as speaking: (Jn 16:13; Acts 1:16; 8:29; 10:19; 11:12; 13:2; 16:6; 20:23; 21:11; 28:25-27; 1 Tim 4:1; Heb 3:7-11; 10:15-17; 1 Pet 1:11; Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13,22).
 8. Can be lied to (**Acts 5:3**); grieved (Eph 4:30).
 9. Can make decisions, judgments (Acts 15:28).
 10. Intercedes for Christians with the Father (Rom. 8:26).

e. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit Are Distinct Persons (Matt 28:19)

- i. "*the* Father and *the* Son and *the* Holy Spirit": use of definite article before each personal noun indicates distinct persons unless explicitly stated otherwise (cf Rev. 1:17; 2:8, 26). The views that "Father" and "Son" are distinct persons but not the Holy Spirit, or that the Holy Spirit is not a person at all, or that all three are different offices or roles of one person, are impossible in view of the grammar.
- ii. Does singular "name" (Yahweh) prove that the three are the same person? No; cf. Gen. 5:2; 11:14; **19:24** (two Yahwehs?); 48:6; and esp. 48:16.

3. The Church of Jesus Christ – Latter Day Saints. The Mormons

a. History

- i. Founded in 1830 by “The Prophet” Joseph Smith Jr. (1805-1844).
- ii. 1815 – While praying in the woods, Joseph receives a personal visit from The Father and The Son. They declare that all the Christian Churches are wrong – true Christianity was lost after the death of the Apostles but will be re-established through Joseph.
- iii. 1820 – Joseph receives a visit from the Angel Moroni (son of Mormon) – who told Joseph where he would find some golden plates inscribed with “reformed” Egyptian hieroglyphics.
 1. Joseph digs up the plates on the hill Cumorah near Palmyra NY.
 2. He translates the plates (1827-1829) by means of special glasses provided by Moroni (*Urim* and *Thummim*) – which becomes the Book of Mormon – first published in 1830.
- iv. 1829 – Joseph is met by John the Baptist (who had been sent by Peter, James and John) to confer up him the Aaronic Priesthood. Shortly thereafter, Peter, James and John themselves conferred on Joseph the Melchizedek Priesthood.
- v. 1844 - Joseph is killed, while in jail, by an angry mob.
- vi. 1846-47 – Brigham Young takes control of the church and moves the headquarters to Salt Lake City, UT.

b. What They Believe

- i. Holy Scripture – Four Books
 1. *The King James Version* of the Bible is the Word of God’s – *insofar as it is correctly translated*.
 2. *Book of Mormon*. The book is primarily about a civilization made up of Jews who migrated to the New World around 600 BC; led by Lehi and his son Nephi.
 - a. These people divided into warring factions; the Nephites and the Lamanites (American Indians – who were cursed with dark skin because of their evil ways).
 - b. Jesus Himself came to the New World to preach the Gospel to the Nephites (not to the Lamanites).
 3. *Pearl of Great Price* - recorded church history by Joseph Smith Jr.
 4. *Doctrine and Covenants* – Sets out basic church doctrine and revelations by various church leaders.
- ii. Nature of God
 1. There are many Gods – council of Gods.¹¹
 2. “God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man”¹¹
 - a. The Father – is the biological and spirit father of Jesus (and us) and has a body of flesh and bones.¹²
 - i. He is, in fact Adam who became Michael the Archangel.¹³

- b. Jesus is a spirit offspring of Adam, the spirit brother of Lucifer. Begotten in His human body by sexual relations with Mary.¹⁴
 - i. Was married to “Mary, Martha and the other Mary”.¹⁶
 - c. The Holy Spirit – one of the many Gods; is a personage of spirit, an immaterial being; *is diffuse but cannot be everywhere at once*.¹⁵
 - iii. Means of Salvation
 - 1. Is obtained by faith in Christ *PLUS* baptism, obedience to the teaching of the Mormon Church, good works, and “keeping the commandments of God”.¹⁷
 - 2. Blood of Christ is only effective for some sins, the remainder must be paid for you - by your own blood.¹⁸ Salvation by grace is simply God’s mercy in allowing us the opportunity to atone for our own sins.¹⁹
 - 3. In keeping the ordinances of the Mormon Church and marriage in the Temple, a male will become (eventually) a god and rule his own planet with his own spiritual offspring.²⁰

c. Through the Looking Glass

- i. Didn’t Jesus say “Ye are gods” in John 10:34? (cf Ps 82)
 - 1. There are two answers:
 - a. Jesus did not say those prophets and judges were Gods (capital ‘G’) – they exercised God’s authority over the people as gods (having the power of life and death) but were merely men.
 - b. Mormons cannot use this text to show that men were gods since their own theology states that the *become gods after physical death and through a long process of exaltation*.
- ii. The Book of Mormon is a second witness to the true gospel.
 - 1. The Book of Mormon contradicts the Bible on virtually every major doctrine. The truth is true, everything else is a lie. The Bible doesn’t need a second witness; it has 66 witnesses written by 40 authors in the Books contained therein.
 - 2. The Bible is translated incorrectly. This is a common excuse meant to confuse and cloud the truth (transmission and translation of the Biblical text is covered in, *The Bible – We Can Trust It* - supra.
 - 3. The Book of Mormon was, supposedly, a direct translation of the golden plates by means of *Urim* and *Thummim*; yet it has undergone major “corrections” - 1920 and 1981.
 - 4. Thousands of words in the Book of Mormon are plagiarized from the King James Bible – including textural errors.
 - 5. The Book states that the Lamanites were the Jewish predecessors of the American Indians. DNA evidence now shows that the Indians are descended from Asian peoples.²¹

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Ephesians 6:10,11

1. **Understanding Paradigms** - A paradigm is a philosophical or theoretical framework of ideas, concepts and/or theories that inform a person's worldview.
 - a. **Our worldview** (paradigm) is influenced by perception through:
 - i. Our Experiences – set our expectations – what will happen
 - ii. Our Background – sets our context – why things happen
 - iii. Our Education – sets our perspective – how things happen
 - b. **Lack of information** - What we know about the world is a small subset of reality.
 - i. 100 years ago all the leading scientist were sure that the universe was eternal and infinite. Today they know that neither is true.
 - c. **Some knowledge cannot be learned though logic alone** (Col 2:8; 2 Tim 3:7)
 - i. Logic is based on experiential evidence - Which is subject to perception.
 - ii. Our perception is limited to the time and space domain of this Universe.

2. **First Cause and Creation**
 - a. **Nothing ever comes from nothing** - there must be a first cause.
 - i. Every observation of science shows a cause for every effect - no exceptions. (Gen 1:2; Ps 8:3).
 - ii. Critics cannot explain the origin of *information*.
 1. Microcosm – digitally defined
 - a. DNA is a self-correcting *digital code* exceedingly more complex than any computer program man has ever devised.
 2. Macrocosm – governed by exceedingly fine-tune “laws”
 - b. **Darwinism is Dead** – *Macro* evolution (from one species to another) is simply a theory which has never been proven by the evidence. *Micro* evolution (adaptation) is a demonstration of incredible design.
 - c. **Top Three Flaws in Darwinian Evolution**
 - i. Fossil record shows no transitional forms.
 1. However, there is extensive evidence of sudden appearance of fully developed species²².
 - ii. Irreducible Complexity - Darwin admitted that if "*any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down.*"²⁵
 1. Many prominent scientists have disavowed any validity to the theory that complex organisms came about by random mutation²⁶. As biochemist Franklin Harold stated an Oxford University Press monograph, "there are presently no detailed Darwinian accounts of the evolution of any biochemical or cellular system, only a variety of wishful speculations."²⁷

- iii. DNA evidence destroys the “Tree of Life” concept that all biological system descended from a single cell into families of species. In a recent scientific journal, one evolutionary biologist summed up their findings in light of DNA evidence, noting, *“For a long time the holy grail was to build a tree of life. We have no evidence at all that the tree of life is a reality,”*²⁸

3. Christianity and Reason

- a. Objection to miracles and resurrection
 - i. Basis is flawed logic based on misunderstanding the nature of God [cf Matt 19:26; 22:29].
 - ii. Misunderstanding of God’s role in the affairs of men (2 Pet 3:3-7; cf Jn 2:7-9; Matt 14:25 [violating the laws of physics]).
- b. Objection to Christ being the only Way.
 - i. Assumes that God will judge based on individual merit (works). (cf. see Uniqueness of Christianity, (supra) Section 2, *Uniqueness of the Message*).

4. Similarity of the Cults

- a. All other forms of Christianity are wrong.
 - i. They have come to “restore” the truth. (cf. Matt 16:18 – Christ builds the Church; Jn 16:13 – Holy Spirit leads us into all truth, is IN the believer – forever [Jn 14:16, 17]).
- b. One can only be saved by faith PLUS keeping the rules of the cult organization.
- c. Jesus is a created being, not God incarnate.
- d. The Bible is the Word of God; so long as it agrees with the cult teachings.

5. Our Approach – Be Strong IN the Lord

- a. It is spiritual warfare (Eph 6:12). Those who are in the world and in the cults are in spiritual darkness and deception (2 Tim 2:24-26). The truth of God’s plan is gained only by revelation of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:14).
- b. Put on the whole Armor of God (Eph 6:10-18).
- c. Be ready to give an answer – looking for those “Divine Appointments” (1 Pet 3:15; Eph 2:10)

Fossil Record

Charles Darwin admitted that his theory required the existence of "transitional forms." Darwin wrote: "So that the number of intermediate and transitional links, between all living and extinct species, must have been inconceivably great. But assuredly, if this theory be true, such have lived upon the earth."

He was dismayed that no such forms had been found in his time. The reality is, no viable transitional forms have ever been found. As recent Biology text books have noted: “Most of the animal phyla that are represented in the fossil record first appear, 'fully formed,' in the Cambrian some 550 million years ago...The fossil record is therefore of no help with respect to the origin and early diversification of the various animal phyla.”²³ And, “Many species remain virtually unchanged for millions of years, then suddenly disappear to be replaced by a quite different, but related, form. Moreover, most major groups of animals appear abruptly in the fossil record, fully formed, and with no fossils yet discovered that form a transition from their parent group.”²⁴ Ω

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