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# A CUMULATIVE CASE FOR BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY

By James M. Rochford

Why should we believe that Christianity is really true? Is this something that we take on blind faith, or are there good reasons to trust our lives and eternities to Christ?

Instead of offering one knockdown argument for Christ, we should instead consider a *cumulative* case. In a court of law, a jury will consider multiple and independent lines of evidence to reach a verdict of conviction or innocence. Similarly, we should think through several arguments in concert with one another to reach a verdict about Christianity.

## SECTION I: Evidence from Personhood

**Perception of equality.** Do you believe that all people were created equal? The Christian worldview affirms the equality of all people (Gal. 3:28), because we were all made in God’s image (Gen. 1:27; Jas. 3:9) and Jesus values us enough to die for everyone on Earth (Jn. 3:16; Gal. 2:20). If this is true, then equality is both objective and incredibly valuable. Yet if God doesn’t exist, why believe that all people truly have equal worth?

Surely not all people are all *physically* or *intellectually* equal. The physicist Stephen Hawking is not *intellectually* equal with LeBron James, and LeBron James is not *athletically* equal with Stephen Hawking. If these men were truly equal, then Stephen Hawking should have an equal opportunity in trying out for the NBA, and LeBron should have just as much of a chance publishing popular books on astrophysics. So in what sense are these two men equal? Atheist Ayn Rand admits, “Egalitarianism [equality] is so evil—and so silly—a doctrine that it deserves no serious study or discussion.”<sup>1</sup> If there is no God, then Rand is right. We might still affirm the equality of all people, but we would have no basis for doing so. However, if God does exist and if he values all people, equality would be both objective and important.

**Perception of morality.** The Bible states that God has placed a moral law in the heart of all human beings (Rom. 1:19; 2:14-15), because God himself is a moral being (Hab. 1:13). Humans can perceive this moral law, but sometimes wonder if this could exist without God? If there is no God, then the same blind cosmic machine that evolved the fungus on our feet also produced our family members. Nature does not in any way differentiate between the life forms it creates—nor does it care about them or value

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<sup>1</sup> Rand, Ayn. *Philosophy: Who Needs It?* New York: Signet, 1984. 120.

them. Amoral and impersonal causes cannot produce morality, unless there is a moral standard outside of this naturalistic process.

Is it wrong when a lion kills a gazelle for dinner? Of course not; it's only natural. But why is it that we consider it *unnatural* when a human kills another human? For instance, if someone broke into our house and killed one of our family members, we wouldn't call this *nature*; we would call it *murder*.

But what is the difference between a gazelle in the wilderness and a human primate in your home? They both weigh the same. The gazelle has more body hair, and it can run faster. On the other hand, your family member has a bigger brain, walks upright, and can operate a remote control. While these two obviously have some physical or behavioral differences, what is the *moral* difference between them? Atheist Richard Carrier states that a human baby "has more value than any animal on Earth, with the possible exception of adult apes or dolphins (or, perhaps, elephants)."<sup>2</sup>

Yet when a pedophile rapes a child or when a serial murderer kills innocent victims, do you think this is truly wrong? If you can perceive a moral law like this, then it points to a moral Lawgiver—a moral Being who transcends nature.

**Perception of freewill.** The Bible teaches that God wanted free persons to choose to relate to him, rather than having programmed machines which were forced to mechanically respond to him (Mt. 23:37; Acts 14:16; Jn. 1:13). Humans have the immediate awareness that we're free to a large degree, but under a naturalistic worldview, everything in the universe is the result of cause and effect. If there is nothing *beyond* nature, then even our own thoughts and decisions would just be the result of a physical process in motion. We might feel like we have free thoughts and decisions, but this would simply be an illusion in the hardwiring of our conditioned brains. As one atheistic thinker colorfully explains, "The brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile."<sup>3</sup>

The reactions of our brains are certainly complex, but *more complex reactions* do not create *free will*. For instance, imagine setting up ten dominos in a row, watching them as they knock each other over. Now, imagine if you set up 50,000 dominos in a wide, complicated maze. Of course, this would surely be more *complex* than the first set, but not any more *free*. Atheistic thinkers are all too aware of this uncomfortable consequence of a universe without God. Atheist J.L. Mackie calls our perception of freewill "a *useful illusion*."<sup>4</sup> Atheist Susan Blackmore states that we need to "accept

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<sup>2</sup> Carrier, Richard. *Sense and Goodness Without God: A Defense of Metaphysical Naturalism*. Bloomington, IN: Authorhouse, 2005. 329.

<sup>3</sup> Pierre-Jean Georges Cabanis. Cited in Sire, James W. *The Universe next Door: a Guidebook to the World Views*. Downers Grove, Ill. [u.a.: InterVarsity, 1998. 57.

<sup>4</sup> Emphasis mine. Mackie, J. L. *The Miracle of Theism: Arguments for and against the Existence of God*. Oxford, Oxfordshire: Clarendon, 1982. 131.

that we might be *deeply deluded* about our own minds”<sup>5</sup> and our perception of freewill is really just “a *grand illusion*.”<sup>6</sup>

Do you agree? Or do you have a direct and immediate perception that you are *not* determined but within control of your own actions? If you sense that you do have a freewill, this points to a supernatural aspect to reality, which transcends nature, rather than being bound by it. Of course, it’s possible that humans are collectively deluded about the fact that they have freewill, but does that answer make the most sense of our perception of reality? Or does it make more sense that our awareness of these realities points toward a Creator who endowed them within us?

## SECTION 2: Evidence from Creation

***The origin of the universe.*** Ever since the days of Aristotle, secular thinkers in the Western world held that the universe had existed eternally in the past.<sup>7</sup> But remarkably the Bible claimed: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1; cf. Jn. 1:1; Heb. 11:3). Yet surprisingly, modern scientists confirmed that the biblical view had been right all along: The universe had not existed eternally; it sprung into being sometime in the past.

Modern physicists call this cataclysmic event “The Big Bang,” where all space, time, matter, and energy sprung into existence from nothing. Agnostic physicist Stephen Hawking states, “Almost everyone now believes that the universe, and *time itself*, had a beginning at the Big Bang.”<sup>8</sup> Likewise, agnostic physicists John Barrow and Frank Tipler write, “At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo* [or “out of nothing”].”<sup>9</sup>

Yet the ten million dollar question still remains: *What (or Who) caused the Bang?* If you heard the sound of a grenade exploding in the street, what would you think? Wouldn’t you try to discover what caused it? But if “little bangs” need causes, how much more do “Big Bangs”? Commenting on this remarkable discovery, agnostic Robert Jastrow writes, “This is an exceedingly strange development, unexpected by all *but the theologians*. They have always accepted the word of the Bible: In the beginning God created heaven and earth.”<sup>10</sup>

***The organization of the universe.*** The Bible teaches that God created the laws of the universe: God tells Jeremiah that he “the fixed laws of heaven and earth” (Jer. 33:25 NIV). In the last half century, physicists have discovered that the laws and constants

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<sup>5</sup> Emphasis mine. Blackmore, Susan. *Consciousness: A Brief Insight*. New York: Sterling, 2010. 59.

<sup>6</sup> Emphasis mine. Blackmore, Susan. *Consciousness: A Brief Insight*. New York: Sterling, 2010. 81.

<sup>7</sup> Copan, Paul, and William Lane. Craig. *Creation out of Nothing: a Biblical, Philosophical, and Scientific Exploration*. Leicester, England: Apollos, 2004. 219-220.

<sup>8</sup> Hawking, S. W., and Roger Penrose. *The Nature of Space and Time*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1996. 20.

<sup>9</sup> Barrow, John D., and Frank J. Tipler. *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle*. Oxford [Oxfordshire: Oxford UP], 1986. 442.

<sup>10</sup> Emphasis mine. Jastrow, Robert. *God and the Astronomers*. New York: Norton, 1992. 106.

of nature are not arbitrary; instead they contain a remarkable balance to allow for the existence of life. In fact, if these laws weren't exquisitely calibrated, life would be impossible. Even atheist Richard Dawkins explains, "Physicists have calculated that, if the laws and constants of physics had been even slightly different, the universe would have developed in such a way that life would have been impossible. Different physicists put it in different ways, but the conclusion is always much the same."<sup>11</sup> Agnostic John Barrow of Cambridge University explains that if the laws and constants were even slightly different "there could be no imaginable forms of life at all."<sup>12</sup> Agnostic physicist Paul Davies illustrates just one of these constants in this way:

Had the explosion [of the Big Bang] differed in strength at the outset by only one part in  $10^{60}$ , the universe we now perceive would not exist. To give some meaning to these numbers, suppose you wanted to fire a bullet at a one-inch target on the other side of the observable universe, twenty billion light years away. Your aim would have to be accurate to that same part in  $10^{60}$ .<sup>13</sup>

Davies documents roughly "thirty knobs"<sup>14</sup> that need to be perfectly set in order for life to exist. While just *one* of these constants would be nearly impossible to explain by chance, we need to remember that there are actually several dozen, and they *all* need to be calibrated with one another.

Incidentally, as result of these scientific discoveries, Antony Flew (one of the most infamous atheistic philosophers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) became a believer in God in 2004, writing a book titled *There is a God* in 2007.

### SECTION 3: Evidence from Predictive Prophecy

The Bible teaches that only God knows the future (Isa. 41:21-29; 42:8-9; 44:25). Repeatedly throughout the Bible, God predicts future events which can be verified:

***The destruction of the city of Tyre.*** Ezekiel wrote, "They will destroy the walls of Tyre and break down her towers; and I will scrape her debris from her and make her a bare rock" (Ezek. 26:4). Alexander the Great surrounded the city in 332 BC, but the people retreated to an island a half mile from the coast. To attack the city, Alexander scraped the city of Tyre clean, throwing its stones and rubble into the Mediterranean—thus fulfilling Ezekiel's prophecy two hundred years later.

***The decline of the Egyptian empire.*** The Egyptian empire reigned for millennia in the ancient world. Yet Ezekiel predicted that it would become "an unimportant, minor kingdom. It will be the lowliest of all the nations, never again great enough to rise above its neighbors" (Ezek. 29:14-15 NLT). The nation of Egypt still exists today—

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<sup>11</sup> Dawkins, Richard. *The God Delusion*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006. 169-170; 173.

<sup>12</sup> Barrow, John D. *The Constants of Nature: from Alpha to Omega--the Numbers That Encode the Deepest Secrets of the Universe*. New York: Pantheon, 2002. 141-142.

<sup>13</sup> Davies, P. C. W. *God and the New Physics*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983. 179.

<sup>14</sup> Davies, P. C. W. *Goldilocks Enigma: Why Our Universe Is Just Right for Life*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin, 2008. 146.

even as a shadow of the great civilization that it used to be, exactly as the Bible predicted.

***The permanent destruction of Babylon.*** Isaiah predicted, “Babylon will never be inhabited again. It will remain empty for generation after generation. Nomads will refuse to camp there, and shepherds will not bed down their sheep” (Isa. 13:20 NLT). When these predictions were made, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon were one of the Seven Wonders of the World, and the city itself was an extravagant monument to human achievement. Today, however, the modern city of Babylon is completely desolate. An Iraqi tour guide web site notes, “Babylon lies completely in ruins. A large and splendidly carved stone lion is all that remains of its former glories.”<sup>15</sup>

***The global dispersion and regathering of Israel.*** The Bible predicts the regathering of the nation of Israel at the end of human history (Isa. 11:11-12; Jer. 31:38-40; Ezek. 37:11-25; Hos. 3:3-5; Zech. 10:8-10). No other nation has ever been globally dispersed and then regathered in such a way. Just to put this in perspective, this would be akin to the government giving back the United States to the surviving Native American population. In fact, this would be far *more* likely—given the fact that Native Americans were not globally dispersed and have only been oppressed for a couple of centuries, compared with the Jews who have been oppressed for two millennia. Yet the Bible predicted the regathering of Israel numerous times millennia before this event occurred in 1948.

***The crucifixion of Jesus.*** David wrote, “A band of evildoers has encompassed me; they pierced my hands and my feet” (Ps. 22:16). This psalm was written *one thousand years* before Jesus ever walked the Earth and *five hundred years* before crucifixion was even invented.<sup>16</sup> Thus, David pictured a form of death for a future person, which hadn’t even been invented yet.

***The date of Jesus’ death to AD 33 (Dan. 9:24-27).*** The starting point—or decree—that Daniel references occurred in Nehemiah 2, when King Artaxerxes allowed the Jews to rebuild their city. This was in the spring of 444 BC. The years Daniel predicted (“seven weeks and sixty-two weeks”) add up to 483 years (69 x 7 = 483). And yet, we must remember that the Jewish people didn’t use our modern calendar system. They used a *360 day calendar year* and 30 day month—not a *365 day calendar year* (Num. 20:29; Gen. 7:11; 8:3-4; Rev. 11:2; 13:5; 12:6; 11:3). When we adjust the calendar accordingly, we find that Daniel predicted 476 years on the solar calendar, bringing the prediction to AD 33—the preferred date for Jesus’ death.

***The life, death, resurrection, and legacy of Jesus (Isa. 42, 49, 50, 53).*** Isaiah states that the Suffering Servant will be loved by God (Isa. 42:1), be endowed with God’s Spirit (Isa. 42:1), have a global influence (Isa. 42:1, 4; 49:1; 52:15), be gentle and quiet (Isa. 42:2-3), represent the nation of Israel (Isa. 49:3), but be separate from it (Isa. 49:6), appear

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<sup>15</sup> <http://middleeastarab.com/iq/cities-iraq-babylon.html>.

<sup>16</sup> Hoffmeier writes, “Herodotus, the fifth-century Greek historian, describes a case in which Darius the Great (522-486 BC) crucified 3,000 Babylonians.” Hoffmeier, James Karl. *The Archaeology of the Bible*. Oxford: Lion, 2008. 158.

to fail in his mission, but actually succeed (Isa. 49:4; 53:1), be God's salvation (Isa. 49:6),<sup>17</sup> help the weary (Isa. 50:5), be innocent in God's eyes (Isa. 50:7-9; 53:9), be exalted like a King (Isa. 52:13; cf. 6:1), not look like a King (Isa. 53:2), be beaten beyond recognition (Isa. 50:6; 52:14; 53:5), not defend himself of false accusations (Isa. 53:7), be killed (Isa. 53:8), be buried in a rich man's tomb (Isa. 53:9), be a sin offering for the people (Isa. 53:10-11), and come back to life (Isa. 53:10).<sup>18</sup>

**The global spread of the gospel.** Isaiah wrote, "You will do more than restore the people of Israel to me. I will make you a light to the Gentiles, and you will bring my salvation to the ends of the earth" (Isa. 49:6 NLT; cf. 42:4). Jesus made the same prediction, claiming that his message of love and forgiveness would reach the entire world (Mt. 24:14). Roughly seven billion people fill the Earth today. According to the *United States Center for World Mission* (USCWM), the message of Christ has reached roughly four billion of these people (4.06).<sup>19</sup> In his massive book *World Christian Trends*, David Barrett writes, "The country with the fastest Christian expansion ever is China, now at 10,000 new converts every day."<sup>20</sup>

**The general rejection of the Messiah by the nation of Israel.** Isaiah predicted that God's own people wouldn't believe the message about the Servant of God (Isa. 53:1; Ps. 118:22). The Servant be "despised and forsaken" and the nation of Israel "not esteem Him" (Isa. 53:3). Instead the message of forgiveness would travel to the Gentile nations (Isa. 49:6). Robert Newman observes, "[Jesus of Nazareth] is also the only person claiming to be the Jewish Messiah who has founded a world religion among Gentiles. This accomplishment would have been very difficult to stage. Furthermore, the prophecy envisions quite an unusual event. Here is a figure who is to be a light to Gentiles, but is abhorred by the nation Israel. Who would ever have expected that the Jewish Messiah would be generally rejected by Jews but widely accepted by Gentiles?"<sup>21</sup> What person in human history has caused more non-Jewish people to

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<sup>17</sup> The Hebrew states that the Servant doesn't just *bring* salvation, but rather, he himself *is* the salvation. Motyer, J. A. *The prophecy of Isaiah: An introduction & commentary*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. 1996.

<sup>18</sup> Of course, critics argue that the Servant is really the nation of Israel (Isa. 41:8; 42:19; 43:10). However, this interpretation wasn't held for 1,000 years after the time of Jesus, and it is more of a recent view—not an ancient one. The nation of Israel is clearly distinct from the Servant after Isaiah 49:6. Here we read, "It is too small a thing that You should be *My Servant* to raise up the *tribes of Jacob* and to restore the *preserved ones of Israel...*" (Is. 49:6). Later in Isaiah 53:6, we read, "All of us [the people] like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on *Him* [the Servant]." And in Isaiah 53:8, we read, "But *he* [the Servant] was struck down for the rebellion of *my people* [the nation of Israel]" (NIV). Again, the Servant is distinct from Israel—being a singular person.

<sup>19</sup> The Joshua Project is a ministry of the United States Center for World Missions. Joshua Project "Great Commission Statistics." <http://www.joshuaproject.net/great-commission-statistics.php>.

<sup>20</sup> Barrett, David B., Todd M. Johnson, Christopher R. Guidry, and Peter F. Crossing. *World Christian Trends, AD 30-AD 2200: Interpreting the Annual Christian Megacensus*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2001. 3.

<sup>21</sup> Robert C. Newman "Chapter 13: Fulfilled Prophecy as Miracle." Geivett, R. Douglas., and Gary R. Habermas. *In Defense of Miracles: a Comprehensive Case for God's Action in History*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997. 223.

come to faith in the God of Israel? Jesus has led more Gentiles to faith in the God of the Hebrews than anyone else *by a long shot*.

#### SECTION 4: Evidence from History

**Timeframe of the NT.** Jesus has more written about him within less time than any other figure from ancient times. For instance, the Roman emperor Tiberius has two biographies that date eighty years after his death. Alexander has one biography that dates 450 years after his death. By contrast, Jesus has *four* biographies that date within one generation after his death. Even critics agree that the entire New Testament was written before the close of the first century. For instance, even critic John Robinson dated the entire New Testament before AD 65.<sup>22</sup>

**Transmission of the NT.** We do not have very many manuscripts from the ancient world. Papyrus manuscripts easily disintegrated over time. For instance, we only have *seven* copies of Plato’s works, and *eight* copies of historical books from Thucydides and Herodotus; and these date over a millennium from the time they were written. We have 643 copies of Homer’s *Illiad* which is more than any other ancient book...

With the exception of the New Testament. In fact, to date, we have 5,366 manuscripts of the New Testament.

<b>Josh McDowell <i>The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict</i><sup>23</sup></b>					
<b>Author</b>	<b>Book</b>	<b>Date Written</b>	<b>Earliest Copies</b>	<b>Time Gap</b>	<b>No. of Copies</b>
<i>Plato</i>		400 B.C.	A.D. 900	1,300 yrs.	7
<i>Caesar</i>	Gallic Wars	100-44 B.C.	A.D. 900	1,000 yrs.	10
<i>Herodotus</i>	History	480-425 B.C.	A.D. 900	1,350 yrs.	8
<i>Thucydides</i>	History	460-400 B.C.	A.D. 900	1,300 yrs.	8
<i>Tacitus</i>	Annals	A.D. 100	A.D. 1,100	1,000 yrs.	20
<i>Demosthenes</i>		300 B.C.	A.D. 1,100	1,400 yrs.	200
<i>Homer</i>	<i>Illiad</i>	800 B.C.	400 B.C.	400 yrs.	643
<b>New Testament</b>		<b>A.D. 50-100</b>	<b>A.D. 114 (fragment)</b> <b>A.D. 200 (books)</b> <b>A.D. 250 (most of NT)</b>	<b>+ 50 yrs.</b> <b>100 yrs.</b> <b>150 yrs.</b>	<b>5366</b>

The New Testament has earlier documents and more documents than any other work from antiquity. Textual critic Daniel Wallace writes, “Many of these are fragmentary, of course, especially the older ones, but the average Greek New

<sup>22</sup> Robinson, John A. T. *Redating the New Testament*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976. 352.

<sup>23</sup> McDowell, Josh. *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*. Nashville, TN: T. Nelson, 1999. 38.

Testament manuscript is well over 400 pages long. Altogether, there are more than 2.5 million pages of texts.”<sup>24</sup>

**Trivial details in the NT.** Most so-called “holy books” either do not interact with history, or repeatedly make historical inaccuracies. By comparison, the New Testament grounds its events in historical reality. In fact, Luke’s historical accuracy is so impressive that one of the greatest archaeologists of all time, Sir William Ramsay, came to believe in Christianity because of it. Originally, Ramsay was a hostile critic of the Bible. Early in his career, he set out on an archaeological quest to research much of Asia Minor in an effort to disprove Luke’s history. Later in life he wrote, “Luke’s historicity is unsurpassed in respect to its trustworthiness... Luke is a historian of the first rank; not merely are his statements of fact trustworthy... this author should be placed along with the very greatest of historians.”<sup>25</sup>

**Testimonies from the enemies of Christianity.** Imagine if you were put on trial in a court of law, and several of your bitter enemies came to support your alibi. Just consider how much this would support your case in a court of law. In a similar way, ancient non-Christian historians and writers mention the crucifixion of Jesus. For instance, Tacitus writes, “Christus... was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the reign of Tiberius.”<sup>26</sup> Elsewhere, Jewish historians record details about Jesus’ death, which mention the fact that he was “hanged (or crucified) on the eve of Passover.”<sup>27</sup> Moreover, a Greek satirist named Lucian wrote, “The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day... and was *crucified* on that account... they are all brothers, from the moment that they are converted, and deny the gods of Greece, and worship the *crucified* sage.”<sup>28</sup> The evidence is so strong for the death of Jesus that even critic John-Dominic Crossan states that Jesus’ death “is as sure as anything historical can ever be.”<sup>29</sup>

**Trustworthy Witnesses.** In addition to hostile historians, we have many reasons to believe that the writers of the New Testament were honest in their writings. The disciples didn’t change the story, even when it would’ve benefited them. The disciples wrote that they themselves were unintelligent (Mk. 9:32; Lk. 18:34), uneducated (Acts 4:13), uncaring (Mk. 14:32), cowardly (Mt. 26:33-25), and doubtful (Mt. 28:17). In fact, Peter was even called “Satan” by Jesus in the biography that he helped author, the gospel of Mark (Mk. 8:33). The disciples placed women at the empty tomb of Jesus, as the first eyewitnesses of the resurrection in a day when women were second class

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<sup>24</sup> Ehrman, Bart D., Daniel B. Wallace, and Robert B. Stewart. *The Reliability of the New Testament*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011. 33.

<sup>25</sup> Ramsay, William Mitchell. *The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953. 222. For a more modern treatment of this, see A.W. Mosley’s article titled, “Historical Reporting in the Ancient World.”

<sup>26</sup> Cornelius Tacitus *Annals* 15.44.

<sup>27</sup> Babylonian Talmud *Sanhedrin* 43a.

<sup>28</sup> Lucian *The Death of Peregrine* (p.11-13).

<sup>29</sup> Emphasis mine. Crossan, John-Dominic. *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography*. Harper One. 1995. 145.

citizens—unable to testify in a court of law.<sup>30</sup> If they were fabricating the story (and they were willing to change the details), they would never have placed *women* at the empty tomb; they would've placed *themselves* at the empty tomb.

Moreover, Jesus' closest disciples signed their testimonies *in their own blood*. For instance, James son of Zebedee, was killed by Herod Agrippa I in AD 44.<sup>31</sup> In AD 95, Clement of Rome recorded that both Peter and Paul were martyred for their faith (1 Clement 5:4-5).<sup>32</sup> Josephus recorded that Jesus' brother, James, was martyred by Jewish authorities. The fact that Josephus mentioned James must imply that he was a notorious follower of Jesus.<sup>33</sup>

Many religious people have gone to their deaths for their beliefs, but these men were different. They *started* the religion. They would've known that they themselves were making it up. While religious fanatics will go to their deaths for what they believe to be *the truth*, the disciples would've died for what they knew to be *a lie*. They would have no motive for lying about their faith in Christ—other than the fact that they believed it was true. This is why Peter writes that he wasn't writing “myths” when passing on the story about Christ (2 Pet. 1:16).

## Conclusion

We do not have 100% certainty for many of the decisions that we make in life. Instead, we trust in good evidence. Just like in a court of law, we shouldn't wait until we have confidence beyond all *conceivable* doubt; instead, we should make our decision beyond all *reasonable* doubt. Based on the evidence, we stand on solid ground for trusting our lives and eternities to Jesus Christ.

## Further Reading

Rochford, James. *Evidence Unseen: Exposing the Myth of Blind Faith*. Columbus, OH: New Paradigm Publishing, 2013.

Geisler, Norman L., and Frank Turek. *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004.

Craig, William Lane. *On Guard: Defending Your Faith with Reason and Precision*. Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2010.

Lennox, John C. *Gunning for God: Why the New Atheists Are Missing the Target*. Oxford: Lion, 2011.

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<sup>30</sup> Josephus writes, “But let not the testimony of women be admitted, on account of the levity and boldness of their sex, nor let servants be admitted to give testimony on account of the ignobility of their soul; since it is probable that they may not speak truth, either out of hope of gain, or fear of punishment.” Josephus *Antiquities of the Jews* 4.8.15.

<sup>31</sup> See Acts 12:2. This biblical account has credibility, because it also mentions the death of Herod Agrippa I, which is attested by Josephus (see Josephus *Antiquities* 19.343-50). Blomberg, Craig. *From Pentecost to Patmos: an Introduction to Acts through Revelation*. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2006. 48.

<sup>32</sup> Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 2:25.

<sup>33</sup> Flavius Josephus *Antiquities of the Jews* Book 20. Chapter 9.

Pontifical biblical commission. The bible and morality biblical roots of christian conduct. Preface. Introduction.Â In this case too, though for a variety of motives, the sacred text is laid aside and solutions to the grave and urgent problems of today are sought elsewhere. Already in 2002 the Pontifical Biblical Commission, at the behest of the then President Card.Â 1. First of all we would like to situate Christian morality within the larger sphere of anthropology and of biblical theologies. This will bring out more clearly its specific nature and its originality both in relation to natural ethics and those moralities which are founded on human experience and reason, and to the ethical systems of other religions.