

# Evidence for God and the Bible

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## Reasons to Believe

by Eric Lyons & Kyle Butt

About 33 million adults in the United States classify themselves as atheists or agnostics. On the other hand, about 294 million adults believe in a God of some sort. Regardless of which view you currently hold, we can all agree that the time has come for an open discussion of God's existence, the Bible, and Jesus Christ—the pillars of Christianity.

Whether you believe in God or not, the approach of *Reasons to Believe* should be refreshing to you. This book lists reasons to believe in God, the Bible, and Jesus. What is so profound about that approach? In truth, it is often the case that people do not give real reasons for their beliefs. A reason is when an aspect of reality is coupled with proper thinking that leads to a certain conclusion. A motivation does not necessarily have anything to do with proper thinking or reality. If a man says, "I believe in God because my mother told me there is one, and she is the nicest lady I know," he has not given a real reason to believe in God. In truth, how nice a person's mother is has nothing ultimately to do with whether what she says is right or wrong.

Sadly, many Christians and atheists hold to their beliefs because of unreasonable motivations. To be candid, it is likely that all of us hold some beliefs without proper reasons. However, we should be willing to critically examine any unreasonable motivations that we may have, and reason together about the beliefs we currently hold regarding God, the Bible, and Jesus Christ.

Chapter Titles:

- 7 Reasons to Believe in God
  - 3 Reasons to Believe the Bible is from God
  - 5 Reasons to Believe in Jesus
  - 4 Reasons to Do More Than Just Believe in Jesus
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## **Why Should You Believe in God?**

How could we ever know if God exists? We can't see, hear, touch, smell, or taste Him.

We can't weigh Him like we can a five-pound bag of potatoes.

We can't put God under an

electron microscope to study Him on an atomic level. So, how can we know that God exists?

Admittedly, belief in God is not the result of literally seeing His Spirit or touching His

actual essence. What we have at our fingertips, however, is a mountain of irrefutable,

indirect, credible evidence that testifies on God's behalf, including the fundamental fact that matter logically demands a Maker.

A study of the material Universe reveals that every physical effect must have an

adequate cause that came before it (or was simultaneous to it)

and is greater than it—a truth known as the Law of Cause and Effect. The U.S. flag that stood tall on the surface of the moon in 1969 was neither eternal nor without a cause. Its existence on the moon demands a sufficient cause.

Some leading atheists contend that “nothing” gave rise to the Universe. But the fact is, as renowned atheist Richard Dawkins once admitted, “common sense doesn’t allow you to get something from nothing.”

At one time in the past, the material Universe did not exist. Then, at some point, it came into existence. But since matter is not eternal and cannot create itself from nothing, then something outside of the material realm must have brought it into existence. Indeed, the very existence of matter demands a Maker.

Atheism irrationally contends that an accidental explosion (from nothing) caused exquisite order—that a well-designed Universe came about without a Designer. In truth, atheism is unreasonable, while belief in God is entirely rational.

-Eric Lyons

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## **Why Should You Believe the Bible is From God?**

It is impossible to be correct about everything a person says or writes. Even though we

may set high standards for ourselves and learn all that we can, and even though we may put as many safeguards in place as is humanly possible, we will make mistakes, and ignorance will be revealed. As the old adage goes: "To err is human."

"With God," however, "all things are possible."

Why should an honest truth-seeker conclude that the Bible is from the Creator of the Universe? What proves that the Bible is of supernatural origin? In short, because while "to err is human," the Bible writers were correct in everything they wrote –about the past, the present, and even the future.

If an all-knowing, all-powerful God exists, then He could guide even uneducated men to write about events that occurred hundreds or thousands of years before their time with complete accuracy. He could "move" (2 Peter 1:20-21) ordinary people to write flawlessly about any number of contemporary people, places, and things. He could even supernaturally guide penmen to write about future events with perfect accuracy. The most fundamental reason that a person can come to the rational conclusion that the Bible is "given by inspiration of God" is because the writers of the Bible were amazingly accurate...about everything.

One of the first things that any honest truth-seeker would want to know if someone came to him claiming to be in possession of revelation from God is if the "revelation" was completely accurate. The fallibility of the message would be

the first indication that it was man-made and not Heaven-sent. On the other hand, complete factual accuracy would be the first thing to expect from any document claiming to be God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16).

-Eric Lyons

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## **The Bible: One of Three Choices**

What are we to make of the many claims of Bible writers that they wrote the words of God?

In short, the Bible writers were lunatics, liars, or truth-tellers (and God was the ultimate source of their writings).

The honest person must admit that the Bible is not a product of the mentally disturbed. Did insane individuals write the Bible—the world's best-selling book in all of history? Did men without any sense pen a book that some of the world's greatest minds have studied daily for decades? The "lunatic" option for the Bible writers is a very illogical choice.

If the Bible was not written by mentally ill megalomaniacs, then it was written either by the honest or the dishonest. Logically, no other choices exist. For example, was Moses lying or telling the truth when he wrote the Ten Commandments, saying, "And God spoke all these words..." (Exodus 20:1)? This same question can be asked of all the writers of the Bible.

The Bible is either a product of God or a product of liars. [If the writers were liars, then they repeatedly pronounced their own destruction throughout the Bible, for they claimed

that lying is sinful and that all impenitent liars will suffer eternal destruction (Proverbs 19:5; Revelation 21:8).] The Bible is either the greatest book the world has ever known (and deserves our full attention and respect as being from God) or it is one of the worst (with thousands of lies about being from God).

You have to make a choice. But be sure to make an honest, informed decision. Don't hastily base your decision on something as shallow as a meme or a tweet (by skeptics or Christians). Dig in and truly follow the evidence wherever it leads.

-Eric Lyons

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## **THE NEW TESTAMENT: TRIED AND TRUE**

Try it. Test it. And find it to be just so. Water always expands (rather than shrinking) when it freezes. The flame of a match will always go upward (and never downward), regardless of which way you hold the match. Like  $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$ , some things are proven to be true and should be believed.

When dishonest people are afraid that others will fact-check their stories, liars will often be very vague about where they have been, who they were with, and what they were doing. In contrast to manipulative liars, the Bible writers did not attempt to save themselves from serious scrutiny by being vague about people, places, and events in the past. In fact, the very opposite is true: throughout Scripture, the writers noted specific people in specific cities at specific times doing specific things.

From Jericho being "down" in elevation from Jerusalem by 3,500 feet (Luke 10:30) to the 95 individuals, 54 cities, and 32

countries specifically mentioned by name in the book of Acts, the New Testament writers' ancient accuracy is uncanny. From the governor of Judea, Pontius Pilate, who delivered Jesus over to be crucified (Matthew 27; John 18-19) to the apostle Paul reasoning before such first-century rulers as Felix, Festus, and Herod Agrippa (Acts 24-26), the New Testament penmen were specific—and spot on!

The Bible writers' diverse backgrounds and occupations (from fishermen to a physician to a tax collector) did not impede their accuracy. They did not even let the future get in their way (as they quoted Jesus accurately predicting the future destruction of Jerusalem in Matthew 24:1- 34). Indeed, the New Testament has been tried and tested repeatedly (for the past 2,000 years) and found to be true—to be accurate.

-Eric Lyons

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## **Where Did God Come From?**

The question “Where did God come from?” assumes that God had a cause. However, by definition, an eternal spirit (“the everlasting God”) cannot logically have a cause. Asking about God’s cause is as incoherent as asking, “Why is matter eternal?” Matter is not eternal. Matter is no more an eternal essence without a cause than God is a physical being with a cause. Asking “Where did God come from?” is like asking, “When did eternity start?” By definition, eternity never began. Eternity is without beginning and end. By definition, so is God.

From what we observe in nature, matter and energy are neither created nor destroyed. Scientists refer to this observed fact as the First Law of Thermodynamics. Evolutionists allege that the Universe began with the explosion of a tiny ball of matter

13 to 14 billion years ago, yet they have never provided a reasonable explanation for the cause of this supposed original ball of matter. The fact is, a logical naturalistic explanation for the origin of the “original” ball of matter that supposedly led to the Universe does not exist. It cannot exist so long as the First Law of Thermodynamics is true.

Since the physical Universe exists, and yet it could not have created itself, then the Universe is either eternal or something or someONE outside of the Universe must have created it. Relatively few scientists propose that the Universe is eternal. In fact, there would be no point in attempting to explain the “beginning” of the Universe (with a Big Bang, for example) if scientists believed it’s always existed. What’s more, the Second Law of Thermodynamics, which states that matter and energy become less usable over time, has led most scientists to conclude that the Universe has not always existed; that is, it is not eternal.

So why do the laws of thermodynamics or the law of causality not apply to God? Because these scientific laws, like all scientific laws, apply to what we find and study in nature. And again, by definition, God is not natural and thus is logically not subject to the laws of nature. If matter is not eternal, and it cannot create itself, then the only logical conclusion is that something or someONE outside of nature (Who is, supernatural) caused the material Universe and everything in it. Christians call this Someone “the eternal God” because He is “from everlasting to everlasting” (Psalm 90:2).

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## **The Finely Tuned Demands a Fine Tuner**

Everyone knows that cars and computers, pianos and projectors



all require engineers, technicians, and tuners for them to function properly. New machines are built by intelligent people. Older machines receive tune-ups by intelligent tuners. Surely, no one believes that tune-ups happen by accident. How can anything be finely tuned without a fine-tuner?

Atheistic evolutionists continually find themselves in a conundrum because of their admittance that our Universe is fine-tuned. If the physical laws of the Universe (gravity, for example) are merely inherent in the Universe and simply evolved to their current status by time and chance along with everything else that exists, the question arises, "Why, then, is the Universe so fine-tuned?" Why do planets not crash into each other during their orbits? How have astronomers been able to predict with amazing accuracy where a planet, such as Mars, would be in 20 years? How can we pilot and guide spaceships to travel 240,000 miles to a particular point on the Moon while both the Earth and the Moon are in motion?

Atheists allege that the Universe and its laws are the result of non-intelligent, purely naturalistic, random processes, yet at the same time, leading atheists contend that it's "ordered in an intelligible way." Unbelievers have acknowledged many examples of fine-tuned properties in the Universe and have even admitted that it looks as if "a super-intellect has been monkeying with physics." 1

In truth, it "looks...as if a super intellect" lies behind the precise, fine-tuned, law-driven Universe because there is a Super-intellect behind it all. The simple, satisfying answer for why the Universe works so well, and for why Earth is so perfect for life's existence, is because the Universe has a Fine-Tuner. Just as a fine-tuned automobile demands a tuner, so our fine-tuned Universe demands a Designer. Nothing makes sense if an ultimate Tuner does not exist, but everything makes sense if He does.

Although many ridicule Genesis 1:1 as being unreasonable and

unscientific, the fact is, Scripture's explanation makes perfect sense in light of the fact that we live in a finely tuned Universe. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork" (Psalm 19:1). Indeed, "God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1) and "upholds all things by the word of His power" (Hebrews 1:3).

—Eric Lyons

1 Paul Davies, "Laying Down the Laws," *New Scientist*, June 2007, p. 30.

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## **The Puzzling Platypus Demands a Designer**

Scientists classify the platypus as a mammal, but it's unlike any other mammal you've ever seen. It's about the size of a house cat with fur thicker than that of a polar bear. It can store food in its mouth like a chipmunk and lay eggs like a turtle. It has a beaver-like tail, a duck-like bill, and rooster-like spurs. What's more, it produces venom like a snake.

This unique animal has a perfectly designed tail, which it uses both to store fat and to maneuver easily in water. Its fur is so dense that it can trap a layer of air next to its skin, which works as insulation to keep the platypus warm in cold waters. Platypuses also have wonderfully designed otter-like webbed feet.

Surely most impressive is the fact that the platypus completely closes its eyes and ears underwater when searching for food, and yet it finds its prey very effectively. Rather than clumsily tumbling bill-first into the bottoms of rivers and streams in hopes of stumbling upon lunch, this curious

creature has an extremely sensitive snout. Scientists have learned that the platypus's leathery bill has a complex electro-receptor system in it, which allows the platypus to sense even the very weak electric impulses in the muscles of its prey, including earthworms and tadpoles, which often are hiding under the mud and rocks.

Although evolutionists would have us believe that this unique, anatomically and physiologically diverse animal is the product of millions of years of evolution, why not ask yourself if the design and diversity of the platypus actually declares the existence of a Grand Designer?

–Eric Lyons

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## **“Oh, What God Has Done!”**

On May 24, 1844, Samuel Morse, who invented the telegraph system and Morse Code, sent the first telegraph from Washington, D.C., to Baltimore, Maryland. This message consisted of a brief quotation from Numbers 23:23 (KJV): “What hath God wrought!” (“Oh, what God has done!”–NKJV.)

Samuel Morse boldly testified to what everyone should understand: design demands a designer. Morse's code and the telegraph system were the immediate effects of a designer: Samuel Morse. But, the Grand Designer is God, Who created Mr. Morse and every material thing that Samuel Morse used to invent his telegraph system. Samuel Morse recognized this marvelous, self-evident truth. Should we not recognize it as well, especially in view of the amazing creatures that inhabit Earth?

Nature testifies loudly to what “God has worked!” An electric eel can send signals from its brain, through perfectly

positioned nerves, to its battery-like muscles and produce up to 600 volts of electricity. Woodpeckers can repeatedly strike their beaks against trees with a force more than 250 times that which astronauts are subjected to during a launch into outer space without knocking themselves out. A one-pound shorebird (known as a godwit) can fly over 7,000 miles (from Alaska to New Zealand) without stopping for food or rest. What's more, the godwit's roundtrip journey will end exactly where it began several months earlier—all without a map or GPS.

May God help us to open our eyes and hearts and acknowledge what He has done! Truly, "the whole earth is full of His glory" (Isaiah 6:3).

—Eric Lyons

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## **A Proven Contradiction, or Mere Assumption?**

Matthew and Luke's accounts of Satan tempting Jesus in the wilderness certainly are different (Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13): The second and third temptations recorded by Matthew are "flip-flopped" in Luke's account. Matthew recorded that Satan's second temptation involved him trying to persuade Jesus to throw Himself off the pinnacle of the Temple. Then, the third temptation Matthew listed was Satan's attempt to get Jesus to worship him. Even though Luke mentioned the same two events, he listed them in the reverse order. How are these accounts not contradictory?

In short, this question is based upon an assumption. Those who claim that the "disorder" of temptations is a contradiction *assume* that events are always written (or spoken) chronologically. However, that simply is not the case. Open

almost any world history textbook, and you will see that even though most events are recorded chronologically, some are arranged topically. For example, in one chapter, you may read about the European civilization in the late Middle Ages (A.D. 1000-1300). Yet, in the very next chapter, you might learn about Medieval India (150 . 1400). Authors arrange world history textbooks thematically in order to reduce the confusion that would arise if they tried to record every event chronologically.

Even when we tell life experiences to friends and family, oftentimes, we speak climactically rather than chronologically. A teenager may return home from an amusement park and tell his father about all of the roller coasters he rode. It may be that, rather than mentioning all of them in the exact order he rode them, he will start with the most exciting ones and end with the less thrilling ones, or vice versa.

Had both Matthew and Luke claimed to have arranged the temptations of Jesus chronologically, skeptics would have a legitimate criticism. But, the fact is, at least one of the gospel writers could have written topically and never intended for readers to assume a strict, sequential ordering of the events.

Although the Bible writers often are accused of having written contradictory statements, an honest, in-depth study actually shows the so-called "contradictions" are merely *accusations* of contradictions and not valid, proven discrepancies. Remember, assumptions are not contradictions!

-Eric Lyons

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# The Resurrection of Jesus

The same God Who rightly expects His human creation to examine the evidence and come to a knowledge of Him without ever literally seeing Him is the same God Who expects man to follow the facts that lead to the resurrected Jesus without ever personally witnessing His resurrection. No one believes in God because they can put Him under a microscope and see Him. We cannot use the five senses to see and prove the actual essence of God (John 4:24; Luke 24:39). What we have at our fingertips, however, is a mountain of *credible* evidence that *testifies* on God's behalf. The very existence of finite matter testifies to a supernatural, infinite, eternal Creator. The endless examples of complex design in the Universe bear witness to a grand Designer. The laws of science (such as the Law of Biogenesis) testify to God's existence.

A reasonable faith in Jesus' resurrection is, likewise, based upon a mountain of credible testimony. Just as trustworthy testimony (and not firsthand knowledge) has led billions of people to believe, justifiably so, that Alexander the Great, Napoleon, and George Washington were real people, millions of Christians have come to the logical conclusion that Jesus rose from the dead.

- Nineteen-hundred-year-old eyewitness accounts of Jesus' resurrection exist in the most historically documented and accurate ancient book in the world—the New Testament.
- The event was foreshadowed and prophesied in the Old Testament (Psalm 16:10; Jonah 1:17-2:10; Matthew 12:40).
- Though very serious preventative steps were taken to keep the lifeless body of Jesus buried (Matthew 27:62-66), the tomb was found empty on the exact day He promised to arise.
- The body of Christ was never found (and, no doubt, first-century skeptics, especially the impenitent Jews

who put Him to death, would have loved nothing more than to present Jesus' dead body to early Christians).

- The once fearful and skeptical disciples quickly transformed into a courageous, confident group of Christians who suffered and eventually died for their continual belief and teachings regarding the resurrected Lord.
- Hundreds of early Christians were able to testify to having seen Jesus firsthand after His resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:5-8).
- Tens of thousands of once-skeptical Jews, including Saul of Tarsus, examined the evidence, left Judaism, and confessed Jesus Christ as the Son of God (Acts 6:7; 21:20).
- What's more, these same Jews changed their day of worship from Saturday to Sunday (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2).

As with evidence for the existence of God or the inspiration of the Bible, the logical, cumulative case for the resurrection of Christ from credible testimony lies at the heart of a fortified faith.

–Eric Lyons

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## **How Did Judas Die?**

One of the most frequently asked questions by Bible skeptics is, "How exactly did Judas die?" According to Matthew, after Judas betrayed Jesus, Judas "went and hanged himself" (27:5). In the book of Acts, however, Luke mentioned that "falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out" (1:18). So which is it? Did Judas hang himself, or did he fall headlong and burst his mid-section open?

The truth is, Matthew 27:5 and Acts 1:18 cannot logically contradict each other if it is possible for both to be true—and it certainly is possible for both incidents to have occurred.

Consider a brawl in which two men are fighting to the death. The larger man strikes the undersized man in the throat, crushing his larynx. For nearly 60 seconds, the wounded man stumbles around, trying to breathe, but cannot. He then falls to the ground, strikes his head on the cement, and dies. One witness may declare, “James hit John and killed him.” Another person may say, “John suffocated after being struck in the throat.” While another might add, “Falling headfirst, John hit his head on the ground, and died.” Are the witnesses’ statements contradictory? No. They are supplementary. Likewise, neither of the Bible statements concerning the death of Judas is contradictory. Simply put, one does not exclude the other; thus, logically, they can both be true.

Matthew does not deny that Judas fell and had his entrails gush out, and Luke does not deny that Judas hanged himself. In short, Matthew records the method by which Judas attempted his death, while Luke reports the end result.

—Eric Lyons

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