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INTRODUCTION

IF THE BIBLE IS TRUE

If the Bible is truly the Word of God, the implications are unspeakably wonderful, and at the same time utterly terrifying. This is because of its offer of Heaven and its warning of Hell. As believers, we know that the Bible is God's Word, but how effectively can we convince others of that truth?

In this book we will look at the case for the Scriptures being divinely inspired, by looking at empirical evidence to back up the claim—what could be considered to be ten of the top scientific facts in the Bible.

The challenge to those the Bible calls the “unsaved” is that they owe it to themselves (and those they love) to examine the facts to see if the Bible is truly God's message to humanity. Is the gospel Heaven-sent? In an unstable world that is growing darker

by the day, here is something to rest our hopes on and relieve our fears—both for this life and for the life to come. The word *gospel* means “good news,” but it’s only good news if we see ourselves as we really are in the sight of God.

Years ago, Mark Spence, who works for our ministry, taught a weekly Bible study with about twenty women attending. It was wonderful that they had such a hunger for the Word of God. At one of the studies Mark announced some really good news. He had become engaged. The next week no one showed up at his study. It was understandable that they weren’t too happy, because Mark was tall, dark, and handy around the house with tools. What may be good news to some people may not be good news to others.

So it is with the gospel. It is God’s offer of everlasting life to dying humanity, but most don’t see that as being good news at all. Not even slightly. Not even if we have solid evidence to back up its claim. If you’re a true-blue skeptic, you can easily negate the evidence simply by not accepting it. You could say that these “solid facts” were added to the Bible after the fact, or that the author never intended for his words to be interpreted in such a way. Or you may say that establishing the existence of God doesn’t prove that this God is the Christian one. That leaves the claims of the gospel going nowhere.

The eloquent and likable atheist Christopher Hitchens, now deceased, once said,

But if you’ve established deism you’ve got all your work still ahead of you to be a theist. You have to show that this god, this person who went to all this trouble with physics, cares

who you sleep with or how or whether you should eat pig or not or what day you should observe as holy.¹

Good point. How do we move from believing that Something created everything to the thought that this Something cares about you committing adultery? The answer isn't difficult, as we will look at later in this book. As Christians, we often point to prophecy as evidence that the message of the Bible is divine. The Scriptures predict the future in many places, and because mankind can't even predict tomorrow's weather accurately, we maintain that the words of the Bible must be written by the hand of God.

As a hard-nosed skeptic, you could maintain that if we fire 100 arrows into the air, one of them will eventually hit some target, and that that's what happens with prophecy. If there are enough predictions, one or two are bound to get it right. That's true in one sense. Think of the famed prophecies of Nostradamus. His ramblings were so nebulous about supposed events that would take place, you can look at almost anything in history and find a convincing target, and it will sound credible to the simple.

This is especially the case with those who don't know their Bibles. Nostradamus secretly read the Scriptures, stole some of its prophetic words and made them his own, giving him credibility with those who are ignorant of what Scripture says. And so his prophecies have become big business for publishers and filmmakers who have a huge financial incentive to convince the world to believe them.

However, there is much more at stake than money when it comes to an unbelieving world accepting the message of the

Bible. It is no big deal whether you believe Nostradamus; there are no consequences for not believing his prophecies. But there are dire consequences for not believing what the Bible says. This is because genuine belief always produces some sort of reaction. A hand grenade tossed at your feet will cause you to run, if you *believe* that the pin has been pulled and you're in danger. If you don't believe, you will probably just stand where you are. If you and I truly believe what the Bible says about Heaven and Hell, we will react accordingly. For those who think belief is for weak people, one ticking time-bomb tossed at the their feet will show their thoughtlessness in seconds.

YOUR MIDLIFE CRISIS

Millions have what is erroneously called a “mid-life crisis.” It is incorrectly labeled, because nobody knows the time of the middle of their life. The only way to pinpoint that would be to know the date of your death. If you know that you will die at age eighty-six, when you turn forty-three you can then say that you are having a midlife crisis, if indeed you are distressed about life.

What most are having would be better termed a *realization of their mortality*. They come to the realization that they are dying, and the crisis is that they believe there's nothing they can do about it. There is an ever-darkening shadow over them as the Grim Reaper inevitably closes in.

But because Christians *have* done something about it, they don't have any crisis. Believers don't resign themselves *to* the inevitability of death, they resign *from* it. We overcome death in Christ. Until this good news is realized and embraced, the world

will have an ever-increasing and terrifying crisis until death seizes upon them. That's why we must plead with the lost as if tonight their soul is going to be required of them.

If you're not a believer, it may surprise you to know that my agenda isn't to convince you that the Bible is God-inspired. It's rather to convince you to believe one relatively small part of the Bible—the gospel. That “good news.”

The gospel is the simple but profound message that Jesus Christ suffered and died for our sins and rose again on the third day. The Scriptures make it even more simple by saying that Jesus “has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Timothy 1:10).

To any thinking unbeliever, that statement by itself is ridiculous. People die at the rate of 150,000 every 24 hours. It is senseless, naïve, and annoyingly stupid to think that Jesus has abolished death. That is, until we understand the *nature* of death. Scripture tells us that it's a wage (see Romans 6:23). Death here on earth is the first payout. We *earn* capital punishment for our sins. That's a bitter pill to swallow for a world that embraces humanism—a philosophical worldview that paints mankind as being unworthy of such terrible condemnation. Hard to believe though it may be, death is the ultimate convincing agent that God is deadly serious about sin. Actually it's more than just a convincing agent. It is the arresting officer that will drag us before the Judge of the Universe to stand trial for violating His moral Law, and those who are found guilty will find themselves in God's prison . . . a terrible place called Hell, and there's no parole.

Yet, there is something that precedes the gospel and helps it make sense, and it's something far more convincing than scien-

tific or prophetic facts. This is why I have included a number of true-life gospel presentations in this book. To illustrate the importance of this, let me ask you an easy question. When a blind man boarded a crowded bus, someone immediately stood and gave up his seat. Here's the question: Was that a good thing to do? The answer seems obvious. Of course it was! It was kind and thoughtful. Yet it wasn't; it was morally wrong and foolish. It was so wrong, when his boss heard that he had given up his seat, he was fired. And rightly so. This is because he was the *driver*.

Knowing that he was the driver quickly changes our perspective. This is because we were given information that reshaped our thinking.

That's the reason I have also included the "something" that precedes the gospel presentation. It contains vital information that, if believed, will radically change our minds about the gospel. Instead of it being irrelevant and naïve foolishness, it becomes the greatest news you could ever hope to hear.

And even though I've included these, my confidence isn't confined to the information you will read. It is in the God who gave us the gospel. In John 16:8, when Jesus spoke of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, He said,

“And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment . . .”

The intent of a good prosecutor is to convict a guilty criminal. When a sinner is convicted of his sins, understands that he has failed to reach the moral standard expected of him, and is therefore under judgment for his crimes, he's ready for the good news of the gospel. The conviction of the Holy Spirit convinces

us that we are sinners. That was my experience, and the experience of millions, and is what brings us to the cross. This is because sin, righteousness, and judgment are *moral* issues rather than intellectual ones. The Holy Spirit didn't come to *intellectually* convince us that the Bible is God's Word. That should be the *result* of conversion, not the *means*. No one comes to the Savior without a knowledge of sin. If we don't think we need to be saved from our sins, we don't think we need the Savior.

The scientific facts in this book serve as a light for the intellect, but as mentioned, this light can easily be extinguished. However, the real-life witnessing sessions at the end of each chapter contain light for the conscience. And *that* light isn't so easy to extinguish. Though the conscience may be society-shaped, it is independent and God-given. It can be dulled, but it has a way of flickering back to life and shining so brightly that it has driven many to drink, and some to suicide.

My hope is that the light it brings drives you to the Savior, and in doing so shows you that Jesus Christ has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. That's good news for those who value their life. *Really* good news.

ANOTHER REASON

There is another important reason that I've included the real-life gospel conversations throughout this publication. The purpose of the Church on earth is to fulfill the Great Commission (see Matthew 28:18–20). Jesus suffered and died so that sinners could be saved from death and Hell—that's the message we are to take to this dying world. However, according to a recent Barna Group

survey, 51 percent of the contemporary Church have never even *heard* of the Great Commission, another 6 percent weren't sure what it was, and 25 percent said they couldn't recall exactly what it was meant.² That left only 17 percent of the Church knowing what the Great Commission meant—even fewer actually obeying the command to go into all the world and make disciples, and even fewer knowing how to do this biblically.

In his book *The Coming Revival*, Bill Bright reported that “only two percent of believers in America regularly share their faith in Christ with others.”³ My hope is that you will find the witnessing encounters inspiring and encouraging and that you will then want to share your faith with others. But, if you are normal, you may have a small problem.

YOUR LINGUAL FRENULUM

Do you know what it means to be “tongue tied”? It's when someone is unable to speak because of shyness or embarrassment. If you are shy or embarrassed when it comes to sharing your faith, let me share a fascinating story that points to a solution.

In April 2017, a six-year-old boy from Texas visited a pediatric dentist for work on his teeth. For most of his life he was unable to speak clearly. His speech was so unintelligible that the only ones who could understand what he was saying were his parents.

During the dental procedure the dentist noticed that the boy was tongue-tied, a condition in which his lingual frenulum—the band of tissue under his tongue—was shorter than normal, keeping him from moving it freely. She ran to the waiting room to ask

his parents if she could snip it. They gave permission, and after a ten-second procedure, the boy immediately spoke clearly.

We see a similar incident in Mark 7:32–35 when Jesus prayed for a man whom the Bible says “was deaf and had an impediment in his speech.” Jesus said, “Be opened,” and the Scriptures say, “Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly.” His ears were opened, then he spoke clearly.

If you’re tongue-tied when it comes to the gospel, let me perform a quick and simple operation that will almost certainly fix the problem. The problem is that your conscience is falling short of what it should be doing. This may be a little painful, but what I’m going to say should free it up, so that it does its God-given duty. If your ears are open to what I’m about to say, you will begin to speak clearly, and if that happens it will change your life forever.

Here goes:

Charles Spurgeon said, “Have you no wish for others to be saved? Then you are not saved yourself. Be sure of that.” You’re more concerned with your own temporary embarrassment than you are with the fact that people are going to Hell for eternity. How then can you say that the love of God dwells within you? If you’re not deeply concerned for the salvation of the lost, I’m deeply concerned for yours.

There you are. I hope that helps. You should be able to speak clearly—if you have a mind to do so. And as you begin to move in that direction, those witnessing encounters will help you to have confidence.

Now that we understand why witnessing conversations are included in this book, let's look at a few scientific facts in the Bible. In chapters 1 through 10, we'll consider ten of the top scientific facts recorded in Scripture. To help you recall the points that are covered, each of these chapters includes "Questions to Consider" for you to ponder (or to discuss if you're reading in a group) before going on to the next chapter.

THE EARTH'S FREE-FLOAT IN SPACE

Do you ever think about the fact that we are living on a massive round rock that is suspended in space? Of course, that is being a little simplistic. While we *are* hanging in space, we are spinning in a circle and moving through this vast universe. With the advent of space travel, we have even more answers, but the answers only bring up more questions. How does our planet spin, why does it spin, what made it spin, how does it move through space, when did all this begin, what caused the earth to hang in space, what is space, and where did *that* come from?

Secular science prides itself on its answer-seeking as to *how*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *why*. But it stops for some reason at *who*. But why omit *who*? If truth is our goal, we must follow wherever it goes, even if it leads to an uncomfortable *Who*.

THE VERY LARGE ANIMAL

At a time in history when it was believed by some that the earth sat on a large animal (around 1500 BC), the Bible spoke of the earth's free float in space:

He stretches out the north over empty space; He hangs the earth on nothing. (Job 26:7)

There we see the *Who* in the double mention of the word "He." According to the Bible, the earth's spin, its movement through space, and its free float weren't an accident. It was purposefully *placed* by God.

I'm going to repeat myself a number of times in this publication, by being aghast to a point of mind-blown numbness at the power of God. How on earth could He have created this earth, suspended it in the almost nothingness of space, spinning it like a top, from the top to the bottom? How could He have then flicked it like a massive marble and set it in motion through space, in a circuit? But that's what happened: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). Sometimes we are so focused on the *when* of the "beginning" that we overlook the *how* or the *Who*. He hung the earth on nothing! Our normally most applicable "WOW!" falls woefully short.

Science didn't discover that the earth hangs on nothing until 1650 AD, 3,000 years later:

Discovered in 1475 by Copernicus, astronomers found that the earth hangs literally on nothing, or is free floating in space. Other cultures from around the world at this time,

when examined show the way that human cultures thought about astronomy and how the nature of the earth worked by man's understanding. Hindus believed that the earth was held on the back of four elephants standing on the back of a cosmic turtle, Akupara. In Greek mythology, it was believed that the god Atlas held the earth upon his back, written by the poet Hesiod. The Norse mythology exclaims the earth, along with 8 other worlds, are held up by a giant ash tree, Yggdrasil.⁴

In the 1680s, Sir Isaac Newton discovered that the earth was suspended in outer space, being held in orbit by the gravitational force of the sun. It was not until recent times that man has proved Newton's theory by way of space flights.⁵

THE UNBELIEVER

The simplicity of "He hangs the earth on nothing" isn't so readily embraced by the understandable bias of a hard-nosed skeptic. He doesn't want this to be evidence of divine inspiration, because it is the ultimate of wet blankets on his deliriously pleasurable sins. So he will search his fertile imagination (and the Scriptures) for evidence to the contrary, and there he will find enough rope to hang himself. Here is one skeptic imagining Job's thoughts:

Firstly, the odds of just *guessing* this fact correctly are pretty good, since either the earth hangs on something, or it does not. You have one chance in two of guessing correctly. And the odds are even better when we consider that Job could observe that:

- 1) There was nothing visibly tethering the earth to the sky,
- 2) The sun and moon did not hang on anything, and
- 3) The sun appeared to go down in the West and rise in the East, and nothing impeded its path (suggesting there was nothing underneath the earth, just as there was nothing under the sun or the moon).

Given this, such a revelation isn't impossible or even unreasonable.⁶

It may be reasonable for an atheist—someone who believes the scientific impossibility that nothing created everything. Such a revelation also isn't impossible for someone so gullible as to believe that mankind evolved from primates when there isn't a lone bone to back up the belief. Neither can it pass the scientific method of being tested or observed.

But it is utterly unreasonable for any rational human being who sees the effects of gravity on a leaf, or even a tiny feather, to believe for a second that a lowly rock—let alone this massive earth—could hang lighter than a feather on nothing. Such a belief would be ridiculous, in the truest sense of the word.

The skeptic then turns to the pages of Scripture:

Secondly, if it turned out the earth *wasn't* floating, but was supported in some way, there are numerous verses that could've been used to suggest God always knew that the earth was supported:

“He shakes the earth from its place and makes its pillars tremble.” —Job 9:6

“Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . . Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened?”
—Job 38:4–6

“The pillars of the earth are the LORD’s, and he hath set the world upon them.” —1 Samuel 2:8

“When the earth and all its people quake, it is I who hold its pillars firm.” —Psalm 75:3

Since there are only two possibilities (floating or supported), and both are suggested in the Bible, the Bible has a 100% chance of getting this fact correct (so long as we play down the losing answer).

With the benefit of hindsight (and a little bias), today’s believer can now assert that *all* the verses about pillars *must* be metaphorical, while the single verse about hanging on nothing *must* be interpreted literally.⁷

Typically, the skeptic thinks that his thoughts are exhaustive. He offers only two explanations:

1. Physical pillars, or,
2. The free float in space.

But there is at least one other explanation, given over three hundred years ago. John Gill’s commentary (originally published in 1766) gives a third explanation, and clearly the correct one for the use of the word *pillars*:

The earth has its foundations on which it is laid, and its pillars by which it is supported; but these are no other than

the power and providence of God; otherwise the earth is hung upon nothing, in the open circumambient air: and that God can and does do this may well be thought, and to do all the above things in providence and grace, related in the preceding verses; in the support, and for the proof of which, this is observed. Figuratively, the pillars of the earth may design the princes of the world, the supreme rulers of it, and civil magistrates, who are sometimes called corner-stones, and the shields of the earth (Zechariah 10:4; Psalm 47:9), and so pillars, because they are the means of cementing, supporting, and protecting the people of the earth, and of preserving their peace and property. Likewise good men may be meant in a figurative sense, who, as they are the salt of the earth, are the pillars of it, for whose sake it was made, and is supported, and continued in being; the church is the pillar and ground of truth; and every good man is a pillar in the house of God, and especially ministers of the Gospel.⁸

Here are the verses that refer to men as metaphoric pillars:

“He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.”
(Revelation 3:12)

“But if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” (1 Timothy 3:15)

“And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.” (Galatians 2:9)

“Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn out her seven pillars” (Proverbs 9:1)

WAIT A MINUTE

Weight Watchers and a thousand other weighty organizations want us to watch our weight. In one sense, they exist because they work alongside the junk food and fast food folks. They feed off each other. We pay one to put it on, and we pay the other to take it off. Our intake is their income. Bible verses such as “And put a knife to your throat if you are a man given to appetite” (Proverbs 23:2), if obeyed, would put both out of business.

The dictionary tells us that *weight* is “a body’s relative mass or the quantity of matter contained by it, giving rise to a downward force; the heaviness of a person or thing.” But our *real* concern, more than our weight, is our quantity of fat. If we looked lean and were rippled with muscle, it probably wouldn’t worry us too much how much we weighed, because we would look good.

Have you ever thought about how much this earth weighs? Think of the weight of all the oceans, the massive mountains around the earth, the elephants, the whales, and all the other animals, plus almost seven billion people, many of whom are overweight. It's pretty heavy:

So what does Earth weigh? Earth's weight is 5.972 sextillion (1,000 trillion) metric tons... That's 5,972,000,000,000,000,000,000 tons and gaining.⁹

Such measurements are beyond our comprehension. But what we *can* know is that the Bible says God created every atom that holds every drop of water in the massive oceans, the magnificent mountains, shaped it all into one big ball, and hung it on nothing in space. These are heavy thoughts.

EARTH'S MAKEUP

Do you ever think about what makes up the earth? Its outer crust is made of what we often call *soil*, or the dust of the earth. Many unbelievers believe we came from dust—star dust—because our bodies are made up of the same elements that are in the soil. According to Physics.org, “We are all made of stardust.”¹⁰

For decades, science popularizers have said humans are made of stardust, and now, a new survey of 150,000 stars shows just how true the old cliché is: Humans and their galaxy have about 97 percent of the same kind of atoms, and the elements of life appear to be more prevalent toward the galaxy's center, the research found. The crucial elements for

life on Earth, often called the building blocks of life, can be abbreviated as CHNOPS: carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen, phosphorus and sulfur. For the first time, astronomers have cataloged the abundance of these elements in a huge sample of stars.¹¹

But we already knew that we are from dust, because thousands of years ago the book of Genesis says that God made man from the dust of the earth:

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. (Genesis 2:7)

And we're not the only life that comes from the soil. All of our food comes from the soil. All plants, fruit trees, etc., obtain their life from the earth as they grow in its crust, and all animals eat food that traces itself back to the soil. We trample dirt beneath our feet, but without it, we wouldn't be alive.

And so this great big, incredibly heavy ball of dirt floats in space, seemingly lighter than a feather, because God put it there. Do you believe that? If you don't, would you let the evidence take you there?

Richard Dawkins became the most famous atheist of our time, but before he evolved into that role, there was another atheist who was held in high esteem by the world. His name was Antony Flew, an English philosopher who taught at universities such as Oxford. According to Wikipedia:

Belonging to the analytic and evidentialist schools of thought, Flew was most notable for his work related to

the philosophy of religion . . . For much of his career Flew was known as a strong advocate of atheism, arguing that one should presuppose atheism until empirical evidence of a God surfaces. He also criticized the idea of life after death, the free will defense to the problem of evil, and the meaningfulness of the concept of God.

However, in 2004 he changed his position, to acknowledge the existence of an Intelligent Creator of the universe, shocking his fellow colleagues and atheists . . . He stated that in keeping his lifelong commitment to go where the evidence leads, he now believed in the existence of a God.¹²

It was the discovery of DNA that stopped Flew in his atheist tracks. Asked if recent work on the origin of life pointed to a creative Intelligence, this is what he said:

Yes, I now think it does . . . almost entirely because of the DNA investigations. What I think the DNA material has done is that it has shown, by the almost unbelievable complexity of the arrangements which are needed to produce (life), that intelligence must have been involved in getting these extraordinarily diverse elements to work together.¹³

In his book *There Is a God*, Flew later explained how he arrived at his conclusion:

Science spotlights three dimensions of nature that point to God. The first is the fact that nature obeys laws. The second

is the dimension of life, of intelligently organized and purpose-driven beings, which arose from matter. The third is the very existence of nature. But it is not science alone that has guided me. I have also been helped by a renewed study of the classical philosophical arguments.¹⁴

One would think that his much publicized conversion to theism would have led others to rethink their views and brought an end to the foolishness of atheism. But it didn't. This is because most who profess atheism are not like Flew. They stumble at *Who*. There is good reason for that.

PAPER MONEY

Did you know that American currency is made of cotton? It feels like paper, but it's not:

According to the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, US paper currency is made up of 75% cotton and 25% linen. That is, there are three-fourths of a pound of cotton in each pound of dollar bills. This same source also informs us that there are 454 bills in a pound of currency. During Fiscal Year 2009, over six billion bills of all denominations were printed in the United States, consuming 21,476 bales of cotton. The total dollar value of these bills was two hundred and nineteen billion dollars, or \$21,290.55 per pound of cotton.¹⁵

Let's surmise that a skeptic doesn't believe money is made of cotton, so he says the cotton folks are all lying for some reason. He then points to a government organization to back up his claim.

It's an article from the US Treasury's Bureau of Engraving and Printing that is headlined "How Money is Made—Paper and Ink":

The paper and ink used in the production of U.S. paper currency is as distinct as its design. The paper, with the exception of \$100 paper, comes to the BEP in brown paper-wrapped loads of 20,000 sheets (two pallets of 10,000 sheets). \$100 paper comes to the BEP in loads of 16,000 sheets (two pallets of 8,000). Each of these sheets is tracked and accounted for as it passes through the production process.¹⁶

He then has you count how many times the word "paper" is used, saying, "Paper money is made of paper, not cotton." You check out the article, but further down you read:

The ordinary paper that consumers use throughout their everyday life such as newspapers, books, cereal boxes, etc., is primarily made of wood pulp; however, United States currency paper is composed of 75 percent cotton and 25 percent linen.¹⁷

But he replies that he doesn't believe what the government says because it's in cahoots with the cotton industry. You therefore point to an independent news source:

NEW YORK (CNNMoney)—Sure, packs of T-shirts and socks are getting expensive because of skyrocketing cotton prices. Guess what else is made of cotton? The dollar bill in your wallet.

In 2010, the cost of making one note jumped 50% from what it cost the government in 2008.

The government produced 6.4 billion new currency notes last year. Each one cost 9.6 cents to produce, including the cost of paper and printing.

In 2008, it only cost 6.4 cents a note, a tiny bit more than it did in 2007, according to the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

With the price of raw cotton at a 140-year high, things could get worse.¹⁸

He says that it's fake news. So you have a dilemma. All the evidence you present to him is cut off at the pass. Nothing can or will convince him if he refuses to have some sort of faith. If he doesn't believe what's presented, there is no case for him to be considering.

There is also another problem: he may be right. The government *could* be lying—a lie that has been believed by the media and others. It may come out in years later that billions of dollars has been pocketed over the years by corrupt government officials, who perpetuated the lie that money is made of expensive cotton, when it was really made with a cheap but strong papyrus reed.

So when it comes down to the truth, we don't truly know if American paper money *really* is made of cotton. Even if we have it professionally analyzed, we have to have faith in those results. We can only believe it, and that belief may change with further knowledge.

Everything we think is true falls into the same category. Many things that were believed two hundred years ago have been proven to be false, and our present scientifically believed conclusions may be laughed at as being ludicrous two centuries from now. And yet truth itself doesn't change. Whatever makes up paper money remains the same, despite our surmising.

Antony Flew, who believed he had discovered the truth, stated:

I have been denounced by my fellow unbelievers for stupidity, betrayal, senility and everything you could think of. And none of them have read a word that I have ever written.¹⁹

Unlike Flew, most atheists aren't interested in following where the truth leads. No matter what we tell them about the existence of God, they have the option of choice. They can always come back with an argument. That our creation had a Creator is as obvious as a building is proof of the builder and a painting is proof of the painter. But if the skeptic has a mind to, he can play semantics. He can cut everything off through unbelief. He can say that he doesn't believe the building is proof of a builder, nor a painting is evidence of the painter—and so, for us, Reason Street becomes a dead end.

If someone has ever listened to the song of a bird, felt the warmth of the sun, viewed the blueness of the sky, smelled the fragrance of a rose, held a puppy in his arms, looked into the eyes of a newborn baby, and said to himself that it all happened accidentally because of an explosion of nothing in space—caused by nothing—then I must concede that the Bible is right when it

says that person is a fool (see Psalm 14:1). Atheism is a form of willful insanity.

FISHING WITH MY DOG

For years I have wanted to buy the world's biggest breed of dog. I'm talking about a Great Dane *plus*. This was because I caught a glimpse of their potential to reach the lost. I had noticed that when someone had a huge dog, strangers would approach the owner and start a conversation. If I had a massive canine it would simply be a matter of getting to know the person who approached me, and then transitioning to the gospel.

I had already created a gospel tract that included trivia on dogs and tips on how to easily train them. But I hesitated to buy a huge dog for a number of reasons: 1) He may eat my existing smallish dog, Sam. 2) Our backyard is the size of a postage stamp, so he would have trouble turning around. 3) It would cost an arm and a big leg to feed. 4) There are big daily repercussions when you give a big dog big food. 5) Vet bills would be off the charts.

But one Saturday as Sam ran alongside my bike, I noticed that he couldn't run the distance he did as a puppy. I scooped him up and carried him with one arm, but he was so heavy that by the time we got home, my arm was screaming with pain. So I decided to make a contraption for him to sit on in front of me—between my arms as I rode the bike.

The platform I made wasn't too stable, so I decided to call a local garage to ask if they did welding. The owner looked at what I had made and gave me some great advice to make it stable. His name was Nasser. He was a Muslim, but he let me briefly share

the gospel with him. Then he said the whole thing was pretty confusing because he was listening to the radio and heard a Catholic priest say that he was into Buddhism.

The first time I went for a ride with Sam, I stopped in to see Nasser, thanked him for his advice, and gave him one of my books. He seemed really pleased.

The next day I went for a ride on the bike, but this time I put a pair of sunglasses on Sam that matched the pair I was wearing. Suddenly, strangers began pointing and smiling, and yelling out, “Cute dog!” When I stopped for a pat and chat, it was like we were old friends. I realized that I didn’t need a big dog. *Cute* had the same effect.

FIRST WITNESSING SESSION

When I saw three men in their early twenties sitting on a park bench smoking marijuana, I rode right up to them and begin talking. It wasn’t even slightly awkward. This was because they were smiling at my dog wearing sunglasses. Sam was a wonderfully effective icebreaker. They even offered me a puff of marijuana. I said that I didn’t need it, and had a great time witnessing to them for about fifteen minutes.

Some time later, Sam paved the way for me to approach a young man who was sitting in a local park reading a book. His name was Alex, and he was an atheist who was honest enough to admit that if he faced the Ten Commandments on Judgment Day he would be justly damned in Hell. (We’ll see later why I asked him this.)

Then I asked a probing question I always ask the lost. I said, "Does that concern you?" A second later we talked over each other. Just as he replied, "No," I said, "Think before you answer, because I'm going to question you about your answer." He did think, and immediately changed his mind to, "Yes, it does, actually." The thought of going to Hell terrified him. But this was a good fear because it was a fear of *real* danger.

The prospect of dropping 10,000 feet from a plane is a good fear that sends us running to a parachute, and the prospect of passing through death without the Savior is terrifying for those who think. Those who don't think will stay in their sins and have eternity to regret not manning-up to their sins and its fearful consequences.

In the movie *After Earth*, actor Will Smith's character said, "Fear is not real. The only place that fear can exist is in our thoughts of the future. It is a product of our imagination, causing us to fear things that do not at present and may not ever exist. Do not misunderstand me, danger is very real, but fear is a choice."

In one sense that is correct. But if we don't have faith in God, we have nothing with which to replace fear. The psalmist said, "The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (Psalm 118:6). "I will not fear" is a choice. The psalmist chooses not to fear, but he has that choice only because of his faith in God.

Having no fear may be valid when talking about achieving goals in life, or working the stock market, or having faith in yourself when making decisions. But for the unsaved there is an inner fear over which they have no control without faith in God—namely, the fear of death. Death is the future's promise, whether we are rich or poor, famous or unknown, wise or a fool.

It is the great leveler and a Goliath that feeds its victims to the birds. Reject God, and that fear produces unending torment.

Making sinners tremble in fear at the thought of facing God is something believers should never fear. It is the greatest favor we could ever do for those the Bible calls “lost.” The result of Paul’s faithful preaching to Felix the governor was that “Felix was afraid” (Acts 24:25), and that fear came because the apostle spoke the truth in love. If we love the unsaved, then we must tell them that it is a “fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31).

That’s what I did with this humble atheist, and the result of his humility was that he let me pray with him. If we want to see sinners come to the cross we must not be afraid to make them afraid, and the way we deal with a fear of doing so is to have faith in God. He is our helper as we share the gospel, and it’s ultimately His smile we seek.

MY WIFE IS MISSING

There is an interesting story about a man whose wife disappeared:

Husband: My wife is missing. She went shopping yesterday and hasn’t come home!

Officer: Age?

Husband: I’m not sure. Somewhere between 50 and 60. We don’t do birthdays.

Officer: Height?

Husband: I’m not sure. A little over five feet tall.

Officer: Weight?

Husband: Don't know. Not slim, not really heavy.

Officer: Color of eyes?

Husband: Sort of brown, I think. Never really noticed.

Officer: Color of hair?

Husband: Changes a couple times a year. Maybe dark brown now. I can't remember.

Officer: What was she wearing?

Husband: Could have been pants, or maybe a skirt or shorts. I don't know exactly.

Officer: What kind of car was she in?

Husband: She went in my truck.

Officer: What kind of truck was it?

Husband: A 2017, manufactured September 16th, pearl white Ram Limited 4X4 with 6.4l Hemi V8 engine ordered with the Ram Box bar and fridge option, LED lighting, backup and front camera, moose-hide leather heated and cooled seats, climate-controlled air-conditioning. It has a custom matching white cover for the bed, Weather Tech floor mats, trailing package with gold hitch, sunroof, DVD, with full GPS navigation, satellite radio, Cobra 75 WX ST 40-channel CB radio, six cup holders, 3 USB ports, and 4 power outlets. I added special alloy wheels and off-road Toyo tires. It has custom retracting running boards and under-glow wheel well lighting.

(At this point the husband started choking up.)

Officer: Take it easy, sir. We'll find your truck.

Of course, that was just a joke. But it *does* make a valid point. We focus on things that we care about. This is the motivation for us to study on how to reach the lost. Love cares.

ANOTHER ENCOUNTER

Sam and I were out on the bike. I had prayed for divine encounters yet had spoken to only one person, and he didn't want to talk. He was very polite, but he was working out on the basketball court, so I didn't pressure him.

About a minute later I saw a gentleman walking toward me, and I gave him a coin containing the Ten Commandments and the gospel.²⁰ When his reaction was positive, I asked him if he was a Christian. Sye said he was, "... sort of." I questioned as to what he meant, and he responded that things weren't going too well. I asked him, "Isn't that the time that we should be driven to our knees?" He agreed.

When I asked him if he was a good person he said that he was, and so we went through the Ten Commandments, into the cross and his need to repent and trust Jesus. He is very thankful for some literature and a Subway gift card I gave him. Just as I was about to say goodbye, another gentleman walked up and asked if he could take a photograph of Sam wearing sunglasses.

I said goodbye to Sye and went through exactly the same approach with this next gentleman, whose name was Dustin. Dustin was in his mid-twenties, wearing cool sunglasses, but his face was terribly disfigured by some sort of physical virus. It looked as though the virus had exploded and almost blocked out one side of his face. My heart went out to him. If I get as much

as a pimple on my nose I'm horrified. Despite this man's scars, he was as happy as a lark. His positive demeanor gave me a sense of admiration for him.

Dustin said that he was a good person and as we went through the Commandments, he held on to his self-righteousness. So I explained that the confusion comes with the definition of the word "good." It means moral perfection—in thought, word, and deed. When I shared the gospel with him, he was very appreciative and thankful.

It always amazes me that, even though I had gone through the same thing word-for-word with two different gentleman within just ten minutes, I didn't tire for a second when sharing such an incredibly wonderful message. It was as though it was my first time.

A few days later, I saw a young man sitting in a grassy area at a park. I rode up to him, gave him a Ten Commandments coin, and asked if he ever thought about the afterlife. He did but not much. I said it was probably because he was young. He nodded in agreement.

When I asked him if he was going to Heaven when he died—was he a good person?—he was a little uncomfortable, but politely let me speak. After taking him through the gospel, I thanked him for listening to me, and when I gave him a Subway gift card he said, "Wow!" His attitude completely changed, and he became thankful that I'd talked to him about his eternal salvation.

A minute or so later as I was riding the bike, a woman stopped me. She raved about Sam and the fact that he was wearing sunglasses. She said that she was a Christian, but I detected

that something wasn't right. So I gave her a CD and encouraged her to watch our Living Waters YouTube videos.

A few feet in front of us, an elderly gentleman had a metal detector and was digging into the park grass, searching for coins. So I gave him a Ten Commandments coin. He said that he was a Christian, but that he wasn't born again. I told him that the difference between being born again and believing in God is like the difference between wearing a parachute and just believing in one when 10,000 feet up in a plane. I said that when we jump we will see the difference. Then I told him it was essential that he was born again. He seemed a little agitated, so I asked if he was comfortable talking about spiritual things. He said he was, but a little later said that he didn't discuss religion and politics. I laughed and said, "I bet you talk about politics but you just want me to leave," so I gave him a Subway gift card, and as I did, I was able to share the gospel with him in a 30-second presentation. Then I smiled and said, "Well, I got it in." Thankfully, he smiled back.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1 How does mentioning the earth's free float in space give the Bible credibility?
- 2 Explain how the earth could hang on nothing.
- 3 Try to justify the logic of believing that the earth sits on something.
- 4 Are you brought to wordless worship at the thought of the power of God? If so, why?

- ⑤ How should we live our lives when we understand the power of God?
- ⑥ Name a good fear to have. Why is it good?
- ⑦ Read Acts 24:24,25 and explain what it was that made Felix afraid.