

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES

Course Expectations

This course will examine the evidence for the validity of the Christian religion. Specific areas of emphasis will include evidence for:

- A Supreme Being God who created all things.
- The inspiration of the Bible, which reveals the true nature of God.
- Jesus of Nazareth being the Son of God.

The goals of this course are to:

- Show that belief in God, the Bible, and Jesus is very reasonable based on the available evidence.
- Encourage your belief in Christianity.
- Enable you to share this evidence with others.

My expectations of you are:

- Carefully consider the questions that are handed out for each lesson and come prepared to discuss them.
- To do considerable research on your own to prepare for class. Plan your preparation time accordingly.
- If you miss a class, you should find out what we covered and be prepared to pick where the class stopped.
- Keep the finished lessons for future use (e.g., in a three-ring binder).

Special notes to parents of teenagers in the class:

- I find typical pre-printed Bible class materials to be too shallow for the age of their intended audience. That is why I develop most of my own handouts.
- The handouts tend to be very light on reading material and heavy on challenging questions that encourage students to think.
- That combination means students are expected to supply and use their own study aids to research answers to the questions, just like in public school.
- Depending on their maturity, study habits, and knowledge of available aids, they will likely need your help and encouragement. That is to be expected.
- I may provide material written by others. I try to be careful, but that material is not guaranteed to be 100% true. The same certainly can be said about any outside material students may encounter in their research. I will point out false doctrine whenever I can. You may need to do the same.
 - Ken Ham's book "The New Answer Book #1" is provided as a supplement.
- I am honored and am looking forward to offering this course topic to your children. Personally, I view it as very foundational to a stable Christian life, especially in our modern, secular world.

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Lesson 1 – Introduction

The subject of Christian evidences is a very broad one with multiple facets, special vocabulary, and other distinctive features. In this introductory lesson, we'll examine some of them.

1. Define the following terms:
 - a. Evidence
 - b. Christian evidences
 - c. Apology
 - d. Apologetics
2. It has been said that acceptance of evidence depends on the 1) weight of the evidence, 2) clearness of the presentation, 3) honesty of the hearer, 4) ability of the hearer to evaluate the evidence, and 5) background prejudices of the hearer. Which of these do we have some control over as hearers? As speakers?
3. Define "worldview". Briefly summarize and contrast the following major worldviews:
 - a. Atheism
 - b. Agnosticism
 - c. Theism
4. Define "values" and "ethics". Briefly summarize and contrast the following major value systems:
 - a. Naturalism
 - b. Secular humanism
 - c. Judeo-Christian ethics
5. How is our worldview and values/ethics related to our view of the supernatural and our behavior?
6. What responsibilities does a Christian have toward evidences (John 8:32; Phil. 1:17; I Thess. 5:21; I Pet. 3:15; 1 John 4:1; Jude 3)?
7. Answer the following
 - a. What is "faith"?
 - b. What is "blind faith"?
 - c. What are the dangers of 'blind faith'?
8. Define "science" and "scientific method". Why do some claim science and the Bible are incompatible with science being fact based and the Bible being faith based?
9. What questions would you like us to discuss during this course?

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Lesson 2 – Pre-assessment

You will encounter many people (teachers, friends, co-workers), movies/TV shows, and books that say things about God, the Bible, and Jesus which are different from what you may have heard in church and/or what you believe. Let's discuss how you would answer the following questions. If you struggle with them, don't worry. One of the primary goals of the course is to give you information and evidence to answer them confidently.

1. Scientists say earth is +4 billion years old. How can you believe it was created only thousands of years ago?
2. Scientists say life came from non-living matter by natural processes in an ancient, primordial sea. How can you believe it was created supernaturally?
3. Scientists say the fossil record shows a steady transition from deeply buried, simple forms to shallowly buried more complex forms, indicating that evolution occurred over a long time. How can you believe all plants/animals were created in one week?
4. Scientists say fossil evidence has been found showing that apes evolved into men (e.g., Java man, "Lucy", Neanderthal man). How can you believe man was created?
5. How can you believe in an all-powerful and all-good God when there is suffering and evil in the world He allegedly created?
6. Skeptics say the Bible contains numerous errors, absurdities, and inconsistencies. How can you believe it came from God?
7. Scientists say there is no way all the animal species could fit and survive inside a primitive boat for a year. How can you believe the Bible "myth" of Noah and the ark?
8. Since the Bible is so old that we don't have any of the original copies, how can you believe today's version is still reliable?
9. Skeptics say Jesus of Nazareth never existed or was an ordinary man like you and me. How can you believe He was the promised Messiah, the Son of God?
10. Skeptics say Jesus faked His death and/or the disciples stole His body. How can you believe He was resurrected?
11. How can the Bible which was written thousands of years ago still be relevant in our modern era?

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Lesson 3 – Introduction to “God Is”

The first major section of Christian Evidences focuses on the existence of a Supreme Being. Classically, there are many philosophical arguments for the existence of such a being. But most modern arguments center around creation versus evolution.

1. In lesson 1, we discussed the scientific method (hypothesis/experimentation).
 - a. Can this method “prove” the occurrence of historical persons or events?
 - b. How can we believe in the existence of people/events 1000’s of years ago?
 - c. Does this mean the study of history is “unscientific”?
2. Define the following:
 - a. God
 - b. Polytheism
 - c. Monotheism
 - d. Pantheism
 - e. Deism
 - f. Ditheism
 - g. Maltheism
3. Without special revelation (as the Bible claims to be), can we know the nature of deity (one God or many gods, male/female/neuter, good/evil, alive/dead, concerned/indifferent toward mankind)?
4. Psalms 19:1-14 says we can learn about God through what two ways?
5. Which of these two categories does Acts 14:15-17 and Rom. 1:18-23 fit into?
6. Briefly describe the following explanations offered for the origin of the universe, earth, life, and man.
 - a. Natural Evolution
 - b. Creation/Global Flood (“young earth creationism”)
 - c. Theistic Evolution (“old earth creationism”)
7. Briefly contrast these three models in terms of:
 - a. Starting state (a.k.a. “In the beginning...”)?
 - b. Starting Time?
 - c. Sequence/time spans?
 - d. Primary acting force(s)?
 - e. Time spans?
 - f. Other contrasts?

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Lesson 4 – The Origin of Life

In this lesson, we'll examine the evidence for the complexity of "simple" life and what might be responsible for its origin. Read the following in addition to other research you may do:

- Ham Ch. 1 "Is There Really a God?"

1. What characteristics would you say are needed to classify an object as "living"?
2. What are the following in cells and what do they do?
 - a. Proteins
 - b. Ribosomes
 - c. RNA
 - d. Gene
 - e. DNA
 - f. Nucleotide
3. How many nucleotides (base pairs) are in the DNA of a typical "simple" bacteria like E. coli?
 - a. The genome of E. coli (sequenced in 1997) is about 4 million base pairs with about 3000 genes.
4. To get some idea of the complexity of life, view the following (or find similar ones on the Internet)
 - a. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tfy1mOT-gEQ>
 - b. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oefAI2x2CQM>
 - c. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WFCvkkDSfIU>
5. How much of this complexity must be fully functional in order for life to exist?
6. Define Irreducible Complexity and how it relates to the origin of life?
7. Define the following alternative explanations offered for the origin of life:
 - a. Spontaneous generation
 - b. Abiogenesis
 - c. Panspermia
 - d. Intelligent Design (note: you may detect a bias based on public/Internet sources)?
8. Which offered explanation better explains this complexity? Which requires the most faith?

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Lesson 5 – Diversification of Life

Next, we'll examine the complexity of various lifeforms and what might be responsible for their origin. Read the following in addition to other research you may do:

- Ham Ch. 22 “Is Natural Selection the Same Thing as Evolution?”
1. Describe the complexity needed to add the following biological processes to a hypothetical “simple” ancient lifeform:
 - a. Motion (e.g., bacteria’s flagellum per <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NaVoGfSSSV8I>)
 - b. Multi-cell organism
 - c. Photosynthesis per <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gW3fuILye2M>
 - d. Circulation, blood clotting, and coagulation cascade per <https://www.khanacademy.org/science/health-and-medicine/advanced-hematologic-system/hematologic-system-introduction/v/how-do-we-make-blood-clots> and <https://www.khanacademy.org/science/health-and-medicine/advanced-hematologic-system/hematologic-system-introduction/v/coagulation-cascade>
 - e. Bombardier beetle defense mechanism per <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKM9yoQ3Wug>
 2. Can you think of other equally complex processes you’d like to research and tell us about (like adding an exoskeleton, being endothermic, adding vision, switching cell reproduction from mitosis to meiosis)?
 3. The following alternative explanations are offered for the origin of this complexity:
 - a. Lamarckism or Lamarckian inheritance
 - i. Describe this mechanism.
 - ii. Why is it not generally accepted today?
 - b. Natural selection or survival of the fittest
 - i. Describe this mechanism and what causes it.
 - ii. Give two examples of it.
 - iii. What are its limitations?
 - c. Genetic mutations
 - i. Describe this mechanism and what causes it.
 - ii. Give four examples of it.
 - iii. What are its limitations?
 - iv. Do cells have built-in mechanisms to prevent or reverse a mutation per the following? <https://www.khanacademy.org/science/high-school-biology/hs-molecular-genetics/hs-discovery-and-structure-of-dna/a/dna-proofreading-and-repair>
 - d. Creation followed by natural selection within kinds per Edward Blyth (1810-1873)
 - i. Describe this mechanism

4. Which offered explanation better explains this complexity? Which requires the most faith?
5. Discuss the following quotation:
 - a. "If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down." --Charles Darwin, Origin of Species
6. Regarding the change of one lifeform (plant, animal) into another:
 - a. Define "species"
 - b. Define Biblical "kind" (Gen. 1)
 - c. Have we observed the origin of new species? New kinds?

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Lesson 6 – Evidence for Evolution?

Having examined the complexity of the origin and diversification of life, next we'll look at various evidence offered in support of different types of evolution (stellar, chemical, biological). Read the following in addition to other research you may do:

- Ham Ch. 23 “Hasn't Evolution Been Proven True?”
1. Many people believe the “Big Bang” is unquestionably explains the origin of the universe via purely natural means.
 - a. What is the Big Bang theory?
 - b. Search the Internet using the term “Problems with the Big Bang theory”. How many scientific (not creationist) websites list such problems? Which site lists the most problems?
 - c. Is the Bible consistent with an expanding universe per Psalm 104:2; Isaiah 42:5; Isaiah 44:24; and Jeremiah 10:12)
 - d. How much faith is needed to accept an explanation that all the matter and energy in the universe came from nothing?
 2. Many people believe the “Miller experiment” proves life can easily arise from non-life via purely natural means.
 - a. What was the experiment conducted by Stanley Miller and Harold Urey in 1953?
 - b. What problems did this experiment have?
 3. Many people believe comparative anatomy shows life forms evolved from common ancestors.
 - a. What is “comparative anatomy”?
 - b. Is it plausible that comparative anatomy points to a common Creator instead of a common ancestor per <https://answersingenesis.org/biology/homology-comparative-similarities/>?
 4. Many people believe embryology shows life forms evolved from common ancestors.
 - a. What is “embryology”?
 - b. How do people use it and alleged vestigial organs to support evolution?
 - c. What evidence indicates these alleged vestigial organs are not leftovers from evolutionary ancestors per <https://answersingenesis.org/evidence-for-creation/human-embryonic-development/>

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Lesson 7 – Dating methods (part 1) – Ancient life

In this lesson, we'll examine attempts to date formerly living objects using radioactive carbon. Read the following in addition to other research you may do:

- Ham Ch. 9 "Does Radiometric Dating Prove the Earth Is Old?" pages 113-117
- Ham Ch. 7 "Doesn't Carbon-14 Dating Disprove the Bible?"

1. Define the following:
 - a. Isotope
 - b. Radioactivity
 - c. Parent and daughter isotopes
 - d. Half-life
2. Explain how radioactivity is used to date objects in general ("radiometric dating" or "radioisotope dating").
3. What assumptions must be true for radiometric dating to be accurate?
4. Briefly summarize how Carbon-14 dating works ("radiocarbon dating").
5. What are the scientific limitations of radiocarbon dating?
6. What dating assumption(s) are questionable or invalid in the case of radiocarbon dating?
7. Detectable amounts of Carbon-14 have been allegedly found in coal (fossilized plants/animals) and diamonds (compressed coal) that are supposedly millions of years old. What does this suggest?

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Lesson 8 – Dating methods (part 2) – Rocks and beyond

In this lesson, we'll examine attempts to date older objects. Read the following in addition to other research you may do:

- Ham Ch. 9 “Does Radiometric Dating Prove the Earth Is Old?” pages 117- 124

1. What kinds of radioactive elements are typically used in addition to Carbon-14?
2. Can you give examples of rock formed recently that have allegedly be in existence for millions of years? What does this imply about the assumptions about initial conditions?
3. What technique do scientists use to try eliminating the assumption of initial conditions? Does this always yield consistent results?
4. Can you find articles from scientific sources suggesting radioactive decay rates may not be constant (hint: search for “variable radioactive decay rates”)?
5. Have scientists found soft tissue surviving allegedly millions of years in fossils per <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/dinosaur-shocker-115306469/>? What does this suggest?
6. What is “apparent age” and how does this potentially distort dating methods?

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Lesson 9 – Theistic Evolution

Some professed Bible believers attempt to harmonize the Bible's account of origins with an allegedly "proven" old earth and evolution. Read the following in addition to other research you may do:

- Ham Ch. 2 "Why Shouldn't Christians Accept Millions of Years?"
- Ham Ch. 5 "What About the Gap & Ruin-Reconstruction Theories?"
- Ham Ch. 8 "Could God Really Have Created Everything in Six Days?"
- Ham Ch. 23 "Hasn't Evolution Been Proven True?" pgs. 284-285

1. The following alternative explanations are offered for combining Biblical creation and evolution. Briefly describe each.
 - a. Theistic evolution
 - b. Day-Age Theory
 - c. Progressive creation
 - d. Gap Theory
 - e. Young Earth Creationism
2. What Biblical references point to Gen. 1 describing six literal days and a relatively recent creation?
3. What differences between the order of events can you find in the evolution model versus the creation model? What does this suggest about evolution-creation hybrids?
4. What Biblical references suggest no significant gap between Gen. 1:1 and 1:2?
5. Which explanation best fits the available evidence?
6. Do evolutionary scientists concede a planetary cataclysm destroyed all land animals within the last 10,000 years (per Gen. 6-9)? What implications does this have for those promoting evolution-creation hybrids when it comes to the Genesis flood being historically accurate?
7. If the Genesis narrative of creation and the global flood can't be trusted as factual history, what does this imply regarding the rest of the Bible that references those events as fact?

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Lesson 10 – Geologic Record (part 1)

In Genesis 1, God pronounced everything he created as very good. However, buried in the ground we find the fossilized remains of countless plants and animals. Where did they come from? See the following in addition to other research you may do:

- Ham Ch. 14 “Can Catastrophic Plate Tectonics Explain Flood Geology?”
- <https://answersingenesis.org/geology/geologic-time-scale/geologic-column/>
- <https://answersingenesis.org/geology/catastrophism/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=47vDpY3eMXg> (14 min.)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zd5-dHxOQhg> (23 min.)

1. Define the following terms:
 - a. The geological column or geological record
 - b. Continental drift or plate tectonics
2. Briefly describe and contrast the following models offered to explain the geological column:
 - a. Uniformitarianism
 - b. Catastrophism (old earth)
 - c. Catastrophism (young earth)
3. What terms in Gen. 6:5-9:19 indicate the severity of the flood? What about Matt. 24:36-39; Luke 17:27; 2 Pet. 2:5; and 2 Pet. 3:3-6?
4. Gen. 1:6-8; 2:6; and 7:11 suggest a great canopy of water vapor around the earth. What climate effects might this cause prior to the flood? What about during/after the flood?
5. Gen. 7:11 indicates much water was stored in the earth's crust. What effect would releasing this water have? (Hint: think of earthquakes and Mt. Saint Helens).
6. If the earth was covered with water during the flood, where did the water go afterwards? What effect would that have on earlier deposits?
7. Given the forces likely at work throughout the Genesis flood, is it reasonable they could produce the massive layers of fossil-containing sediment seen today?

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Lesson 11 – Geologic Record (part 2)

In this lesson, we'll examine evidence for the rapid formation of the geologic record as well as examine the credibility of Noah's ark. Review the following:

- <https://answersingenesis.org/the-flood/geologic-evidences-for-the-genesis-flood/>
- <https://answersingenesis.org/geology/grand-canyon-facts/> (4 min.)
- <https://answersingenesis.org/geology/mount-st-helens/> (3 min.)
- Ham Ch. 10 "Was There Really a Noah's Ark & Flood?" pgs. 136-138
- Ham Ch. 11 "How Did Animals Spread All Over the World from Where the Ark Landed?"

1. How does Mt. Saint Helens suggest large geologic features can be formed by large amounts of water over short time spans?
2. What are polystrate or polystratic fossils and what do they suggest regarding rates of sediment deposit per the following?
 - <https://www.icr.org/article/classic-polystrate-fossil/>
 - <https://askjohnmackay.com/polystrate-fossils-vertical-fossil-trees-any-other-polystrate-fossils/>
 - <http://apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=9&article=213>
3. What geological evidence suggests a global flood?
4. Briefly describe Noah's ark. Compare its size to modern steel ships. Is there anything significant about its proportions (length, width, height)?
5. Some people scoff at the size of the ark in comparison to the number of animal species today as well as the size of larger species. How would you respond?
6. Some people assert there is no reasonable way for the limited number and kinds of animals from the ark spreading around the world after the flood and becoming all the species we see today. How would you respond?
7. Which model for the origin of the geologic column from Lesson 10 question 2 better fits the available evidence?

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Lesson 12 – The Fossil Record and Dinosaurs

From the fossil record, dinosaurs hold a fascinating position in the minds of people, especially children. How do they fit within the Biblical narrative? Review the following:

- Ham Ch. 12 “What Really Happened to the Dinosaurs?”
- Ham Ch. 24 “Did Dinosaurs Turn into Birds?”
- <https://answersingenesis.org/dinosaurs/feathers/> (5 min. video)
- Ham Ch. 21 “How Did Defense/Attack Structures Come About?”
- Ham Ch. 13 “Why Don’t We Find Human & Dinosaur Fossils Together?”

1. Define the following according to evolutionary theory:
 - a. Paleontology
 - b. The fossil record
 - c. Transitional fossils
 - d. Dinosaurs
 - e. Archaeopteryx
2. According to Ham, pg. 290-293, and <https://answersingenesis.org/fossils/transitional-fossils/>, is there abundant evidence for the existence of transitional fossils?
3. According to many evolutionists, archaeopteryx is abundant evidence birds evolved from reptilian dinosaurs. What problems does this claim have?
4. Prior to the discovery of large dinosaur fossils in the 1800’s, what evidence in the Bible and elsewhere suggests mankind already knew about dinosaur-like animals?
5. What do the following scriptures indicate about the behavior and diet of ancient animals: Gen. 1:28; 1:30; 3:17; 9:2?
6. Skeptics challenge the concept of a loving Creator God by pointing out animals with sharp teeth, claws, venomous poison, and other defense/attack capabilities. How would you respond?

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Lesson 13 – The Fossil Record and Man

Did man and ape evolve from a common ancestor as many scientists claim according to the fossil record? This lesson will examine the alleged evidence for this claim. Review the following:

- <https://answersingenesis.org/human-evolution/ape-man/did-humans-really-evolve-from-ape-like-creatures/>
- <https://answersingenesis.org/human-evolution/making-leap-ape-adam/> (See “Part 1— Do Humans and Chimps Share a Common Ancestor?”)
- <https://creation.com/apeman>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XmwnPwbAwuM> (28 min)
- <https://answersingenesis.org/human-evolution/ape-man/making-monkeys-out-of-man/>

1. Contrast the origin of mankind according to evolutionists versus creationists.
2. Define the following:
 - a. Hominids or Hominidae
 - b. Ape-men
 - c. Missing link
3. Scientists cite a genetic difference of 1% to 2% between modern apes and men as proof they are closely related via a common ancestor. How would you respond?
4. Summarize the following attempts to bridge the gap between ape-like ancestors and modern man:
 - a. Combining men and apes
 - b. Making man out of apes
 - c. Making apes out of men
5. Describe Australopithecus (“Lucy”). Scientists cite these fossils as a transition from ape-like ancestors to modern man. How would you respond?
6. Describe Homo Erectus. Scientists cite these fossils as a transition from ape-like ancestors to modern man. How would you respond?
7. Describe Neandertals. Scientists cite these fossils as a transition from ape-like ancestors to modern man. How would you respond?

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Lesson 14 – Review

With this lesson we will wrap up the first major part of our study – the evidence for the existence of a Supreme Creator.

1. Briefly summarize the major explanations offered for the origin of the universe, earth, life, and man (Lesson 3).
2. Scientists say life came from non-living matter by natural processes in an ancient, primordial sea. How can you believe it was created supernaturally (Lesson 4)?
3. Scientists say the diversity and complexity of various lifeforms came from incremental mutations and natural selection over non-living matter by natural processes in an ancient, primordial sea. How can you believe it was created supernaturally (Lesson 5)?
4. Scientists say earth is +4 billion years old. How can you believe it was created only thousands of years ago (Lesson 7 & 8)?
5. Some religious people say we can easily harmonize the Bible's supernatural account of origins with evolution's natural account of origins? How would you respond (Lesson 9)?
6. Scientists say the fossil record shows a steady transition from deeply buried, simple forms to shallowly buried more complex forms, indicating that evolution occurred over a long time. How can you believe all plants/animals were created in one week (Lesson 10 & 11)?
7. Scientists scoff at the concept of a simple wooden boat being able to preserve all land animals sufficient to repopulate and redistribute animals around the globe. How would you respond (Lesson 11)?
8. Scientists say the fossil record, especially the dinosaurs, provide abundant evidence for evolution. How would you respond (Lesson 12)?
9. Before leaving this section, do you have any related topics you would like to discuss?

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Lesson 15 – Introduction to “The Bible is God’s Word”

This next major section of Christian Evidences focuses on claims and evidence for the Bible being the inspired, accurate “special” revelation from the Creator God. This evidence tends to fall into three categories (to be covered in later lessons): unusual features, items difficult for man to do, and items beyond the power of man to do. Review the following:

- <https://www.biblequestions.org/bqar014.html>
- <http://www.bibletruths.net/archives/BTARO37.htm>
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_inspiration

1. Define the following:
 - a. Bible
 - b. Scriptures
 - c. Inspired or inspiration
2. Summarize the various attitudes people have toward the Bible. How does this influence their interpretation of available evidence?
3. Summarize the following types of Biblical “inspiration”.
 - a. Natural inspiration
 - b. Partial inspiration
 - c. Thought (noematic) inspiration
 - d. Verbal plenary inspiration
 - e. Verbal dictation
4. Explain the following scriptures associated with the inspiration of the Bible.

a. Gen. 1:3	e. 2 Tim. 3:16-17
b. Matt. 10:17-20	f. Heb.1:1-2
c. Acts 4:31	g. 2 Pet. 1:20-21
d. 1 Cor. 14:37	h. 2 Pet. 3:16
5. Is claiming inspiration sufficient to prove that any book, including the Bible is inspired?
6. Briefly describe the various human authors of the Bible (when they lived, education, cultural background, language, etc.)

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Lesson 16 – Unusual Features of the Bible

If the Bible were God’s word, you would expect it to have certain characteristics. The works of men could share some of these characteristics, but a document lacking them would certainly not be taken seriously. Review the following:

- Ham Ch. 25 “Does Archaeology Support the Bible?”
1. List several unusual features about the Bible per <https://www.josh.org/investigation-bible-unique/>
 2. Describe some of the unusual/controversial themes addressed consistently throughout the Bible. Why is this consistency unusual given the human authors (discussed last lesson)?
 3. How are the following doctrines unusual?
 - a. Deut. 4:35; Isa. 44:6-8; Isa. 45:5, 21-22
 - b. Ex. 20:1-17
 - c. Lev. 24:19-20; Deut. 19:21
 - d. Matt. 5:44
 - e. Matt. 22:21
 - f. Matt. 22:37-40
 - g. Matt. 26:52
 4. How are the following unusual in contrast to typical accounts of society’s “heroes”?
 - a. Gen. 6:8 versus Gen. 9:20-21
 - b. 2 Pet. 2:7 versus Gen. 19:29-38
 - c. Acts 13:22 versus 2 Sam. 11
 - d. 2 Chron. 1:7-12 versus 1 Kings 11
 - e. John 13:36-38; Gal. 2:11-16
 - f. Acts 8:1-3
 5. Per Ham, in what ways is the Bible historically accurate?
 6. Describe some of the influence and motivational power the Bible has had over the centuries?
 7. Is having unusual features & doctrines, historical accuracy, and/or the power to motivate countless millions over the centuries sufficient to prove that the Bible is inspired?

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Lesson 17 – “How did they know that?”

The second category of evidences for the Bible’s inspiration are alleged scientific items in the Bible that you would not have expected ancient man to have known on their own (“scientific foreknowledge”). Review the following:

- <https://www.biblequestions.org/bqar546.html>
- https://www.conservapedia.com/Biblical_scientific_foreknowledge

1. From your research, list 7 items offered as Biblical scientific foreknowledge that you find compelling you would like to discuss in class. Consider the following categories
 - a. Physics/Astronomy
 - b. Earth sciences
 - c. Biology
2. How would you respond if someone said, "Maybe the Bible writers already knew about these scientific truths or they just got lucky."?
3. Skeptics say the Bible is scientifically wrong because of the following verses. How would you respond?
 - a. The sun goes around the earth per Eccl. 1:5 and Psm. 19:6
 - b. The earth is a flat circle per Isa. 40:22
 - c. The earth is a flat square per Isa. 11:12; Rev. 7:1; Rev. 20:8 “four corners”
 - d. The earth is unmovable on “foundations” per 1 Chr. 16:30; Psa. 93:1; Job 38:4-6; Psa. 104:5
4. Is having scientifically accurate information in the Bible about physics, chemistry, biology, and earth sciences sufficient to prove that the Bible is inspired?

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Lesson 18 – Fulfilled Prophecy

The third category of evidences for the Bible's inspiration are alleged predictions of the future that came true. Review the following:

- <https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/Dictionary/viewTopic.cfm?topic=ET0003005>
- <https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/Dictionary/viewTopic.cfm?topic=VT0002236>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PgN33jH6jHk>
- <https://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-study/topical-studies/the-old-testament-is-filled-with-fulfilled-prophecy-11652232.html>
- <https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/swisscottage/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2014/11/44-Prophecies-Jesus-Christ-Fulfilled.pdf>

1. Define "prophecy".
2. Many people make lots of predictions (e.g., fortune tellers, astrologers, scientists). List the things that would make prophecies compelling as evidence for a supernatural origin.
3. Does the Bible claim to use fulfilled prophecies to establish its trustworthiness per Isa. 46:9-10; Rom. 1:1-4; Rom. 16:25; Heb. 1:1-2?
4. Describe the prophecies regarding Babylon in Jeremiah 25:11-12; 32:36-37; Isaiah 13:19; Isaiah 14:23
5. Describe the prophecy regarding Cyrus in Isaiah 44:28; 45:1
6. Describe the prophecy regarding Tyre in Ezek. 26:12
7. Describe at least 7 prophecies regarding Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah.
8. Describe the prophecy regarding the fall of Jerusalem (70 A.D.) in Matt. 24:1-28; Mark 13:1-23; Luke 21:5-24.
9. Is having fulfilled prophecies sufficient to prove that the Bible is inspired?

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES

Lesson 19 – The Canon of the Bible

Skeptics will question the trustworthiness of the Bible due to how it was gathered together.

Review the following:

- “Topics > B” for “Bible Origins” at biblequestions.org
 - “How were the books of the New Testament selected?”
- <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/bible/what-is-the-apocrypha-are-apocryphal-books-really-scripture.html>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k7o6JXCfCjM> (5 min)

1. Define the following terms:
 - a. Epistle
 - b. Canon and Canonization
 - c. Apocryphal
 - d. Deuterocanon (Catholic) and the Apocrypha (Protestant)
 - e. Pseudepigraphon
2. According to 1 Thess. 5:27; Col. 4:16; and 2 Peter 3:16, what happened to the epistles written by inspired NT authors?
3. Who was Marcion, when did he live, and how did he contribute to the New Testament canon?
4. What other early lists of NT books were produced and when?
5. The Catholic Church claims they are responsible for establishing the NT cannon (at the Synod of Hippo in 393 A.D., Councils of Carthage in 397 and 419, Council of Trent in 1545-1563 for the Apocrypha). How would you respond?
6. What doctrines in the Apocrypha contradict the Bible per <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/bible/what-is-the-apocrypha-are-apocryphal-books-really-scripture.html>?
7. Some people claim there are “lost books” or “forgotten books” missing/removed from the Bible per www.gotquestions.org/lost-books-Bible.html and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aRYQi8lslqE> (8 min). How would you respond?

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES

Lesson 20 – The Manuscripts of the Bible

Skeptics will question the trustworthiness of the Bible due to how it was copied down through the centuries. Review the following:

- “Topics > B” for “Bible Origins” at biblequestions.org
- <https://truthfaithandreason.com/case-making-101-how-does-the-bible-compare-to-other-ancient-documents/>
- <https://jesusisnotfakenews.com/the-number-of-new-testament-textual-variants-doesnt-matter/>

1. Answer the following questions about ancient manuscripts.
 - a. What is a “manuscript”? An “autograph”?
 - b. How were copies of ancient manuscripts created?
 - c. What potential sources of error would this method have?
 - d. What is “papyrus” and how durable was it?
 - e. What is a “scroll” and a “codex”?
 - f. For ancient Greek and Latin, what are “uncial” and “cursive” manuscripts?
2. Since we do not have the original NT autographs, what evidence is offered for the manuscript copies we have being accurate reflections of the originals based on the following criteria?
 - a. How much time passed between writing and oldest copy?
 - b. How many copies do we have for comparison?
 - c. How many other sources do we have for comparison?
3. How does the availability of NT manuscript copies compare with secular writings from the ancient world that are considered trustworthy?
4. Answer the following about textual variants.
 - a. What is a “textual variant” and what causes them?
 - b. Some scholars estimate there are 400,000 variants in the NT. How can this be when the NT consists of only about 140,000 words?
 - c. According to <https://jesusisnotfakenews.com/the-number-of-new-testament-textual-variants-doesnt-matter/>, describe the following groupings of variants and the number of variants they contain.
 - i. Neither meaningful, nor viable
 - ii. Viable, but not meaningful
 - iii. Meaningful, but not viable
 - iv. Meaningful and viable
5. Skeptics claim “The Bible has been changed so many times over the last 2000 years, it’s impossible to know what it originally said.” How would you respond?

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES

Lesson 21 – Translations of the Bible

Skeptics will question the trustworthiness of the Bible due to how the ancient manuscripts were translated into our modern language. Review the following:

- <https://www.biblequestions.org/bqar621.html>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_major_textual_variants_in_the_New_Testament
- <https://www.biblequestions.org/bqar606.html>

1. Are translators inspired? How do Matt. 24:35 and 1 Pet. 1:23-25 relate to having reliable translations today?
2. Ancient New Testament manuscript resources are normally compiled into a Greek-based edition used to make English translations. What are the following editions?
 - a. "Textus Receptus" (Latin for "received text")?
 - b. "Majority Text", "Byzantine text-type", or "MT"
 - c. "Westcott-Hort"
 - d. "Nestle-Aland", "Novum Testamentum Graece", "NA28", "United Bible Society Greek Text", or "Critical Text"
3. What are the main differences between the Textus Receptus and the Westcott-Hort text?
3. Are these differences significant? Why?
4. List some popular English translations use the following Greek texts?
 - b. Textus Receptus
 - c. Nestle-Aland
5. Describe the following approaches to translating Greek into English:
 - b. Literal or formal equivalence
 - c. Dynamic equivalence
 - d. Paraphrase
6. Which translations are "better"?

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES

Lesson 22 – Alleged Errors and Self-Contradictions in the Bible

Frequently, the inspiration of the Bible is challenged on the basis of the errors it supposedly contains. Review the following:

- Ham Ch. 6 “Cain’s Wife—Who Was She?”
- <https://www.bible.ca/islam/islam-bible-contradictions-refuted.htm>
- Lesson 22 Shelly Supplement

1. According to Shelly pg. 61, what would be a good first question to ask the skeptic who says the Bible has errors?
2. According to Shelly pg. 62 “Ignorance”, what could we say if someone points out that a person or place mentioned in the Bible is not found in other historical documents?
3. One of the most popular questions we receive at the BibleQuestions.Org website is “Where did Cain get his wife?” How would you respond based on Ham ch. 6 and Shelly pg. 62 “Failure to be Fair With the Bible”?
4. According to Shelly pg. 63-64 “Misinterpretation of the Bible” and “No Single Author Claims to Tell Whole Story”, why is it important to closely read what the Bible says in a particular context as well as to read all the Bible has to say on a given subject?
5. Select five alleged Bible problems from the www.bible.ca site referenced above and be prepared to summarize them and offer a reasonable explanation for their resolution.
6. From this lesson, list several techniques for resolving alleged Bible errors and contradictions?
7. What should you do if someone points out an alleged error or contradiction that you can't immediately answer?

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES

Lesson 23 – Review

With this lesson we will wrap up the second major part of our study – the evidence for the Bible being the inspired, accurate “special” revelation from the Creator God.

1. Which type of “inspiration” should we claim for the Bible (Lesson 15)?
2. Provide three examples where authors of the Bible claim to be inspired by God (Lesson 15).
3. Describe three unusual features about the Bible that suggest it is inspired (Lesson 16).
4. Describe three scientific pre-knowledge items in the Bible that suggest it is inspired (Lesson 17).
5. How would you respond to the skeptic who says the Bible teaches the sun goes around a flat earth (Lesson 17)?
6. List three things what would make any prediction about the future compelling as evidence for a supernatural origin (Lesson 18)?
7. Describe three compelling, fulfilled prophecies in the Bible (Lesson 18)?
8. How would you respond to the skeptic who says we can’t know which books should and shouldn’t be in the Bible (Lesson 19)?
9. How can we trust the Bible since we don’t have the authors’ original manuscripts (Lesson 20)?
10. How can we trust the Bible when there is such a large number of textual variants in the manuscript copies we have (Lesson 20)?
11. What are the main differences between the Textus Receptus/Majority Text manuscripts and the Westcott-Hort/Nestle-Aland manuscripts (Lesson 21)?
12. How can we trust the Bible when there are so many differences in the English language translations available today (Lesson 21)?
13. Which English translations are better (Lesson 21)?
14. Before leaving this section, do you have any related topics you would like to discuss?

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES

Lesson 24 – Introduction to “Jesus of Nazareth is God’s Son”

The final major section of Christian Evidences focuses on evidence for the unique claims of the nature and role of Jesus. Review the following:

- Lesson 24 Shelly Supplement, pgs. 19-20
- At BibleQuestions.org under “Topics > J” for “Jesus”
 - [The Historicity of Jesus \(BT\)](#)
 - [Jesus, the Son of God \(BT\)](#)

1. Who is the “Jesus” of this study (since many are named “Jesus” or the Hebrew equivalent of “Joshua”)? How would you describe Him to someone totally unfamiliar with the Bible?
2. You may encounter claims that Jesus of Nazareth never existed. How would you respond?
3. You may encounter claims that Jesus existed, but everything supernatural about Him was a conspiracy fabricated by His disciples after His death as reflected in the New Testament. How would you respond?
4. In Matt. 16:13, Jesus asked His disciples a critical question, “Who do men say that I am?”
 - a. What did His disciples say per verse 14?
 - b. What did the Jews of His day as well as today say (per Mark 2:7; John 19:7)?
 - c. What do Muslims say per https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus_in_Islam?
 - d. What do Jehovah’s Witnesses say per https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jehovah%27s_Witnesses_beliefs#Jesus_Christ?
 - e. What do Oneness Pentecostals say per https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oneness_Pentecostalism#Father,_Son,_and_Holy_Spirit?
5. In Matt. 16:15, Jesus asked His disciples, “Who do you say that I am?” What was Peter’s two-part response per verse 16? Did Jesus agree with it per verse 17?
6. What does it mean to be the “Christ” or the “Messiah” per https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Messiah_in_Judaism?
7. Since Adam was “the son of God” (Luke 3:38) and Christians are “children of God” (1 John 3:1-2), what does Peter mean for Jesus to be “the Son of the Living God” (hint: John 1:1-5; Luke 1:35)?

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES

Lesson 25 – Claims for Jesus of Nazareth

In this lesson we'll further explore some of the astonishing claims made by and for Jesus. After you review the following, explain what the groups of verses below are claiming.

- Under “Topics > J” for “Jesus”
 - [Christ, Prophet, Priest and King \(BT\)](#)
 - [Jesus and the Father \(BT\)](#)
 - [Jesus, His identity \(BT\)](#)
1. Matt. 10:37; Matt. 28:18-19; Mark 16:15-16; John 12:47-48; John 14:6; Luke 21:33; Rev. 17:14
 2. John 5:17-24; 10:30-33; 14:6-10
 3. Matt. 4:10 with Matt. 8:2; Matt. 14:33; Acts 10:25-26; Rev. 19:10; Rev. 22:8-9
 4. Mark 2:5-7; Luke 7:48
 5. Heb. 13:8 with Mal. 3:6
 6. John 8:46; Matt. 27:4; Heb. 4:15; Heb. 9:12-14; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 John 3:5; Matt. 26:28
 7. John 8:24, 28, 58 (with Ex. 3:14); John 1:1-5
 8. Matt. 1:18; John 17:5; John 2:18-22; John 20; Acts 1; Acts 2:22-26; 1 Cor. 15:3-4
 9. Given the extreme nature of these claims, comment on the challenge that Jesus was either “Lunatic, Liar, or Lord” (per https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lewis%27s_trilemma).

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES

Lesson 26 – Unusual Sayings

If Jesus of Nazareth was God's Son, you would expect what He said to have unusual characteristics in contrast with the prevailing religious attitudes of the day, especially for being a relatively poor Jewish man without formal religious training. After you review the following, explain the unusual teachings in the groups of verses below.

- Under "Topics > J" for "Jesus"
 - [Jesus - The Perfect Preacher \(BT\)](#)

1. Matt 5:43-48; Luke 23:34
2. Matt. 5:21-48
3. Matt. 7:28-29; John 7:45-46
4. John 4:9-10; Mark 16:15; Gal. 3:28-29
5. John 6:15; Matt. 19:17-22; Matt. 23; John 18:36;
6. Luke 10:25-37
7. Matt. 22:15-21
8. Matt. 20:27-28
9. Matt. 24:1-2
10. Matt. 24:35
11. Given the unusual nature of these sayings, would you tend to say they are more consistent with Jesus being a mentally deranged lunatic, a pathological liar, or the Lord?

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES

Lesson 27 – Unusual Deeds

If Jesus of Nazareth were God's Son, you would expect what He did would have unusual characteristics. Review the following:

- Under "Topics > M" for "Miracles"
 - "The Miracles of Jesus (BT)"

1. Define "miracle".
2. What is their primary purpose according to Matt. 9:6; John 3:2; John 5:36; John 10:25?
3. Who claimed Jesus worked miracles according to the following verses?
 - a. John 5:36; John 10:25
 - b. John 3:2; John 20:30-31; Acts 2:22; 2 Pet. 1:16-17
 - c. Matt. 13:54-58; John 9:16
 - d. Matt. 12:22-24; John 10:32-33
4. List at least 7 miracles associated with Jesus.
5. How would many of these be difficult, if not impossible, to fake?
6. In addition to performing miracles, Jesus is credited with fulfilling a number of Old Testament prophecies. List at least 7 (hint: see Lesson 18 question 7).
7. How would many of these be difficult, if not impossible, to fake?
8. Given the unusual nature of these deeds, would you tend to say they are more consistent with Jesus being a mentally deranged lunatic, a pathological liar, or the Lord?

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES

Lesson 28 – Jesus’ Death and Resurrection

At the core of Christianity is the claim that Jesus was resurrected after His crucifixion as proof that He was the Son of God who died on the cross for our sins. Review the following:

- Under “Topics > R” for “Resurrection”
 - “How important is Jesus’ resurrection?”
 - “The Resurrection of Jesus (BT)”
1. Briefly describe Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection (Matt. 27-28; Luke 23-24; John 19-21; 1 Cor. 15:1-8; Acts 1)
 2. Why is the bodily resurrection of Jesus important to Christianity (Matt. 12:39-41; John 2:19; Rom. 1:4; 1 Cor. 15:12-19)
 3. Some skeptics claim the disciples stole Jesus’ body from the tomb (Matt. 27:62-64; Matt. 28:11-15). How would you respond?
 4. Some skeptics claim the disciples merely imagined Jesus’ resurrection or saw a ghost-like apparition (a.k.a. “hallucination theory”). How would you respond?
 5. Some skeptics claim Jesus just passed out on the cross, came to in the tomb, and only claimed to have been resurrected (a.k.a. the “swoon theory”). How would you respond?
 6. Let’s look at those to claimed to be eye-witnesses to these events.
 - a. Who claimed to have visited the tomb and found it empty?
 - b. Who claimed to have seen Jesus alive after his death?
 - c. Where was Jesus claimed to have been seen?
 - d. How long after His death was Jesus claimed to have been seen?
 7. What makes the claims of those who say they saw the resurrected Christ credible?
 8. Given the various explanations above offered for what happened to Jesus’ body, which appears to be the most credible given the available evidence?

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES

Lesson 29 – The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus

Many believe the influence Jesus had on those around Him after His death, especially the conversion of Saul (Paul) to Christianity, represents strong evidence for His resurrection and hence His deity. Review the following:

- Under “Topics > P” for “Paul”
 - “What do we know about Paul?”
 - “Paul’s Great ‘I am’ Statements”
- Acts 7:58-8:3; Acts 9:1-22; Acts 22:1-21; Acts 26:6-11; Gal. 1:11-16; 2 Cor. 11:22-28; Phil. 3:4-6

1. Briefly describe Saul’s background and his alleged conversion experience.
2. What factors made Saul’s conversion to Christianity highly unlikely?
3. Contrast Saul’s behavior after his conversion with his behavior before.
4. Skeptics might claim Saul falsely claimed to have seen Jesus in order to seek the following. How would you respond?
 - a. Wealth (1 Cor. 4:11-12; Acts 20:33-34)?
 - b. Reputation (1 Cor. 4:13)?
 - c. Power (2 Cor. 4:5)?
5. Skeptics might claim Saul merely imagined his encounter with Jesus. How would you respond?
6. What kinds of miracles is Saul/Paul allegedly credited with (hint: skim Acts 13-16, 19-20)? Would it be relatively easy to fake these miracles?
7. Contrast the behavior of Peter and the other apostles before Jesus’ resurrection per Matt. 26:56, 69-75 and John 20:19 with their behavior afterwards per Acts 2-5.
8. According to <https://www.christianity.com/church/church-history/timeline/1-300/whatever-happened-to-the-twelve-apostles-11629558.html>, how willing were the 11 apostles to preach a resurrected Jesus and suffer as a result?
9. Given the influence Jesus had on Saul and the 11 apostles after His death, is it reasonable to believe Jesus was resurrected?

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES

Lesson 30 – Review

With this lesson we will wrap up the third and final major part of our study – the evidence for the Jesus being the Son of God who died for our sins and was miraculously resurrected as ultimate proof.

1. You may encounter claims that Jesus existed, but everything supernatural about Him was a conspiracy fabricated by His disciples after His death as reflected in the New Testament. How would you respond (Lesson 24)?
2. Contrast “who do men say that” Jesus is with who Peter claimed Him to be (Lesson 24)?
3. List three additional claims may by or for Jesus that would suggest He was more than just a good teacher or mere mortal (Lesson 25).
4. Given the extreme nature of these claims, comment on the challenge that Jesus was either “Lunatic, Liar, or Lord” (Lesson 25).
5. List three unusual sayings of Jesus that would suggest He was more than just a normal Jew of His day (Lesson 26).
6. List five miracles allegedly performed by Jesus that would be difficult, if not impossible, to fake (Lesson 27)?
7. List five OT prophecies allegedly fulfilled by Jesus that would be difficult, if not impossible, to fake (Lesson 27)?
8. List three claims for what happened to Jesus’ body after His death. Which best fits the available evidence (Lesson 28)?
9. Contrast Saul of Tarsus’ behavior before and after his conversion to Christianity (Lesson 29).
10. List three claims for what happened to Saul to radically change his behavior. Which best fits the available evidence (Lesson 29)?
11. List three miracles allegedly performed by Saul that would be difficult, if not impossible, to fake (Lesson 29)?
12. Contrast the behavior of Peter and the other apostles before Jesus’ resurrection with their behavior afterwards (Lesson 29).
13. Of all the available evidence for Jesus’ deity presented in this part of our study, which has the greatest weight in your opinion?