

A Beginner's Guide to the Evidence for Biblical Christianity

By Dan Jensen (2023)

Introduction

This essay is not at all intended as an in-depth defense of Biblical Christianity. It is solely intended to give new Christians or believers who are just starting to take their faith more seriously, a very basic overview of the evidence in favor of the faith. Before reading this essay, I strongly recommend first reading all of my works under my “works for beginners” section on my website, with the exception of the essay on the history of Confessional Presbyterianism. That essay can be read after this essay.

If this essay does excite you and you want to go deeper, and feel that you have the abilities and time to go deeper, I recommend reading all of my “call” essays next. They can be found in the section on the religions of the world on my website. After you read those, I recommend reading my *A False Kind of Christianity*. You don't need to read the testimony section unless that interests you. After you finish that, I would read as many of RC Sproul's books on apologetics as you can. Then after reading those, I would begin looking through my extensive bibliography at the end of my *A False Kind of Christianity* for further resources. Once you get this far, you will start to see other resources in those works that can continue to take you further. You could also at that point begin to read some of my more in-depth works on my website as any of them interest you. Feel free to email me (my email can be found on my website) any questions you have along this journey.

Assessing Evidence

I understand that as long as this essay will seem in some ways (for a beginner level essay at least), there may be a huge part of you that is like, “Ok, but if you can

summarize the case for the Bible in such a short space in the big scheme of things, is the evidence actually all that compelling?" In order to dispel that possible objection, allow me to use an analogy that I have used effectively with many other people.

Most sports analysts believe that the debate over the GOAT (Greatest Of All Time) in basketball comes down to Jordan vs. LeBron. I understand that many of you may not want to hear that, especially you Kobe fans out there! I also understand that many of you may be die-hard LeBron fans and so I may lose you with this analogy, but the facts are the facts. If we are only going to go by the overall evidence, then the debate is between those two. And when we compare the major evidence, it not only does not take that long to make the comparison, the comparison alone shows that the debate is not that close. Jordan is the GOAT. Now, if you want to argue that the evidence is misleading for any number of reasons, that is fine. But, you need to understand that these are all going to be subjective arguments. The same thing is true when addressing religions, worldviews, and philosophies. People can say that they know their worldview is true for any number of subjective reasons, but they should be honest about this. You are totally free to continue to believe that LeBron is the GOAT, and to defend that. But, you should be honest about the fact that you are doing so based mostly on evidence that is not really all that measurable in any concrete sense.

Almost all sports analysts agree that there are 4 basic categories to be analyzed when discussing this question if the question is going to be decided by evidence. You can say that the criteria is itself subjective and that is true to some extent, but all starting points have to be presupposed. Whenever we examine the case for anything in life, there has to be some basic common sense first principles that guide us. If someone wants to say that whoever had the fastest dribbling skills should be considered a category, I could not objectively prove him wrong. But, that is rather silly. Hence, if the basic categories that I give here for the GOAT are not the basic criteria, then we all have to be honest that subjectivism reigns. And the same is true regarding the basic categories I will give regarding worldviews.

The 4 GOAT basketball categories are:

- 1 - Winning
- 2 - Accomplishments
- 3 - Stats
- 4 - Longevity

The breakdown of each category in regard to Jordan vs. Lebron is as follows:

1 - Winning

Jordan - 6 Championships and 2 3-peat runs; Jordan won every time he went to the Finals

Lebron- 4 Championships; Lebron has gone to the Finals 10 times and is 4-6 and was swept in 2 of those Finals

[Jordan Wins]

2 - Accomplishments

Jordan - 5 MVP; 6 Finals MVP; 10 Scoring Titles; 9 NBA All-Defense; 1 Defensive Player of the Year; 14 All Star Appearances

Lebron - 4 MVP; 4 Finals MVP; 1 Scoring Title; 6 NBA All-Defense; 0 Def Player; 19 All Star Appearances

[Jordan Wins]

3 - Stats (Per game avg.; not totals)

8 Major Categories: Points, Assists, Rebounds, Steals, Blocks, FG%, FT%, and Turnovers. Jordan leads in 5 of these, including the most important (points; by 3 full points - 30.1 to 27.1)

[Jordan Wins]

4 - Longevity

[Lebron Wins]

Conclusion:

Jordan wins 3 of the 4 categories. If we are going by the objective evidence and criteria alone, Jordan plainly wins.

The case is that simple. I was able to lay it out for you in barely over one page. But, that does not change the fact that many people will try to push for Lebron on other grounds. They may even have a lot to say about this. They may even write full articles on their position. They may even write entire books on their position. They may even write entire books on a side point that they believe strongly favors their position. None of all that changes one iota the basic simplicity and strength of the above case. If we are going to go by the objective evidence, Jordan wins. If we are going to go by other criteria, fine, but be open about that and how easily I can create my own countering criteria.

And think of the endless amounts of objections and negative evidence that could be brought against all that I said above. Bill Russell had more championships than either Jordan or Lebron. Lebron is the leading scorer of all time if we only go by raw points (because of his longevity). Lebron has more All-Star appearances (also because of his longevity). Jordan had a lot of bad games. He missed a lot of shots. He even missed some dunks. He was not always a very liked teammate. He was not a very moral person. Nike, Gatorade, and the NBA all had a vested interest in pushing him as the greatest of all time and made oodles of money off that. People could argue that it was all about the money with Jordan. Many excellent sports analysts like Nick Wright passionately disagree with me and often make cogent cases in public for their position. Jordan did not play all that great on the Dream Team. Barkley was plainly the best on that team.

Entire articles and/or books could be written about each one of these points, making it seem like the case is not so simple after all. And while most of this evidence is pretty weak, the Dream Team argument is puzzling. Why would the GOAT in his prime not be

the best on his team when placed with the rest of the best talent in the league? That is an anomaly, no doubt about it. Lots of theories on this point exist. The LeBron advocates say it just proves that the Jordan case is not all that strong.

At the end of the day though, all of this blustering does not change the basic argument. If we are going to go by the *objective* evidence, *taken on the whole*, Jordan just plain wins. I understand that in the world of apologetics giant tomes are written on every point under the sun. And all of that is fine and is actually good and helpful. But, all of this evidence, both for the Bible and against it, all amounts to side issues along the lines of the side issues I brought up above in regard to Jordan vs. LeBron. As one example, apologists against the Bible love to point out some of the similarities with Christianity that existed in some of the Pagan religions prior to Jesus. All of these points are interesting, but they do nothing to prove these Pagan religions or disprove the Bible. I agree that if we had nothing else to go off of, this evidence would certainly carry more weight the way that the Dream Team argument would. But, we have no concrete evidence in favor of these Pagan religions, and these similarities in no way disprove the evidence in favor of the Bible. Are these points of evidence anomalous? Yes, they are. Are some of them somewhat difficult to explain? Yes. But, when placed in the overall context of looking at *all* of the major lines of evidence, they don't amount to much at all.

Before moving forward, I do want to say that I originally got the idea for this excellent analogy from a great YouTube presentation. While that presentation includes some subjective evidence that is not appropriate for our purposes here, for the most part the presentation is a masterpiece on how to assess objective evidence. Some of that presentation is now a touch out of date, and my numbers above reflect the current state of things. Overall though, it is still well worth the watch if that interests you. You can view that presentation by watching the following YouTube video by DANGERProductions, titled "Jordan vs. LeBron - The Best GOAT Comparison," and uploaded on Apr 20, 2020.

I understand from the outset that there are many difficult portions of the Bible. Much of what the Bible says in certain places is hard to swallow. I don't have explanations for all of this either. But, all of this evidence is only along the lines of Jordan having some really bad games and moments. Obviously, the GOAT isn't going to make all of his shots and have great games every time out. However, we would not expect the GOAT to have quite so many bad games. There were games where Jordan was awful. The only game I got to see him in person was one such game and it was a bummer. He only scored like 12 points and missed almost every shot. That was still one of the coolest moments in my life as my friend and I pushed our way down to the court for warm-ups and were a mere few yards away from him, but it was a bad game. And Jordan had hundreds of these games. I would admit that LeBron has probably been more consistent. Again though, this has no real bearing on the overall case as we have seen.

I understand that some of you may struggle with all the supernatural of the Bible, with all the talk of angels and demons, maybe even more than you let on around other Christians. I want you to know that I certainly struggle with this side of things a great deal to this day. But, our subjective aversion to the supernatural is not an objective objection. The fact remains that when you peel away all of the nonsense, myths, superstitions, and outright fraud, you are still left with like 5% of the claims today and throughout history from all over the world that stubbornly resist all credible naturalistic explanations. These credible claims have existed in every culture throughout history. The supernatural is real whether we like it or not.

And in my own life, I have rarely directly encountered the supernatural, but I have experienced it. And this is coming from someone who desperately wanted to believe in the doctrine of a minority of Christians that God is no longer performing miracles after the completion of the Bible. My experience eventually made it impossible for me to continue to hold that viewpoint.

I have on rare occasions been assaulted physically by demons whether you believe that is entirely crazy or not. It is rare, but I have had times where a physical presence was in

my room and was pressing upon me. I have heard Atheists respond to these episodes that have been reported by many people today and throughout history (and not only from orthodox Christians) as our bodies sometimes freeze up in our sleep and cause us to feel this way. This does not explain the data. I can testify that I have smelled them and that on one occasion one tried to close my lips as I was trying to pray out loud. And in each of these cases I was not dreaming. Many people have testified to levitating off of their beds and on one occasion my bed started shaking. My body seizing up does not explain this.

Further, these events always occur in the middle of the night between about 1-4am. That same exact testimony has been given by countless others, and again, not only by orthodox Christians. I have never ever had this experience even when taking long naps in the middle of the day. And because of my serious health issues where I sometimes only sleep about 3-5 hours at night, I often take up to 2-3 hour naps. If my body is merely prone to seizing up when I sleep sometimes, why does this never ever happen when I nap?

I also experienced the supernatural during my searching period, when I was searching for sound doctrine. This is something I reference in my essay about myself on my website, and which I thoroughly detail in the second chapter on my testimony in my *A False Kind of Christianity*. During this period, I almost became a Roman Catholic. I was terrified that I was going to pick the wrong claim to Christianity and because of the antiquity and unity of Rome, I was very worried that Rome was the right one. I prayed and prayed and researched and researched, and God kept showing me to avoid Rome, but I couldn't get past my worry. So, I pleaded with Him to show me something I could not deny. I gave Him about 2 months and set a specific day. I was not demanding anything, it was only a request. But, I prayed and fasted earnestly for God to show me something very definitive on that day if He so willed.

On that day, I didn't know what to do or expect. So, I decided to try flipping a coin. I flipped the coin and it said to stay away from Rome. But, that didn't seem very

convincing, so I flipped again, and it was in favor of Rome. God was telling me that He was not going to answer through a coin. So, I waited all day. I ran some errands and thought I would meet some nuns or something randomly, or that a pastor would say something that would really catch my attention.

I want to be so clear here that I cannot emphasize more strenuously how open I was to whatever was God's truth. I was open to the fact that possibly neither Rome or Historic Protestantism was true. Honestly, I was so drained that if I had had an encounter (which would not have been impossible in Santa Cruz at the time) with some Buddhist monks, I probably would have looked into Buddhism, with Jesus added in somehow. If LDS missionaries had come to our door that day, I would have taken that as a major sign. But, nothing happened well into the evening and I thought God was not going to give me a sign and I had to be ok with that. Then my ex-wife asked me to check the mail and I did so. And in that mail was a newsletter from Jews for Jesus, specifically on the evils of Rome.

I want to be very clear that this newsletter did not come the same day every month. I was not expecting it that day. And for the most part, the organization is not very polemical. Almost every single newsletter was simply about testimonies of ethnic Jews coming to the biblical Jesus. The only time they ever got polemical was regarding Judaism itself and that was very, very rare. The movement is also non-denominational. It is not like God was telling me to become a Methodist or something. He only did what I asked and confirmed for me that Biblical Christianity is true and that Rome specifically is not.

You can say that other worldviews, including Rome itself, have explanations for such an experience. And I would agree and would not seek to refute Rome on these grounds. They can say it was just Satan. This is why I did not include this part of my testimony in my book. I was so thankful to God for this event and it greatly reassured me. However, I also knew that I had to continue to seek more objective evidence as people could

explain this event away. I knew, and I know to this day, that I was honestly and earnestly seeking God for whatever His truth is, but I cannot objectively prove that to others.

With that fact made very clear, it does provide powerful testimony for the existence of the supernatural. People can claim that I am simply a complete liar and am making this story up entirely, but you would need to provide some evidence of me having that type of character. Many, many other people, and not only orthodox Christians, have had similar experiences. This testimony cannot be dismissed. Now, you may wonder how I would explain the similar experiences of people from other religions. I would say that they were deceived by demonic influences, which is completely in keeping with my worldview. I don't say that to be judgmental, but that is how I view their experiences. Again, I'm not here saying that my experience alone proves Biblical Christianity. Far from it. I am saying that it is powerful testimony, when joined with the similar testimony of so many others all over the world and throughout history, in favor of the existence of the supernatural.

You can say, "Ok, but that is really where you land Dan. It is not about the so-called objective evidence. It is about this experience for you and so you read the evidence in light of that experience." Nope. After this happened, I knew very little about apologetics. I honestly at that time thought that Christianity could not be objectively defended and that it was pretty much about faith. I thought God revealed Himself to each Christian in His own way along the lines of what He did to me. To this day, if all of the evidence were overturned, I am very, very honest about the fact that I would still be an orthodox Christian based upon the internal testimony of the Spirit. I have come to see that even this experience cannot be relied upon as much as I thought when it happened. I now know that God was merely confirming for me what I already knew inside. Although, I will again say, you will never ever convince me that this event does not at the least prove the supernatural, and well beyond any Deistic sense of the supernatural.

If the evidence is against me, so be it. God will reveal the full evidence in due time. But, the fact remains that the evidence is in fact there. If people want to subjectively reject it

as I would do if the evidence were against me, fine. That is fair enough. All I ask is that people be honest about that. Most refuse to do so.

The Philosophical Evidence

I am happy to discuss all of the major theistic proofs via email, and I discuss most of the major ones in my *A False Kind of Christianity*, but for the sake of space I limit myself to the most unassailable proof here. And that is the moral argument. If a perfect being does not exist, then there can be no objective moral principles. Denying all objective moral principles is absurd and horrific in the extreme as it has to say that rape, child molestation, murder, the Holocaust, and many other atrocities, are not objectively immoral.

Anyone can say there are good objections from some of the best philosophers regarding the notion that we must posit a perfect being if we are going to believe in objective morality. Provide me with one via email. Just one. I am happy to dismantle it. I have read all of them. They are unbelievably weak. You also have my full permission to publish and/or post our email correspondence in case anyone wishes to say that I'm hiding behind my email. And what is so convincing here is that *the overwhelming vast majority of Atheist philosophers agree with me*. Most Atheist philosophers deny objective morality and are not shy about it. They admit that this is an unbelievably difficult pill for most people to swallow, but they say that admitting the supernatural is just too much for them.

You can say that I have just engaged in both the appeal to authority and the appeal to the majority logical fallacies. Nope. And if you wish to accuse me of that it would only show how poorly you understand the logical fallacies. If, as one example, I started out by saying that Aquinas is universally recognized as one of the greatest philosophers of all time, and he agreed with me here, that appeal alone would constitute the appeal to authority fallacy. If I said that most philosophers agree with me here and left it at that, that would indeed be the appeal to the majority fallacy. That is not what I am doing

though. I am laying out a common sense principle. I then say that the objections against it are so weak it is almost sad (and I'm happy to further defend that via email if necessary). Only *then* do I appeal to the fact that the vast majority of Atheist philosophers agree with the basic core of my argument. That is a very strong *and entirely legitimate* piece of confirmatory evidence for my case.

And Deism is no get out of jail free card. If "god" is one being and one person, then "he" is not a perfect being (please see my "call" essay to Muslims if you require a defense of this point). Hence, Deism fails to explain the moral argument. You can say that maybe Deism is still correct, it merely needs to add the personal element to the perfect being that would be established by saying that it is plural. Full Biblical Christianity is not needed in order to do that. Fair enough. But Deism never asserted that. You can say, "Well I'll just assert it." Fine. But then be honest about the fact that you are no longer a Deist, you are advocating your own new philosophy. You have come up with your own new philosophy that sounds an awful lot like Christianity, only without all the parts you may not like. If you alone are wise, I guess so be it.

But, your problems would not end there. While most people will still seek to be basically moral, what about those who won't? You can say that the perfect being will punish them in the next life, but how could you know that as a qualified Deist? If the perfect being has not chosen to reveal itself beyond its basic existence and the fact that it created us with certain moral principles, how can you know that it will in fact punish the immoral in the next life? You can say that the mere fact of these moral principles proves that. Ok, fine, fair enough. But, it is starting to sound like this "god" of yours reveals a lot more to us than was originally asserted by any of the original Deists. While it is true that many did in fact say that the moral principles alone do prove a reward/punishment system in the after life, most said that there was no way to know this for sure and none asserted the plurality of the perfect being. In fact, most mercilessly mocked that teaching. Your "god" is starting to sound less and less Deistic as we move forward.

Even further, Deism cannot touch all that was said above about the supernatural penetrating our world on rare occasions beyond the perfect being's initial creating of all things. You can say, "Well my Deistic being does." Ok fine. But again, this is sounding like less and less of a Deistic "god" to me. Again, maybe you need to start your own religion. You could probably make a lot of money off of it, so maybe not a bad idea! Finally, Deism has no answer for all of the evidence I will provide below.

Miracles

This line of evidence may not sound much different from my discussion on the supernatural, but it is. There is a massive difference between a given culture providing certain instances of very credible examples of experiencing the supernatural in the broad sense, and a very specific individual claiming he has the ability to perform miracles on cue. Throughout history the overwhelming vast majority of these claimants have been shown to be hucksters or to be very, very inconsistent with this claim. Most witch doctors around the world always preface with their clients that their methods only work some of the time.

Many of the major world religions have no one real founder. There have only been a few people throughout history that can truly be called genuine founders of new religions. These are Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha); Jesus; Muhammad; Friedrich Schleiermacher; Joseph Smith; Charles Taze Russell; Ellen G. White; and Mary Baker Eddy. Out of these 8, only 2 claimed to be able to do miracles on cue and consistently. Most did not even claim to be able to do miracles at all. Stop and think about that. Out of the 8 founders of big religions (and only 4 of these founded major religions [Gautama; Jesus; Muhammad; and Schleiermacher]), only 2 claimed the ability to do miracles. And only 1 of the 4 major ones claimed the power of regular miracles. I bet you can guess who that was.

While countless miracles were later ascribed to Buddha, in his lifetime he never ever made this claim. Muhammad was so emphatic that he did not possess the ability to do

miracles, that he said his only miracle was the Quran and this same position has been held by the vast majority of Muslims up to the present day. And Schleiermacher certainly never claimed the ability to perform miracles. The only two on that list that made the claim were Jesus and Joseph Smith. And most scholars today agree that Jesus had some sort of miracle working power or at least certainly appeared to have this ability. There is just too much evidence in favor of this conclusion. They may give other explanations for this phenomena, but they don't deny it. As one piece of evidence, even the Talmud never denies Jesus this ability. It only says that He had it through sorcery.

And while there are in fact a couple examples of healings from Joseph Smith that cannot be easily explained away, he was a known huckster and was not able to perform these on a regular basis. There is also a mountain of evidence against Joey boy. The man was a proven con man, and he was a serial adulterer, who even married women that were already married to other Mormons.

The Historical Evidence

The historical evidence in favor of the Bible can be broken down as follows:

a. The Historical Reliability of the Content of the Bible

- 1.) Almost all of the major non-Jewish/Christian places, people groups, and famous figures described in the Bible existed according to all historians, including the most secular and skeptical ones.
- 2.) For the period of the Patriarchs, we have strong and abundant evidence regarding many of the social customs and places described in the Bible as being in keeping with what we know from this period from extra-biblical sources.
- 3.) The monument of Joseph was recently discovered in Goshen.
- 4.) The Israelites were in Egypt. Building structures are non-Egyptian and proto-Israelite. Further, *Apiru* is the original term for the name *Hebrew*.

- 5.) Tremendous new evidence for the conquest of Jericho. Much of what Kathleen Kenyon asserted has now been debunked.
 - 6.) The altar of Joshua on Mt. Ebal has in all likelihood been found. This find (if legitimate as is probable) has also strongly contradicted many of the long-held conclusions from minimalist Old Testament scholars.
 - 7.) We now have strong evidence for the palace of David and for the existence of David as the king of Israel as well. The Tel Dan Stele was a remarkable find.
 - 8.) We now have evidence of Solomon's building projects. And the Moabite Stone (or Mesha Stele), the Kurkh Stele, and the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III, mention a number of kings from the period before the fall of Samaria, including foreign kings that are also mentioned in the biblical record.
 - 9.) As far as the Assyrian Conquest to Christ, very few scholars today doubt the basic contours of the historical details from this time period as they are recorded in the biblical record, as they are so well attested by extra-biblical sources. Many of these mainstream scholars do question the existence of certain figures like Daniel and Esther, but these figures are seen as exceptions to the rule.
 - 10.) The overwhelming vast majority of scholars agree that Jesus of Nazareth existed; that He was a revolutionary character; that He said and did many of the things that are described in the Gospels, especially the Synoptic Gospels; that He was crucified by the Romans; and that many highly credible people believed that He had been raised from the dead.
 - 11.) Almost no scholars question the existence of Mary; Joseph; John the Baptist; or the 12 apostles. Very few scholars question the influence of Peter; John; Andrew; Philip; and Thomas. And very few scholars question the existence of Jesus' brother James and his sincere conversion.
 - 12.) Almost no scholars question the existence of Paul, the fact that he wrote the bulk of the Pauline Corpus, and that his conversion and letters are sincere.
- b. A Small Sampling of Instances where the Bible has been Vindicated Historically

- 1.) The Hittites - Long thought to be myth, in 1906 the Hittite capital was discovered in Turkey.
- 2.) The Amorites - Also long thought to have not existed, they have since been well established.
- 3.) Camels - It was long thought that much of the Old Testament was mistaken because it described camels as being used as transport in the Middle East, and it was long held that they were not so used until 1K BC. It has now been thoroughly proven that camels were used in the region as far back as 2200 BC.
- 4.) King David - It was long thought that either David did not actually exist or was merely a small tribal chieftain at best. The Tel Dan Stele shattered this viewpoint.
- 5.) The Assyrians - It was long thought that most of the biblical details on Assyria, especially of Nineveh, were imaginary. But in 1845, Nineveh was discovered, along with Sennacherib's Prism. These discoveries confirmed many of the biblical details concerning Assyria.
- 6.) Sargon II (King of Assyrian Empire) - Long thought to be myth until discoveries in the 19th century.
- 7.) Belshazzar - He was long thought to be legendary because none of the Greek historians mentioned him. But, it has now been well established that he was the son of Nabonidus (last king of the Babylonian Empire), and was made viceroy of the city of Babylon itself by his father.
- 8.) Nazareth - It was long thought that Nazareth did not exist as far back as the 1st century until the Nazareth House was discovered.
- 9.) The Pool of Bethesda - Long thought to be mythical until it was recently discovered.
- 10.) The Pool of Siloam - Long confused with another pool until it was also recently discovered.
- 11.) Pontius Pilate - Many skeptical scholars questioned his existence, until the discovery of the Pilate Stone.
- 12.) Crucifixion - The remains of a crucifixion victim were found in an ossuary outside of Jerusalem. The details of the bones, including a bent nail that was still in the heel bone, confirm many of the biblical details and refute the long touted

notion that crucifixion victims were only tied to crosses and that all of them were thrown into open graves for the dogs. There were different positions by which victims were crucified, but the lower case *t* shape was one of them.

c. The Resurrection of Jesus

3-4 Major Theories Among Scholars

- 1.) Actual Resurrection (I'm not saying the resurrection is theoretical; I'm merely speaking from the vantage point of scholars here)
- 2.) Hallucination Theory
- 3.) Swoon Theory
- 4.) Impersonation Theory

You can easily look up each of these theories online and I also detail each of them in my *A False Kind of Christianity*. The fact that the 3 skeptical theories are such wild stretches speaks volumes and that is putting it **VERY MILDLY**. But, maybe the Deistic "god" raised "Jesus" from the dead for kicks!

The Scientific Evidence

The scientific evidence in favor of the Bible can be broken down as follows:

- 1.) Not a Single Transition Fossil has Ever Been Established Beyond Doubt
- 2.) DNA is a Massively Complicated Code that Could Not Have Evolved
- 3.) No Even Remotely Tenable Explanations for Eye or Language Evolution Exist
- 4.) The Rate of Population Growth (the world should be far more than 8B if Evolution is true)
- 5.) Soft Tissue Found in Dinosaur Fossils

The Prophetic Evidence

It is true that the New Testament often uses *sensus plenior* and we must be honest about this. If you don't know what *sensus plenior* is, you can read about that in my *Doctrine: Going Deeper*. That discussion can be found in part 1 of that work, in chapter 2. Not every text from the Old Testament that the New Testament says is a Messianic prophecy can be proven to be such on a *prima facie* reading. However, there are a number of passages that are plainly Messianic prophecies. They are as follows:

Genesis 3:1-15 (especially verse 15); Psalm 2; Psalm 45 (especially verse 6); Isaiah 9:6-7; Isaiah 53; and Daniel 7:9-14.

From these key verses, we can conclude that the Old Testament prophesied these 15 core items about the future Messiah:

- 1.) The Messiah will be a man.
- 2.) The Messiah will be a mighty deliverer from Satan.
- 3.) The Messiah will be the preeminent anointed one of God.
- 4.) The Messiah will be rejected by the unbelieving world.
- 5.) The Messiah will be God's ultimate human king, especially of God's people, forever.
- 6.) The Messiah will be the Son of God.
- 7.) The Messiah will conquer and reign over the world forever.
- 8.) The Messiah will be God in the flesh.
- 9.) The Messiah will be a descendant of David.
- 10.) The Messiah will be average looking.
- 11.) The Messiah will die for the sins of God's people.
- 12.) The Messiah will be the Lamb of God.
- 13.) The Messiah will be raised from the dead.
- 14.) The Messiah will be called the Son of Man.
- 15.) The Messiah will be worshiped by His followers from all nations.

The New Testament claims that Jesus fulfilled each of these prophecies. And even skeptics are constrained to say that Jesus fulfilled many of these prophecies. Almost all scholars agree that a real man named Jesus of Nazareth existed. Almost all scholars agree that He was Jewish. While this does not fully prove He was a descendant of David, it does prove part of that claim as any descendent of David would be a descendant of Abraham. Almost all scholars agree that Jesus died by crucifixion at the hands of the Romans. Even from a purely secular vantage point, that fulfills parts of #’s 4 and 11-13 (you can’t be raised from the dead unless you are deceased first). Jesus used the title *Son of Man* for Himself more than any other in the Gospels. Even if you take the extreme position that Jesus did not exist, you still have to admit that because of this, the “Jesus character” is called the Son of Man by millions of people today every time they read the Gospels.

Finally, everyone agrees that Jesus is today worshiped by millions of people from all nations across the globe. Even the “fringiest” of the fringe scholars, that believe Jesus did not exist and deny all sorts of other basic facts, have to say that the “Jesus character” is worshiped all over the world exactly as Daniel 7 says. The Book of Daniel was written over 2500 years ago. Even skeptics admit that the Book of Daniel was written well before the time of Jesus. And dozens and dozens of Jewish men since the penning of Daniel 7 have claimed to be the Messiah. None of these Jewish claimants are worshiped by Gentiles all over the world, save one, and that is Jesus of Nazareth. And He is not merely worshiped by thousands of Gentiles all over the world, He is worshiped by hundreds of millions. And it is not only that those other claimants are not worshiped in the manner described in Daniel 7 today; currently, they have zero followers period.

No prophetic evidence along these lines exists for any of the other founders of big religions that we discussed earlier.

We will look at 18 of the largest and best known (from an American standpoint) worldviews on the market today. Obviously, there are many other smaller ones and I am happy to respond to any of them upon request. If you add Biblical Christianity to the list, these 19 make up almost 99.99 percent of the world's population. Below are the 18:

- 1.) Islam
- 2.) Roman Catholicism
- 3.) Hinduism
- 4.) Buddhism
- 5.) No Religion (includes Atheists; Agnostics; Deists; New Age; Spiritual but not Religious; and Nothing in Particular [among others])
- 6.) Nature Religion
- 7.) Liberal Protestantism (includes mainstream and Progressive Christianity)
- 8.) Eastern Orthodoxy
- 9.) Pseudo Pentecostal/Charismatic
- 10.) Judaism
- 11.) 7th Day Adventists
- 12.) LDS
- 13.) Jehovah's Witnesses
- 14.) Christian Science
- 15.) Christian Fundamentalism
- 16.) Unitarianism
- 17.) Universalism
- 18.) Open Theism

Before moving forward, I need to make one quick point of clarification. When I refer to unitarianism here, I am not referring to the Unitarian Universalist Association. I am referring to anyone who holds to the unitarian doctrine on "god" and is not part of another worldview. Also, when I refer to Universalists here, I am also not referring to the above organization, but only to those who hold to the doctrine of universalism while not being part of any other worldview.

All 18 of these, with the exceptions of #'s 2; 7-9; 11; 15; and 17-18; deny the teaching that the perfect being exists as one in being while being plural in person. Hence, all of them cannot answer the moral argument. Even further, #'s 7; 9; and 17; all hold to a very weak doctrine on this point. What I mean by this is that many in these worldviews do not hold to it, and many (if not most) of those who do, do not see it as being all that essential. That leaves #'s 2; 8; 11; 15; and 18 standing. Each of these worldviews says that they believe in the overarching authority of the Bible, while blatantly and overtly contradicting the Bible on one or more fundamental points that is taught beyond all doubt by the Bible. That leaves Biblical Christianity left standing alone. I flesh all of this out in my "call" essays on my website, and I highly recommend them to you.

Most of these worldviews don't even attempt to make apologetic cases for themselves. What does that tell you my friend?

Many of these groups say that the biblical manuscripts are so badly corrupted that we cannot know what was in the originals on any level. This is an unsustainable claim. The manuscripts are messy. And many apologists do try to downplay this too much. I have tried to be very honest about this over the years. I was very honest about this in my debate with Tony Jones, and I have been honest about this in all of my writings. With that said, the idea that we do not have the basic gist of both the Old and New Testaments is held to by ZERO textual scholars today.

Islam also tries to say that the manuscripts have been woefully corrupted. They are wrong. They also say that Jesus was not crucified. Almost no scholar holds to that. And even the most extreme scholars only do not believe that Jesus existed. Even they agree that an impersonator is a ridiculous theory. Muhammad performed no miracles and did not claim to perform any miracles. Islam has no explanation for the fact that the Old Testament prophesies that the Messiah would be God in the flesh, Jesus claimed to be God in the flesh, and supported that claim with His resurrection. It provides almost no historical, scientific, or prophetic evidence because the Quran presents almost none.

Roman Catholicism uses much of the same evidence we do, and for that reason it makes a far stronger case than most of the other worldviews. However, its denial of faith alone is fatal. It tries to argue that the Bible is unclear and therefore this is why we need Rome. They largely base this on 2 Pet 3:15-16. They are badly misinterpreting this passage. The passage does not refer to all of the Bible, but only to Paul, and even then says that only *some* of what he says is unclear. The absolutely essential doctrine of faith alone is pervasive throughout the New Testament. It is not only found in a few sparse verses in the Pauline corpus.

The vast majority of Hindus believe that the world is illusory, including evil. This is an unsustainable theory. And of those that don't believe this, we have to ask them why they are part of a religion that for the most part holds to this doctrine. Further, Hinduism does not assert that Brahman (their "god") is one in being and plural in person. Thus, in two crucial ways it has no explanation for the moral argument. It essentially denies morality altogether in favor of a very opaque doctrine of karma. Hinduism also has no answer for all of the other evidence I provided for Biblical Christianity.

True and original Buddhism is agnostic on the question of the supernatural. Later Buddhists have to answer why they have departed from Siddhartha on such an important point and on what grounds. It is true that Siddhartha was Monistic, but on the actual question of the supernatural, he was agnostic. And Agnosticism has no answer for the moral argument. It also cannot answer all of the other lines of evidence I provided for Biblical Christianity.

No Religion has no answer for the moral argument, other than maybe a very modified form of Deism. And even that would still be plagued with problems as I have documented. It also cannot answer all of the other lines of evidence I provided for Biblical Christianity.

Nature Religion is Pantheistic for the most part. And of those that are not, they tend to be very inconsistent and we still have to ask them why they are part of a religion that for the most part tolerates and even promotes Pantheism. Pantheism has to deny moral evil, otherwise it has “god” engaging in evil. Any denial of objective morality is unacceptable on its face. Nature Religion also cannot answer all of the other lines of evidence I provided for Biblical Christianity.

Liberal Protestantism gives no clear and universal proclamation on the Trinity or the gospel of faith alone. It also denies the Bible’s clear teachings on sexuality and gender. They can claim that none of this matters because they do not believe in inerrancy, but if they say that they believe in the basic spirit of the Bible on any level (and they do), then they cannot deny the above teachings, which are taught too clearly and pervasively in the Bible. Further, the doctrine of inerrancy itself is taught too clearly and pervasively to deny if one is going to assert the basic accuracy of the Bible in spirit.

Unlike Rome, Eastern Orthodoxy largely eschews apologetics in favor of its doctrine of extreme mystery. It states that “god” is so mysterious that we can know almost nothing about “him” apart from the Eastern Orthodox Church, which allegedly is “his” vehicle for revealing “himself.” This is an entirely subjective theology. At the end of the day though, they still say that the Bible is the word of “god.” And the Bible objectively teaches faith alone. Yet, they deny that doctrine. Like Rome, this is an overt and undeniable internal contradiction.

The Pseudo-Pentecostal/Charismatic Movement is an absolute chaotic mess. Many deny the Trinity. Many deny faith alone. Yet, all of the movement says that the Bible is the word of “god.” I further breakdown and refute this movement in my “call” essays.

Judaism has no response for all of the evidence I provided for the New Testament, especially the prophetic and the resurrection of Jesus. It has to badly misinterpret all of the Messianic prophecies. It literally says that Isaiah 53 is about Israel. Read the chapter; it is not about Israel.

The Seventh-day Adventists say that the Bible is the word of “god,” yet they overtly contradict it at a number of points. The most blatant example of this is concerning their doctrine of hell. The Bible teaches that hell will be conscious and eternal for all unbelievers, but their Church explicitly denies this.

Christian Scientists deny the perfect being as existing in one being and plural in person, it denies the existence of the real world, and it denies the existence of evil, pain, and suffering. These are all, with respect, ridiculous positions.

Christian Fundamentalism denies that sanctification is an essential part of the gospel. That is heresy and they are rightfully labeled with that guilt because they say that the Bible is the word of “god.”

Unitarians deny the perfect being as being one in being and plural in person. That cannot answer the moral argument. Further, many unitarians say that they believe in the overarching authority of the Bible, and yet they still deny the clear and pervasive doctrine of the Trinity.

Universalists say that the Bible is the word of “god,” and yet deny the reality and eternity of hell. There is no way to reconcile those two beliefs.

Open Theists say that they believe the Bible is the word of “god,” but they explicitly deny that “god” is omniscient. There is no way to reconcile those two beliefs.

Finally, a couple of quick additional notes on the LDS and the Jehovah’s Witnesses. I remind you of what was said about Joseph Smith above in regard to the LDS under the section on miracles. Further, not a shred, and I truly mean not a shred, of historical evidence has ever surfaced to support the Book of Mormon. And in regard to Charles Taze Russell, he was convicted in a court of law for fraud for claiming to be able to translate the Bible when he had no such credentials.

Answering Objections

I do not deny that a lot of negative evidence exists against the Bible. I have always tried to be very, very honest about this fact. But, none of it ever comes close to being fatal the way the evidence against the above worldviews does. I have already answered most of the major objections in my *A False Kind of Christianity*, and you can read those if you would like. If you would like me to answer anything further or more specifically, let me know via email. I am happy to interact with any opposing scholar or apologist, or anything directly from any opposing scholar or apologist.

Allow me to give one piece of negative evidence here though, as a test case. This is fresh on my mind because of my recent informal debates with Kipp Davis, an Old Testament scholar. For the period of the Kings, most of the extra-biblical evidence is very patchy. And of what we do have, it seems to point in the direction that Israel was not a monotheistic faith, but was polytheistic like its neighbors. Davis often points this out. If we boxed that evidence in and did not look at it in light of the rest of the evidence for the Bible, it is not great. However, it is very much along the lines of what we saw with Jordan and the Dream Team. It is anomalous, yes, but hardly fatal.

To a large extent, this evidence should not surprise us as the Old Testament itself tells us that most of Israel did in fact practice Polytheism at this time, *in defiance* of the religion of its Scriptures. With time, we can be confident that the Old Testament will once again be vindicated as it has so many times in the past. And as we have seen, that is not a blind faith position. There is a wealth of positive historical evidence in favor of the Bible, and there have been numerous highly publicized times where the reigning consensus of skeptical scholars was overturned in light of new and better evidence. None of this can be said for the Quran, the Book of Mormon, the Upanishads, or any other religious texts that are considered scripture by any given religious community today or in the past.

Questions

If you have any questions about anything from this essay, again, please email me. I repeat that my email can be found on my website. And I again reiterate that you have my full permission to publish and/or post anything from our correspondence that you would like. I understand that many of the words, terms, and concepts in this essay may be foreign to many of you. And I did not fully define or flesh out many of them because I did not want the essay to become too long. It was impossible to write an essay on apologetics without getting a little technical here and there. So, please don't hesitate to email me for any necessary clarifications.

Sources

As far as sources and further resources, I highly recommend the extensive bibliography at the end of my *A False Kind of Christianity*. Beyond that, I recommend almost everything else on my website. Even further, below is a list of other books, documentaries, two websites (these websites are an absolute wealth of excellent apologetic information), a podcast, and an article (in no particular order) that I strongly recommend as well. I want to be clear that I do not agree with everything said in *any* of these sources listed below. I have many (in some instances very strong ones) disagreements with certain things that are said in all of these resources. It should also be said that some of what is said in these sources has since been disproved by newer and better evidence.¹ That is simply how scholarship works. None of this means that these resources do not still possess great value. They absolutely still do. If you would like for me to explain any of my disagreements, or point out outdated conclusions, please email me and I will be happy to do so. All of these resources can be found either on Amazon, through a simple Google search, or by searching the titles and creator on YouTube. For the final article, just Google search "Apologetics Press," go to that

¹ This is especially true of #24 in regard to the evidence of chariots at the bottom of the Red Sea. A number of scientists and scholars, including some very conservative and godly young earth scientists, have strongly called these conclusions into question. With that said, much that is in this documentary is still very good and helpful.

website, and then in their search bar search the title of the article by the author and it will come right up.

- 1.) *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* by FF Bruce
- 2.) *Reinventing Jesus* by Dan Wallace and Others
- 3.) *How God Became Jesus* by Michael Bird and Others
- 4.) *The Historical Reliability of the New Testament* by Craig Blomberg
- 5.) *Why I Trust the Bible* by William Mounce
- 6.) *Can We Trust the Gospels* by Peter Williams
- 7.) *The Case for Jesus* by Brant Pitre
- 8.) *Cold-Case Christianity* by J Warner Wallace
- 9.) *Myths and Mistakes in New Testament Textual Criticism* edited by Elijah Hixson and Peter Gurry
- 10.) *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* by KA Kitchen
- 11.) *Lights in the Sky and Little Green Men...* by Hugh Ross and Others
- 12.) *The Infidel Delusion* (Free Ebook Online) by Steve Hays and Others
- 13.) *The Comprehensive Guide to Apologetics* edited by Joseph Holden
- 14.) *In Defense of the Bible* edited by Steven Cowan and Terry Wilder
- 15.) *Christian Apologetics* by Douglas Groothuis
- 16.) *Refuting Evolution* by Jonathan Sarfati
- 17.) *Has God Spoken* by Hank Hanegraaff
- 18.) *Kingdom of the Cults* by Walter Martin
- 19.) *The Roman Catholic Controversy* by James White
- 20.) American Gospel 1 (Documentary)
- 21.) American Gospel 2 (Documentary)
- 22.) Does God Exist? 1 (Documentary) taught by Stephen Meyer
- 23.) The God Who Speaks (Documentary)
- 24.) Exodus Revealed (Documentary)
- 25.) Patterns of Evidence: The Exodus (Documentary)
- 26.) Patterns of Evidence: The Red Sea Miracle (Documentary)
- 27.) Patterns of Evidence: The Red Sea Miracle 2 (Documentary)

- 28.) Patterns of Evidence: The Moses Controversy (Documentary)
- 29.) Expedition Bible: Jericho Unearthed (Documentary)
- 30.) Is Genesis History? (Documentary)
- 31.) Dismantled (Documentary)
- 32.) Genesis: Paradise Lost (Documentary)
- 33.) Debunking Evolution (Documentary)
- 34.) The Atheist Illusion; The Bible vs. Bart Ehrman; An Earnest Plea to Muslims; An Earnest Plea to Roman Catholics; The Failure of Eastern Orthodoxy; An Earnest Plea to Seventh-day Adventists; and An Earnest Plea to Latter-day Saints (All YouTube Documentaries by Jason Wallace)
- 35.) CARM (website)
- 36.) GotQuestions (website)
- 37.) New Archaeological Discovery Challenges Bible Skeptics (YouTube Podcast by Alisa Childers)
- 38.) Population Statistics and a Young Earth by Jeff Miller (Article on Apologetics Press [website])²

Finally, below are a number of resources from opposing apologists. I have no fear of you reading anything from any other worldview. If you have any questions about anything you read in these resources, or from any other opposing source, please email them to me.

- 1.) *Is Jesus God? The Bible Says No!* by Shabir Ally
- 2.) *The Case for Catholicism* by Trent Horn
- 3.) *30 Arguments Against the Existence of God, etc.* by Jonathan Pearce
- 4.) *Undeniable* by Bill Nye
- 5.) *Progressive Christians Love Jesus Too* by Randal Rauser (I wrote a full book response to this work if you are interested; it can be found on my website)

² I want to be clear that I do not fully recommend this ministry. It's not just that I have some disagreements with them; I cannot fully recommend them because they hold to the heretical position that baptism is absolutely essential for salvation. This is extremely unfortunate because they are so conservative and orthodox on almost all other points of doctrine. And their website is a veritable treasure trove of solid apologetic information.

- 6.) *Rock and Sand* by Josiah Trenham
- 7.) *Essentials of Oneness Theology* by David Bernard
- 8.) *Let's Get Biblical!* 2 Vols by Tovia Singer
- 9.) *Seventh-day Adventist, I Don't Know About...* by Stephen Ferguson
- 10.) FAIR website (LDS)
- 11.) *The Doctrine of the Trinity: Christianity's Self-Inflicted Wound* by Anthony Buzzard and Charles Hunting
- 12.) *God is Open* 3 Books by Christopher Fisher and Others