

April 6th, 2023**Is there a God at all?**

- Why the questions ...
- I didn't understand evil –why it is here
- I was not familiar with the realm of scientists who did believe and why
- Why is this important in this discussion – if there is no god then there can be no miracles –this forces us into a materialistic world view—there has to be a naturalistic answer

Gerd Ludemann Director of the Institute of early Christian studies at University of Gottingen, and professor at Vanderbilt University

Visual of some of the scientists who believe in God and why?

- See Anthony Flew – there is a God

Sir Fred Hoyle– Originator of the Steady State Theory of Evolution
(a tornado and a junkyard producing a 747)

Which God? Josh McDowell and his journey influenced me

- From a historical view –
 - 4 questions –
1. Do we have an actual early account from actual people who could witness it and has the story changed over time?
 2. Were the witnesses credible –
 3. Do we have witnesses that can verify parts of the story –those not on the inside
 4. Do we have any physical evidence –archeology

I began to test other religions based on this but found the evidence altogether different than that of Christianity

Question 1: Do we have an unchanged story given by actual witnesses or has the story of Jesus grown over time?

A mythology

Many say that the Bible has been copied over and over and there is no way that we have the same story we started with. Many say that the authors of the scriptures were not eyewitnesses.

- A. We have early copies of the New Testament – 24k plus
 - We have letters written by believers quoting scripture
 - No other historical document comes close to what we have religious or non-religious

Question 2: Are the Witnesses credible?

Atheist: Gerd Ludemann—Vanderbilt --Author -What Really Happened to Jesus?

“It may be taken as historically certain that Peter and the disciples had experiences after Jesus’ death in which Jesus appeared to them as the risen Christ.... He goes on to say that they believed they had but had not really.

Paula Fredrikson, Boston University

“The disciple’s conviction that they had seen the risen Christ is part of historical bedrock, facts known past doubting’

Why should we believe they were telling the truth?

Question 3: Are there historical sources of unbelieving witnesses that verify parts of the story?

- These miracles and signs were seen in public not private

Justin Martyr

Justin was burned at the stake and this is taken from his final defense. He quotes from Pilates' report, which was written at the time of the crucifixion, which we did not have for years and we believe that we may have now. But since it is not confirmed it will not be used.

But the words, "They pierced my hands and feet," refer to the nails which were fixed in Jesus' hands and feet on the cross; and after He was crucified his executioners cast lots for his garments, and divided them among themselves. That these things happened you may learn from the Acts, which were recorded under Pontius Pilate.

Josephus

Ananias convened the judges of the Sanhedrin and brought before them a man named James, the brother of Jesus, who was called the Christ and certain others. He accused them of having transgressed the law and delivered them up to be stoned.

F.F. Bruce-Professor of Biblical Criticism at the university of Manchester

"Some writers may toy with the fancy of a "Christ Myth" but they do not do so on the grounds of historical evidence. The historicity of Christ is as axiomatic for an unbiased historian as the historicity of Julius Caesar. It is not historians who propagate the Christ myth stories.

Question 4: Is there physical archaeological evidence for the Bible?

- What do some of the most famous archaeologists say about the Bible?

Dr. Merrill Unger (Biblical archaeologist)

Old Testament Archaeology has rediscovered whole nations, resurrected important peoples, and in a most astonishing manner, filled in historical gaps.

Dr. Fredrick Kenyon

Archaeology had not yet had its final word; but the results already achieved confirm what faith would suggest, that the Bible can do nothing but gain from an increase of knowledge.

Dr. Sherwin White (Roman Historian)

For Acts the confirmation of Historicity is overwhelming. Any attempt to reject its basic historicity must now appear absurd. Roman historians have long taken it for granted.

Nelson Glueck (The most famous Jewish Archaeologist in history)

"It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference. Scores of archaeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or exact detail historical statements in the Bible."

The scriptures are unique in all of history (especially in the religious history category). When you put it all together – what makes the most sense?

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