

Introduction

*The Bible does not seek to prove God's existence; it treats it as fact. The Bible's opening words are: 'In the beginning God ...'*¹

It has to be the most frequently discussed issue. From schoolchildren to senior citizens, the argument as to whether or not God exists fuels the flames for heated debate. The Bible does not give space to weighing the arguments. It claims to be the Word of God and so renders unnecessary the discussion. In fact, the Bible teaches that there is a basic dishonesty in the heart of every atheist. 'Only fools say in their hearts, "There is no God"' or, as the thrust of the meaning of the verse implies, the fool has said in his heart, 'No God for me.'² In other words, it is not so much that people *cannot* believe, but that they *will* not. In the New Testament part of the Bible, we read:

*[T]hey can clearly see his invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God. Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. And instead of worshipping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshipped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles. So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired.*³

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God has revealed Himself to the people He has made.

Of course, we will never, as finite beings, be able to understand fully all the qualities and attributes of the infinite God. God is too great for little humans like us to reach, and He is too holy for us to approach. However, God has revealed Himself and reached down to rescue us.

God has revealed Himself to us in many ways, but here are five which are basic:

- Through creation – the material word;
- Through conscience – the unspoken word;
- Through Scripture – the written word;
- Through Christ – the living and loving Word; and
- Through Christian conversion – the experienced word.

In this book we will explore some of these aspects of God's revelation to His world. We will merely scrape the surface of evidence, which in totality is vast. The apostle John wrote at the end of his gospel, 'Jesus also did many other things. If they were all written down, I suppose the whole world could not contain the books that would be written.'⁴ However, the Bible speaks of 'many infallible proofs' concerning Christ and His rising from the dead.⁵ The evidence of the truth of the gospel is overwhelming, and may be experienced by those who sincerely seek God.

On 25 August 1965, I became a Christian. I shall never forget that day. As a teenager I was on holiday in the Lebanon, staying with relatives who were involved in Christian medical work in Beirut and beyond. Their consistent character and caring lives made a deep impression upon me. I began to ask myself questions such as, 'What is a Christian?', 'Why are these people so different from me?' and 'Why do they live for others and I for myself?'

I had been brought up in a home where my parents had taught

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me about God and Jesus and had set a fine example of Christian behaviour. However, as a young person I had drifted away from living life as God would expect. My life and language spoke of a deep-down restlessness and rebellion. But I knew that there was more to life than living for the moment.

After a game of tennis, an uncle of mine began to chat through the gospel message. Using a pocket New Testament he explained step by step my position before God, and God's method of bringing me into a relationship with Himself. He showed me in the Bible Romans 3:23 and asked me to read aloud the words: 'for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God'. I was well aware of wrong within. My attitude to God, my parents and others was far from what I knew to be right. God's holiness and my sinfulness were a reality to me.

We turned to Romans 6:23, and again I read aloud: 'For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.' My uncle explained how sin not only separated me from God now, but ultimately would condemn me to hell. Then he explained to me the significance of Jesus' death on the cross. God's great rescue mission was bound up in Jesus Christ coming to earth. God Himself had stooped to enter our world in the person of Christ. Again, we looked in Romans. This time it was chapter 5 verse 8: 'But God demonstrates his own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.'

Graphically, he explained that God had placed my sin on Jesus. He was the substitute dying in my place, paying for my sin. I had never understood that before. I felt that if God loved me enough for Christ to die for me, then the least I should do was trust Him.

Jesus Christ not only died, but rose again. Things began to fall into place in my mind. Jesus had died to offer me forgiveness, and three days later had risen. He was therefore able not only to

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forgive me, but give me His power over sin and death. God, by His Holy Spirit, could come and live in my life.

Simply, sitting on a log in the mountains of Lebanon, overlooking Beirut, I prayed, placing my trust in Jesus. I thanked Him for dying for me, and asked Him to forgive me and make me His forever. There was no flash in the sky – but neither was this a flash in the pan!

God became real to me and totally changed my aims, ambitions and affections. This was the beginning of my personal relationship with Him, which has grown deeper as the years have passed. It was also the start of finding out about who God is and what He has done.

We read in the Bible that there is only one God.⁶ The one God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As a human being is only one, yet is body, soul and spirit,⁷ so God who made human beings in His own image is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.⁸ It is interesting to note that at the very beginning of time God said, ‘Let *us* make human beings in *our* image.’⁹

Christians describe God as ‘the Trinity’: one God who is in three persons, and three persons who are one. Significantly, the Bible, which speaks of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, ascribes to each attributes that are only God’s. From the Bible we also discover many other attributes of His. We learn that God is:

- Spirit.¹⁰ So we must worship Him in spirit and truth.
- Personal.¹¹ He is interested in each and every one of us.
- Omnipotent, or all-powerful.¹² There is nothing beyond His power.
- Omnipresent, or present everywhere.¹³ There is nowhere He cannot be present.
- Omniscient, or all-knowing.¹⁴ There is nothing He cannot know.

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- Wise.¹⁵ No one exceeds Him in wisdom.
- Infinite.¹⁶ He has no boundaries.
- Eternal.¹⁷ He has no beginning or end, and lives forever.
- Invisible.¹⁸ He cannot be seen by us.
- Unchangeable or immutable.¹⁹ He does not, and will not, change and so is totally reliable and consistent in all that He says and does.
- Unequalled.²⁰ No one, including the devil, is His equal in any way whatsoever.
- Holy.²¹ He is completely pure and clean, spotless and holy, and to be in His presence is to be overwhelmed with awe.
- Just.²² He is always fair.
- Patient.²³ He is slow to anger and quick to forgive.
- Merciful, or forgiving.²⁴ It is part of His nature to show grace, mercy and forgiveness to those who ask Him.
- Angry.²⁵ God's righteousness is such that with good cause, He is angry over the injustices, ungodliness and unrighteousness in the world.
- Loving.²⁶ God's very essence is love, and so He is everlastingly loving.
- Everlasting.²⁷ He has no end, and never becomes weary!
- True.²⁸ There is no deceit in Him.

And so we could go on! But, perhaps these at present seem distant to you. After all, they are just a list.

Everyone wants to find out why they exist. The three great questions we ask are, 'Where have I come from?', 'What am I doing?' and 'Where am I going?' Modern day fascination with the supernatural not only reveals despair about the state of the present world, but an awareness of another dimension to our existence.

God does not want us to flounder in the dark. He is the one who made us, and has devised means by which we can be brought

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into a relationship with Him. This is the Christian message. It was summarized by the apostle Paul in the Bible, when he wrote: 'I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said.'²⁹

Is this the greatest hoax ever to inflict itself on the history of the world? Or, is it in reality God's truth? I trust that reading the chapters of this book will help answer the vital question, why you should believe.

Roger Carswell
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NOTES

1. Genesis 1:1
2. Psalm 14:1
3. Romans 1:20–24
4. John 21:25
5. Acts 1:3, NKJV
6. Deuteronomy 6:4
7. 1 Thessalonians 5:23
8. 1 John 5:7, NKJV
9. Genesis 1:26 (The italics are mine, emphasizing the plurality of personality within the Godhead.)
10. John 4:24
11. John 17:1–3
12. Revelation 19:6
13. Psalm 139:7–12
14. 1 John 3:20

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15. Acts 15:18
16. 1 Kings 8:27
17. Isaiah 57:15
18. John 1:18
19. Numbers 23:19
20. Isaiah 40:13–25
21. Revelation 4:8
22. Psalm 89:14
23. Exodus 34:6–7
24. Lamentations 3:22–23
25. Deuteronomy 32:22
26. 1 John 4:8,16
27. Habakkuk 3:6
28. Revelation 15:3
29. 1 Corinthians 15:3–4