



The evidence is on our side; there are a lot of good reasons to believe that what the Bible says is true.

by Olivia Agee

# Why I Believe

Imagine two young men are at your door, tracts in hand, attempting to share their faith. When you ask why you should believe as they do, they respond, “Because the book of Mormon says so.”

Would this statement alone convince you to abandon your current beliefs and join the Mormon faith? Of course not, and neither would the words “the Quran tells me so” or “the writings of Buddha tell me so.” Yet many times we expect the mere words “because the Bible says so” to convert our non-Christian friends. Now, “the Bible tells me so” is extremely important in matters of doctrine and Christian living, but to non-Christians, those words are not convincing as a reason to accept the Bible as truth.

First Peter 3:15 commands us to “always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have” (NIV84). Is this something we know how to do? The evidence is on our side; there are a lot of good reasons to believe that what the Bible says is true. But could

we explain them to someone else? With these questions in mind, the following is a short summary of evidence that I personally find most convincing.

## Problems With Darwinian Evolution

First, I do not find the evidence for life apart from a Creator to be compelling. Darwinian evolution is full of holes, the most notable being the lack of evidence for life originating from non-life (i.e., abiogenesis); for species evolving into other species; and for the human body developing its systems gradually by natural selection (i.e., irreducible complexity), which was Darwin’s own criteria for the failure of his theory.

I have read some of Darwin’s writings and materials from those who support his views, but their evidence does not add up. Slapping the label “the big bang” on the beginning of the universe does not explain what caused it or how anything could happen without a cause. If life emerged from some primordial soup, where did the ingredients for the soup come from?

Additionally, the fossil record does not demonstrate evolution from one species to another. It does indicate changes within species, but no one disputes this. Finches’ beaks can change, but those finches are still finches, not alligators. Peppered moths may change color to blend in with their environment, but they do not turn into owls. They are still moths.

In *The Origin of the Species*, Darwin himself said, “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.” Biochemist Michael Behe, author of *Darwin’s Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution*, provides an excellent case for the existence of such irreducibly complex systems. Behe describes an irreducibly complex system as being “composed of several well-matched, interacting parts that contribute to the basic function, wherein the removal of any one of the parts causes the system to effectively cease functioning.”

He explains: “An everyday example of irreducible complexity is a mousetrap, built of several pieces (platform, hammer, spring and so on). Such a system probably cannot be put together in a Darwinian manner, gradually improving its function. You can’t catch a mouse with just the platform and then catch a few more by adding the spring. All the pieces have to be in place before you catch any mice.” He gives multiple examples of this in his book, including blood clotting and bacterial flagellum, in which the whole system would have to be in place originally for the organism to survive.

## Evidence for the Existence of God

On the other hand, I do find the evidence for the existence of God compelling, especially the moral argument for God’s existence. The moral argument states: (1) If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist. (2) Objective moral values do exist. (3) Therefore, God exists.

This seems logical. If all we are is a cosmic accident, then there are no objective moral laws. Where would they come from? If there is no moral lawgiver, there can be no moral law. All morality would be subjective.

Let’s think for a moment about the difference between objective and subjective. I hate mushrooms. I hate the way they taste, the way they smell, and the way they squish in my mouth if one gets mixed in on my pizza. I say mushrooms are disgusting.

You might like mushrooms. You might think they taste good and smell wonderful. You say mushrooms are delicious. Neither of us is wrong.

The statement “mushrooms are disgusting” is true when I say it because mushrooms are disgusting to me. The statement “mushrooms are delicious” is true when you say it because mushrooms are delicious to you. So the truth of the statement is dependent on the person making the statement; therefore, it is a subjective truth.

An objective truth, on the other

hand, is a statement that is true no matter who says it. The statement “mushrooms are fungi” is an objective truth and is true whether you like them or not. Another example is “Nashville is the capital of Tennessee.” If someone claims that Memphis is the capital, they are objectively wrong.

Hitler’s ethnic cleansing, when he ordered millions of Jews to be brutally murdered, was wrong. Not mushroom wrong; objectively wrong. Even if Hitler had succeeded in winning the war and killing or brainwashing everyone in the world who disagreed with him so that all people thought what he did was wonderful, he would still be wrong.

Remember, if evolution is true and humans are an accident of the universe, then they can have no inherent value. Therefore, killing or harming another human being could not be objectively wrong. Some would simply define morality or good as whatever causes humanity to flourish. However, given evolution, why would this be the case? If evolution were true, why would human flourishing be any more important than mice or bacteria or cancer cells flourishing? If there is no external standard of right and wrong, then my dislike of rape is no different than my dislike of mushrooms.

This way of thinking makes no sense in real-life scenarios. Certain things are simply wrong. Rape is wrong. Torturing someone for fun is wrong. Although I cannot test it

scientifically, it is self-evident to me that human beings do have inherent value and that objective moral laws do exist. Therefore, God’s existence makes more sense than His non-existence.

## Biblical Reliability

The more I study about the way the Bible was copied, translated and preserved, the more I find it to be a



reliable historical document. These ancient texts have been meticulously preserved. The Bible has, by far, the most copies and the earliest manuscripts of any document of antiquity.

We have roughly 15,000 handwritten biblical manuscripts, some fragments and some entire books. Of books from antiquity, the next highest

number of manuscripts is the *Iliad*, of which we have about 600. We only have 7 copies of Plato's writings. Most accepted ancient manuscripts have only about a dozen surviving copies.

We also have the earliest manuscripts of antiquity with undisputed fragments going back to within 150 years of the originals (and there are disputed fragments dated around 25 years from the originals). Compared to other ancient documents, the average age of surviving documents is about 1,000 years removed from their original writings. Aside from biblical texts, the *Iliad* has the oldest surviving documents, and those were copied about 500 years after the original was written.

You may have heard about errors in the manuscripts. However, it might surprise you to discover that the variants are statistically insignificant. The vast majority of these copy errors are spelling or punctuation errors. In fact, there is not a single variant that affects any doctrine of the church that cannot be clarified by other passages.

Historical facts in the Bible turn out to be quite credible. For example, facts about Jesus are noted not just in the Bible but in non-Christian historical texts as well. In fact, Jesus is mentioned in at least 10 different non-biblical sources within 150 years of His death. By way of comparison, that is more surviving sources than we have for Tiberius Caesar, the Roman emperor of that time.

Many people have set out to disprove the Bible and Christianity only to be converted in the process. Author C.S. Lewis and the reporter Lee Strobel come to mind, but one of the most interesting is Sir William Mitchell Ramsay. He was a famous archaeologist who set out to prove the book of Acts was historically inaccurate and the Bible was false. After years of digging and studying, he concluded that Luke should be placed alongside the greatest historians. The fact that biblical writers were so meticulous with their facts lends credibility to their stories.

## Evidence for the Resurrection

Another reason I believe the Bible to be true is the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus. His crucifixion (and, later, His empty tomb) is one of the best attested to facts of ancient history. Virtually every expert on the time period agrees on three basic facts: (1) Jesus was crucified. (2) His tomb was found empty. (3) His disciples at least believed they saw Him alive after His death.

So if Jesus' tomb was empty, where did the body go? Contemporaries of His disciples claimed they stole the body, but if this were true, why were His disciples willing to go to horrific deaths claiming Jesus was resurrected? They had no motive. They did not achieve the money and fame of modern-day televangelists. They received beatings, ridicule and brutal martyrs' deaths. Why would they have gone to their deaths and sent their loved ones to their deaths for something they knew was a lie? This is why virtually no scholar today, including non-Christian scholars, believes that Jesus' disciples stole His body. It just doesn't make any sense when you consider how they lived and died.

By far the most prevailing theory to explain Jesus' disciples' belief in the resurrection is that they all hallucinated His appearances. But this theory does not fit the evidence. For one thing, many of Jesus' appearances were to groups. By definition, a hallucination is something only one person can see. This theory also does not even address what happened to Jesus' body.

Furthermore, it does not adequately explain why those who previously did not believe in Jesus' divinity, such as Saul (a persecutor of the church turned apostle) or James (Jesus' skeptic brother), would have a hallucination and suddenly be willing to give their lives for their belief in the risen Jesus.

Jesus predicted both His death

and His resurrection. Upon studying the evidence, I came to the conclusion that God did raise Him from the dead. While I accept that for you or me resurrection from the dead would be impossible, I see no such restriction if God is involved. After all, you or I could not create a universe either. But if there is a God who can create life from non-life, then why would it be any trouble for Him to put life back into a non-living body?

## The Power of the Gospel to Change Lives

Finally, I have seen that following the Bible and seeking to build a relationship with God has the power to change lives. I have experienced it personally, and I have seen this power in the lives of others. I do not base my belief on experience alone, but the reasons I have given provide me the confidence to trust my experience. I believe that God created the universe, that He reveals Himself and His plan in the Bible, and that He sent His Son to offer salvation to those who would choose to accept it.

What are your reasons for your belief? I urge you to take some time to plan your response. How will you respond to Peter's challenge to be prepared to give an answer? □

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## Recommended Reading

- *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist* by Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek
- *On Guard: Defending Your Faith With Reason and Precision* by William Lane Craig
- *The Questions Christians Hope No One Will Ask: (With Answers)* by Mark Mittelberg
- *The Case for a Creator* by Lee Strobel
- *The Case for Christ* by Lee Strobel