

Dr. Richard J. Krejcir © 1984 www.IntoThyWord.org

Are you curious about what the Bible is all about?

Are you searching for truth? Then read this series of articles.

Here are some basic apologetics about the Bible you can use personally or share with others. Is the Bible relevant? Does it have a purpose? Is it just a collection of old fables filled with myths and contradictions? See for yourself! Does the Bible really matter for me?

Why should I care about the Bible?

How is the Bible different from any other book? Look at the evidence...

"The New Testament is the best book the world has ever known and will ever know."
Charles Dickens

THE BIBLE CLAIMS TO BE THE WORD OF GOD

- Many of the words and messages included in the Bible are said to be from God Himself. In fact, in II Timothy 3:16-17, the apostle Paul presents a fantastic claim made by no other writing, ancient or modern:

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

"The Bible is the greatest benefit which the human race has ever experienced."
Immanuel Kant

- In II Peter 1: 2 the process is explained. Peter writes: *"Prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."* In other words, God guided the writers as they wrote so that their words were His words. The writers were not spiritual word processors. God worked through each one, using that person's personality and vocabulary while creating an infallible inerrant document.
- Jesus also made some strong statements about his Bible (Old Testament). Matthew 5:18 says: *"I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, nor the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished."* *"the Scripture cannot be broken"* (John 10:35).

THE BIBLE IS A BOOK FROM GOD

In addition to Jesus, Peter, and Paul, other Bible writers claimed to be writing the very words of God. Of course these claims do not establish the fact. But they do demand that we investigate further. And there is some other evidence.

“That Bible on the table may be a book to you. It is far more to me. It speaks to me, it is as if it were a person.” Napoleon Bonaparte

When reading the Bible, you get the feeling it is more than a manmade book. It just seems different. Here's why:

1. **Its Unity.** The Bible is composed of sixty-six books and was written during a span over 1,500 years by over forty different authors. They all wrote independently, and most of them knew little or nothing about the other writings. They include farmers, statesmen, poets, scholars, kings, physicians, and fishermen, people from every conceivable walk of life. Despite these factors, the Bible is a unified book with a running theme and purpose; it is the story of Jesus Christ.

The Old Testament predicts what the New Testament records. Even with our modern technology and massive libraries and resources no work has ever come close!

2. **Its Preservation.** The Bible is actually a group of books, many of which were written over 3,000 years ago. The fact that the Bible has survived and that we have an accurate copy is amazing because in those days books were copied by hand on materials not easily preserved. Yet there is more evidence for the authenticity of the Bible books than for any other ancient literature. And there are more copies of early Bible manuscripts than any other historical source. In scholarly circles there is no debate with the authorship and contents of Aristotle, Plato, Homer or Socrates. Yet there is less than 1% of historical evidences for all of these works combined as compared to the Bible! And the nearest dated manuscript for any of them is over 400 years old. The Bible has manuscripts less than a hundred years old!

3. **Its Content.** The message of the Bible is both timeless and timely. Consider the most important questions in life: Who am I? Where did I come from? Why am I here? How can I find meaning and purpose? How should I live? What happens after death? The Bible tackles and answers all of these profound issues and so much more. And although the Bible is not a book of science, psychology, or philosophy (and should not be approached as such), when understood in its historical and cultural setting, it is consistent with other factual information. In fact it proves scientific evidences thousands of years before science. Such as the earth rotates around the sun! (It was the Catholic Church that thought the earth was the center and discredited Galileo and Copernicus, not the Bible!)

4. **Its Influence.** The Bible has influenced almost every area of life, from promiscuity to politics to academics to the arts. Its message has changed lives throughout the ages.

More has been written about the Bible than any other book, and it continues to be a bestseller around the world.

THE BIBLE PROVES ITSELF TO BE THE WORD OF GOD

"You can learn more about human nature by reading the Bible than by living in New York." William Lyon Phelps

· Impossible? Consider the following facts...

"The Bible is the one book to which any thoughtful man may go with any honest quest of life and find the answer of God by honest searching." John Ruskin

1. **Its Accuracy.** Archeology has consistently proven the Bible's historical accuracy. Critics claim that the Bible is filled with errors and contradictions. Typically, those accusations are made with very little knowledge of the Bible and no 'real' research into the areas that they attack. When I read those books on Bible contradictions, they are mostly about verses taken out of their context or using outdated King James language and misinterpreting the English word meanings (they rarely go into the original Greek or Hebrew!) because language changes over time. Just watch old TV shows from the 50's and compare it with today. And the KJV is over 400 years old! In fact, the Bible is being vindicated again and again by scholarly and scientific research that is not even from Christians!

For example, historians used to think the Bible was wrong when it said Abraham took camels with him to Egypt (Genesis 12:16). They disputed furiously because every scientific mind knows that there were no camels in Egypt at that time. Until archeologists found the bones of a camel dated to 2000 BC, (The time of Abraham). Later, other archeologists found pottery dated at 3000 B.C. with a picture of a camel's head on it. They also found a rope of camel hair woven about 2500 BC. This is just one of thousands of examples. Archeology consistently confirms the of Bible's accuracy.

2. **Its Prophecy.** Anyone who studies the Bible with any amount of honesty and effort and compares the prophetic statements to secular history will conclude that the Bible is a supernatural book. No group of men or women, no matter how wise, could have been so accurate in predicting the future.

As stated earlier, the theme of the entire Bible is Jesus Christ. And in the Old Testament you will find over 300 specific references to Jesus' life. Many include specific details, written over one thousand years to 400 years before He lived. Micah said He would be born in the city of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2); Isaiah said He would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7: 14); Zechariah told of His riding into Jerusalem on a donkey while people hailed Him as King (Zechariah 9:9-10); Isaiah gave a fantastic, poetic account of the crucifixion (Isaiah 53), as in Psalm 22.

3. **Its Effect.** The final proof that the Bible is God's Word is the effect that it has had on its followers, such as no work or crusade has ever had. All but one of the 12 disciples died horrific painful deaths, and the one who did not was exiled on an island (see 'Foxes Book of Martyrs')! Consider the martyrs and the suffering of Christians over the centuries, and even today. A person usually will not suffer and die for a lie, sometimes as seen by terrorist groups, but not in the scale and course of time as with Christianity! And this is because the Bible works!

To get people to try their products advertisers will challenge would-be customers to test a product by trying it. The Bible invites us to do the same; for example, Psalm 34:8 states, Taste and see that the Lord is good. Those who do taste, who read and study the Bible, discover for themselves that it delivers what it promises. This is the ultimate test.

So the Bible claims to be the Word of God. It is a special book. This leads to a very personal question...

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What Difference can the Bible Make in My Life?

Dr. Richard J. Krejcir

So What? What can the Bible do for me?

"A thought knowledge of the Bible is worth more than a college education."

Theodore Roosevelt

Whether you have personal questions about love, suffering, guilt, loneliness, success, God, the future or the meaning of life, the Bible has answers. Consider these analogies.

The Bible is a light. *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path" (Psalm 119:105). "The unfolding of your words gives light" (Psalm 119: 130).* A light illuminates the way, provides direction, and allows us to see. And the Bible sheds light on human nature, God's plan for the world, and the right paths to take.

The Bible is a mirror. *"Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like" (James 1: 23-24).* Through this book, God reveals what we're like and what we need to change. It's a mirror that reflects the inside - our personalities and souls - not just the outside.

The Bible is food. *"Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good" (1 Peter 2:2-3).* Much of the Bible is direct, simple, and immediately applicable to life. *"But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil" (Hebrews 5: 14).* In an age that craves easy directions and instant solutions, the Bible challenges our minds and hearts, helping us grow in character, love, integrity, insight, and courage.

The Bible is a shield. *"You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word" (Psalm 119: 114).* God's truths, recorded in His Word, shield us from attacks on self-concept, emotions, and faith. Against doubt, guilt, fear, insecurity, and inferiority, the Bible offers protection.

The Bible is a rock foundation. *"I (Jesus) will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built" (Luke 6:47-48).* To resist life's storms (illness, injury, grief, separation, loss, and reversal); we need a place to stand. God's truth can be our solid foundation.

The Bible is a counselor. *"You guide me with your counsel" (Psalm 73:24).* There's nothing quite so helpful and comforting as the advice of a friend, especially if that friend

is also knowledgeable and wise. Think of the Bible as a trusted counselor, providing understanding, insight and answers.

- The Bible can make a tremendous difference in your life if you read it, believe it, and apply it.

Where can I find answers to life's questions?

"It ain't those parts of the Bible that I can't understand that bother me, it is the parts that I do understand." Mark Twain

Life is filled with questions. Here are some brief Bible statements on a few of these issues.

1. **What's the meaning of life?** After studying and analyzing life, Solomon, known as the wisest man who ever lived, wrote: *"Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man"* (Ecclesiastes 12: 13). *"Jesus said: I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full"* (John 10:10).

2. **Why is human life important?** Human beings have God's stamp of approval: God said, *"Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over...all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. " So God created man in His own image... male and female he created them"* (Genesis 1: 26-27).

3. **Why do people fight with each other?** *"What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet... You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures"* (James 4:1-3).

4. **Why is the world in such a mess?** The great theologian and missionary Paul answers this question: *"For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. They claimed to be wise, but they became fools"* (Rom 1: 21-22). *"The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred... jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition...drunkenness, orgies, and the like"* (Gal. 5: 19-21).

5. **How can I get the wisdom I need?** Solomon said to go to the Source: *"For the Lord gives wisdom and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding"* (Proverbs 2:6). James agrees: *"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him"* (James 1: 5).

7. **What is real love?** Paul's classic definition: *"Love is patient, love is kind, It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud, it is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily*

angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always preserves. And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:4- 7, 13). John, known as the "apostle of love" adds: "...God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:16).

6. How can I resist temptation? *"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it" (1 Cor.10: 13). Look for God's way out and take it.*

8. How can I get along with others? Paul wrote: *"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Philippians 2:3-4).*

9. Where can I turn when I'm lonely? King David knew times of desperate loneliness, but he knew that: *"the Lord is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made. The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth" (Psalm 145:17-18). And Jesus said: "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you" (John 14: 18).*

10. What can I do about guilt? Through the prophet Isaiah, we hear: *"Come now, let us reason together, " says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool" (Isaiah 1: 18). If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1: 9).*

What are the Answers to Life's Ultimate Issues?

Dr. Richard J. Krejcir

1. What does the Bible say about the existence of God and is Jesus really God?

First, Christians do not believe in God because they can prove He exists: they become sure He exists as they believe and trust Him.

Second, believing in the existence of God is a requirement in order to become a Christian, but believing in the existence of God doesn't make you a Christian. You can admit that someone or something exists and still not be willing to have anything to do them. The Bible makes this point clear when it says. "You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that - and shudder" (James 2: 19). Throughout history people have believed in the existence of supernatural beings. Instead of asking, "Do I believe in God?" a more appropriate question is, "what kind of God do I believe in?"

Third, Christians are not people who believe they have discovered God; but, people to whom God has revealed Himself. Christians believe in a very specific God. This God has shown Himself through creation, through the Bible, and convincingly in Jesus Christ.

Fourth. Christians are aware that there are many questions created by the existence of God. In fact, they realize that without God all questions become meaningless. Leaving us without any ultimate reason for our existence.

All the questions and answers that follow take for granted not only the existence of God; but also the fact that He is a God who allows Himself to be known. Christians are sure that God exists and that Jesus is God because they have met Him personally through the Bible and their lives.

T H E B O T T O M L I N E: "The fool says in his heart, "There is no God. " (Ps 14: 1)

2. What does the Bible say about life after death?

The scientific mindset tells us the answer is 'Oblivion' but this is not a popular belief in society. People who say we all just die and that's it, are sometimes viewed as courageous. But their group is small, They seem a little like the man who stood on the railroad tracks and yelled as the train was bearing down on him, "It may hit me, but it won't hurt me!" Death is the train. By the time it hits you, it's too late to decide whether it might hurt you or not!

On the other hand 'Life after death', is a popular belief, most religions have some kind of teaching on this. Some even believe we re-enter new lives after death, reincarnation. But the Bible teaches that life goes only one way, not in circles. In other words, we pass through death once and what happens beyond this life depends heavily on what has happened in this life! How we behave and learn in this life affects what we will experience in the next. So we need to be serious about life before it ends!

Up to this point, Christianity sounds like any other religion. But it is right here that Christianity parts ways with all other religions. In general religion tries to get people to make themselves good enough for a positive experience in the afterlife. Christianity says this cannot be done. By the time we are aware of our own sin, we are already drowning in it. Religion shouts to the drowning person, "swim harder"; but through Christ, God throws us the life preserver, He offers to rescue people who otherwise are hopelessly lost. Paul said: "*But God demonstrates his own love for us in this; while we were still sinners, Christ died for us*" (Romans 5:8).

The Bible clearly teaches in life after death, there will be a judgment on how we have lived this life. Only those who have accepted Christ's suffering in their place will be declared "not guilty," From that point on, people will be, for eternity, with Christ or apart from Christ.

THE BOTTOM LINE: "*man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment*" (Heb 9:27). "*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ*" (Rom 6: 23).

3. What does the Bible say about there only being one way to get to heaven?

This belief troubles many people because it seems so narrow minded, so limited, Maybe you have heard someone say, 'We are all traveling to the same destination; we're just taking different paths,' or "It doesn't matter what you believe in, as long as you're sincere." But the truth is always narrow. If a car hits you then you get hurt or die. If you swim in the ocean you will get wet. Sincerity is important, but it is not a substitute for truth.

'What if you failed an exam in school or a performance review at work and then tried to argue with the professor or your boss that you should have passed because you were sincere? Do you think they would buy it? Not a chance! Both you and your teacher would know there are right and wrong answers to the test questions, and your job objections. And because you did not give the right answers, or performed as you should then you failed. What if you drank a liquid that looked like a harmless soft drink, but it contained a deadly poison? The old chemistry saying, "little Johnny is no more what he thought was H₂O (water) was H₂SO₄ (sulfuric acid)."

Would your sincerity matter? No, you would die because you drank poison. That's the narrow truth. What kind of surgeon would you like to have operate on you? A

skilled and well-trained doctor, or someone who sincerely loved you, but was a medical school dropout? The answer is obvious.

Let's say you want to call your friend on the phone, but you forgot his phone number, so you punch in any random numbers, because you sincerely WANT to reach him so badly. SURELY your sincerity will get you through! No way- only ONE phone number will work.

Here's one last question, suppose you were traveling and came to a dead end at the edge of a cliff. But you heard that there was a bridge across the chasm ten miles to the east. Would you stand at the precipice and whine and complain that the bridge wasn't at the spot where you stood? Would you complain that the bridge builder was unfair because they provided only one way across? Of course not! You'd be thankful that there was a way across, and you would cross the bridge.

The point? Truth is narrow! There is only one way a person can get to God, only one bridge to heaven, Jesus Christ. Christians didn't make this up. Jesus himself said that HE was the way, the truth and the Life. The only way: then He proved that what He claimed was true through His life, death, and resurrection. Thus you should thank God there IS a way! Because He was not obligated to save anyone, He did it out of pure undeserving love.

THE BOTTOM LINE *“Jesus answered, I am the way and the truth and the life, No one comes to the Father except through me.”* (John 14:6)

“It's not that I am afraid to die, I just don't want to be there when it happens” Woody Allen

4. What does the Bible say about Jesus rising from the dead?

Wouldn't Christianity be more of an acceptable faith without the awkward belief that the Founder rose from the dead? It would sure make it easier to get along with other religions. After all, their founders died and stayed dead. Some think it's time to call the Easter story a nice fable.

Make no mistake; the resurrection of Jesus was the birth of Christianity. You cannot get rid of it any more than you can disbelieve in your own birth date. If you disprove the bodily resurrection of Jesus, Christianity tumbles into a run-of-the-mill religion. The resurrection is the proof and power of the gospel.

That's why Christians insist on the resurrection. It's the foundation for their faith.

Something remarkable and shattering happened to a group of people on that first Easter. It transformed them from confused and fearful followers of a dead teacher into confident believers who gave their lives for Him. After being with the risen Christ,

they shared a hope greater than death with anyone who would listen! Simple men and women became courageous. Many sacrificed everything, including their lives, to spread the good news. They knew death was defeated and Jesus was alive!

People tried many ways to explain the resurrection away, Often those who begin to try to discredit the Bible end up as believers. The resurrection still convinces people of the truth about Christ.

THE BOTTOM LINE: *“And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins”* (1 Corinthians 15:17).

5. What does the Bible say about what happens to those who die without ever believing in Christ?

Christians believe Jesus' statement: *“whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life. For God's wrath remains on him”* (John 3:36). Jesus explained that this condemnation and wrath means eternal punishment and separation from God: *“How will you escape condemnation to hell?”* (Matthew 23:33)

Two distinct groups fall into the category of those who die without believing in Christ: (a) those who hear about Christ, sometimes repeatedly without ever responding. And (b) those who never hear. (Sorry; after reading this you are not part of group b!) Has this been an issue for you? Consider this scenario. A rescue ship arrives on the scene of a disaster and throws rescue lines to those drowning. But some of the victims instead of allowing themselves to be pulled to safety shout questions about whether the ship will guarantee to save everyone or what will happen to those who don't get a rope in time. Not only does this not make sense, it also presents the possibility that not responding will delay the rescuers from saving others. Those who know the message but do not respond before they die will have rejected Christ. The Bible is clear on their fate. If we disown Him, He will also disown us (2 Timothy 2: 12).

The fact is that God loves all human beings and would like nothing better than to rescue all of us. (2 Peter 3:9). He created men and women in His image with a built-in thirst for Him (Genesis 1: 27), reveals Himself through nature (Romans 1: 18-20), through the Bible (2 Peter 1: 21), and through His Son Jesus. Who showed His love for us and died for us (John 3: 16). He has done everything conceivable, even entrenching upon our human free will (such as with Paul) to draw people to Himself.

But from Adam and Eve on, men and women have consistently denied and rejected God, Including those who saw Christ with their own eyes (John 1: 10- 12). God does not judge them for what they have not heard, but for what they have heard and rejected (Luke 12:47-48, Romans 2:11-16). The fact is that God does not send anyone to hell. People send themselves by rejecting God's love and mercy!

When it comes to those who have never heard Christians trust in the justice of God. They take seriously the command to take the gospel around the world. The Bible

also promises that those who seek God will find Him, and at the same time it is us who are accorded of the search; for God seeks us before we seek Him (Luke 11: 9-10).

- **What are you doing with the truth that you know about God and His Son, Jesus?**

THE BOTTOM LINE *"I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now the day of salvation."* (2 Corinthians 6:2)

6. What does the Bible say about how Christians can believe in a loving God with SO much suffering in the world?

Christians do not believe they have figured out suffering, because we all still get sick and we still suffer and die. We still suffer loss and broken hearts. Even TV preachers who claim God will heal you if you have enough faith suffer in pain and one such preacher who is famous for the prosperity gospel (believing God is a divine bellhop and will give whatever you desire if you have faith. But this is anti- Scripture) I know, has suffered the extreme pain of cancer and another with an unknown disease.

It is not so much how we answer the question or problem of suffering, but how we live our lives with it! Suffering builds, convicts, purifies and molds us to be better, stronger and prepares us for the wonder of eternity. We did not start out with suffering; sin entered in and distorted everything. It is by our free choice to rebel that caused all things in the universe to fall into depravity. Yet God will work it out for His glory and our good (Rom. 8:28)!

Everything suffers in the universe, as I sit and type this the filament of my lamp is burning away. The sun is extinguishing its finite fuel. Everything has limits and endings. We are not promised a smooth pain and error free ride in life. If so, what would be the point, what would we learn if everything went our way. It might be fun to hypnotize about, but in reality a time comes when we must venture out and experience life. And life, the soil, our soul and everything have been corrupted with sin.

We are here for a purpose to learn and grow and sometimes it takes suffering to bring it on. Remember no one in history lost so much and suffered so much who did not deserve it, as our Lord Jesus Christ! And He did it for you and me so we can have eternal life, a cost that He paid that we could not.

Pain in life is unavoidable and often unanswerable. Our whys are usually met with silence. But God has given us something far more valuable than answers. He has given us Himself. Jesus understands our suffering. He has been there. *"Because He Himself suffered when He was tempted. He is able to aid those who are tempted"* (Hebrews 2: 18). The cross is proof that God understands suffering.

Here are some other ways the Bible helps understand the conundrum of suffering:

- Humans have a free will and natural Laws remain consistent. These two cause conflicts with each other resulting in suffering. The laws of physics that makes an airplane fly will cause a person to fall. Just as the hardness of a hammer can drive in a nail and be useful for construction and will also smash a thumb and cause pain. Combined with that is that all things, soil, people, animals, nature...are all corrupted by sin. (Romans 8:18-24)
- Human beings misuse their free will by rebelling against God rather than obeying Him. That rebellion affected all of our relationships too, so when a spouse is abused or a person is robbed this caused by the rebellion and sin of others that affect those around the person inflicting the sin.
- The Bible describes how creation has suffered because sin had ecological consequences. Thus we are in an imperfect world that produces all sorts of pain. (Genesis 3-4)
- Suffering sometimes comes through the way people treat each other intentionally. They have the ability to do good, but wrong decisions and pride cause a lot of pain and evil.
- God gave us many good gifts that we have put to the worst possible use. The element Uranium can be an incredible pollution free source of energy (fusion) or it can be misused to do mass destruction. Or be miss-engineered to produce power that causes harmful waste (fission), all by our free choice to mold it in the way we desire.
- The church exists to be the representation of Christ on earth. When we care for the poor as we care for Christ, when we ignore the poor we ignore Christ. The church and the people of God for the most part have neglected their call and duty. God uses Christians as instruments of His grace and dealings and will rarely intervene personally. So it is up to us to follow in His character to elevate suffering. Jesus told Paul he was persecuting Him. (Acts 9; Romans 8; Galatians 3; Ephesians 3; 5; I Peter 1; I Corinthians 12; II Corinthians 3; 5)

In spite of much evil in the world the Bible says there could be much, much more. God sets the boundaries by His Spirit. Only in eternity will we be able to appreciate just how much God intervened daily to keep evil under control. For Christians, the greatest hope is that God defeated evil once and for all time on the cross, but the fruits of it we will not fully see until we go home to the place we were created for, Heaven.

Though we do not like to admit it, pain is sometimes beneficial. God gave us a capacity to feel pain as warning of even greater potential suffering. The initial pain of touching a hot pipe is nothing compared to the suffering of holding on to it. Pain helps us reconsider our options. For Christians there is hope through the pain. All suffering

will eventually end. Christians trust that God Will prevail. And remember we are only on this earth for a short, short, short time in the grand scheme of eternity, we are here temporarily, and our permanent home is yet to come!

Sooner or later God will abolish suffering and this hope makes life endurable for believers (Revelations 21-22).

THE BOTTOM LINE *“He will wipe every tear.,. There will be no death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”* (Revelation 21: 4).

7. What does the Bible say about other religions?

First a clarification is needed. The word religion can mean two very different things. Sometimes it is used to refer to a denomination within Christianity like Baptist, Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, and whatever yours may be (there are nearly 1,500)! These are not different religions, because they all hold the same essential core truths of Christianity (they are suppose to, but not all do). They are merely different expressions of Christianity. Most of the deviations are in the way we govern the church and how we perform our worship services. But 99% of essential doctrine is in agreement, what we disagree with is not essential. And of course there are always rogue pastors, teachers and churches who toot their own horn and ignore the clear precepts of Scripture!

Sometimes religion refers to a systems of beliefs, these include Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, UFO cults, or ??? Christians can respect other religions because they all contain some truth, but not the Truth of the Way, of Jesus Christ! Thus, Christianity is exclusive as most religions are, even though the world of academia may say all religions are the same. This popular notion that religions are only different on superficial things but are all the same is flat out not true. Actually, religions tend to be more similar on superficial matters but differ at their core. For instance, most religious groups encourage prayer, but to whom those prayers are directed differs greatly in each religion, even in Protestant (Jesus, God, Holy Spirit) verses Catholic (Jesus, God, Holy Spirit, and Mary)

There is at least one point that makes Christianity unique. All the other systems teach that the individual is ultimately the master of their own fate, with eternal punishments and rewards based on one's behavior in this life. But the Bible says that eternal life is a gift, which cannot be earned and certainly is not deserved. How we live and what we do becomes very important as a response to God's free gift, not an effort to earn that gift in any way. Christians can appreciate the ethical systems others have formed. They can respect the lives that followers of other religions live. But when the discussion turns to setting the fact of sin and the matters of eternity. The Bible says, "Jesus is The Answer."

THE BOTTOM LINE *“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”* (Acts 4:12).

8. How can the miracles in the Bible be true?

Christians believe in miracles because they believe in a God who acts. He is not a static or unconscious power. He has established laws of nature, and He can intervene in those laws if He chooses. He reserves the right to suspend those laws if He chooses to do so. Miracles are exactly that, events beyond natural understanding. They demand a supernatural explanation.

All four gospels describe miracles in the ministry of Jesus. He exercised control over every aspect of life. The main lesson is that miracles can confirm faith but not create it. *"And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith"* (Matthew 13:58). *"When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue and many who heard him were amazed. "Where did this man get these things?" they asked. "What's this wisdom that has given him that he even does miracles!"* (Mark 6:2). *"If I had not done among them what no one else did they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen these miracles and yet they have hated both me and my Father"* (John 15:24; Luke 16: 19-31).

The problem, for the unbeliever is that he or she must keep a closed mind. Their own senses and awareness must be the final test of truth. No matter how unusual the event, or how well it is witnessed he or she must deny the miraculous. Allow one little miracle and suddenly the world becomes a place into which God may present Himself at any moment, Christians are convinced by the grand miracle: the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If it is true, then the miraculous is always a possibility. If the resurrection did not happen, then it doesn't really matter if there are miracles or not, that is because, as the Bible puts it. *"If Christ has not been raised your faith is futile you are still in your sins"* (1 Corinthians 15:17).

THE BOTTOM LINE: *"Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe. " Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in the book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."* (John 20:29-31)

9. What does the Bible say about the spirit world?

The Bible recognizes the spiritual realm as real and infecting upon us and tells us about spiritual powers for good and evil. It explains what is behind our struggles in life: *"Finally be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms"* (Eph 6; 10-12).

Angels are described as superhuman servants of God. One of these, Satan, rebelled against God and took a large number of angels with him. They were cast out of heaven and will eventually be permanently put in hell (2 Peter 2:4. Isaiah 14:12-15, Rev 20: 10). In the meantime, Satan and his forces are actively polluting the world with sin. Their plan is to use people's own rebellious nature against God to keep them from hearing the gospel. *"The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so that they cannot see the light of the gospel.."* (2 Corinthians 4:4). They also take advantage of human tendencies: *"For everything in the world - the cravings of sinful man the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does - comes not from the Father but from the world"* (1 John 2: 16).

The Bible records many types of Angels, Seraph, Cherub, Demons as well as "Powers", Principalities" and such. We do not know what these last two actually are. Only that God is a great Creator and our understanding of the universe is a mere drop in the ocean!

Christians have been freed from Satan's power: For God has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves. In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:13-14). Jesus Himself prayed for us: *"My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one"* (John 17: 15).

Christians are called on to willfully resist the influence of Satan: *"Humble yourselves. Therefore under God's mighty hand that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him. Standing firm in the faith. Because you know that your brothers- throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings"* (1 Peter 5:6-9).

THE BOTTOM LINE: *"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Romans 8:38-39)

10. What does the Bible say about New Age beliefs?

The Bible speaks forcefully against any attempt to replace the worship of the One true God with worship of our self or any created thing. New Age beliefs really turn out to be dressed up 'Old Age' unbelief, such as a mix of Hinduism and Pantheism. People keep coming up with alternate ways to express their basic rebellion toward God. The Bible describes the process this way: *"For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles"* (Romans 1 :21 -23).

New Age philosophy is often called a progressive step in humanity's evolution toward divinity (this is also what Mormonism teaches). This is diametrically opposed to faith in Jesus Christ. One explanation for the growing popularity of the New Age movement is that it rarely presents itself in an obviously religious form. The term New Age seems to be innocently attached to everything from music styles to diets, from relaxation techniques to medical practices. But the underlying philosophy is seldom discussed. Although some of the things called New Age are benign, such as the music and diet, which some committed Christians find relaxing and beneficial. Just be careful and discerning!

Most New Age thinking is based on Hinduism and Animism. It teaches through 'enlightened' gurus. They teach that a person is able to discover the 'god' within and finally arrive at a state of god-consciousness. In essence it teaches that we are all gods and our real problem is that we have not yet realized it (ironically this teaching has crept into some churches, so be careful). But Ezekiel warns: *"In the pride of your heart you say, I am a god; I sit on the throne of a god in the heart of the seas.' But you are a man and not a god though you think you are as wise as a god"* (Ezekiel 28:2).

Genesis also makes it clear that humans are created beings that are very special to God, but not god: *"So God created man in his own image, in the image of god he created him; male and female..."* (Gen 1: 27).

Extensive worldly acceptance of New Age thinking has invaded medicine, music, politics, and education it must be seen as a demonic effort to stage an attack on Christian values and teaching. Followers of Christ have always been urged to be alert: *"See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the principles of this world rather than on Christ"* (Colossians 2:8).

THE BOTTOM LINE: *"They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator who is forever praised. Amen."* (Romans 1: 25)

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What does the Bible say about Jesus Christ?

Dr. Richard J. Krejcir

Jesus' Life Story was Predicted and Described Centuries Before His Birth.

"But you Bethlehem... though you are small among the clans of Judah out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." (Mica 5: 5:2). "The Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14) "Rejoice greatly. . . See your king comes to you righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9). "Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities: the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. . . He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. . . . He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.. though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth." (Isaiah 53: 4-5. 7. 9)

Jesus Lived in History

No other person has influenced the history of the world as much as Jesus. He was born in Palestine when Palestine was part of the Roman Empire. *"In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. . . . And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth... to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in clothes and placed him in a manger, because there was no room in the inn, . . . He was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived." (Luke 2: 1. 3-7. 21) Jesus grew as a young man, (Luke 2:52) the son of a carpenter (Mark 6: 1-3). Later He became very popular as a teacher and leader (Matthew 4:23-25). But politicians and religious leaders were jealous of Jesus and plotted His death (Matthew 26:3-5). They persuaded Pilate, a Roman governor to sentence Jesus to die. (Matthew 27: 11-26)*

Jesus Had Unprecedented Extraordinary Power

"If God does not exist. . . man is in consequence forlorn, for he cannot find anything to depend upon, within or outside himself ." Jean Paul Sartre

He had power over the forces of nature. *"As they sailed, he (Jesus) fell asleep. A squall came down on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger. The disciples went and woke him, saying. "Master, we're going to drown!..*

He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters: the storm subsided, and all was calm. "where is your, faith?" he asked His disciples. In fear and amazement they asked one another. "Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him." (Luke 8:23-25)

He had power over the supernatural. The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority. Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out. *"What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are - the Holy One of God!" "Be quiet!" said Jesus sternly. "Come out of him!.. The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek. The people were all so amazed that they asked each other. "What is this? A new teaching - and with authority: He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey." (Mark 1:22-27)*

He had power over disease. *"Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her, so he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them. That evening after sunset, the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. The whole town gathered at the door, and Jesus healed many who had various diseases." (Mark 1: 30-34)*

He had power over death. *"Jesus' friend Lazarus had died, but Jesus called him out of the grave. Jesus called in a loud voice. "Lazarus, come out:" The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go." (John 11: 43-44)*

Everyone on earth must die someday. Jesus did. But three days later he returned to life. As Paul wrote: *"...Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."* (1 Corinthians 15:3-4) The fact that Jesus died and rose again from the dead is the strongest evidence that Jesus was God's special messenger. *"On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away far from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them- "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!" (Luke 24: 1-6)*

Jesus Was More Than an Ordinary Man. *"In the beginning was the Word (Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. we have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1: 1-3, 14) "He is the image of the invisible God. The first born over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in Heaven and earth, visible and invisible... He is before all things, and in him all things hold together." (Colossians 1:15-17) "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men: the man Christ Jesus." (1 Tim 2:5). He*

who has the Son has life: he who does not have the Son of God does not have life." (I John 5:12)

"I was going to waste until Jesus recycled me" Rachelle Cross

Here's what Jesus said about Himself:

He is the Messiah. *"The high priest asked him. "Are you the Christ the Son of the Blessed One?" "I am" said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Mark 14:61-62).*

He is the way to God. *"Jesus answered. "I am the way and truth and the life. No one comes to the father except through me." (John 14:6)*

He is God. *"I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me." (John 14:9-11)*

He is the light in our darkness. *"I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8: 12)*

He satisfies. *Jesus declared. "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty" (John 6:35). "My purpose is to give life in all its fullness." (John 10: 10)*

He forgives sins. *"Some men brought to him a paralytic lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, son: your sins are forgiven." At this, some of the teachers of the law said to themselves, "This fellow is blaspheming!" Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said. "Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts? Which is easier: to say your sins are forgiven, ' or to say, get up and walk'? But so that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins. Then he (Jesus) said to the paralytic. "Get up, take your mat and go home." And the man got up and went home. When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe: and they praised God, who had given such authority to men." (Matthew 9:2-8)*

Jesus Changed the Lives of Others

Today there are many opinions about who Jesus Christ is! Just listen to these people who met Jesus face to face:

Ordinary people. *“When Jesus had finished saying these things. The crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, not as their teachers of the law.”* (Matthew 7:28-29) *“They (people from town of Sychar) said to the woman, we no longer believe just because what you said: now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”* (John 4:42)

Peter, one of Jesus' apostles: *“When Jesus came to the region Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples. Who do people say the Son of Man is?” They replied, some say John the Baptist: others say Elijah: and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter answered. “You are the Christ. The Son of the living God.”* (Matthew 16: 13-16)

The Roman judge who heard the accusations against Jesus. *“Then Pilate announced to the chief priest and the crowd. I find no basis for the charge against this man.”* (Luke 23:4)

The centurion. Jesus' executioner *“... When the centurion, saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed. “Surely he was the Son of God!”* (Matthew 27:54)

Jesus Christ Can Change Your Life Too Throughout history; people have tried to get rid of Jesus. Some try to ignore him. Others don't want to admit the truth about Him. But the most important question is not what others believe about Jesus, but what you believe about Him. For more information on how Jesus can change your life, read the article "How can I know God personally!"

“When Christ came into my life, I came about like a well-handed ship” Robert Lewis Stevenson

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Why should I go to Church?

Dr. Richard J. Krejcir

There are 5 main reasons why going to church is important.

The church can be and should be...

1. A PLACE TO BELONG (Rom. 12:5; I Cor. 12:12; 2 Cor. 5: 17). When a person trusts Christ as Savior, God's Spirit makes him or her a member of God's family. All Christians are born into this family that will live forever, where we belong! So we should look for a group of other believers with whom we can meet regularly for worship, teaching, encouragement, and service; in other words, a local church. *"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching."* (Heb. 10:25),

2. A PLACE TO SERVE (Rom. 2: 6; I Cor. 14:26). God's Spirit gives each Christian special abilities (gifts) that are designed to work with each others gifts: 'spiritual gifts'. Christians need to be involved in local churches so they can discover their function and use their gifts. In a world of self-centered thinking, Christ's example and command to serve others still applies! We need church, but the church also needs us! In the church we can grow spiritually, and we can also have the thrill of helping others grow. As we discover how God's gifted us, we feel good about helping and grow more!

3. A PLACE TO BE SERVED (1 Cor. 12; 14:27; James 5:13-16), The various parts of your body depend on each other. Your eye gives you vision, while your brain interprets the image so you see it. You cannot see just with your eyes or just with the brain. When you serve in the church, you will find that your needs get met also, we all work together in oneness and purpose for God's glory. God normally meets our needs by using others, and He uses you to meet others needs, this is the church's purpose and that Christ is the head of it. Church members need to depend on each other just as the members/ parts of a human body do!

4. A PLACE TO GROW (Acts 20:7; Col. 3: 16; Heb. 10:25). Just as our physical bodies need nourishment, so too our spiritual lives need to be fed. This spiritual food includes worship, prayer, discipleship, good Biblical instruction, and mentoring. As Christians praise God and pray, there is a special bond occurs. Gifted teachers and preachers who know and use God's Word and care about you can help you grow. So plant yourself in a good church and grow!

5. A PLACE TO WORK TOGETHER (John 13:34-35). Christian faith is personal but not private. Healthy Christians are not loners. Jesus said that the world would watch relationships between Christians: *"By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another"* (John 13:35). Church helps us learn how to love and obey God.

Looking for a good church? Here's what to look for ...

Worship: songs and hymns in praise to God that are reverent with adoration offered to God! Knowing who God is, we are the performers He is the audience as we give Him Praise!

Prayer: words and thoughts expressed to God with care toward each other!

Preaching: inspired and Biblical that challenges you to live for God, that lifts up Christ!

Teaching and Discipleship: solid Biblical Instruction from the Word of God!

Sharing: joyful support for the work of God for missions and outreach!

Fellowship: encouragement from the family of God!

Discipline: Not allowing someone to distract or harm others by personal agendas and sin!

More here:

[What the Healthy Church Looks Like](#)

<http://sites.silaspartners.com/CC/article/0,,PTID34418|CHID629576|CIID452956,00.html>

[The Twelve Characteristics of the Healthy Church](#)

<http://sites.silaspartners.com/CC/article/0,,PTID34418|CHID629576|CIID452974,00.html>

"In 25 years the Bible will be a forgotten book." Robert Ingersoll who died in 1899.

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Why are there so many disagreements in the Christian faith?

Dr. Richard J. Krejcir

Is not the Holy Spirit giving all Christians the same truth?

The Holy Spirit is giving the same truth; the problem is not Him; but us! I had once believed that the many different beliefs in the Christian faith demonstrated that it was not true. After all, how could there be so many disagreements about something that was supposed to be true? I found over the years this is easily; the case is that we have more in common than not, but we tend to focus on the negative distinctions and not our unity.

For example, all Christians agree that we are all sinful. Thus as long as sin remains, it is going to influence how we handle knowledge and truth, even the truth of God's Word. Additionally, nearly all of the divisions among Christians are the result of pride. Furthermore all Christians believe that we humans are limited in our abilities to understand what God has told us and even effectively communicate clearly what God is teaching. This is demonstrated by people who are against the Reformed teachings, mainly because it was not explained logically or clearly. All through Seminary I denied "Limited Atonement" because my professors never clearly explained it; since I did not understand it, I denied it. This is the same reasoning as to why Christians disagree over such things as the method of baptism: Who should be baptized, believers or infants...and what is taking place during this sacrament.

We contradict each other because scripture teaches us to baptize and gives some examples; but it does not actually provide any kind of specific formula. Thus, we come to different conclusions based on our limited insight and our own determination, (what we like over what God desires us to do). These differences are going to multiply if no control is enforced on individuals and churches, which is exactly what has happened. That is why our Church Order Manual and "Articles" are so important. The Reformation encouraged all people to read the Bible, before the common person was not allowed to. Thus many interpretations have risen, both minor and cultic over the centuries, and all these various reasoning have combined with traditions and expectations. These all focus on what we do versus what God calls us to do.

What is important is the agreement that remains over the basics of Christianity by those who believe that the Bible is true. (There are individuals and churches that claim to be Christian and reject what the Bible says. I'm not talking about them, just look up the word "reprobate", and read Romans 1). Most committed Christians, regardless of denomination, who believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God have more in common than not; there is a great deal of unity in the midst of our diversity.

We all believe that God is our Creator; that He created us without sin, but that we have all fallen into sin; that our sin separates us from God and we cannot make up this gap; that Jesus Christ is God's Son who died for us that we may receive forgiveness for sin; that He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven: and we embrace salvation only by our faith in Jesus Christ; that the Holy Spirit is the one who gives us

understanding about Jesus and salvation; that Jesus will return some day in glory. These chief beliefs are our essence that have withstood the test of time and the misinterpretations from sinful people. For myself, the many different denominations have increased my appreciation for the gospel, at the same time given me a passion to teach correct theology. and to reach the lost.

Consider your neighbor, the person you work with, a close friend, a relative, or acquaintance who does not know Him. Will your attitude of “my way or no way” keep you from being a witness or friend? Scripture is clear on what we are called to do, are you clear in your understanding and purpose and response? From the Episcopal church practice of burning incense in worship to the fundamentalist church that renounces any form of liturgy, we all still bow the knee to our Lord (John 14:6).

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