

Proof for the Existence of God

by Rev. Tom Aicken

The question is often asked by unbelievers around the world, “If God really exists, why doesn’t He prove it once and for all and beyond all shadow of doubt?” As we shall soon see, the very fact that such a question is even asked takes us into a study of man as well as into a study of God’s own being. I’ll begin this article with God and what He has revealed about Himself, and from that we’ll go on to learn what He has told us about man and see why he asks such a question.

It’s perfectly true that God doesn’t *prove* His existence in ways that people dead in sin typically expect and feel they’re entitled to receive. What He does instead, and we see this from the very first verse of the Bible, is to *assert* His existence. Gen. 1:1, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” There it is, an assertion of His existence, but not proof. Why does the Lord God do this? Surely, it’s for two reasons: (a) It’s God who is in control over everything (Dan. 4:35), who determines what is to be revealed and how (Deut. 29:29); moreover, (b) He’s to be believed rather than tested (Matt. 4:4), and we’re to commit everything to Him, our faithful Creator, who judges righteously (1 Pet. 2:23).

While, however, God doesn’t give the type of proof for His existence that men may be looking for, this is not to say that He fails to demonstrate His presence and power; indeed, He does so overwhelmingly and in a vast number of ways. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world” (Psalm 19:1-4).

Would anyone look at a painting from an earlier age, for instance, and seriously express that no one ever painted it, that it just came into being on its own, whether from a big bang or by some mysterious evolutionary process over millions of years? In the same way, no one in his right mind is going to think that the natural realm suddenly appeared out of nothing or that life slowly evolved from an uncreated amoeba. Every theory of the world coming into being apart from God creating and sustaining it is absurd beyond rational belief; one has to be willfully blind to truth and utterly desperate to deny the clear evidence we have for God ever to pose such careless and wholly unsubstantiated theories.

This may seem like a harsh judgment to make, but think about it. We may *know* God, personally, only by faith in Jesus Christ which comes through special revelation – namely, the Bible – as its message of Christ and Him crucified is proclaimed (Rom. 10:14-17). Clearly, most people in the world are unfamiliar with the Word of God and have never heard that glorious gospel preached. Those who have never heard the good news of Christ are not as responsible (i.e. not to the same extent) as those who have heard it (Luke 12:48). Nevertheless, we know a great deal *about* God through general revelation – which is creation itself – and, as we have seen, these are details that may be observed by all (Psalm 19), and so it is that these are people who are responsible for what at least they do know.

All men, for instance, may learn from observation about the aseity of God. What that means is that God not only demonstrates His existence in the things He has created, but reveals at the same time that He is eternal (He has neither beginning nor end), that He, unlike His creatures, is self-existent and isn't dependent on anyone or anything. Indeed, everyone and everything is wholly dependent on Him, the Creator Himself, in whom we all live and move and have our being. It's precisely because these things are so widely known that not only atheists, but even religious people who willfully bow down to gods of their own creation rather than to the God who has created them, are so far off track and subject to His burning wrath.

Paul writes, “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness” – i.e. they go against what they observe and instinctively know to be so – “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, because although they knew God” – or knew *about* Him – “they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man – and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things” (Rom. 1:18-23). You see, then, the absurdity of men expecting God to prove His existence when they are not prepared to consider the undeniable evidence with which He confronts them each and every day.

Let's move on now to how we can know, not only that God is real, but that His Word is true. Here are ten compelling points which need to be considered:

1. The Scriptures are not a scientific textbook, no, but neither do they reveal anything contrary to the facts of science as we have come to know them. For example, many say the earth is much older than what the Bible tells us. It's not the Bible, however, but radiometric dating that is inaccurate. Certain rocks were recently assessed to be well over 1,000,000 years old, yet, coming from the volcanic activity of Mount St. Helens, their actual age was known to be no more than twenty years. Lesson: Let's stop using such unreliable dating methods.
2. These sacred Scriptures are riddled with fulfilled prophecy, and the fact that these prophecies were fulfilled precisely as they were first predicted, with information that only God Himself could have known beforehand, they are in themselves a profound testimony to distinguish the prophecies of God from the prophecies of men (Deut. 18:20-22).
3. In addition to fulfilled prophecy we find the testimony of countless miracles, supernatural events which could only be achieved by the power of God, and, once again, they were performed with the set purpose of distinguishing what is of God and what is of men (Acts 2:22; Heb. 2:3,4).
4. The resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth is a most notable event and the most glorious display of divine power in human history. Jesus made eleven such resurrection appearances about which we have been told, one of them to over five hundred people at one time (1 Cor. 15:6), and there can be no question that His resurrection from the dead has transformed the lives of countless numbers of people. His crucifixion paid the penalty for the sins of all those whom the Father has given Him; His resurrection, in turn, is their assurance and comfort that they, too, will be raised to live and reign with Him for all eternity (vv. 12-23).
5. The resurrection of Jesus testifies to the trustworthiness of the Bible, but so, too, does the demonstrated commitment of its human writers. Paul, for example, witnessed with his own eyes the resurrected Christ (v.8), and later saw visions of heaven too wonderful to describe (2 Cor. 12:1-7), and, demonstrating the reality of these extraordinary experiences, he was prepared to suffer every kind of affliction, torture and even death itself, in order to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ (2 Cor. 11:22-33). Pretenders will never do that.

6. Another compelling testimony to biblical reliability is the unity of Holy Writ. Though these Scriptures had different human authors, people from several different backgrounds and circumstances writing over a period of many centuries, the Bible has a remarkable unity, a fact which demonstrates its one divine Author tying everything together. A prime example of this may easily be seen in its teaching of the Trinity; no one really understands how there can be three Persons in one God, yet the Christian believes it with all his heart because that is how God has consistently made Himself known from Genesis to Revelation.

7. Along with the unity of Holy Scripture is the fact that it is one complete book. Had the Old Testament stood alone, it would have been the most disappointingly unfinished narrative in history. Had the New Testament stood alone, it would have made very little sense. We need the whole account, namely, the first creation and Adam's fall into sin (Gen. 1-3), the second creation (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15) provided by the righteousness and substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ, and with that the third creation (Rev. 21), an eternal rest for the redeemed of the Lord in the presence of God and His angels.

8. The indestructability of God's Word gives further testimony to its divine inspiration and trustworthiness. Most ancient writings have passed away into obscurity, and much of what we do have is fragmentary. The Bible, however, has been preserved and has endured every attempt to stamp it out. It was the first book to be published with the invention of the printing press, has been translated into more languages than any other collection of writings, and is still the most widely read literature in all the world.

9. Holy Scripture authenticates itself (2 Tim. 3:16,17; 2 Pet. 3:15,16). For more on this, and how significant it is, please see the last two pages of this article.

10. Finally, the most powerful testimony to every awakened soul is that of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit who bears testimony to and with the Word of God, who assures him that he is a child and heir of God, and who helps him in all his weaknesses. If you are not a Christian, my friend, trust in Christ Jesus today and you, too, will receive the Spirit of God. If you are trusting in Him, you may be sure that you have the Holy Spirit already, along with all the benefits of His regenerating grace, for you would surely not have sought refuge in Christ apart from the Spirit making you so willing to do so in a day of His power (Eph. 2:8-10).

Let's look, finally, at what we can learn from the fact that Holy Scripture authenticates itself and how the Christian may use that in defence of biblical authority.

A believer, for example, tells his unbelieving friend that he believes the Bible to be the inspired, inerrant, and only infallible rule of faith and practice, the ultimate authority over everything else that has ever been written, and he believes that because this is what the Bible says about itself.

The unbeliever responds, "Oh, but that's circular reasoning. It doesn't make any sense to believe that the Bible is the highest authority just because that's what the Bible claims about itself. Any document can make a similar claim – in fact, many of the books of cults and other false religions do indeed make similar claims – but that doesn't establish their authority."

The believer adds, "Well, to some degree you are right, but what then is your highest authority?" The unbeliever answers, "I think the highest authority, what I trust above everything else, is my own mind, my own capacity to examine the evidence and to determine for myself what is true." The Christian asks, "And why do you think that?" The unbeliever replies, "Because that's what makes the most sense to me."

The believer tells him, "Oh, but that is circular reasoning as well. You are willing to trust your own mind, your own powers of deduction, to be your highest authority – why? – because that's what your own mind tells you to believe! This may surprise you," he continues, "but I think circular reasoning makes the most sense in determining one's ultimate authority. If, for instance, I say that I believe the Bible to be the highest authority just because some philosopher or scientist says it is, am I not then placing that person and his supposed expertise above the Bible itself? It would surely be more consistent, if the Bible really is my final authority, to let the Bible speak and determine for me what my ultimate authority should be. I won't quote what I regard to be a lesser authority to establish the greater authority, but will proceed immediately to what I believe is the greatest authority, the highest and best authority, for that answer."

The Christian continues to build on this argument and tells his friend, "It makes good sense that I quote the Bible if that is my highest authority, and it makes equally good sense that you refer to the thinking of your own mind if that's your

highest authority. I wouldn't expect you to do otherwise. Up to this point we're on equal footing. All we need to do now, therefore, is to compare the known reliability of your mind with the known reliability of the Bible, and in doing so we can learn which one is better and truly more reliable than the other."

With that, the Christian proceeds to ask the unbeliever, "Has your mind ever lied to you? Have you ever jumped to unwarranted conclusions without having all the facts before you, without having fully investigated the issue beforehand? In other words, have you ever been proved wrong in your thinking about anything?" His friend, reflecting on that for a few moments, and daring to be fully honest about it, says, "Yes, I get things wrong occasionally. I have jumped to unwarranted conclusions, spoken too soon on certain matters, and thought I was on the right path only to be corrected later."

The believer continues, "Let's see now if the Bible has ever been wrong about anything," and with that he reviews the ten points listed above. He concludes, and rightly so, that there is no reason to doubt that the Bible really is in fact what it claims and demonstrates itself to be, namely, the inspired (i.e. God-breathed, and thus inerrant) Word of God. This is the Scripture which cannot be broken (John 10:35), which cannot be added to, or subtracted from, without the severest penalties in the world to come (Rev. 22:18,19).

This presents a great challenge to unbelievers, and if, dear reader, you are one such person, please be sure to take it up. I know that I have not persuaded you that the Bible is the Word of God, nor could I ever do so, in spite of all the evidence that I have laid before you. This isn't how anyone comes to faith in Jesus Christ, to a commitment to God, to His Word and His ways. I challenge you, rather, to read the Bible for yourself. Attend a Bible-believing church, sit under faithful preaching where the minister dares to proclaim the whole counsel of God, and continue to do that regularly. This is the means God uses to regenerate sinners, and with that to bring them under conviction, not only that the Bible is true, but also that they themselves need to live with the help of the Holy Spirit according to every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. If you do this, and remain unpersuaded, remember what the Lord Jesus said to those who wouldn't take Him seriously in His own day, how He would gladly receive them and bless them, but they were not willing (Matt. 23:37-39; see also Rom. 10:11-13).

