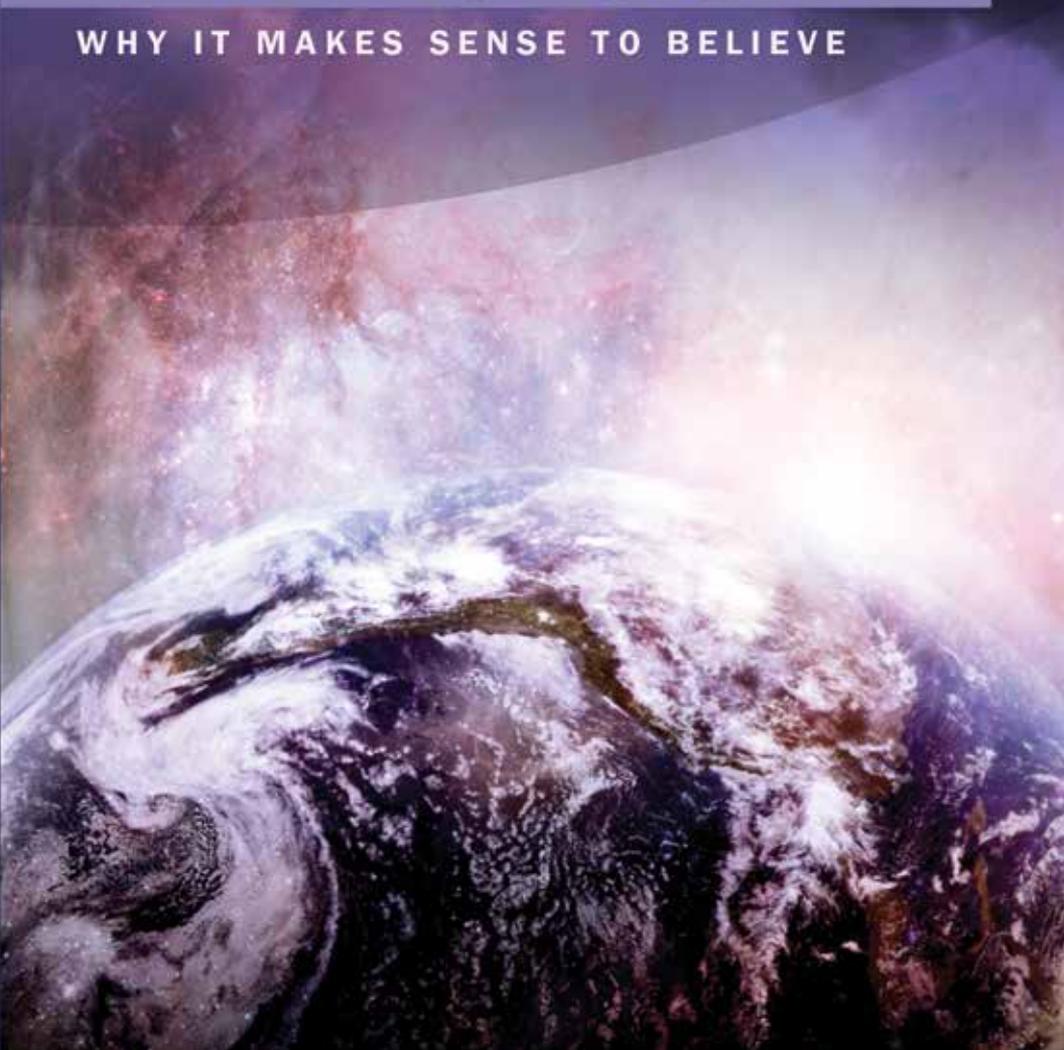


"...from everlasting to everlasting you are God." Psalms 90:2

IS THERE REALLY A LIVING GOD?

WHY IT MAKES SENSE TO BELIEVE



“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.”

~ Romans 1:19-20

Is There Really a Living God?

Why It Makes Sense to Believe

Does God Have a Role in the Modern World?

Good question. In the western world at least, there are widening doubts and broadening disbelief in the existence of God. Surveys suggest a host of reasons for these trends, including:

- **Rising interest in worldly rather than spiritual concerns**, especially the accumulation of riches and a preoccupation with material things and pursuits.
- **Scientific advances** seen as questioning or raising doubts about the existence of God and any revelation from him.
- **Less willingness to accept external authority in determining behavior**, with personal preferences and judgments typically assuming overriding importance.
- **Disillusionment** with the lifestyle and practices of many professedly religious people, often seen as hypocritical and inconsistent.

Readers can doubtless add to the list further important factors they see contributing to these trends.

True, some countering factors can be noted. Religious communities do remain strong in some parts of the western world, including the United States. They continue to play important roles, for example, in various social welfare programs. Yet church membership in the western world as a whole has continued to erode significantly.

Against this background is the rationality and credibility of personal faith in a supreme and living God, the key issues addressed in this booklet. Specifically:

- A God who created this universe and who sustains it day by day
- A God who directs the course of human history
- A God who wishes each of us very personally and individually to be involved in His purpose



If you are an atheist, I believe you would argue that God has no part in any of these roles: the source of this universe is unknowable apart from what science can attempt to discover, human history is entirely a product of man's direction, and personal faith in a living God is irrational and without meaning in the modern world. Views on these issues undoubtedly differ from person to person, but these core objections would seem to be common to all dissent.

The Bible is designed to be a spiritual guidebook, revealing God's purpose and how mankind can participate in it.

How then are we to proceed? Many people are in fact apathetic and indifferent about these matters. They are happy to live their lives focused on more immediate concerns. Others, however, want to find in life a higher purpose and meaning. They look for higher goals to guide human existence and behavior, hopefully providing a deeper and more lasting satisfaction.

Where can we go for such guidance? What source has sufficient credibility and reliability to enlighten us on things so fundamental? In this booklet, I wish to share with you why I believe the Bible has the unique authority and credibility to contribute to such guidance.

First, we need to consider the credibility of the Bible's claims. It presents itself as the authoritative word of the living God, and with good reason. It is designed to be a spiritual guidebook, revealing God's purpose and how mankind can participate in it.

Our Marvelous World – Evidence of Divine Power and Authority

Where do we begin in considering the credibility of the Bible? The letter of the apostle Paul to the Christians in Rome is a good place to begin. Here he argues that man's salvation is by faith in God and not by individual works, no matter how good. Paul begins his letter by stating,

I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes. (Romans 1:16)

Paul is directly addressing our issue. He sees the Gospel as having a thoroughly rational and firm foundation. Why? He goes on to explain in a very important passage:

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. (Romans 1:19-20)

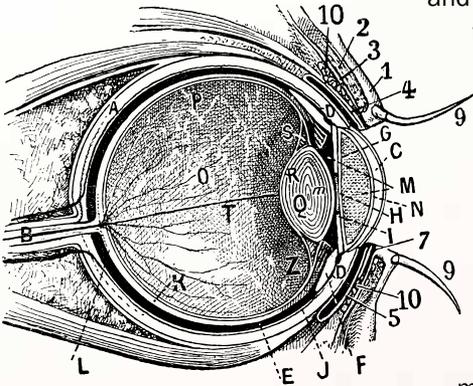
Paul is claiming that any rational observer of the world, in all of its infinite beauty and intricacy, should conclude that a mind, a divine mind, lies behind it all. He sees that as a thoroughly logical conclusion. The world and the consistent functioning of its laws over time speak strongly of a divine architect and sustainer. Enormous scientific advances have been made over the many years since Paul wrote, but the relevance of his language remains.

Indeed, to suggest that the extraordinarily intricate design of this world and the consistency of its physical laws happened by chance and accident seems hardly credible. Does it make sense to argue that it all occurred by accident? The

astounding dimensions of space down to the design

and workings of much smaller things, such as

the human eye, suggest the direction of a supreme mind and power. Even Charles Darwin in his “Origin of the Species” (1859) states, “To suppose that the eye...could have been formed by natural selection seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest degree.”



Despite his misgivings, Darwin did try to explain it through gradual changes from more primitive forms.

The apostle Paul, however, firmly attributes this magnificence in the created world, both for things great and small, directly and unambiguously to the living God.

Paul strengthens his argument by adding: “So they are without excuse” (Romans 1:20). The credibility of the proposition that a divine mind and purpose lie behind this world is so obvious to the great apostle that he adds a moral dimension. If a living God so self-evidently accounts for His great creative work, do we not then have a moral responsibility to Him?

Paul is challenging critics of divine authority to pause and consider the behavioral implications of their position. Without responsibility to the divine, men and women are encouraged to do “what is right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25), with all the consequences that such behavior may bring.

The Role of Rational Faith

In all this, Paul acknowledges the essential role of faith:

For in it [the Gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith'. (Romans 1:27)

Given the evidence of God's creative and sustaining powers, Paul considers that faith in God and His purpose is thoroughly reasonable. Of course, it's quite impossible to subject God to full intellectual scrutiny and prove His existence with scientific methods. Faith and trust must necessarily be involved.

Before considering further Biblical evidence, it's important to remember how we act in faith in our daily lives, often on much less substantial evidence.

We have faith in promises made to us by our employers; faith that contracts entered into will be kept; faith that other drivers will adhere to the rules of the road; faith indeed that the sun will rise as it did on the previous day, and so on. Some of these examples of faith are rational, some perhaps not.

But faith is a key ingredient.

How is this relevant for our discussion? It's a reminder that we have to be sensible and reasonable about faith. Faith is no longer faith if it's about somebody or something fully known. Therefore, when the Bible calls for faith in the living God, it is not calling for thought or action quite outside our normal experience. It's placing well-understood human behavior on a much higher level.

At this point, we need to consider more specifically what the Bible has to say about faith. In a key passage in Hebrews 11:6, we read,

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Faith and belief are essentially the same concept; the word "believe" is actually derived from the word "faith" in the original New Testament text. That said, this passage necessarily invites the question: what is *faith*, and what is *belief*?

The writer of Hebrews addresses this issue earlier in this chapter, saying,

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1)

The word translated "*substance*" in its simplest meaning conveys the idea of foundation or beginning. In another sense, it is a quality of assurance or confidence, based on a sure foundation.

Why is this important? The writer is in fact making a critical point. Faith has substance; things less tangible become real and solid with the exercise of faith.



*Faith has substance;
things less tangible become real
and solid with the exercise of faith.*

Indeed, without this step of faith, “it is *impossible* to please God.” We cannot move into God’s world and understand His ways and purpose without taking this essential step of faith. Indeed, faith becomes the very means and basis of our salvation. Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, states “God would justify (consider righteous) the Gentiles by faith” (Galatians 3:8).

Fulfilled Bible Prophecy Indicates its Divine Origin

Let’s consider further this essential step of faith. The immediate issue for many is whether or not it is rational to take such a step. What other evidence, beyond observing the majesty and magnificence of God’s created world, exists for having a confident faith in a living God?

A clear and striking example is the fulfillment of Bible prophecies, often occurring long after the original prediction, and often against expected outcomes. The Bible makes it very clear that the test of a true prophet, speaking on God’s authority, is whether the predicted event or circumstance does, in fact, come to pass. The Bible applies a strong test.

When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him. (Deuteronomy 18:22)

The Bible elaborates further on this claim, saying in the New Testament,

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, to which you will do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place. (2 Peter 1:19)

The accuracy of prophetic predictions is presented in the Bible as a legitimate and crucial test of the credibility of the Bible. Without evidence of Biblical predictions being fulfilled, our confidence in its writings would be greatly diminished, and, in

turn, our trust in God Himself discounted. Our faith in a living God would then be on less firm ground. With many Biblical prophecies fulfilled, we can feel that our confidence and faith are well placed.

Israel's History Predicted in the Bible

As it turns out, there *are* many prophecies in the Bible that have been fulfilled. Perhaps the most striking relates to the history of Israel, a people central to God's purpose. In this, we can keep aside any personal feelings about Israel as a people, whether our feelings are positive, negative or neutral towards the Jews. This is purely a matter, for our present purposes, of the accuracy of prophetic fulfillment.

Being God's special people, Israel had unique responsibilities, as the Bible clearly states. In a very straightforward challenge, God said, if they should obey His voice and be careful to do all His commandments, then,

*...the LORD your God would set you high above all nations of the earth.
(Deuteronomy 28:1)*

Conversely,

If you do not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you. (Deuteronomy 28:15)

What were these curses? Perhaps most ominously,

You shall become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all the nations where the Lord will drive you. (Deuteronomy 28:37)

Despite this direct and very clear warning, Israel did indeed slide into idolatry, gradually moving away from God and losing sight of His commandments. At least at two levels the Biblical prediction was realized: Israel became a curse in many lands, and its peoples were led away first to the surrounding nations (Assyria and Babylon especially), and later to almost all nations.

Nevertheless, there was much more prophetic fulfillment in store for Israel. The prophets, against overwhelming odds to the contrary, went on to declare that Israel would return to their homeland. This widely dispersed and often-scorned people were to be restored and returned to their own land. That idea, even only a century ago, seemed impossible. How could, for example, Jeremiah's prophecy in this respect have any hope of realization?



*David's Tower,
Jerusalem*

And they shall come back from the land of the enemy. There is hope in your future, says the Lord, that your children shall come back to their own border. (Jeremiah 31:16-17)

Other Biblical prophets made similar predictions. How could a widely dispersed, often persecuted people with little organization, ever realistically hope to be reestablished in their own land?

It was a nice dream, but in reality it had little prospect of being realized.

Yet, after almost 2000 years of wandering among the nations, the state of Israel came to birth on May 14, 1948. It was a remarkable fulfillment of Bible prophecy! Against all expectations, Israel was restored to its homeland and recognized as an independent state by the United Nations. In subsequent years, against much adversity, Israel has built upon and consolidated its national identity.

The course of Israel's history, as can be seen, has a profound bearing on the credibility of the Bible and on its divine origins.

It was not only the return of Israel to its homeland that was remarkable. The surrounding events were completely in line with these prophecies. Israel did come "back from the land of the enemy" (Jeremiah 31:16).

While Israel's hardships and difficulties had extended throughout the centuries, none would equal the appalling circumstances of the Holocaust during the Second World War. Israel experienced, one could argue, the greatest evil in its history, and very likely the worst atrocities in the whole of human history!

Indeed, in a remarkable twist, the cause for a homeland for Israel was advanced dramatically by sympathetic responses, both nationally and individually, by the circumstances of the Holocaust. The prophetic writings were indeed being fulfilled amazingly.

More Biblical Prophecies Fulfilled!

That Israel would become a nation again, against all odds, is even more notable when matched with prophetic predictions about the destiny of some of the surrounding nations.

For example, Babylon, a mighty empire in the days of Israel's prophets had a major impact on Israel's fortunes. It had been the superpower of the then known world for a long time, but at the height of its power, its demise was clearly foretold by the Biblical prophets.

Isaiah, writing at around 700BC, predicted a time when Babylon would "never be inhabited, nor will it be settled from generation to generation...wild beasts of the desert will lie there, and their houses will be full of owls" (Isaiah 13:20-21). Babylon would be swept "with the broom of destruction, says the LORD of hosts" (Isaiah 14:23).

It was not only the return of Israel to its homeland that was remarkable. The surrounding events were completely in line with these prophecies.

At the time, people who knew the influence of Babylon would have laughed at these dire predictions by Isaiah and other Old Testament prophets. However, the Babylonian empire *did* collapse in 539 BC. The Persians under Cyrus entered the city, and Belshazzar, the last Chaldean ruler, was slain (dramatically described in Daniel 5:30).

Even more startling is that Babylon has never been settled again. It remains to this day a desolate place, despite the efforts of Sadaam Hussein to rebuild these ancient ruins! Consider the implications of a prophecy that could at any time be proven false.

Similar predictions about the decline of kingdoms and cities were made at the height of their powers. The prophet Ezekiel details a succession of prophecies against the nations and cities surrounding Israel—Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, and Tyre—predicting their impending decline or destruction.

The humbling decline of Egypt was also clearly foretold long before the event. (See as an example Ezekiel 32.) Reasons for these overthrows are given by the prophets, typically arrogance, pride, and the persecution of God's people.

One Final, Surprising Example

Consider one more especially remarkable example of fulfilled Bible prophecy. In Daniel chapter 2, we are given the details of an extraordinary dream of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. In his dream he saw a large image or statue composed of various metals. These metals represented a series of five major empires that would dominate the Middle East: Babylonian, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and a fifth empire.

The significance of these empires is that each one, in its turn, exercised authority and power over Israel, the land, and its people. This prophecy is remarkable for several reasons:

- 1 Only the first of these empires existed when Daniel wrote, though he lived to see the second one (the Persians).
- 2 As surely as night follows day, Greece, then Rome each came to power as prophesied.
- 3 Even more dramatic is why the fifth empire has not yet appeared: When the people of Israel proved rebellious and unwilling to submit to the power of Rome, Rome destroyed the nation and drove the Jews out of the land. In a moment of time (AD 70), they ceased to be a nation in their own land and became a despised, stateless people wandering from nation to nation.
- 4 Because of this scattering by Rome, there was no Jewish land or people for a fifth empire to exercise their power over. This situation lasted over 1900 years until May 14, 1948, as mentioned earlier. Since that date, by virtually miraculous means, the nation and people of Israel have existed in their ancient land.
- 5 This also means the fifth and final power is yet to emerge, and therefore, a present day test of this prophecy remains for us to witness.

And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold – the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure. (Daniel 2:44-45)

Although much Bible prophecy has been fulfilled, much remains yet to be realized. This is especially so with prophecies such as in Daniel 2 that focus on circumstances surrounding the return of Jesus Christ to this earth. He will be the ruler of the kingdom mentioned that will “stand forever”. (Think about what is said in the Lord’s Prayer that is still often repeated in churches today.)

When we see Bible prophecy fulfilled so accurately in the past, and even in our own day, it can give us greater confidence that the Bible is truly the product of a divine mind.

The Bible's Consistent Message

Another aspect that can give us confidence in the Bible's reliability is its consistency. Though the Bible has been written by many authors spanning a period of around 1,600 years, its interlocking harmony is one of its key features. An example of this are the many prophecies fulfilled within the Bible itself. One instance of special importance is the many events of Jesus' life predicted centuries before in the Old Testament scriptures.

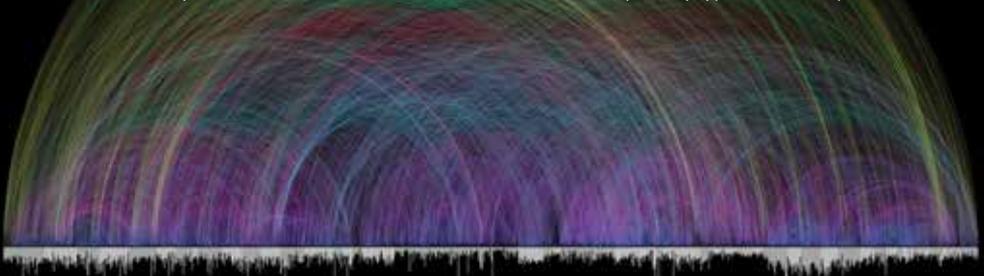
Consider events at the beginning and end of his earthly ministry. Matthew's gospel, describing the circumstances surrounding Jesus' birth, cites in chapters 1 and 2 several passages from the Old Testament as "being fulfilled"—the birth in Bethlehem, the attending persecution, and the settling in Nazareth in particular. At the other end of the Lord's life, the events surrounding Jesus' crucifixion are also clearly foretold.

The details given in Psalm 22 of Jesus' suffering and sacrifice, for example, can be matched very precisely with the account of his crucifixion in the Gospels (see Matthew 27). This is not only about the consistency of Biblical writings that speak of a common theme, but also about the consistency in the purpose of God being revealed to us.

THIS IS A VISUALIZATION OF INTERCONNECTIONS BETWEEN ALL THE CHAPTERS IN THE BIBLE.

It is a visual demonstration of the internal consistency in the Bible. The bar graph along the bottom represents all of chapters in the Bible. Books alternate in color between white and light gray. The length of each bar denotes the number of verses in the chapter. Each of the 63,779 cross references found in the Bible is depicted by a single arc, the color corresponding to the distance between the two chapters, creating a rainbow-like effect.

Source: Christoph Römheld and Chris Harrison, www.chrisharrison.net/index.php/Visualizations/BibleViz



Of further crucial importance in terms of the Gospel message is Jesus' resurrection from the dead. This was foretold in Scripture, a crowning aspect of prophetic fulfillment. Peter, in his first recorded address in the Acts of the Apostles (2:25-28), cites a Psalm by King David (Psalm 16:8-11). There, David foretells Jesus' resurrection,

You will not leave my soul in Sheol [the grave], nor will you allow your Holy One to see corruption. (Acts 2:27)

Peter, reinforcing the point, adds,

This Jesus, God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. (Acts 2:32)

Confronted by the initial disbelief of the disciples, Jesus had earlier

presented himself alive after his suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. (Acts 1:3)

Later, the apostle Paul reports that large numbers had seen the risen Christ, who "rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:4).

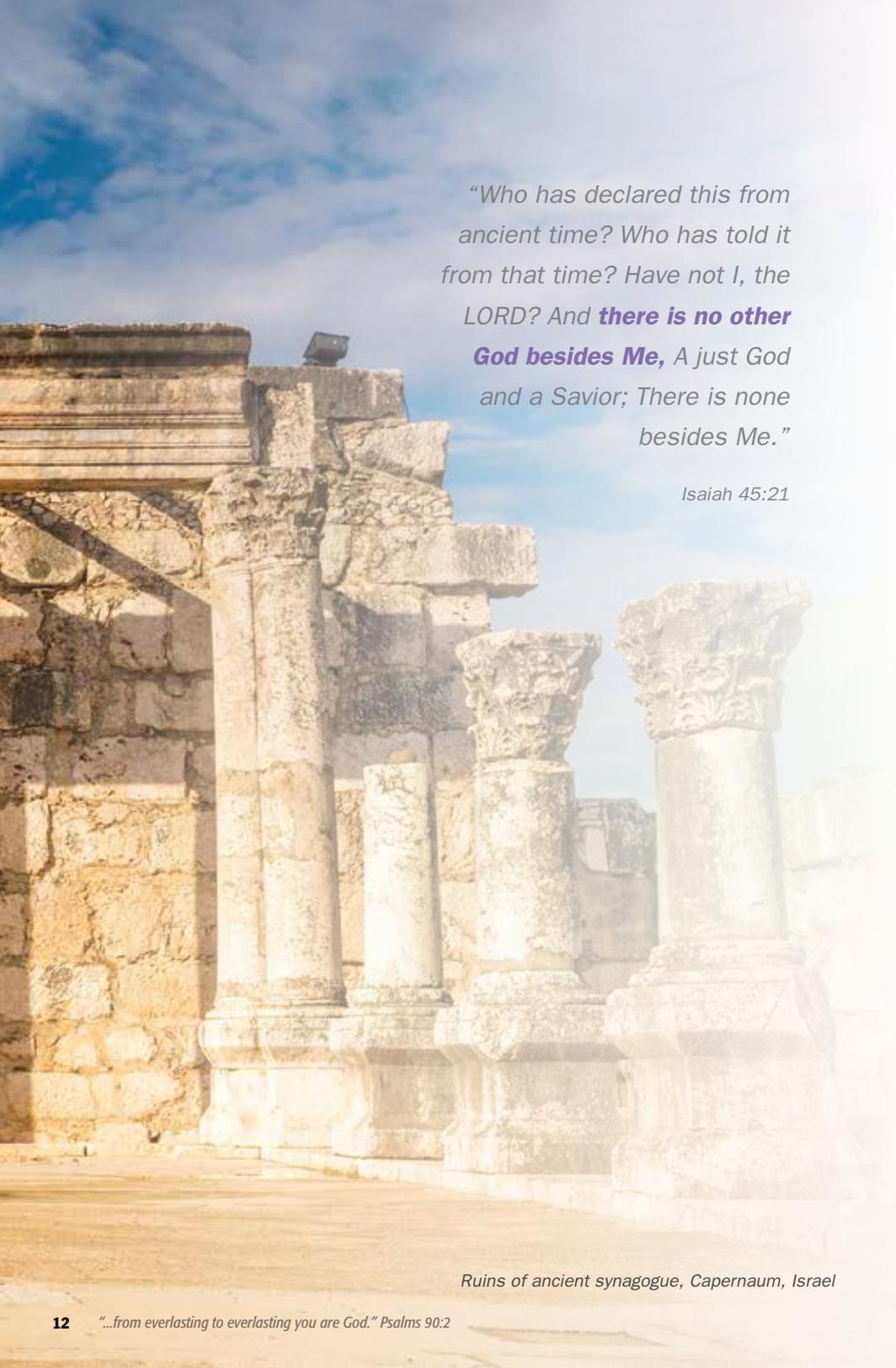
The Bible had long foretold this crucial event in many ways and at many times, and now, the predictions had been realized. Jesus' resurrection in accord with Scripture had a major, transforming influence on the early disciples. This key fact was consistently a central feature in their presentation of the Gospel message.¹

We can see now that fulfilled prophecy is not just about establishing the credibility of God's word, even though that is important. More fundamentally, such fulfillment, particularly within Scripture itself, emphasizes the critical consistency and firmness of God's purpose. It's all about God's unfolding plan of redemption for those willing to receive it and act upon it. Peter can therefore say authoritatively,

We have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place. (2 Peter 1:19)

Establishing rational grounds for Biblical faith, while a significant and essential step, is not an end in itself. Rather, the end is to discover that there is indeed a living God who has a plan and purpose for mankind that is sure and steadfast.

1. The reader may be interested in another booklet in this series that addresses the importance of the resurrection as the Christian's only hope of life: *Dying to Live – is there really an answer to mortality?*



*“Who has declared this from ancient time? Who has told it from that time? Have not I, the LORD? And **there is no other God besides Me**, A just God and a Savior; There is none besides Me.”*

Isaiah 45:21

Ruins of ancient synagogue, Capernaum, Israel

Evidence of Archaeology

There are some other features that can strengthen our confidence in the Bible as the word of a real, living God. Archaeology is one of these that has confirmed the historical accuracy of the Bible in many instances. Archaeological findings in Biblical lands range from large structures such as monuments, tombs, and buildings to smaller objects such as inscriptions, coins, and a whole array of ancient artifacts. They relate to both the Old and New Testament records.

Biblical accounts, for example, of the invasions against Israel by the Assyrian King Sennacherib (2 Kings 18:13) and by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 24:1-7) are confirmed in ancient Near Eastern inscriptions—the prism of Sennacherib commemorating the former campaign, and the Lachish Letters commemorating the latter. The desolation of Babylon referred to earlier has been authenticated by many archaeological discoveries in that area.

Many wax and clay seals bearing inscriptions, such as those of Baruch and Seriah featured in Jeremiah's prophecy, have been found dating back to times consistent with the Biblical record.

As for the New Testament, many archaeological digs confirm the accuracy of the Scriptural accounts. For example, ancient inscriptions mention key figures such as Pontius Pilate (Luke 23:1) and Herod the Great (Matthew 2:1), placing them in times and in roles thoroughly consistent with the New Testament records. Major digs around the city of Jerusalem have yielded relics of buildings, and art works and inscriptions in line with the Biblical descriptions. Overall, many and varied items mentioned in the Bible have been discovered in the forms and with the functions described.

Taken together, these many findings provide further strong support for the authenticity of the Biblical accounts.

The Apostle Paul's Challenge

With what we have considered so far, a case can be made that there is a living God who is in control of this world. Further, there is strong evidence that the Bible is His word written under inspiration. Fulfilled prophecy, historical authenticity, and internal consistency are among the factors establishing the Bible as a sure guide to God's ways and His purpose.

True, in the final analysis, faith is needed to accept fully this position. However, this, as already stated, is not irrational faith, but faith based on a reasonable assessment of the evidence. Accordingly, Biblical faith is described in Hebrews 11:1 as having substance, a conviction about things not seen. It is not baseless or imagined, but fully credible as a foundation for understanding and appreciating God's purpose.

How then do we proceed from this point? What is God's plan and purpose in the context of His overall control of this world?

The apostle Paul's famous speech in Athens during his second missionary journey to Gentile lands provides excellent guidance, being set against a background of some of the factors we have been considering (Acts 17:16-34). The citizens of Athens, as described by Paul and acknowledged in history, were very keen seekers about the origin and purpose of things. New teachings were of great interest to them, who "...spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing" (Acts 17:21). This interest included discussions on divine powers and purpose.

So wide, as well as vague, was their understanding of such matters that they included an altar to an unknown god among their objects of worship. Paul, observing such an altar when moving around the city, seized on it as a key element of his address to the Athenians. It is interesting to note that evidence of two such inscriptions has been found by archaeologists.

Paul begins his speech by stressing the wonders of God's created world, very similar to the opening comments in his letter to the Romans, as we have already observed:

God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands...He gives to all life, and breath, and all things. (Acts 17:24-25)

Having acknowledged God's overall sovereignty of the world, Paul goes on to describe His purpose:

And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth... that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. (Acts 17:26-27)

God's purpose and wish, as here described, is that men and women might have a relationship with Him, if they so choose.

Then comes the personal challenge. Paul is very aware that the message he is presenting involves a personal response. The challenge he is making remains highly relevant today: "Being then the offspring of God", he says, we should not think that He is like "gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising" (Acts 17:29). In our very materialistic age, the relevance of Paul's stress on avoiding the worship of material things and pursuits remains as immensely important as ever.

Paul's challenge, however, deepens. He goes on to say,

Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent. (Acts 17:30)

This further step in his argument may seem distinctly old-fashioned: *Repent!*

What is that all about? He seems to invoke older moral and other values from which modern men and women have at last escaped. We are masters, are we not, of our own destiny? The age of definitive moral and religious values has now passed. But, no, says the apostle Paul, God continues to be the abiding point of authority for all humanity.

His created world remains in essence as He designed it and as He has forever maintained it. Equally, His purpose and moral principle for humanity remain unchanged. The self-evident existence of the Creator, Paul stresses, has major implications for our accountability to Him. His authority is established so clearly in the created world. We need, therefore, to seek out and respond to His purpose.

Paul does not close his address without a further, very telling point, and a clear challenge:

He [God] has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance on this to all by raising him from the dead. (Acts 17:31)

What are his main points here?

- **A day of judgment** has been determined by God.
- This righteous judgment will be exercised by the **one appointed**.
- This **one appointed is the Lord Jesus Christ**, who God raised from the dead.
- Jesus' resurrection assures that God has **the will and capacity to carry out His declared purpose**.

Paul is not raising points and issues unaddressed in other parts of the Bible. Indeed, he is emphasizing the heart and soul of the Gospel message. The march of history is not pointless. It is being guided by God, culminating in the establishment of God's kingdom on this earth, with Christ as king. The Bible is full of expectations of this great culmination of God's purpose. One example of many passages is Zechariah 14:9.

*And the Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day, it shall be—
"The LORD is one," and His Name one.*

Before leaving Paul's speech to the Athenians, we should note their response,

And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said 'We will hear you again on this matter'. (Acts 17:32)

Paul left them to think it over. Some, we are told, "joined him and believed."

Our Choice

The options remain unchanged today. We can, even if not mocking as with some of Paul's audience in Athens, perhaps be skeptical about the challenge of believing in God. Yes, faith is required, and indeed is a critical foundation for responding to God's revealed purpose for humanity. Alternatively, we might be like the other group of Paul's audience in Athens, willing to consider carefully what God's word is telling us.

In all this, we need to recognize that our choice has consequences. We cannot avoid the challenge of Christ Jesus judging the world in righteousness. Men and women are responsible to their Creator for their decisions and actions. The idea of accountability before God might bother us, but the Bible does not shy away from stressing the point.

Does that all sound rather frightening? Judgment can surely have that connotation, but we need to look at the issue in a wider context. The apostle John wrote:

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear. (1 John 4:18)

The Bible presents the loftiest goal of the human spirit as striving to be at one with our Creator, and to love Him and all His ways.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind. (Luke 10:27)

Why wouldn't we want it to be so? Don't we wish to be at one with Him who has made us and sustains us? "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," declared Jesus (Luke 12:32). God has made it abundantly clear in the Bible that He wishes us to participate fully in His purpose.

The choice with such great personal consequence is **ours to make**.

~ Ron Hicks





The Christadelphians, meaning “*Brethren in Christ*” (Heb. 2:11), believe the Bible to be the inspired word of God and our only guide in life. It is our desire that you experience the joy of discovering God’s word for yourself.

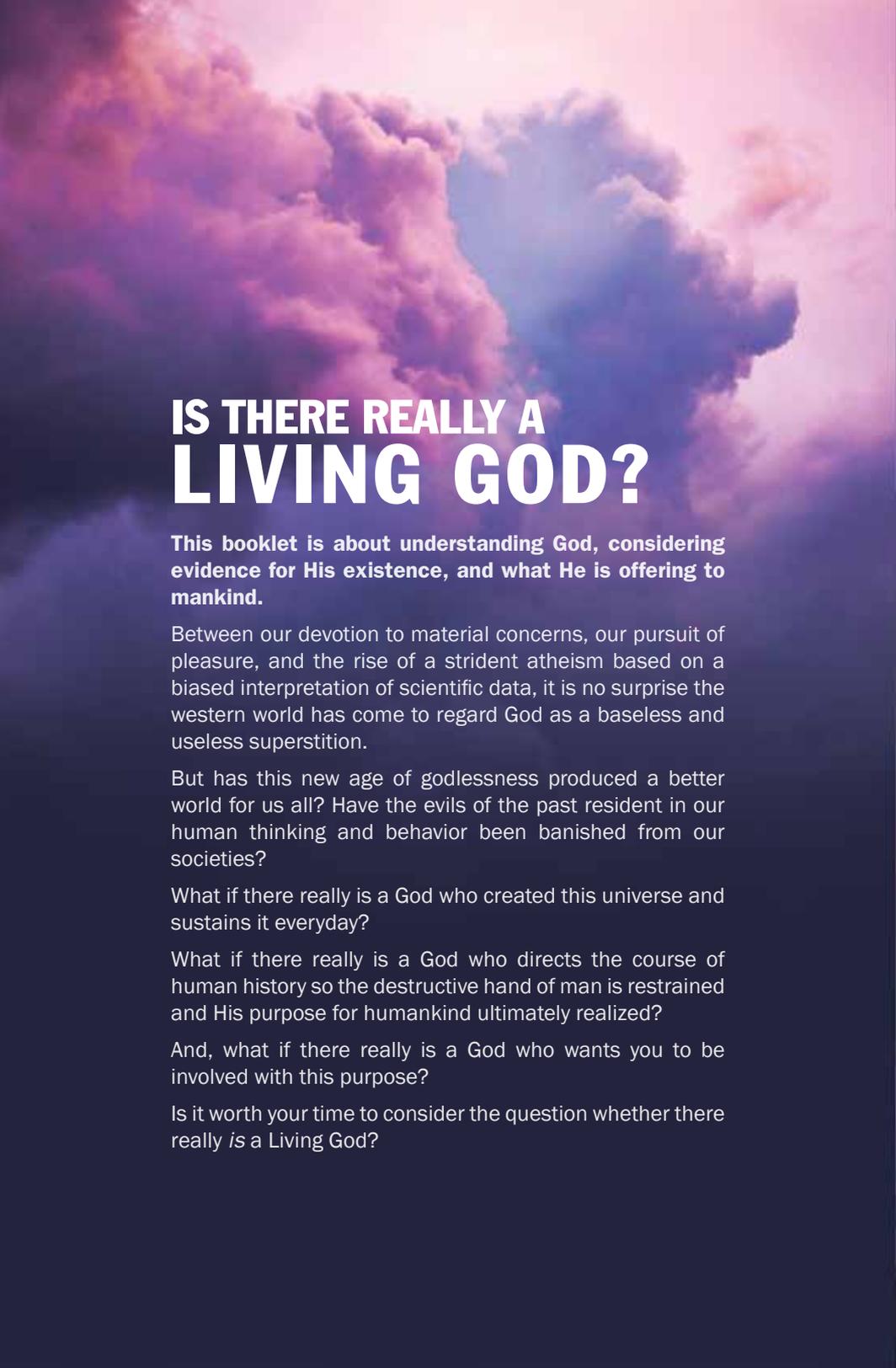
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IS THERE REALLY A LIVING GOD?

This booklet is about understanding God, considering evidence for His existence, and what He is offering to mankind.

Between our devotion to material concerns, our pursuit of pleasure, and the rise of a strident atheism based on a biased interpretation of scientific data, it is no surprise the western world has come to regard God as a baseless and useless superstition.

But has this new age of godlessness produced a better world for us all? Have the evils of the past resident in our human thinking and behavior been banished from our societies?

What if there really is a God who created this universe and sustains it everyday?

What if there really is a God who directs the course of human history so the destructive hand of man is restrained and His purpose for humankind ultimately realized?

And, what if there really is a God who wants you to be involved with this purpose?

Is it worth your time to consider the question whether there really *is* a Living God?