

Reasons to Believe

1. **You are in college to learn → belief there is something to learn → belief Truth exists.**
 - a. This college will deny the existence of Truth.
 - b. RZ – A correct philosophy must exhibit **logical consistency**, **empirical adequacy** and **experiential relevancy**; all answers must **individually correspond to reality** and all answers **must be coherent with each other**? These must address:
 1. **Origin.** How did you come to exist?
 2. **Meaning.** Why do you exist?
 3. **Morality.** How should you act? Is there a God?
 4. **Destiny.** Where are you going?
 - c. Only Jesus' answers satisfy these criteria. We'll see why.
 1. Contradictory statements can't be true! Don't try to argue against this.
"You will seek me and you will find me, when you search for me with all your heart."
– God (Jer. 29:11)
"I am the way and the Truth and the life..." – Jesus (Jn. 14:6)
2. **Naturalistic origin?** God must exist. **Implications of atheism (no morals, hope or meaning).**
 - a. 1st law of thermodynamics - naturalism can't account for the existence of matter.
 1. Physics has confirmed there was a beginning for the universe.
 - a. This convinced Einstein a creator had to exist.
 2. Matter was created – requiring a creator of some sort.
 - b. Evolution is a theory of how matter arranges itself – it doesn't explain matter's existence.
 1. All theories require a mechanism – evolution has none.
 - a. Natural selection is not a mechanism for speciation.
 2. One example: Simplest theoretical organism- 100,000 nucleotides, 10,000 amino acids and hundreds of functional proteins.
 - a. Nucleotides and amino acids won't form spontaneously out of "primordial soup."
 - b. Chirality! If they miraculously did, racemic mixtures would be present – making correct protein formation impossible.
 - c. Odds of naturally obtaining 100,000 nucleotides and 10,000 amino acids all with correct chirality = 1 in $10^{33,113}$.
 - d. It has been calculated that the probability of components necessary for the simplest theoretical prokaryote coming together randomly is ~ 1 in $10^{112,827}$.
 - e. 1 in 10^{45} is considered statistically impossible.
 - c. Many prominent scientists recognize the impossibility of an evolutionary worldview.
 1. Ex. Francis Crick – co-discoverer of the structure of DNA.
 - d. Anthropic principal – earth's suitability → purpose (over 150 universal factors necessary, in perfect accuracy, for life on earth). 10 to 15 new factors are discovered each year.
 - e. Design always implies a designer. Ex. An adult human body synthesizes ~150 x 10^{18} amino acids every second, with precise accuracy.
3. **Reasons to believe in the Bible.** The Bible is **logically consistent**, here are some reasons why:
 - a. The Bible is scientifically accurate – here a just a few things it describes:
 1. Radioactive decay (2Peter 3:10)
 2. Hydrologic cycles (Ps.135:7, Ec.1:7, Job 36:27-29)
 3. Atmospheric jet streams (Ecc. 1:6)
 4. Clouds and condensation (Job 26:8, 37:11)
 5. Earth's spherical shape (Job 40:22)
 6. The expansion of the universe (Job 26:7)
 7. The impossibility of numbering the stars (Jer. 33:22)
 8. Earth's foundation – hung on nothing (Job 26:7)
 9. That air has weight (Job 28:25)
 10. Hydrothermic vents (Gen. 7:11, Job. 38:16)
 11. That like begets like – a biological law (Gen. 1:11-12, 21, 25)

12. The chemical composition of “flesh” –the same compounds other matter consists of – described as dust (Gen. 2:7, 3:19)
13. That blood is vitally important for life (Lev. 17:11)
14. That one event could be seen across the world – an impossibility then – now possible through TV (Mt. 24:30, Rev. 11:9-11)
- b. The Bible is prophetically accurate (here are a few examples – there are thousands more).
 1. Jesus alone fulfilled over 300 (odds of just $8 = 1$ in 10^{17}).
 2. Jesus’ crucifixion prophesied 1000 years before crucifixion was even invented (Ps. 22:16).
 3. Alexander the Great, his reign, demise and the events, which followed his death (Great warrior from the West → early death → empire split four ways → 4 empires combined into 2 - the Tolomaic and the Selucid → these 2 combined into the Roman) – prophesied in such detail critics called it post written history until it was discovered that Alexander had even been given a copy of the book of Daniel – this was reported by Josephus (Daniel 8:5-12).
 4. Cyrus rebuilding Jerusalem and its temple prophesied 100 years before Cyrus’ birth and 100 years before Nebuchadnezar destroyed Jerusalem (Is.44:28).
 5. Tyre’s destruction prophesied in great detail: Tyre will be destroyed, made as bare as a rock, a place where fisherman dry their nets, rubble throne into the sea and it will never be rebuilt (Ez. 26).
- c. The Bible is historically accurate, real people, places and events corroborated by archeology (here are just a couple of examples).
 1. Hitites – critics condemned the Bible’s description of this group; archeological digs have since proven the existence of these people.
 2. Caesar Augustus’ census around the time of Christ’s birth (Luke 2:1).
- d. The Bible is full of mathematical, sequential and prophetic codes.
 1. Mathematical codes (prime number multiples in words, sentences, passages and books; sequential codes throughout).
 2. Prophetic codes embedded in the text.
- e. The Bible’s authors agree (over 40 authors of different backgrounds, times, social status, languages and ethnic groups).
- f. Bible is textually accurate (here is a quick comparison with Homer’s Illiad – the next closest textually accurate manuscript).
 1. The NT has copies from AD 125 (~25-70 years after written), The Illiad’s earliest copy is from 400 BC (500 years after written).
 2. NT has 24,000 early copies (~200 yrs) vs. Illiad’s 643.
- g. The Bible has the power to change human beings.

You may choose at the end of your investigative processes of the New Testament to say, “I choose not to believe it.” But you may not reserve the right to say, “Because there is not enough evidence to believe it.”

– Simon Greely - Famed Law Professor, Harvard Law School.

The entire Bible points to one person and one event – Jesus and his provision – our salvation.

4. Jesus’ authority.

- a. Jesus accurately described the human condition.
 1. All other religions adamantly claim that you can be good if you try.
 2. More people were killed last century than in all others combined.

The depravity of man is at once the most empirically verifiable reality but at the same time the most intellectually resisted fact. – Malcom Mugridge

- b. Jesus provided a remedy for that condition.
 1. His remedy is experientially relevant.
- c. Jesus impacted history more than any other human that has ever lived.
- d. Jesus triumphed over death (we’ll discuss this in more detail).
 1. He alone has authority to describe the means of salvation.

5. Reasons to believe in Jesus’ death and resurrection.

“And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile...” – 1 Corinthians 15:17

- a. Did Jesus really die in the first place? Discuss various theories.
 1. Swoon Theory – supposed that Jesus was only half dead when buried.
Impossible – No treatment could revive a crucified and speared victim.
 2. Eyewitness accounts were hallucinations, illusions or mistakes.
Impossible – Jesus’ body would have been presented by authorities.
 3. The body was stolen – **Impossible** – The Romans and Jews would not have stolen the body (they had a vested interest in stopping Christianity). The disciples could not have overpowered a Roman guard (especially considering their cowardice and unbelief).
 4. The body was moved – **Impossible** – When accounts of the resurrection started authorities could have produced the body.
- b. Some historical evidences.
 1. Jewish and Roman extra-biblical sources admit an empty tomb.
 - a. Josephus and the Jewish “Toledoth Jeshu.” (“positive evidence from a hostile source” – Dr. Paul Maier).
 2. John described pericardial and pleural effusion – clear fluid and blood form the spear wound – a fabrication wouldn’t have included this.
 3. The Jews had no belief that the Messiah would die in the first place.
 - a. Death by crucifixion was believed to be evidence of God’s curse – not evidence of God himself.
- c. Jesus’ burial.
 1. Joseph of Arimathea (A member of the Jewish Sanhedrin) buried Jesus.
 2. A fabrication wouldn’t glorify its own nemesis.
 3. Everyone would have known the location of Joseph’s property and tomb – making it impossible to hide anything.
 4. No competing independent burial stories.
 - a. If it were a fabrication there would have been other burial accounts also.
 5. The Roman seal was placed over the 2 ton rock over the entrance to the tomb.
 - a. Breaking a Roman seal was punished with upside down crucifixion.
 - b. A 2 ton rock was placed in front of the tomb.
 6. A roman guard, part of a Roman legion, was placed in front of the tomb.
 - a. Roman guards were undefeatable.
 1. Had they been defeated this would have been used as evidence against the resurrection.
 - b. Roman guard members were burned to death if they fell asleep at guard (12 would sleep in front of four guarding – they would rotate shifts).
 1. Not a single one would have fallen asleep, much less the whole guard.
 2. When they found Jesus’ tomb empty the guard fled – also punishable by death.
- d. Tomb found empty by women.
 1. First century AD - a woman’s testimony wasn’t even accepted in court.
 - a. A fabrication wouldn’t claim women found the empty tomb.
 2. Supposed discrepancies – all just different parts of the same story – no contradictions.
- e. The earliest Jewish and Roman response (described in Biblical and extra-biblical accounts) admitted an empty tomb.

1. The earliest Jewish response recorded in the Bible assumed an empty tomb.
 - a. If the body had been in the tomb there would be no argument today.
- f. Other Evidences for the resurrection.
 1. The Jews didn't even confidently believe in life after death for anyone.
 2. There were hundreds of eye witnesses (1Cor 15).
 - a. These included hostile witnesses.
 3. The Christians didn't believe the first news of the resurrection.
 4. They ALL went on to face torture and persecution and most died as martyrs (did they do this for a known lie?).
 - a. People often die for their beliefs, never for known lies.
 5. The Christian's creed – earliest documentation of the Christians' beliefs and observations.
 6. The Apostles used Christ's resurrection as proof for the gospel – if Jesus' body were available people would never have allowed such statements.
 7. Jesus predicted His own death and resurrection (Jn 2:18-22).
 8. Disciples adamantly claimed that Jesus rose physically.
 - a. A fabrication would have claimed spiritual resurrection.
6. **Jesus' message corresponds with reality – He alone hit the nail on the head.**
 - a. The Bible is **logically consistent**, only Jesus' description of our condition is **empirically correct** and only Jesus' remedy is **experientially relevant**.
 - b. Contradictory statements can't be true. The Bible is the only inspired Word of God.
 - c. The Bible alone provides coherent answers to the questions of origin, meaning, morality and destiny; these answers all correspond with reality.
 - d. Jesus alone correctly described our condition and the only remedy – Himself!
7. **What is the reason for this talk (not to build a Christian ego)?**
 - a. There is no naturalistic explanation for the universe.
 - b. The intricate design seen in the universe points to a designer.
 - c. The Bible is scientifically, mathematically, historically and prophetically accurate – It stands alone as the complete Word of God.
 - d. Jesus' life, death and resurrection are historical facts.
 - e. **The implications** → There is a God, He is the God of the Bible, He came to earth as a man, Jesus, He provided your only means of salvation.
 1. God created you, loves you with an everlasting love and has a wonderful plan for your life. He offers the abundant life on this earth and eternal life with Him after this earth. **Jer. 31:3, 2 Peter 3:9, Jn. 3:16, 10:10.**
 2. You have sinned and (if you're w/o Christ) are separated from God, having missed the mark of His holiness. Sin → eternal separation from God. **Rom. 3:23, 6:23.**
 3. Jesus paid the price, at the cross, for all your sins and **only** His work at the cross is sufficient for salvation. **Jn.14:16, 1 Cor. 15:3-6.**
 4. You must personally accept His salvation being reconciled to God and a personal relationship with Him. **Jn. 1:12, Rom. 10:9, Eph. 2:8-9.**

It all boils down to this. Naturalism can't account for matter or design. There is a God. He has manifested Himself to us through His in-errant Word. He loves you. You must be saved. That is a free gift. You must recognize your need and accept His personal invitation.

Rev. 3:20 – “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come in and eat with him and he with me.” – Jesus

God makes himself easy to be found. How will you respond to the evidence? Will you open the door?