

Defending Christmas In An Unbelieving World

A Model For Christian Apologetics

By

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Chapter One

Christian Apologetics

How does Christian **apologetics** work? How can Christians **defend** Truths of the Faith with people who don't believe as they do? Here are notes from a recent Bible study about how to defend Christmas – specifically, the VirginBirth – to unbelievers. The principles of Faith Defense used in this study will work for defending any doctrine of Scripture with unbelieving friends and family members.

Job 1 – Preach, Teach and Defend

“And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations.” Mark 13:10 (*keruchthenai* – preached, proclaimed, heralded)

“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’” Matthew 28:18-20, (*matheteusate* – disciple [imperative, command verb]) (*baptizoun* – dip) (*didaskontes* – teach)

“I am appointed for the defense of the gospel.” Philippians 1:16 (*apologian*)

“... always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.” 1 Peter 3:15 (*apologian*)

How do we accomplish Job 1?

Four Pillars of Personal Ministry – 2 Corinthians 5

1) **Please God** – “Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.” 2 Corinthians 5:9

2) **Persuade People** – “Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.” 2 Corinthians 5:11

What is the “terror” of the Lord? – “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.” Romans 1:18-20 ... *anapologetous* – without defense

3) **Reconcile Souls** – “Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.” 2 Corinthians 5:18

4) **Represent Christ** – “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us.” 2 Corinthians 5:20

Here are some of the charges (*kategoria*) against Christmas and the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ:

1. Jesus is a myth ... He never existed
2. Jesus was just a man, not born of a virgin – nothing special about Him.
3. Jesus was a revolutionary, but died trying to change the world. He failed.
4. Jesus was a good man and teacher, but nothing more.
5. Jesus was one of the world’s great prophets, but never claimed to be God. He would never have wanted His followers to start a religion using His Name.

6. Jesus was a healing prophet, but he was not crucified and did not rise from the dead.

7. Jesus was a false prophet and was rightly put to death.

8. Jesus was delusional, thinking He was God.

9. Jesus was just an illusion from Heaven to point us toward God.

10. Jesus is a creation, the product of relations between a god and his goddess wife who used to be people from another world.

11. Jesus studied in India as a teenager and returned to Israel to become a guru to Jews. His teachings were based on those of Buddha and were frowned upon by Jewish leaders, leading to Christ's death. Upon death, Jesus became enlightened and merged with the Godhead.

12. Jesus is one of many gods who have visited earth.

13. Jesus is Lord and Savior, but not God (Jehovah) incarnate, not a God-man but inferior to God, not part of a Godhead. Jesus was a created spirit being, God's only begotten son, sent to earth as a perfect human. His sacrifice became the "ransom" price to redeem mankind from sin and death. After Christ's resurrection by God, He was "exalted" to a level higher than angels.

14. Jesus was a religious teacher who faked His death because of fierce opposition to His teaching. Jesus escaped, married and spent the rest of His life quietly raising His children.

15. Jesus is a manifestation of God, who is a combination of a series of personages who reflect the attributes of the divine into the human world for the progress and advancement of human morals and civilization.

16. Jesus was the son of a Roman soldier who had an affair with Mary. Joseph divorced Mary for her adultery and Jesus grew up in a world that would have nothing to do with children who were born without fathers. Jesus did what He could to enlighten people to be

more compassionate to the poor and downtrodden, but was eventually eliminated by Jewish and Roman leaders in Israel.

17. Jesus is a memory implanted in the human race by space aliens.

How should we defend the story of Christmas against those who attack it? By using Paul's Four Pillars of Personal Ministry: Please God, Persuade people, Reconcile souls, and Represent Christ.

How do we do that?

- 1) Know Christ and His Message (Knowledge)
- 2) Grow in Christ daily (Experience)
- 3) Develop a "strategy" for persuading unbelievers
- 4) Persuade unbelievers (Show Christ)

Our objective for this study is to "build confidence through evidence and persuade through evidence that will build confidence."

Chapter Two

The Christmas Story

What do we “know” about **THE Christmas Story**?

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.’ So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ‘Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which is translated, ‘God with us.’ Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.” Matthew 1: 18-25

“Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, ‘Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!’ But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and

of His kingdom there will be no end.” Luke 1:26-33

“And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.” Luke 2:1-7

“Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: ‘Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!” Luke 2:8-14

“So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.’ And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.” Luke 2:15-20

“And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called JESUS, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, ‘Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD’), and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, ‘A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.’” Luke 2:21-24

“And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: ‘Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.’ And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, ‘Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.’” Luke 2:25-40

“Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, ‘Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.’ When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. So they said to him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: ‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among

the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.’ Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, ‘Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also.’ When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.” Matthew 2:1-12

“Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, ‘Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.’ When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, ‘Out of Egypt I called My Son.’ Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: ‘A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted, Because they are no more.’” Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, ‘Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child’s life are dead.’ Then he arose, took the young

Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, 'He shall be called a Nazarene.' Matthew 2:13-23

That's what we "know" as Christians – and that's good – but a large number of people in the world do not believe as we do. So, how do we defend the Truth about Christmas to an unbelieving world?

1. Pray that God will prepare their hearts to hear and believe
2. Engage them in conversations about what they believe. Be as kind to them as you would want someone to be kind to you. Look for common ground that opens the opportunity for deeper and longer conversations.
3. Ask them questions to understand their beliefs and to challenge their beliefs. Disagree where appropriate, but don't be disagreeable – which is inappropriate.
4. Share what you believe and why – back it up with facts
5. Pray that God will take the seeds of the Truth you plant and make them grow into saving faith
6. Lead your neighbors, friends and family to saving faith in Jesus Christ as God provides

Chapter Three

Defense Strategies

First, let me remind you that I'm not defending what the world believes about Christmas. This has nothing to do with Santa Claus and reindeer, lights, trees, stockings hung by the chimney with care, elves and presents. My defense of Christmas is the Truth that God's Eternal Son, Who is equal with God, made Himself of no reputation, took on the form of a bondservant, and came to earth in the likeness of men. Jesus, the Son of God, became flesh through the miracle of the Virgin Birth. That's what I'm defending.

What group of unbelievers do you think is the most challenging to talk to about Christmas? Most Christians tell me that atheists and agnostics are the most challenging for them. I understand that as a former atheist.

Atheists and many agnostics, humanists, and secularists believe Jesus is a myth and the Bible is filled with legends and lies. So, how do you have a meaningful conversation with them about Christmas?

You might ask them a question? Did you know that many non-Christians who lived during the 1st and 2nd centuries AD wrote about someone named Jesus Christ who lived and died and was followed by people who believed He was God? Did you know that some of those unbelievers are thought to be credible historians?

Depending on their answer, you might share this information with them.

1. Cornelius Tacitus (55-120 AD), known as the greatest historian of ancient Rome, was not a Christian. Here's what he wrote about Jesus.

“Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for

their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular.”

2. Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus (69-140 AD) was another well-known Roman historian who lived during the 1st and 2nd centuries AD and was not a Christian. Here’s what he wrote about Jesus.

“He banished from Rome all the Jews, who were continually making disturbances at the instigation of one Chrestus.”

3. Flavius Josephus (37-97 AD), a Jewish historian of the 1st century AD who became court historian for Roman Emperor Vespasian, was not a Christian. Here’s what he wrote about Jesus.

“Now there arose at this time a source of further trouble in one Jesus, a wise man who performed surprising works, a teacher of men who gladly welcome strange things. He led away many Jews, and also many of the Gentiles. He was the so-called Christ. When Pilate, acting on information supplied by the chief men around us, condemned him to the cross, those who had attached themselves to him at first did not cease to cause trouble, and the tribe of Christians, which has taken this name from him is not extinct even today.”

4. The Jewish Talmud was compiled between 70 and 200 AD. Here’s what it states about Jesus.

“On the eve of the Passover Yeshu was hanged. For forty days before the execution took place, a herald went forth and cried, ‘He is going forth to be stoned because he has practised sorcery and enticed Israel to apostacy. Anyone who can say anything in his favour, let him come forward and plead on his behalf.’ But since nothing was brought forward in his favour he

was hanged on the eve of the Passover.”

5. Lucian was a second century Greek satirist who was not a Christian. Here’s what he wrote about Jesus.

“The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day—the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account ... You see, these misguided creatures start with the general conviction that they are immortal for all time, which explains the contempt of death and voluntary self-devotion which are so common among them; and then it was impressed on them by their original lawgiver that they are all brothers, from the moment that they are converted, and deny the gods of Greece, and worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws. All this they take quite on faith, with the result that they despise all worldly goods alike, regarding them merely as common property.”

6. Pliny the Younger (61-112 AD) was the provincial governor of Pontus and Bithynia. He wrote a letter to the Roman Emperor Trajan about how to deal with the Christians who worship Christ instead of Trajan. Pliny was not a Christian. Here’s what he wrote about Jesus.

“Those who denied that they were or had been Christians, when they invoked the gods in words dictated by me, offered prayer with incense and wine to your image, which I had ordered to be brought for this purpose together with statues of the gods, and moreover cursed Christ — none of which those who are really Christians, it is said, can be forced to do — these I thought should be discharged. Others named by the informer declared that they were Christians, but then denied it, asserting that they had been but had ceased to be, some three years before, others many years, some as much as twenty-five years. They all worshiped your image and the statues of the gods, and cursed Christ.”

7. Mara Bar-Serapion of Syria, who was not a Christian, wrote a letter from prison sometime between 70 and 200 AD to motivate his son to emulate wise teachers of the past.

“What advantage did the Athenians gain from putting Socrates to death? Famine and plague came upon them as a judgment for their crime. What advantage did the men of Samos gain from burying Pythagoras? In a moment their land was covered with sand. What advantage did the Jews gain from executing their wise king? It was just after that that their kingdom was abolished. God justly avenged these three wise men: the Athenians died of hunger; the Samians were overwhelmed by the sea; the Jews, ruined and driven from their land, live in complete dispersion. But Socrates did not die for good; he lived on in the teaching of Plato. Pythagoras did not die for good; he lived on in the statue of Hera. Nor did the wise king die for good; he lived on in the teaching which he had given.”

There are 17 known non-Christian sources who lived within 50-150 years of Jesus' Life. 12 of them wrote about His death and half of them wrote that people believed Jesus was deity. If you piece together what the 10 primary *non-Christian* references say about Jesus, we learn this:

1. Jesus lived during the time of Tiberius Caesar.
2. Jesus lived a virtuous life.
3. Jesus was a wonder-worker.
4. Jesus had a brother named James.
5. Jesus was acclaimed to be the Messiah.
6. Jesus was crucified under Pontius Pilate.
7. Jesus was crucified on the eve of the Jewish Passover.
8. Darkness and an earthquake occurred when He died.
9. Jesus' disciples believed He rose from the dead.
10. Jesus' disciples were willing to die for their belief.

11. Christianity spread rapidly as far as Rome.

12. Jesus' disciples denied the Roman gods and worshiped Christ as God.

In light of these non-Christian references, the theory that Jesus never existed is clearly unreasonable. In fact, the writings of these non-Christians actually support the primary claims of the New Testament.

Using extra-biblical sources as part of proving that Jesus is a real person is often "pre-evangelistic." It helps seekers and even skeptics see that some non-Christians who lived close to the time of the Lord's earthly ministry knew about Jesus and did not deny His existence. However, leading an unbeliever to faith in Christ needs two things to make that happen: the **Spirit** of God and the **Word** of God.

Chapter Four

Truth Is The Best Defense

Before we move to the next charge, let's look at one of the most powerful defenses you have against any charge people make against Truths in the Bible? I call it "The 5 Word Question Defense."

- Why do you believe that?
- Why do you think that?
- Why would you say that?
- Where did you hear that?
- Where did you read that?
- Do you think that's true?

Five-word questions are short, easy to remember, easy to understand, and help you discover more about the reasoning (or lack of reasoning) on the part of the unbeliever. Winning arguments is not why we defend the faith – winning souls for Christ is why.

Defense Against "Jesus Just A Man – Not Born Of A Virgin" Charge

- Question – Why do you say that?
- Answer – Because a virgin birth is physically impossible
- Question – How do you know that?
- Answer – Because it's never happened before?
- Question – Are you sure about that?
- Answer – Absolutely sure

Once you have established what they believe and why, you can move to the next phase – presenting and defending specific Truths in Scripture. We'll use the Virgin Birth as one example of defending a biblical Truth.

- Truth** – The mother of Jesus Christ said she was a virgin when Jesus was born and her husband Joseph said it was true.

- Charge** – That's not true. The Bible is just a bunch of legends and lies filled with errors and contradictions.

- Defense** – That's not true. The Bible is the most credible Book of antiquity and can be trusted.

- Charge** – Prove it.

- Defense** – Thank you, I will. (You now have permission to present the Gospel)

The New Testament is a credible, believable, provable document of antiquity. We have accurate copies of the original documents that were written during the 1st century and those documents are true.

1) Accurate copies – the New Testament has more manuscripts, earlier manuscripts, and more abundantly supported manuscripts than any other ancient document.

Almost 5,700 hand-written Greek manuscripts of the New Testament

More than 19,000 manuscripts in other languages

Many of these are complete New Testaments, some are individual Books of the New Testament, some are pages of New Testament, some are fragments.

The closest contender for manuscript evidence in the ancient world is Homer's Iliad – with 643 manuscripts.

More than 24,000 ancient manuscripts for the New Testament – 643

for the Iliad, 200 for the great Greek orator Demosthenes, and only 8 for the famous Greek historian Herodotus.

2) Earlier copies – the New Testament has manuscripts that were written soon after the originals. Nine disputed fragments that date from 50-70 AD were found with the Dead Sea Scrolls. The earliest undisputed manuscript is a segment of John 18 known as the John Rylands fragment. It was found in Egypt and has been dated by some scholars between 117-138 AD, but may be even earlier. John wrote his Gospel account in Asia Minor, but the Rylands fragment was discovered in Egypt – a demonstration of the powerful reach of the New Testament within a short time after the writing of the original. The time gap between original and 1st surviving copies is about 25 years. The time gap for Homer's Iliad from original to 1st surviving copies is 500 years. The gap for the earliest copies of Demosthenes is 1,400 years, as are those for Herodotus.

25 years for the New Testament – 500 years for the Iliad, 1,400 years for Demosthenes and Herodotus.

3) More abundantly supported copies – the Roman emperor Diocletian tried to destroy Christianity during the great persecution of 303-311 AD. The Roman army destroyed hundreds of thousands of Christian manuscripts, but even if they had been successful, the early fathers of the Church quoted from the New Testament 36,289 times in their own writings. Those quotes would be enough to reconstruct the New Testament except for just 11 verses.

Here's the process we're using -

- Charge** – Jesus was just a man, not born of a virgin – nothing special about Him.

- Defense** – Mary was a virgin when Jesus was born. The Birth of Jesus Christ was a miracle.

- Evidence** – Testimony of Mary, Joseph, Gabriel, and God.

You and I can and should use the New Testament with great confidence in defending what it teaches about Jesus Christ. THE Christmas Story found in Matthew and Luke is the TRUE story of Christmas.

Here's another example:

Charge- The Hebrew word for "virgin" in Isaiah 7:14 means "maiden" or "young girl," not "virgin."

•**Question** – Why do you believe that?

•**Answer** – That's what my rabbi says.

•**Defense** – The Hebrew word "*almah*" was often understood to mean a "virgin."

•**Evidence** – Hebrew usage, translation of the Greek LXX by Hebrew scholars, and Matthew and Luke's translations.

The Hebrew word "*almah*" is a feminine noun used for a girl who has reached puberty but is still under the shielding protection of her family. Usage in the ancient Jewish culture assumed the young girl was a virgin.

The 70 Jewish scholars who translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek more than 200 years before Christ was born chose the Greek word "*parthenos*" to translate the Hebrew "*almah*." "*Parthenos*" almost always means "virgin."

Matthew quoted Isaiah 7:14 in his Gospel account and used the word "*parthenos*" — "So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: '*Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,*' which is translated, 'God with us.'" (Matthew 1:22-23)

Luke used the word "*parthenos*" twice when referring to Mary — "Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of

Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.” (Luke 1:26-27)

The “sign” God gave Israel was a miracle – the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ!

Chapter Five

Apologia - Mormonism

What is your toughest challenge in presenting the Gospel? Atheist, Agnostic, Mormon, Jehovah's Witness, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Scientology? We want to be able to help all of them believe the Gospel and be saved. During the next several chapters we'll see how different world religions look at the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ and how we can share the Truth with them. All of the quotes about their beliefs are from their own writings.

Charge – Mormons

“Christ was begotten by an immortal Father in the same way that mortal men are begotten by mortal fathers” ... “There is nothing figurative about his paternity; he was begotten, conceived and born in the normal and natural course of events” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1966, p. 547 & 742, Bruce McConkie, LDS First Council of the Seventy)

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“Our Father in heaven, according to the Prophet, had a Father, and since there has been a condition of this kind through all eternity, each Father had a Father” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:47, LDS President Joseph Fielding Smith)

“God the Father is a perfected, glorified, holy *Man*, an immortal personage. And Christ was born into the world as the *literal Son* of this Holy Being; he was born in the same personal, real, and literal sense that any mortal son is born to a mortal father.

There is nothing figurative about his paternity, *he was begotten, conceived, and born in the normal and natural course of events*, for he is the son of God, and that designation means what it says” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1979, p. 742, under Son of God).

“The birth of the Savior was a natural occurrence unattended with any degree of mysticism, and the Father God was the literal parent of Jesus in the flesh as well as in the spirit” (*Religious Truths Defined*, p. 44, quoting LDS President Joseph Fielding Smith)

“The birth of the Saviour was as natural as are the births of our children; it was the result of natural action. He partook of flesh and blood – was begotten of his Father, as we were of our fathers” (*Journal of Discourses*, v.8, p. 115, LDS President Brigham Young)

“Now, remember from this time forth, and for ever, that Jesus Christ was not begotten by the Holy Ghost” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, p. 51, LDS President Brigham Young)

“The first spirit born to our heavenly parents was Jesus Christ (see D&C 93:21). He is thus our elder brother (see Discourses of Brigham Young, p. 26). Our spirits resemble our heavenly parents although they have resurrected bodies. We have inherited the potential to develop their divine qualities. If we choose to do so, we can become perfect, just as they are” (*Gospel Principles*, 1978, p. 9)

“Jesus became a God and reached His great state of understanding through consistent effort and continuous obedience to all the Gospel truths and universal laws” (*The Gospel Through the Ages*, General Authority, Milton R. Hunter, p. 15).

Mormon doctrine teaches that God the Father “has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s” (*Doctrine & Covenants* 130:22, LDS scripture)

“The appointment of Jesus to be the Savior of the world was contested by one of the other sons of God. He was called Lucifer, son of the morning. Haughty, ambitious, and covetous of power and glory, this spirit-brother of Jesus desperately tried to become the Savior of mankind” (*The Gospel Through the Ages*, 1945, p. 15)

How do we respond to those charges? Begin by asking a question – **Why do you believe that?**

Their answer may be - That’s what our Scriptures teach?

Ask another question - **What Scriptures do you mean?**

Mormons believe in the Bible (their take on it since they believe the Christian Bible has been corrupted), the *Book of Mormon*, *Doctrines and Covenants*, and the *Pearl of Great Price*. It helps to know where they get their information so you can respond knowingly to it.

Mormons believe that every “god” came from a father and mother who used be flesh and blood on other worlds and became gods. When a man does the right things in his life, he can become a god and get his own universe. Then, he can have spirit children through sexual relations with his wife (a goddess) and start his own world.

Mormons believe that God the Father is a man of flesh and blood and that Jesus was His first spirit child. Lucifer was second. Mormons believe God wanted to save His spiritual children being born on earth, so He had sex with the virgin Mary and she gave birth to Jesus. Mormons do not believe in the same Jesus Christians do, so don’t be fooled when they say they do.

Once you’ve asked enough questions to understand their thinking about, begin to make your defense (*apologia*).

Defense – The birth of Jesus Christ was a miracle. God the Father did not have sexual relations with the virgin Mary. She would not have been a virgin if a flesh and blood man had sex with her. God the Father does not have a body and is not flesh and blood. He was never a man. God is Eternal and Self-Existent. The Holy Spirit came upon the young virgin Mary and the power of the Highest overshadowed her and she became pregnant, as a virgin, with the Eternal/Self-Existent Son of God, Who is equal with God the Father and God the Spirit.

Evidence – The evidence is clear in the Bible, but remember that Mormons are taught the Christian Bible has been corrupted. They believe it is fallible. They believe the *Book of Mormon*, *Doctrines and Covenants*, and the *Pearl of Great Price* are infallible. They also believe the words spoken by LDS presidents are also infallible. As you present evidence for the Eternal Nature and Essence of God the Father and God the Son, you will most likely have to demonstrate to them that their scriptures are wrong.

As we've seen in other GraceLife Ebook studies, the Christian Bible we read today contains the same Hebrew Scriptures Jesus quoted and the same Greek Scriptures 1st and 2nd century Christians used in their preaching and teaching. The argument that the current Christian Bible has been corrupted does not hold water historically or textually.

Because of the reliability of Christian Scriptures, the Mormon scriptures are greatly suspect. The Apostle Paul wrote Christians in the region of Galatia that *“even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.”* (Galatians 1:8-9)

This is strong language from the Apostle and for good reason. The Holy Spirit Who inspired Paul's writings knew that Satan would appear as an angel to men in the future and give them a different gospel to preach than the Gospel Paul had preached. Paul's Letter to the Galatians is an important prophetic document to support the fact

that the *Book of Mormon* is not from God, and if the *Book of Mormon* is not true, neither are *Doctrines and Covenants* and the *Pearl of Great Price* since they are based on the *Book of Mormon*. That also means what a sitting LDS president says is not the infallible Word of God.

You cannot say that Paul's Gospel and a different gospel are the same gospel. What Paul taught about God the Father and Jesus Christ is much different than what Joseph Smith, Brigham Young and other Mormons taught about God and Jesus. A big part of your evidence is proving that point to a Mormon or someone considering Mormonism as a belief system.

This is where we start taking the top off Mormonism. Mormons need to see the error of their scriptures in order to be open to the Truth of God's Word. You can do that by comparing Christian teaching with Mormon teaching.

Brigham Young is quoted in the *Journal of Discourses* as saying, "How many Gods there are, I do not know. But there never was a time when there were not Gods."

What does Christianity teach about that?

- *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!"*
Deuteronomy 6:4
- *"Before Me there was no God formed, Nor shall there be after Me."* Isaiah 43:10
- *"I am the LORD, and there is no other; There is no God besides Me."* Isaiah 45:5

That seems pretty clear. God says He is the only God and there is no God besides Him. He also says there was no God "formed," which is the Hebrew word *yasar*. It means "created, fashioned, made." God says that no one created Him.

Joseph Smith is quoted as saying, "God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man ... I say, if you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in a form-like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man." (Teaching of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 1973 ed. p. 346) In *Doctrines and Covenants* 130:22 we read, "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also."

What does the Bible say about this?

John the Apostle wrote that "*No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.*" (John 1:18) In speaking about God the Father, Jesus said that people had "*neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form.*" (John 5:37) When speaking about Himself, Jesus told people, "*Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father.*" Why couldn't anyone else see God the Father? Because He is not a man and not made of flesh and bone. God is Spirit.

- "*For I am God, and not man, The Holy One in your midst.*" Hosea 11:9
- "*God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*" John 4:24
- "*For a spirit does not have flesh and bones.*" Luke 24:39

Mormons call themselves Christians, Latter Day Saints, but they are not Christians. Their teachings about God the Father and Jesus Christ are not the same as the teachings of the Bible. That's because Mormons depend on the teachings of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young instead of the teachings of Moses, Jesus, Peter and Paul. Here are more false claims about God the Father by Mormon scriptures.

- "God used to be a man on another planet." (Mormon Doctrine, p. 321; Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, vol. 7, p. 333)
- "God resides near a star called Kolob." (Mormon Doctrine,

p. 428; *Pearl of Great Price*, p. 34-35)

The Christian defense is that there is no mention in the Bible of God living near a star called Kolob and having been a man on another planet. There are scores of evidentiary Words in the Bible; here are some of them.

- *“Therefore know this day, and consider it in your heart, that the LORD Himself is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other.”* Deuteronomy 4:39
- *“But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You.”* 1 Kings 8:27
- *“But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases.”* Psalm 115:3
- *“But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne.”* Matthew 5:34

Mormons are confused about the issue of “gods.” That’s because of the teachings of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young and other Mormon leaders.

- “There are many gods.” (Mormon Doctrine, p. 163)
- “And they (the Gods) said: Let there be light: and there was light.” (*Book of Abraham* 4:3)
- “God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens!!! ... We have imagined that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea and take away the veil, so that you may see.” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 345)

The only “veil” is the one the teachings of Joseph Smith throws over fellow Mormons. They believe that people can become gods through their efforts and good works, but that’s not what the Bible teaches.

Here is the Christian defense.

- *“For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.”* 1 Corinthians 8:5-6
- *“Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.”* Psalm 90:2
- *“Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting.”* Psalm 93:2
- *“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.”* Romans 1:20
- *“Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”* 1 Timothy 1:7

Mormons believe that God the Father had sex with His goddess wife and she became the mother of all spiritual children in our universe.

“Implicit in the Christian verity that all men are the spirit children of an Eternal Father is the usually unspoken truth that they are also the offspring of an Eternal Mother. An exalted and glorified Man of Holiness (Moses 6:57) could not be a Father unless a Woman of like glory, perfection, and holiness was associated with him as a Mother” (Mormon Doctrine, 1977 ed., p. 516)

The Christian defense is that God created man and woman in Their (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) image. He made the man from the dust of the earth and the woman from the side of the man. There is nothing in the Bible that would lead anyone to even suspect that God the Father had a wife in Heaven and that they had spiritual children through sexual relations.

- *“Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” Genesis 1:26*
- *“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 the LORD God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him’ ... And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.’” Genesis 2:8, 21-23*

The teachings of Mormonism fail miserably in the Light of the Bible. That means Joseph Smith being a true prophet of God also fails miserably. Use God’s Word as your primary evidence against the teachings of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and all other leaders of Mormonism.

Our prayer is that God will give you the opportunity to share His Truth with your Mormon friends and family members and that they will be saved for eternity.

Chapter Six

Apologia – Jehovah’s Witnesses

Here are some of the beliefs **Jehovah’s Witnesses** have about the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ. How would you answer their charges?

“Jehovah’s only-begotten Son willingly left heaven and came down to earth to live as a human. But you may wonder, ‘How was it possible for a spirit creature to be born as a human?’ To accomplish this, Jehovah performed a miracle. He transferred the life of his firstborn Son from heaven to the womb of a Jewish virgin named Mary. No human father was involved. Mary thus gave birth to a perfect son and named him Jesus.”
(*Where Did Jesus Come From?* Watchtower.org)

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“Jesus is Jehovah’s most precious Son—and for good reason. He is called ‘the firstborn of all creation,’ for he was God’s first creation.’ There is something else that makes this Son special. He is the “only-begotten Son.’ This means that Jesus is the only one directly created by God. Jesus is also the only one whom God used when He created all other things. Then, too, Jesus is called ‘the Word.’ This tells us that he spoke for God, no doubt delivering messages and instructions to the Father’s other sons, both spirit and human.” (*Where Did Jesus Come From?*, Watchtower.org)

“The Bible teaches that Jesus lived in heaven before he came to earth. Micah prophesied that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem and also said that His origin was ‘from early times.’ On many occasions, Jesus himself said that he lived in heaven before being born as a human. As a spirit creature in heaven, Jesus had a special relationship with Jehovah.” (*Where Did Jesus Come From?*, Watchtower.org)

“At times, individuals are known by more than one name. For example, the patriarch Jacob is also known as Israel, and the apostle Peter, as Simon. Likewise, the Bible indicates that Michael is another name for Jesus Christ, before and after his life on earth ... God’s Word refers to Michael “‘the archangel.’ This term means “chief angel.” Notice that Michael is called *the* archangel. This suggests that there is only one such angel. In fact, the term ‘archangel’ occurs in the Bible only in the singular, never in the plural. Moreover, Jesus is linked with the office of archangel. Regarding the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Thessalonians 4:16 states: ‘The Lord himself will descend from heaven with a commanding call, with an archangel’s voice.’ Thus the voice of Jesus is described as being that of an archangel. This scripture therefore suggests that Jesus himself is the archangel Michael.” (*Who Is Michael the Archangel?*, Watchtower.org)

Question: Why do you believe that?

It’s important in talking with Jehovah’s Witnesses that you get to the heart of why they believe what they believe and show them the error of their thinking. As with the Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses call themselves Christians, but they are not. Their beliefs about Jesus Christ are not the same as historical Christianity. Jehovah’s Witness is a non-Christian cult.

It’s helpful to understand what’s going on in the mind of a Jehovah’s Witness when he or she knocks on your door or when you meet them on the street. They are under intense pressure from their leaders to perform their duty of “publishing” their message through “field service,” which includes proselytizing door-to-door and teaching

potential converts to become Jehovah's Witnesses. They have to give a report of their field service every month to Kingdom Hall leaders in addition to attending weekly meetings and semi-annual assemblies where they're told to spend even more time in field service. Jehovah's Witnesses are taught that Jehovah will destroy human governments at any moment in the Battle of Armageddon, then establish the millennial reign of Christ on earth. They feel even more pressure because they're taught that Jehovah will reward or punish them based on how well they performed their field service. That's in addition to being faithful in following all the rules of the Watchtower Society and attending Kingdom Hall meetings regularly.

If you think you've never met a Jehovah's Witness, think again. Has anyone ever come to your door and given you a free copy of a small magazine called "The Watchtower?" I remember Jehovah's Witnesses coming to my house when I was a boy. My father talked with them for a short time, then they left. I've learned that JWs do not want to talk with someone who believes the Bible. They are looking for people with little knowledge about Scripture.

When you ask a Jehovah's Witness why they believe what they do, they'll often say it's "what the Bible teaches". Ask them to show you a copy of their Bible. They will be carrying *The New World Translation* – the official Jehovah's Witness Bible. The NWT was translated by five Jehovah's Witness leaders during the middle of the 20th century. Only one of them had any background in Bible languages and that was just a couple of years of Greek. None of the other members of the "translation" group had any training in Hebrew or Greek. What they did was twist the Word of God to fit Jehovah's Witness beliefs.

One of the biggest differences between Christianity and Jehovah's Witness is beliefs about Jesus Christ. That's one of the major reasons Christians call JW a cult. Christianity teaches that Jesus Christ is the Eternal Son of God, Co-Equal with God. Jehovah's Witnesses teach that Jesus is a created being and not co-equal with God. The NWT translators changed the wording of many Bible verses in order to support their distorted beliefs about Jesus.

For example, the NWT changed John 1:1 from “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,” to “In [the] beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god.” Anyone who can read Koine Greek knows that the literal translation is, “In [the] beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word.” The Apostle John clearly wrote that the *logos* (Word) and *theos* (God) were the same person. Jesus is God, not “a god.”

The New World Translation also changed the clear teaching of Scripture about Christ indwelling the believer. One example is the translation of Galatians 1:16. The Christian Bible reads, “to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles.” The New World Translation reads, “to reveal his Son in connection with me, that I might declare the good news about him to the nations.” The literal translation from the Greek is, “to reveal the Son of him in me.”

Another example is Romans 8:10. The Christian Bible reads, “And if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.” The NWT reads, “But if Christ is in union with YOU, the body indeed is dead on account of sin, but the spirit is life on account of righteousness.” The literal translation in the Greek is, “But if Christ [is] in you, the on one hand body [is] dead because of sin, the on the other spirit [is] life because of righteousness.” You’ll find similar differences with John 15:4-5, John 17:26, Colossians 1:27, and 2 Corinthians 13:5.

A big part of witnessing to Jehovah’s Witnesses is dealing with the fact that the *New World Translation* is inaccurate. That’s not an easy task because of how they’ve been taught and trained. That’s also why they often walk away from talking with Christians who are prepared to defend the Faith.

If you find a discussion about translations not to be helpful at the time, you might table that for a few minutes and ask this question. “Who is Jesus Christ?” Their answer, if they’re honest about what they believe, will be, “Michael the archangel.” Your next question could be, “show me where the Bible says Michael is Jesus.” They won’t be able to do that because it’s not in the Bible – not even in

their NWT.

The *New World Translation* mentions Michael five times – as “one of the foremost princes” (Daniel 10:13), “the prince of people” (Daniel 10:21), “the great prince who is standing in behalf of the sons of people” (Daniel 12:1), the archangel who “had a difference with the devil and was disputing about Moses body” (June 9), and when “Michael and his angels battled with the dragon” (Revelation 12:7). No doubt that Michael is a great and powerful angel, but not identical with Jesus Christ.

Most Christians I’ve talked with about witnessing to Jehovah’s Witnesses say they do one of two things when they meet a JW: (1) tell them they are wrong and going to hell, or (2) tell them they’re not interested in talking. I think there is a third way.

Jehovah’s Witnesses are at your house asking to come inside to talk with you, so the conversation is usually polite at the beginning. They want you to believe what they believe and you want them to believe what you believe. If you treat them respectfully, they will usually treat you respectfully. You can have an intelligent conversation that could lead them to Christ over time. A key to witnessing to them is loving them as Jesus loves them.

Asking Questions

Asking questions opens the door for you to present the truth of a matter. It also helps people see that what they believe is often full of holes that cannot be defended. JWs have a method of introducing new people to their beliefs through Watchtower (WT) publications. You could tell them you’ll read their copy of WT “if” they read something you give them. That would probably stop the conversation since JWs are not allowed to accept Christian literature, which they consider apostate. I suggest that unless you are well-grounded in the Bible and witnessing to cultists, you may not want to go any further than to offer Christian materials to JWs.

If you are well-grounded in the Bible and witnessing to cultists, you may want to open the WT copy the JW's give you and ask questions about what you read. Pray as you talk with them. Read something from the WT aloud, then ask the JW's questions about it. In my experience with JW's, one of them will take the lead in talking with you and the other(s) will listen. After I talk with the leader for a minute or two, I turn my attention to the JW's who are NOT talking. That's because they are usually younger in their "faith" and less secure in their beliefs. They're still "learning the ropes" and what I say may reach them, especially if the Holy Spirit takes the words and does a work in the JW's heart.

I realize that my work in apologetics is often pre-evangelistic. My prayer as I talk with JW's is to sow seeds of doubt in their minds by presenting the Truth and that one or more of them will begin to question their beliefs. Those doubts and questions have led to many JW's being saved by the True Jesus, the Eternal, Co-Equal Son of God.

My experience has usually been that the senior member of the JW team brings their visit to an end when he can't get me to stop talking with the junior member of the team. More experienced JW's know what I'm doing and want to get out and move on to a house where they don't have to deal with "apostates." It's not easy to talk with JW's, but they need to know the Truth and how will they know unless someone tells them.

***** I will warn you** that this next witnessing method to JW's is only for those Christians who are extremely sure of their Christian beliefs and experienced in witnessing to cultists. That's because this method will take you into a place where spiritual evil is strong.

Jehovah's Witnesses want to get people into "home book" studies as part of their pre-conversion program. Though most JW's will not attempt to teach strong Christians, it has happened. They might ask you to study with them or you could ask them about getting involved in a study. If they agree, be sure they understand that you want to be able to ask questions during the study time. If they agree to it and you feel strong enough, you could use that study time to help them see

the error of their beliefs. Ask thoughtful, probing and specific questions as they take you through their method. The WT studies use the New World Translation, so have your translation of the Bible ready to ask questions. If you happen to read Hebrew or Greek or have a literal translation (e.g. Interlinear, Parallel), use that during the study. That may bother the JWs you're studying with, but you can say it shouldn't be a problem as long as the NWT is a good translation from the original languages.

The JW teacher will ask you to respond to questions in the WT book using the printed answers. Instead, ask questions about their questions and answers. JWs use a psychological "praise" technique during studies to make the pre-converts feel good about pleasing the JWs. People like people who say good things about them (positive reassurance technique), so JWs use praise a lot during the weekly studies.

You should know that JWs may not continue to meet with you after you ask them questions. The WT teaches JWs to avoid examination and independent thinking. The WT teaches that the Bible can be understood only through the Watchtower organization and that the Watchtower magazine is how God communicates with the human race today. The WT warns JWs that anyone who thinks differently than what the WT teaches is "like" Satan. The WT warns JWs not to spend time with "apostates" (e.g. people who believe in the Trinity, the deity of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, the physical resurrection of Christ). The fact that you want to use your own Bible and have lots of questions that challenge the teachings of the WT may lead JWs to drop you like a hot rock. If that happens, be polite and let the Jehovah's Witnesses know you'll be praying for them.

Chapter Seven

Apologia - Scientology

Here are some of the beliefs **Scientologists** have about the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ. How would you answer their charges?

“Religion does much to keep the assumption in restimulation, being basically a control mechanism used by those who have sent the preclear into a body. You will find the cross as a symbol all over the universe, and the Christ legend as implant in preclears a million years ago.” ... “A few operating thetans scarcely could lead to trouble. Witness the chaos resulting from the activities and other determinism technology of one operating thetan, 2,000 years ago. It is despicable and utterly beneath contempt to tell a man he must repent, that he is evil. Those who talk most about peace on earth and good-will among men themselves carry forward the seas of unrest, war and chaos.” (*Dianetics*, PABS book 2, L. Ron Hubbard, 1956)

“The codes and creeds of Scientology were written by L. Ron Hubbard in the 1950s during the formative years of the religion. They set the guidelines for the practice and expansion of Scientology and still serve those ends today.” (*Scientology Creeds and Codes*, Scientology.org)

“Scientology is a religion in its highest meaning, as it helps bring man to total freedom and truth. The essential tenets of Scientology are these: You are an immortal spiritual being. Your experience extends well beyond a single lifetime. And your capabilities are unlimited, even if not presently realized. Furthermore, man is basically good. He is seeking to survive. And his survival depends upon himself and his fellows and his attainment of brotherhood with the universe.” (*What Is Scientology?* Scientology.org)

“Unlike religions with Judeo-Christian origins, the Church of Scientology has no set dogma concerning God that it imposes on its members. As with all its tenets, Scientology does not ask individuals to accept anything on faith alone. Rather, as one’s level of spiritual awareness increases through participation in Scientology and training, one attains his own certainty of every dynamic. Accordingly, only when the Seventh Dynamic (spiritual) is reached in its entirety will one discover and come to a full understanding of the Eighth Dynamic (infinity) and one’s relationship to the Supreme Being.” (*Does Scientology Have A Concept Of God?*, Scientology.org)

“Somebody on this planet, about 600 B.C. found some pieces of ‘R6.’ I don’t know how they found it; either by watching madmen or something. But since that time they have used it. And it became what is known as Christianity. The man on the cross. There was no Christ!’ The Roman Catholic Church, through watching the dramatizations of people picked up some little fragments of R6.” [LRH, Routine R6EW, L. Ron Hubbard]

“For those of you whose Christian toes I may have stepped on, let me take the opportunity to disabuse you of some lovely myths. For instance, the historic Jesus was not nearly the sainted figure (he) has been made out to be. In addition to being a lover of young boys and men, he was given to uncontrollable bursts of temper and hatred ... You have only to look at the history his teachings inspired to see where it all inevitably leads. It is historic fact and yet man still clings to the ideal, so deep and insidious is the biologic implanting ... No doubt you are familiar with the Revelations section of the Bible where various events are predicted. Also mentioned is a brief period of time in which the arch-enemy of Christ, referred to as the anti-Christ, will reign and his opinions will have sway ... this anti-Christ represents the forces of Lucifer (literally, the “light-bearer” or “light-bringer”), Lucifer being a mythical representation of the forces of enlightenment.... My mission could be said to fulfill the Biblical promise represented by this brief anti-Christ period.” (*Student Briefing*, OT VIII Series I, L. Ron Hubbard)

Question – Why Do You Believe That?

Find out why Scientologists say they believe what they believe. Much of what they believe sounds like wild-eyed science fiction, so why would a reasonable, rational person believe it?

It's important to remember a few basic things about Scientology based on various reports available in the news media, legal documents, and online research.

1. L. Ron Hubbard, the founder of Scientology, was a science fiction and fantasy writer. He developed a self-help system in 1950 called Dianetics based on his "experiments and experiences." Less than a year later in January of 1951, the New Jersey Board of Medical Examiners went after Hubbard for teaching medicine without a license. The Hubbard Dianetic Research Foundation closed its doors, ending the proceedings against it. Hubbard lost the rights to the name "Dianetics" during bankruptcy proceedings, so he came up with the name "Scientology" in 1952 calling it a "religious philosophy."

2. Hubbard dropped out of George Washington University in 1932 after flunking out of the only nuclear physics class he took, then began his writing career. He briefly commanded two U.S. Navy vessels during World War 2, but lost command of both after superiors found him unsuitable for command.

3. Hubbard was charged with petty theft in 1948 and fraud (in absentia) in 1978. He was named an unindicted co-conspirator in an information infiltration and theft project in 1983 (known as Operation Snow White). Hubbard went into seclusion in California and died in 1986.

These facts are in stark contrast to the way the Church of Scientology presents Hubbard as a nuclear physicist, philosopher, artist, photographer, poet, youngest Eagle Scout at the age of 13, aviation pioneer, decorated war hero, member of the famed Explorer's Club leading dangerous expeditions to remote islands, and master mariner licensed to captain vessels on any ocean (Spain, Portugal, Britain, Greece, and Venezuela closed their ports to his fleet). Scientologists

are taught that Hubbard was the first person to “scientifically isolate, measure and describe the human spirit, while objectively demonstrating spiritual potentials well in advance of scientific thought.” (Scientology.org) Critics called Hubbard a madman, liar, and charlatan.

The Church of Scientology officially calls itself “a religion in its highest meaning, as it helps bring man to total freedom and truth.” Hubbard taught that every person is an immortal spiritual being with experience that extends well beyond a single lifetime. He believed that man is basically good “and his survival depends upon himself and his fellows and his attainment of brotherhood with the universe.” (Scientology.org)

The Church of Scientology battled with the Internal Revenue Service for 26 years to obtain tax exemption as a “church.” It received the IRS exemption in 1993. Though the agreement between the IRS and the Church of Scientology was secret, investigations by several major media (e.g. New York Times, Wall Street Journal) have revealed much about what happened during those 26 years and why the IRS surprised tax professionals and taxpayers with its sudden change of mind about withholding the tax exemption from Scientology.

Extensive information about the life of L. Ron Hubbard and the activities of the Church of Scientology and the Church of Spiritual Technology is available for online research.

Scientists say they respect all religions and share with other religions “the dreams of peace and salvation” (www.scientology.org). The creed of the Church of Scientology states that “all men have inalienable rights to their own religious practices and their performance.” Scientology says publicly that they subscribe to the following mandates:

- “Respect the religious beliefs of others.”
- “Tolerance is a good cornerstone on which to build human relationships.”
- “When one views the slaughter and suffering caused by religious intolerance down all the history of Man and into

modern times, one can see that intolerance is a very non-survival activity.”

- “Religious tolerance does not mean one cannot express his own beliefs. It does mean that seeking to undermine or attack the religious faith and beliefs of another has always been a short road to trouble.”
- “The way to happiness can become contentious when one fails to respect the religious beliefs of others.”

The truth is that the goal of Scientology is to be the only religion people believe and practice. As we saw in our first study about Scientology, founder L. Ron Hubbard thought poorly of Jesus Christ and Christianity. Here are a couple of reminders about his beliefs:

“Somebody on this planet, about 600 B.C. found some pieces of ‘R6.’ I don’t know how they found it; either by watching madmen or something. But since that time they have used it. And it became what is known as Christianity. The man on the cross. There was no Christ! The Roman Catholic Church, through watching the dramatizations of people picked up some little fragments of R6.” [LRH, Routine R6EW, L. Ron Hubbard]

“For those of you whose Christian toes I may have stepped on, let me take the opportunity to disabuse you of some lovely myths. For instance, the historic Jesus was not nearly the sainted figure (he) has been made out to be. In addition to being a lover of young boys and men, he was given to uncontrollable bursts of temper and hatred ... You have only to look at the history his teachings inspired to see where it all inevitably leads. It is historic fact and yet man still clings to the ideal, so deep and insidious is the biologic implanting ... No doubt you are familiar with the Revelations section of the Bible where various events are predicted. Also mentioned is a brief period of time in which the arch-enemy of Christ, referred to as the anti-Christ, will reign and his opinions will have sway ... this anti-Christ represents the forces of Lucifer (literally, the “light-bearer” or “light-bringer”), Lucifer being a mythical representation of the forces of enlightenment.... My mission

could be said to fulfill the Biblical promise represented by this brief anti-Christ period.” (*Student Briefing*, OT VIII Series I, L. Ron Hubbard)

Hubbard said on one hand that there was no Christ, and on the other hand that the historic Jesus was a homosexual and pedophile with a terrible temper. That’s what Hubbard believed, but what about today’s Scientologists? Do they “respect the beliefs of others” as Scientology publicly states? Do they believe that “seeking to undermine or attack the religious faith and beliefs of another” is a “short road to trouble”?

In a 1999 interview in the Phoenix New Times, Karin Pouw – American spokeswoman for the Church of Scientology and Director of Public Affairs for Church of Scientology International – was asked about the church’s teaching that Jesus was a false memory implanted into humans by aliens. Pouw was quoted as saying, “So what if we believe Jesus is a figment of the imagination?”

The teachings of Scientology could not be farther from the teachings of Christianity. Scientologists may say they respect all religions and share with other religions the dreams of peace and salvation, but their writings, teachings, and practice say otherwise. The teachings of L. Ron Hubbard are the core doctrine for Scientology and we’ve read what he thinks about Jesus Christ and Christianity.

Witnessing to a Scientologist is similar to sharing the Gospel with any lost person. Satan controls the thinking of unsaved people because they are dead in trespasses and sins and he is their god – whether they know it or not (Ephesians 2:1-3). Whatever “faith” system an unbeliever adopts, the root is found in Satan’s earliest lies found in Genesis 3.

1. “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden’?”
2. “You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

Scientology, like other cults, questions the clear directives of God as stated in His Word and replaces it with their own words and directives (e.g. writings of L. Ron Hubbard). They also teach that what's important for people during this lifetime is to be "enlightened" and "know yourself." Those lies come from Satan and it's important to understand that when witnessing to a Scientologist or any cultist. The focus of cults is on "self." The focus of Christianity is on Christ. The Message of the Lord Jesus Christ is to "deny self" and follow Him and **only** Him. Cult leaders like L. Ron Hubbard want people to follow them, not Jesus. That's how Satan works.

Here are some of the "beliefs" of Scientologists. Knowing these will help you in sharing the Gospel with them.

"Man is an immortal spiritual being.

His experience extends well beyond a single lifetime. His capabilities are unlimited, even if not presently realized.

Scientology further holds Man to be basically good, and that his spiritual salvation depends upon himself, his fellows and his attainment of brotherhood with the universe.

Scientology is not a dogmatic religion in which one is asked to accept anything on faith alone. On the contrary, one discovers for oneself that the principles of Scientology are true by applying its principles and observing or experiencing the results.

The ultimate goal of Scientology is true spiritual enlightenment and freedom for all.

Unlike religions with Judeo-Christian origins, the Church of Scientology has no set dogma concerning God that it imposes on its members. As with all its tenets, Scientology does not ask individuals to accept anything on faith alone. Rather, as one's level of spiritual awareness increases through participation in Scientology auditing and training, one attains his own certainty of every dynamic. Accordingly, only when the Seventh Dynamic

(spiritual) is reached in its entirety will one discover and come to a full understanding of the Eighth Dynamic (infinity) and one's relationship to the Supreme Being. Scientologists take the maxim quite to heart that God helps those who help themselves. They believe that each person has the answers to the mysteries of life. All one requires is awareness of these answers, and this is what Scientology helps one achieve. Man is accustomed to asking for pat answers. Scientology requires that the person think for himself and thus help himself become more understanding, able, happy and healthy. ("Scientology Beliefs & Practices" – Scientology.org)

Every tenet of the Scientology Beliefs & Practices is focused on **self** – not on God. They don't even know who God is and they certainly do not believe that Jesus Christ is the Eternal Son of God, Lord of the universe, and Savior of the world.

The Love of God for cultists

I admire the depth of God's Love. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) Does that amaze you as much as it does me? God loved the world (*kosmon*) so much that He gave (*edoken*) His only begotten (*monogene*) Son. God gave us Jesus – that's how much God loves us. "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8) Jesus did not die for us after we stopped being sinners or after we started being good. He died for us "while we were still sinners."

"But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." Ephesians 2:4-7

The Apostle Paul wrote often about God's Love for sinners. Paul knew well the heart of God and that God wanted him to preach the Gospel to everyone – no matter what they believed. Paul knew the power of his message.

“I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. So, as much as is in me, *I am* ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.” Romans 1:14-16

I remind us of these truths because we may sometimes question whether witnessing to cultists is something God would want us to do. I believe it is. Remember that many of the Gentiles Paul preached to in the 1st century AD were cultists. Many of the Gentile religions were cultic in nature. God sent Paul to them specifically to open the door of salvation to non-Jews and the world.

If Paul visited your church today and you asked him about witnessing to Scientologists, what do you think he would say? Do you think Paul would view Scientologists as sinners who need to hear the Gospel of God's Grace?

If Jesus visited your church today and you asked Him about witnessing to Scientologists, what do you think He would say? Do you think Jesus shed His Blood for Scientologists? Do you think He would want you to preach the Gospel to Scientologists? Do you think Jesus would want you to teach Scientologists to observe everything He has taught you?

I think the answers are clear. Yes, Jesus and Paul would want you and me to preach the Gospel to Scientologists, lead them to saving faith in Christ, and teach them to obey Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

So, what do you and I need to do to prepare our hearts and minds to witness to Scientologists?

1. Pray. You are entering supernatural territory. Ask God for wisdom. Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide you as you share the Gospel. Ask Jesus to reveal Himself as the Word of God as you talk about Him. Ask God's Spirit to convict them of their sin and convince them of their desperate need for salvation.

2. Know what you believe about God and His Word. If you're going to talk with a cultist about his or her need for salvation, you need to be very sure of what you believe. If you aren't sure, get sure. You will need to know God's Word well and rely on His Spirit often as you talk with cultists about Christ.

3. Feel God's Love for the souls of Scientologists – just like He loved your soul before you were saved. Ask God to help you love like He Loves. If possible, develop friendly relationships with Scientologists so they understand you really care about them – and are not just trying to win them over to “your side.”

4. Ask Scientologists questions about what they believe to find out how deeply they are entrenched in Scientology. They may be new to the cult or have little knowledge. They may be very involved and have a lot of knowledge. Knowing where they are in their “faith” will help you steer the discussion in a direction that will be helpful to them.

5. Be prepared to share with them what you know about Scientology and L. Ron Hubbard. Scientologists are taught that Christians “don't know,” are misled and need to be “cleared,” so they may not be open to general statements about what you believe. Be ready to document what you “know” about L. Ron Hubbard and Scientology. There are many books and websites with great historical information about the truth behind Hubbard and his “religion.”

6. Know enough about the claims of Scientology that you can “take the roof off” their beliefs. I like to use material straight from Hubbard's writings and the official Scientology website (<http://www.scientology.org/>) so they can't argue away my statements because I'm using what someone else says about Scientology beliefs. Quote to them from their own quotes. It's a powerful technique that can make an opening for deeper discussions. Know

enough about the terms Scientologists use so you can dig into the fallacy of their beliefs.

7. Scientology officially claims in its creed that Scientologists should respect all religions and the religious beliefs of others. Ask the Scientologists you're witnessing to explain what that means to them. Listen respectfully and ask any questions that flow logically from their comments. Ask them if they respect Christianity and the beliefs of Christians. If they do, then share with them the basic beliefs of Christianity and ask them what they think about those beliefs. If they don't respect the beliefs of Christians, ask them why not since that respect is part of the official creed of Scientology. Follow up with other questions and comments that lead to an opportunity to share the basics of Christian salvation.

8. Scientologists are taught that they have a special "knowledge of life" because of the insights that came to L. Ron Hubbard in 1951 after he observed people using Dianetics – "and found a commonality of experience and phenomena. After carefully reviewing all relevant research data, he isolated the answer: Man was neither his body nor his mind, but a spiritual being. This was the source of all that is good, decent and creative in the world: the individual being himself. With this discovery, L. Ron Hubbard founded the religion of Scientology, for he had moved firmly into the field traditionally belonging to religion—the realm of the human soul." (www.scientology.org) Ask the Scientologist you are talking with why they trust the insights of one man, L. Ron Hubbard, as the sole authority for their eternal souls. You need to be ready to argue for the sole authority of the Bible. Hubbard's life was built on lies. The Bible was built on Truth. Why would anyone want to trust their eternal soul to a liar instead of the Savior?

9. At some point during your conversation open your Bible to a particular passage and ask the Scientologist to read it. If they won't touch the Bible or read from it, ask them why. Remind them that you have read the writings of Scientology to understand their beliefs and you'd like them to read portions of the Word of God to understand your beliefs. This is **IMPORTANT** to do because the God's Word is "living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing

even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12) One of the most powerful weapons in your spiritual arsenal is God’s Word. Place your Bible in the hands of the person you are witnessing to and watch the power of God work. Tell them what the Bible says about God, life, death, sin, salvation, eternity, Heaven, and hell.

10. Many Scientologists will argue all day long with you about the authority of the Bible over the authority of L. Ron Hubbard’s teachings, but they will often listen to your personal story. Everybody has a personal story and many people like to hear the stories of others. Tell them who you used to be and what Jesus did for you. Tell them what salvation means to you and why you love Jesus with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength. Those four areas have a special interest to Scientologists because of the teaching of L. Ron Hubbard. Tell them how knowing Jesus has impacted your thinking, your emotions, your will, your inner strength, and your eternal soul. Tell them about Jesus dying because of their sins and being raised because of our justification (Romans 4:25). Tell them about the peace and joy you now experience in Christ. Share with them how they too can know that peace and joy through faith in Christ. Pray with them to “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ” for salvation (Acts 16:31).

Leading a Scientologist to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ is just the beginning. They will need a lot of help getting out of the cult. First, a quick review of the power we are dealing with as we witness to the lost. **It is the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.**

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.” Romans 1:16

What does a Scientologist need to do to be saved? **Confess the Lord Jesus and believe that God raised Him from the dead.**

“But what does it say? ‘The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’ (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be

saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For 'whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' Romans 10:8-13

What happens to a Scientologist when they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? **They are washed, renewed, justified, sealed and protected by the Holy Spirit.**

"But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Titus 3:4-7

"In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory." Ephesians 1:12-14

Salvation for a Scientologist is the same as for a Mormon, Hindu, Bahai, Buddhist, Jehovah's Witness, Muslim, agnostic and atheist – "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved." (Acts 16:31)

What is different for every new Christian who comes out of a strong belief system is dealing with the beliefs, emotions and spiritual baggage from that system. The Apostle Paul dealt with it often in his ministry to Gentiles because of the kinds of belief systems they left when they became followers of Jesus Christ. Let's see what we can learn from Paul's Epistles about helping cultists who become Christians.

“For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even* Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.” 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10

General Cassander founded the city of Thessalonica in 315 BC. Cassander was married to the half sister of Alexander the Great. Her name was Thessalonike and was the daughter of King Philip II of Macedon (the city of Philippi was named after him). Thessalonica became an important port city in Greece and became the capital of Macedonia. By the time Paul visited Thessalonica, its culture was predominately Roman and was known for having a temple of Serapis.

Serapis was a “god” born during the 3rd century BC on orders from the Egyptian Pharaoh Ptolemy I. It was his way of unifying the Egyptians and Greeks under his control. Serapis looked Greek in appearance, but included cultic symbols from other religious backgrounds. Greeks and Romans embraced Serapis as a god and often replaced Osiris with its image. That image became the idol the people of Thessalonica worshiped.

Paul began his ministry in the Jewish synagogue in Thessalonica.

“Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and *saying*, ‘This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ.’ And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas.” Acts 17:1-4

Paul persuaded some of the Jews that Jesus was “the Christ” (Messiah). A large number of devout Greeks and several of the leading women joined Paul and Silas and became the beginning of the Christian Church in Thessalonica. However, the Jews who were not persuaded were envious of Paul and took some wicked people from the marketplace and gathered a mob. They attacked the house of a man named Jason looking for Paul and Silas. When they didn’t find them, the mob dragged Jason and some of other believers to the rulers of the city, crying out, “These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.” Jason and the other believers had to put up security before they were released by the city rulers. They immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea.

Paul’s visit to Thessalonica began soon after the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:6-29; Galatians 2:1-10). Paul had a strong desire to visit all of the churches in every city where they preached the Word of the Lord and see how they were doing. Paul wanted Barnabas to go with him since Barnabas had been with him on that first missionary journey, but the disagreement about taking John Mark with them again was so strong that Barnabas took Mark to Cyprus and Paul chose Silas to be his co-laborer. They went through Syria and Cilicia strengthening the churches. (Acts 15:36-41).

While Paul was in Derbe and Lystra he chose a young man named Timothy to travel with him. Timothy was the son of a Greek father and a Jewish woman named Eunice. His mother and grandmother (Lois) were Christians and had a big impact on Timothy’s life (Acts 16:1; 2 Timothy 1:5). Timothy went with Paul and began his training in being a missionary and pastor.

Paul, Silas and Timothy went through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, but the Holy Spirit would not allow them to preach the Word in Asia. Paul tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them. He must have wondered what God had in mind for him and it wasn’t long before he got the answer.

“So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help

us.’ Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.” Acts 16:8-10

God wanted Paul to take the Gospel to Macedonia, so He gave Paul a vision of a man pleading with him – “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” Paul’s response was to “immediately” change his plans and go to Macedonia. He left Troas and his previous plans and ran a straight course to Samothrace, an island in the northern Aegean Sea. They traveled from there to Neapoli, then Philippi, which at that time was the primary city of that part of Macedonia.

Paul, Silas and Timothy met many idol worshippers during their journey and won many of them to Christ. Idol worship was an important part of cultic practices in 1st century Macedonia and Greece. Idols were cult images, made by hand, that idolaters worshipped for the god the image embodied or represented. This was not the first time Paul had dealt with idol worshippers. Here’s what happened to him during a visit to the region of Lycaonia in Asia Minor (modern Turkey).

“And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother’s womb, who had never walked. *This* man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, ‘Stand up straight on your feet!’ And he leaped and walked. Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian *language*, ‘The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!’ And Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. Then the priest of Zeus, whose temple was in front of their city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, intending to sacrifice with the multitudes. But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out and saying, ‘Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them, who in bygone generations

allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.’ And with these sayings they could scarcely restrain the multitudes from sacrificing to them.” Acts 14:8-18

The people of Lystra were part of the cult of Zeus and Hermes and thought that Paul and Barnabas were those gods because of their supernatural ability to heal a crippled man. These cults were centuries old. Zeus was the father of the gods and of men. He ruled from Mount Olympus and was god of the sky and thunder. Hermes, believed to be the god of commerce and social intercourse, was special messenger to Zeus. Hermes guided the dreams of Zeus to humans and carried the souls of dead people to Hades. Cult worship involved special ceremonies and animal sacrifices. Sexual perversion was often practiced during worship.

It’s not surprising that the first Jerusalem Council sent this decree to Gentile believers in Antioch of Syria:

“For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well.” Acts 15:28-29

Ancient cult worship focused on the degradation of the body, mind and soul of the worshipper. It bothered Paul deeply and he confronted it everywhere he preached.

“Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols. Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the *Gentile* worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there.” Acts 17:16-17

Paul knew it was vital for Christians who had converted from cult worship to protect their body, mind and soul from those pagan practices, but he also knew that Christ had commanded all believers

to preach the Gospel to the lost. How could they do both – protect themselves from idolatry and share the Gospel with idolaters? Here are some insights from Paul, beginning with advice to the Corinthians who needed to deal with a church member who had committed sexual sins with his father's wife.

“I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet *I* certainly *did* not *mean* with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. 11 But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.” 1 Corinthians 5:9-11

Paul reminded the Corinthians that idol worship was not part of the Kingdom of God.

“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.” 1 Corinthians 6:9-10

Paul warned them about eating animals that had been offered to idols because of the impact it may have on other believers. As you read this, think about how these insights might impact a new Christian who had come out of Scientology or other cult.

“Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him. Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and that *there is* no other God but one. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many

gods and many lords), yet for us *there is* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom *are* all things, and through whom we *live*. However, *there is* not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat *it* as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse. But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble." 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

An **important key** to helping cultists who become Christians is this sentence: "We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him." We should approach helping former cultists with humility and love.

Chapter Eight

Apologia - Islam

Here are some of the beliefs Muslims have about the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ. How would you answer their charges?

“Muslims respect and revere Jesus (peace be upon him). They consider him one of the greatest of God’s messengers to mankind. The Quran confirms his virgin birth, and a chapter of the Quran is entitled ‘*Maryam*’ (Mary). The Quran describes the birth of Jesus as follows: (Remember) when the angels said, “O Mary, God gives you good news of a word from Him (God), whose name is the Messiah Jesus, son of Mary, revered in this world and the Hereafter, and one of those brought near (to God). He will speak to the people from his cradle and as a man, and he is of the righteous.” She said, “My Lord, how can I have a child when no mortal has touched me?” He said, “So (it will be). God creates what He wills. If He decrees a thing, He says to it only, ‘Be!’ and it is.” (*Quran* 3:45-47)

“People of the Book (Jews and Christians)! Do not exceed the limits in your religion, and attribute to God nothing except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, was only a Messenger of God, and His command that He conveyed unto Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in God and in His Messengers, and do not say: ‘God is a Trinity.’ Give up this assertion; it would be better for you. God is indeed just One God. Far be it from His glory that He should have a son. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and in the earth. God is sufficient for a guardian” (*Quran* 4:171).

“Say: “God is Unique! God, the Source [of everything]. He has not fathered anyone nor was He fathered, and there is nothing comparable to Him!” (*Quran* 112:1-4).

“Such was Jesus, the son of Mary; it is a statement of truth, about which they vainly dispute. It is not befitting to the majesty of God, that He should beget a son. Glory be to Him! When He determines a matter, He only says to it, ‘Be’ and it is” (*Quran* 19:34-35).

“Jesus was born miraculously through the same power which had brought Adam into being without a father: Truly, the likeness of Jesus with God is as the likeness of Adam. He created him of dust, and then said to him, ‘Be!’ and he was.” (*Quran* 3:59)

“The Prophet Muhammad said: ‘Whoever believes there is no god but God, alone without partner, that Muhammad is His messenger, that Jesus is the servant and messenger of God, His word breathed into Mary and a spirit emanating from Him, and that Paradise and Hell are true, shall be received by God into Heaven.’” (*Hadith from Bukhari*)

Muslims believe that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, calling Him *Isa ibn Maryam*, “Jesus the Son of Mary” (*Qur’an* 19:34). The Koran declares that Jesus is unique among the prophets because of His Virgin Birth. The Koran speaks of the sins of the prophets, but never attributes sin to Jesus. The Koran refers to Him as the “holy Son” (*Qur’an* 19:19) and presents Jesus as the only prophet with the power to create life, heal the sick, cleanse lepers, give sight to the blind, and raise the dead (*Qur’an* 3:49; 5:110). The Koran also gives Jesus the titles of Al Masih (the Messiah), Ruh Allah (Soul/Spirit of God) and Kalimat Allah (the Word of God). So, do Muslims believe what Christians believe about Jesus – that He is the Eternal Son of God? **They do not**- and that causes an irreparable divide between Christians and Muslims.

I wrote extensively about the history of Islam in “[A History of Man’s Quest for Immortality](#),” so I’ll share just a brief background for this study.

Muhammad was born in 570 AD in the city of Mecca. His father died before he was born and his mother died when he was six, so

Muhammad was raised by his uncle, who was the chief of the Quraish tribe. Muhammad worked with trade caravans as a young person and married the owner of a caravan when he was 25. When Muhammad was 40 years old, he said he had a vision of the angel Gabriel calling him to be a prophet of God. His wife, Khadija, supported him and became his first disciple. Muhammad said he received more visions from Gabriel and began to preach publicly. He moved to what is now known as Medina in 622 AD, which is the first year of the Muslim calendar. His followers became known as Muslims (Arabic for “one who submits to God”). Muhammad and his disciples prayed facing Jerusalem at first, but turned their backs on the city when Jews in Medina opposed him. Muhammad and his followers marched on Mecca in 630 AD and destroyed the idols of the Arabian gods and turned the Ka’ba shrine into a mosque of Allah. Muhammad became the ruler of Mecca and instituted new laws based on the revelations he said he received from Gabriel. Muhammad died two years later.

Muhammad saw himself as the last prophet of God and believed only his revelations were complete and final. All the revelations given to the prophets before Muhammad were incomplete, according to Muhammad. The revelations Muhammad said he received from God through Gabriel became known as the Qur’an (“the recital”) While some of the stories in the Koran (Qur’an) are similar in subject matter to those in the the Hebrew and Christian Bible, the differences are large – especially about the Person of Jesus Christ.

Several things stand out to me about Muhammad and Islam. The first is that he said he received spiritual revelations from the angel Gabriel. Gabriel is mentioned in both the Hebrew Bible (Book of Daniel) and New Testament (Luke). God sent Gabriel to Daniel in Persia and Mary and Joseph in Israel to deliver specific messages to them about God’s plans for Israel and its Messiah. Did Gabriel also appear to Muhammad and give him further revelations about the end times and the Messiah for the new religion of Islam (“submission, surrender” to God)?

Let’s get something on the table at the beginning of our study about Islam – Muslims do not like the Apostle Paul. They view him as a

false, self-proclaimed apostle of Jesus and the man who corrupted Christianity. Why this hatred and distrust of a man Jesus called personally from Heaven? Several reasons, but here are three to consider.

1. Paul was an inspired teacher who presented doctrines opposite to Muhammad's on numerous important issues – the most important being the Person of Jesus Christ. Muhammad believed Jesus was a great prophet. Paul believed Jesus is the Great God.

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.” Colossians 1:15-16

“Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.” Colossians 2:8-10

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.” 1 Timothy 3:16

“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.” Titus 2:11-15

2. Paul was also an inspired prophet and warned about the danger of Islam centuries before Muhammad was born.

“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.” Galatians 1:6-9

No wonder Muslims cannot stand Paul and his teachings. Paul calls out Islam for what it is – **a false gospel**.

3. Paul wrote his Letters to churches before the Gospels were written, so Muslims believe Paul was able to pervert the true Gospel through his influence on Christ’s original Apostles. What they miss is the great event in Jerusalem where Christ’s original Apostles agreed with Paul about the Gospel Jesus had given him to preach. This was not perversion, but Divine Direction.

“Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles. And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, ‘Men and brethren, listen to me: Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: ‘After this I will return And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up; So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, Says the Lord who does all these things.’ ‘Known to God from eternity are all His works. Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses has had

throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.’ Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas who was also named Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren. They wrote this letter by them: The apostles, the elders, and the brethren, To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings. Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, ‘You must be circumcised and keep the law’ —to whom we gave no such commandment—it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.” Acts 15:12-29

“Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me. And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain. Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. But from those who seemed to be something—whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal favoritism to no man—for those who seemed to be something added nothing to me. But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised

had been committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles), 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. They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.” Galatians 2:1-10

Jesus gave Paul a specific calling to the uncircumcised that Jews of his time did not understand and Muslims of our time do not understand. Paul did not pervert the Gospel of Jesus Christ – he took it new heights under the supervision of the Holy Spirit of God Who called Paul to be the Apostle to the Gentiles. Muslims are gentiles and should listen to Paul’s Gospel - “for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.” (Romans 1:16)

Islam’s hatred for Christianity is not new. It began centuries ago with Christians and Jews rejecting Muhammad’s claim to be their messiah prophet and continued through hundreds of years of countless wars in many countries. Hundreds of thousands of people have died, and are still dying, because of this hate. So, what’s a Christian to do? We look to our Lord for guidance.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.” Matthew 5:43-45

As difficult as that is to do - “love your enemies” - that’s what Jesus asks us to do. But does that include Muslims? How could we possibly show love to Muslims? Because Jesus loves Muslims. He has cursed the religion of Islam, but He loves the people of Islam. How many people is that? Some estimates are as high as 1.7 billion with the potential of that number doubling in size during the next 20 years. In

comparison, about 2.1 billion people in the world today claim to be Christians and we are not expanding at the same rate. Experts believe the day will come when Muslims outnumber Christians around the world. They already do in many nations. Here are the top 7.

Indonesia – 187,000,00+ Muslim ... 37,000,000+ Christian

Pakistan – 177,000,000+ Muslim ... 4,500,000+ Christian

India – 173,000,000+ Muslim ... 71,000,000+ Christian

Bangladesh – 146,000,000+ Muslim ... 1,000,000+ Christian

Iran – 74,000,000+ Muslim ... 384,000+ Christian

Egypt – 73,000,000+ Muslim ... 10,800,000+ Christian

Turkey – 73,000,000+ Muslim ... 163,000+ Christian

How do you think Christians live out Christ's teachings when they are so outnumbered by people who hate them and want them dead? Those of us who live in countries that are predominantly Christian can talk about our faith in Christ and our disapproval of Islam without much fear of retaliation by the government or our neighbors, but what about the persecuted Church in countries where Islam is predominant? It's one thing to say we believe the teachings of Christ; it's quite another thing to live out His teachings in the face of great hatred and persecution.

So, does the fact that Christians are outnumbered by Muslims in a country, state or community mean that the teachings of Jesus are different there? I think we all know the answer to that question – of course not. The teachings of Christ are not based on situational ethics. They are always true – no matter what the circumstances.

So, back to the original question: how can Christians show God's love to Muslims? We do it one Muslim at a time. I've worked with Muslims through the years and found them to be like most other people in the

workplace. Some are open to talking about God - others are not. What's helpful with anyone you talk to about God is to know what they believe about Him. I've found it helpful when talking to Muslims to have some knowledge and understanding about their beliefs. It gives us a starting point for discussion about something as important as "faith" and "eternal life." We have some things in common and we can start there.

Muslims, by the definition of their name, are people who are "submitted" to Allah. Christians are also believers who are submitted to the will of God. Muslims and Christians approach their "faith" from a position of submission. That's something we can understand about each other.

Muslims believe in one God. Christians believe in one God revealed in Three Persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).

Muslims and Christians believe they came from the spiritual lineage of Abraham. Muslims believe their lineage is through Abraham's son Ishmael. Christians believe their lineage came through Abraham's son Isaac.

Muslims believe God sent an angel to speak to the prophet Muhammad over a period of several years and gave him their holy book, the Qur'an. Christians believe God spoke to many prophets over a period of hundreds of years and inspired them to write His Holy Book, the Bible. God sent many angels to help the prophets in their ministry.

Muslims have a certain reverence about the Bible because of what the *Qur'an* says about it.

[Editor's Note: *Sura* is a chapter from the *Qur'an* ... *Tavrat* is the Hebrew Law ... *Injeel* is the Gospel given to Jesus ... *Furqan* means Criterion (between truth and falsehood) and is another name for the *Qur'an* ... *Musa* is Moses ... *Isa* is Jesus ... the Book is the Bible]

"Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the

Last day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve. And when We took a promise from you and lifted the mountain over you: Take hold of the law (Tavrat) We have given you with firmness and bear in mind what is in it, so that you may guard (against evil).” Sura 2:62-63

“And most certainly We gave Musa the Book and We sent apostles after him one after another; and We gave Isa, the son of Marium, clear arguments and strengthened him with the holy spirit, What! whenever then an apostle came to you with that which your souls did not desire, you were insolent so you called some liars and some you slew. And they say: Our hearts are covered. Nay, Allah has cursed them on account of their unbelief; so little it is that they believe. And when there came to them a Book from Allah verifying that which they have, and aforetime they used to pray for victory against those who disbelieve, but when there came to them (Prophet) that which they did not recognize, they disbelieved in him; so Allah’s curse is on the unbelievers.” Sura 2:87-89

“Say: We believe in Allah and (in) that which had been revealed to us, and (in) that which was revealed to Ibrahim and Ismail and Ishaq and Yaqoub and the tribes, and (in) that which was given to Musa and Isa, and (in) that which was given to the prophets from their Lord, we do not make any distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit.” Sura 2:136

“The apostle believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers; they all believe in Allah and His angels and His books and His apostles; We make no difference between any of His apostles; and they say: We hear and obey, our Lord! Thy forgiveness (do we crave), and to Thee is the eventual course.” Sura 2:285

“He [Allah] has revealed to you the Book with truth, verifying that which is before it, and He revealed the Tavrat and the Injeel aforetime, a guidance for the people, and He sent the Furqan. Surely they who disbelieve in the communications of

Allah they shall have a severe chastisement; and Allah is Mighty, the Lord of retribution.” Sura 3:3-4

[The next verse of the Qur'an is in the context of the angel speaking to Mary about the birth of Jesus.]

“And He will teach him the Book and the wisdom and the Tavrāt and the Injeel.” Sura 3:48

“O you who have been given the Book! believe that which We have revealed, verifying what you have, before We alter faces then turn them on their backs, or curse them as We cursed the violators of the Sabbath, and the command of Allah shall be executed ... Or do they envy the people for what Allah has given them of His grace? But indeed We have given to Ibrahim’s children the Book and the wisdom, and We have given them a grand kingdom.” Sura 4:47, 54

“O you who believe! believe in Allah and His Apostle and the Book which He has revealed to His Apostle and the Book which He revealed before; and whoever disbelieves in Allah and His angels and His apostles and the last day, he indeed strays off into a remote error.” Sura 4:136

“And how do they make you a judge and they have the Taurāt wherein is Allah’s judgment? Yet they turn back after that, and these are not the believers. Surely We revealed the Taurāt in which was guidance and light; with it the prophets who submitted themselves (to Allah) judged (matters) for those who were Jews, and the masters of Divine knowledge and the doctors, because they were required to guard (part) of the Book of Allah, and they were witnesses thereof; therefore fear not the people and fear Me, and do not take a small price for My communications; and whoever did not judge by what Allah revealed, those are they that are the unbelievers. And We prescribed to them in it that life is for life, and eye for eye, and nose for nose, and ear for ear, and tooth for tooth, and (that there is) reprisal in wounds; but he who foregoes it, it shall be an expiation for him; and whoever did not judge by what Allah

revealed, those are they that are the unjust. And We sent after them in their footsteps Isa, son of Marium, verifying what was before him of the Taurat and We gave him the Injeel in which was guidance and light, and verifying what was before it of Taurat and a guidance and an admonition for those who guard (against evil). And the followers of the Injeel should have judged by what Allah revealed in it; and whoever did not judge by what Allah revealed, those are they that are the transgressors. And We have revealed to you the Book with the truth, verifying what is before it of the Book and a guardian over it, therefore judge between them by what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their low desires (to turn away) from the truth that has come to you; for every one of you did We appoint a law and a way, and if Allah had pleased He would have made you (all) a single people, but that He might try you in what He gave you, therefore strive with one another to hasten to virtuous deeds; to Allah is your return, of all (of you), so He will let you know that in which you differed; And that you should judge between them by what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their low desires, and be cautious of them, lest they seduce you from part of what Allah has revealed to you; but if they turn back, then know that Allah desires to afflict them on account of some of their faults; and most surely many of the people are transgressors. Is it then the judgment of (the times of) ignorance that they desire? And who is better than Allah to judge for a people who are sure? O you who believe! do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends; they are friends of each other; and whoever amongst you takes them for a friend, then surely he is one of them; surely Allah does not guide the unjust people.” Sura 5:43-51

“Say: O followers of the Book! you follow no good till you keep up the Taurat and the Injeel and that which is revealed to you from your Lord; and surely that which has been revealed to you from your Lord shall make many of them increase in inordinacy and unbelief; grieve not therefore for the unbelieving people.” Sura 5:68

“But if you are in doubt as to what We have revealed to you, ask those who read the Book before you; certainly the truth has come to you from your Lord, therefore you should not be of the disputers.” Sura 10:94

“And certainly We gave Musa the Book after We had destroyed the former generations, clear arguments for men and a guidance and a mercy, that they may be mindful.” Sura 28:43

“And do not dispute with the followers of the Book except by what is best, except those of them who act unjustly, and say: We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you, and our God and your God is One, and to Him do we submit. And thus have We revealed the Book to you. So those whom We have given the Book believe in it, and of these there are those who believe in it, and none deny Our communications except the unbelievers.” Sura 29:46-47

“And certainly We gave the Book to Musa, so be not in doubt concerning the receiving of it, and We made it a guide for the children of Israel.” Sura 32:23

“And certainly We gave Musa the guidance, and We made the children of Israel inherit the Book, A guidance and a reminder to the men of understanding.” Sura 40:53-54

“Those who reject the Book and that with which We have sent Our Apostle; but they shall soon come to know, When the fetters and the chains shall be on their necks; they shall be dragged into boiling water, then in the fire shall they be burned.” Sura 40:70-72

“And certainly We gave the Book and the wisdom and the prophecy to the children of Israel, and We gave them of the goodly things, and We made them excel the nations.” Sura 45:16

“And before it the Book of Musa was a guide and a mercy: and this is a Book verifying (it) in the Arabic language that it may

warn those who are unjust and as good news for the doers of good.” Sura 46:12

“Then We made Our apostles to follow in their footsteps, and We sent Isa son of Marium afterwards, and We gave him the Injeel, and We put in the hearts of those who followed him kindness and mercy; and (as for) monkery, they innovated it— We did not prescribe it to them— only to seek Allah’s pleasure, but they did not observe it with its due observance; so We gave to those of them who believed their reward, and most of them are transgressors.” Sura 57:27

The *Qur’an* teaches that God inspired the Law of Moses, the Writings, the Prophets, and the Gospel of Jesus. The *Qur’an* also states that anyone who rejects “the Book” will burn in hell, so why don’t Muslims study the Bible and do what God commands?

Muslims believe that the Christian Bible was corrupted long ago and that we do not have the true Word of God. They believe that the “Book” spoken of in the *Qur’an* – with its *Tavrat* (Law), *Zabur* (Psalms), and *Injeel* (Gospel) – no longer exists because the Church manipulated and corrupted it to say what Christians wanted it to say. Is that true?

Muslim history records that an angel of God began to reveal the *Qur’an* to Muhammad at the beginning of the 7th century AD. That was almost 600 years “after” God inspired the writers of the Gospel, about 1,600 years after God inspired King David to write many of the Psalms, and more than 2,000 years “after” God inspired Moses to write the Law. So, did the Christian Church manipulate (change) the original writings of Moses, David, and the Gospel writers and corrupt it?

For the sake of discussion, let’s look at this using some logical consideration. If the Christian Church had already corrupted the Bible during the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd centuries AD, what “Book” did the angel have in mind when he gave Muhammad the *Qur’an* during the 7th century AD? Think about that for a moment. What Law, Psalms, and Gospel was the angel referring to when he told Muhammad that

Muslims should read, respect and obey the Book? It seems logical from a Muslim perspective that the angel of God would have told Muhammad the truth about the Bible that existed during the 7th century AD. According to the words the angel gave Muhammad, the Law, Psalms, and Gospel used by Jews and Christians during the 7th century AD was inspired by God and true. Muhammad told his followers that they should respect “the Book” and obey it. To reject the Bible of the 7th century AD would mean hell fire for Muslims. So, logically speaking, the supposed corruption of the Bible by Christians had to occur sometime after Muhammad received the Qur’an from the angel of God. Does that make sense?

So, when did the Church corrupt the Bible? Was it later in the 7th century AD? Maybe sometime in the 8th or 9th centuries AD? When? The Qur’an states – “They shall have good news in this world’s life and in the hereafter; there is no changing the words of Allah; that is the mighty achievement.” (Sura 10:64) The Qur’an also says – “And We sent after them in their footsteps Isa, son of Marium, verifying what was before him of the Taurat and We gave him the Injeel in which was guidance and light, and verifying what was before it of Taurat and a guidance and an admonition for those who guard (against evil). And the followers of the Injeel should have judged by what Allah revealed in it; and whoever did not judge by what Allah revealed, those are they that are the transgressors.” (Sura 5:46-47) The Qur’an of the 7th century AD states clearly that the Gospel of the Bible of the 7th century AD was inspired by God and given to Muslims and Christians and Jews for “guidance and light, and verifying what was before it of Taurat and a guidance and an admonition of those who guard (against evil).”

So, logically speaking, Muslims in the 7th century AD could trust what was written in the Bible that existed at that time. Plus, the *Qur’an* declares that “there is no changing the words of Allah; that is the mighty achievement.” If the Christian Church corrupted the Bible, as Muslims believe, it had to happen after Muhammad shared the *Qur’an* with them since the Qur’an ascribes total authenticity and authority to the Bible of the 7th century AD.

Christians and Muslims today should be able to agree that the Bible

of the 7th century AD was the Word of God. That's a good place to begin. The question then becomes, did the Church corrupt the authentic text of the Bible after the 7th century AD, and if so, how and when?

This is a huge problem for Muslims, and here's why. The writing of the Hebrew Old Testament was completed at the end of the 5th century BC. It had been in existence for a thousand years by the time Muhammad received the Qur'an. By the 7th century AD, Jews had taken their Holy Book to scores of countries and had translated it into many languages. The writing of the Christian New Testament was completed by the end of the 1st century AD. It had been in existence for more than 500 years by the time Muhammad received the Qur'an. By the 7th century AD, Christians had taken their Holy Book (that included both Old and New Testament writings) to scores of countries and had translated it into many languages. Christians of the 1st – 6th centuries AD had also included most of the verses found in the New Testament in thousands of letters and sermons. If the Old and New Testaments were corrupted by the Church, how did the Church corrupt it in all of the copies in all of the languages of the world? Is that what Muslims are claiming? That every copy of every Bible and all of the letters and sermons in every language in every nation was somehow corrupted sometime after the 7th century AD? Does that sound improbable? or impossible?

If the Bible somehow went through a process of massive corruption throughout the world sometime during the latter part of the 7th century AD or later, where is the proof? The fact is that ancient copies of the Old and New Testament exist to this day – written long before the Qur'an. Many of them are on display in museums around the world. They've been authenticated by non-Christian as well as Christian experts. I've written extensively about those ancient copies in previous studies (e.g. [Can I Trust The Bible? \(Part 11\)](#), [Can I Trust The Bible? \(Part 7\)](#), [Can I Trust The Bible? \(Part 5\)](#)), so please refer to them for more information about ancient textual evidence to the accuracy of our English translations of the Bible.

It is obvious to me, a former atheist, and should be to Muslims, that the Bible of the 7th century AD is the same Bible the world has in its

possession today. No corruption can be found before or after Muhammad received the Qur'an. In fact, just the opposite is true. God has "preserved" His Holy Word. The thousands of ancient Bible manuscripts, written centuries before the Qur'an, support the fact that the Bible of the 7th century AD and the Bible of the 21st century AD say the same thing. What Muslims should consider strongly is how well God preserved the Bible through centuries of attacks by non-believers. The Romans tried to destroy all copies of the Bible during the 4th century AD, but failed. God preserved His Word in the face of seemingly overwhelming opposition. The Bible today, in whole or part, can be found in 2,400 different languages. That includes Arabic and English. Those translations concur with the ancient copies of the Old Testament that date back to the 1st and 2nd centuries BC and copies of the New Testament that date back to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. Where's the corruption? It doesn't exist. What does exist is God's preservation of His Word.

The corruption that exists today is not the corruption of God's Word, but the corruption of people's hearts and minds. Muslims would be wise to take the advice of the *Qur'an* and obey the guidance and light of the Book. We, the people of the Book, submit ourselves to God and His Word. Muslims would be wise to do the same and submit themselves to the God of the Book.

Chapter Nine

Closing Thoughts

What we've attempted to do in this brief series is demonstrate how Christians can **defend** any teaching of the Bible against any attack from any group or force on earth. We chose the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ last December as an example of a vital teaching of the Church that is currently under attack from many groups of people around the world, and has been for centuries, to demonstrate ways to defend the Teachings of the Church. Our job is to "preach, teach, and defend." It's what we do.

"And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations." Mark 13:10

"And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'" Matthew 28:18-20

"I am appointed for the defense of the gospel." Philippians 1:16

"... always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." 1 Peter 3:15

We accomplish this extraordinary job that God has given us through four "pillars" of personal ministry.

1) **Please God** – "Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him." 2 Corinthians 5:9

2) **Persuade People** – "Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." 2 Corinthians 5:11

What is the “terror” of the Lord? – “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.” Romans 1:18-20

3) **Reconcile Souls** – “Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.” 2 Corinthians 5:18

4) **Represent Christ** – “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us.” 2 Corinthians 5:20

Our prayers are with you as you defend the Gospel of Jesus Christ in your world!

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