



Nobility

**“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica,
in that they received the word with all readiness of mind,
and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”
— Acts 17:11**

Does God Really Exist?

You may be one of many people who have sincerely and honestly asked the question, “Does God really exist?” The question is valid because of the impossibility of approaching, seeing, and touching God physically as one would a member of their family. Not being able to physically approach, see, or touch God can cause one to wonder, “does God really exist?” Some have been provoked to genuinely ask the question, “does God really exist,” after hearing of or seeing violent crime or observing general wickedness and evil in the world.

While these things may cause one to be skeptical of the existence of God, these same things overwhelmingly demonstrate God’s existence. The very fact that cultures, nations, and individual people understand that wickedness and evil exist points to God’s existence. Nations enact laws prohibiting murder, robbery, and various kinds of abuses, and to punish those who commit such acts. The act of recognizing the existence of evil and the need to enact laws to prevent and punish, is the acknowledgment that there is an objective standard of authority, an authority that is higher than any man or group of nations. It is the acknowledgment that such a standard exists in reality an acknowledgment that God exists.

Without an objective standard of authority, then nothing could be classified as evil, wicked, or a crime, and consequently could not be punished. Without an objective standard of authority or a higher authority of appeal concerning all actions, then even actions such as murder, rape, abuse, and robbery would fall into the realm of opinion. It is the existence of God that provides man with that higher objective standard of authority. Humanity is pained and suffers because of crime, immorality, and injustices committed, but it is the recognition of those things as evil that is also an acknowledgment of God’s existence.

God’s existence can also be known by a careful and logical examination of the natural world. Observing the natural world in such a manner leads one to see and understand the principle of adequate cause and effect, such as with daylight and darkness. The light and darkness do not just appear and disappear without adequate cause, but it is the rotation of the earth in a complete circle every twenty-four hours that brings this about. The adequate cause is the sun and the rotation of the earth, and on days when there is less light, the adequate cause may be clouds, rain, fog, or snow in the upper levels of the atmosphere. The natural law and principle of adequate cause and effect demonstrates the existence of God because this detailed world could not exist without adequate cause.

The principle of adequate cause and effect is also recognized in other aspects of life. The logic of adequate cause and effect demands that a city could only exist because of human creativity, ingenuity, work, and talent. It is important to note that the word “adequate” is used because not only must there be a cause, but the cause must be able to bring about the effect, or the cause must be adequate. Human creativity is the adequate cause for a city with buildings, streets, etc.

The Bible teaches the very same principle, “*For every house is builded by some man, but he that built all things is God*” (Hebrews 3:4). The truth is that the natural world cannot exist without adequate cause, and that adequate cause is God.

God’s existence can also be known by recognizing the principle of order and design in the natural world. Is it by chance or design the earth makes a complete rotation, to the second, every twenty-four hours? Is it by chance or design the earth circles the sun in an ellipsis, creating our distinct seasons, in one year? Is it by chance or design that though there are great fluctuations in temperatures from day to day, morning and night, season-to-season, and year-to-year, that year in and year out average temperatures will only vary by less than a degree? Is it by chance or design the human eye can see in color, with depth perception, can focus on something near or far, and can adjust to varying light conditions? The logical conclusion after seeing the order and detail of the universe is: it exists and functions by design. The question then arises, who designed all of this? Concerning things that human beings design and make, one would not think when seeing a house that it just evolved into existence, or a tornado came through forming a house. However, that same logic is used in the natural realm when one views the existence of the universe and humanity as by chance. The order and design of the world leads one to logically conclude and know that God exists.

Finally, a critical observation of who we are as human beings demands the existence of God. Humanity is more than a mere physical body because humanity has the ability think, reason, create ideas, forgive another person, possess emotions such as love for family, and so much more. These very things are what make us human beings, but where do they come from? For humanity to exist there must have been an adequate cause, and the only logical explanation is a being having these abilities to an equal or greater degree. The human being, a man, a woman, or a child is the greatest answer that can be given to the question, “Does God really exist?” You are living proof that God does exist. The Bible says, “*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*” (Genesis 1:1). “*And God said, Let us make in our image, after our likeness...*” (Genesis 1:26).

Wayne Brewer, Mabelvale, AR

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The Gospel Is God's Power to Save

When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, God drove them out of the garden (Genesis 3:22-24). Romans 3:23 teaches us since that time all men "have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Isaiah 59:2 teaches us that our iniquities have come between us and our God and Romans 6:23 also teaches us that our sins have earned us death. But God also loves His creation and does not want men and women to perish because of our sin. It became necessary for our God to devise a power that could save mankind from his own sins.

When we realize that our God has all power, that He has all knowledge, and that he is all present, we can have complete confidence in the power that he has devised to save us. God's power for saving man is not only a good power, it is not only a great power, but it is the only perfect power for our salvation!

Paul, an inspired apostle wrote that he was "not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16). Nearly all of those who desire to follow Christ, agree that the gospel of Christ is God's power unto salvation. Men have many answers as to how that power works to save us. The verses following Romans 1:16 teach us exactly how we can apply the power of the gospel of Christ to our lives so that we can be with God in heaven for eternity. "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness"

(Romans 1:17-18). The gospel reveals two things unto us. It reveals the righteousness of God and the wrath of God. How does the gospel reveal God's righteousness and wrath? It does it through the art of teaching! God draws men to Christ through the teaching that is in the gospel of Christ. Listen to our Lord, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:44-45).

What does the gospel reveal concerning God's righteousness and wrath? It teaches us how to apply the power of the gospel to our sins so that we can be acceptable to God! It teaches us that we will die in our sins if we do not believe in Jesus Christ (John 8:24). It teaches that we must repent and turn away from our sins or perish (Luke 13:3). It teaches us that we must confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God before men (Matthew 10:32; Acts 8:37). Acts 16:22 teaches us that our sins are washed away at baptism and Revelation 1:5 teaches us that the cleansing agent at baptism is the blood of Christ, not the water itself. The gospel also teaches us how to live our lives, what is necessary to please God, and what things God will not accept as a part of our lives. The gospel of Christ as taught in the New Testament teaches us how to change our lives so that we can be pleasing to our God!

Jerry Dickison, Newton, KS

God Calls You to Worship

Hebrews 10:24-25 teaches us that assembling together on a regular basis is required. From the very beginning, the church came together on the first day of the week to worship God (Acts 20:7). I was reared in a rural community that had congregations of most of the "mainline churches," and I had occasion to visit all of them over time. Having seen the various forms of worship and heard often the phrase, "attend the church of your choice," it never occurred to me that God has actually told us how He wants us to worship Him.

A publication came to me not long ago in which there was a report on a gathering of seventh through twelfth graders for a conference on worship. One student was quoted as saying of the periodic event, "It just gives me something to look forward to that gives me a high on God." The article stated that "Organizers gear worship at the conference to the audience." Many churches advertise one period of "traditional worship" and another of "contemporary worship." A newspaper in Houston, Texas carried an article last winter under the heading "Worship Wars" which reported on churches designing their worship programs according to what would bring in the largest crowd.

Many offer to God as worship what they have chosen, but God Himself has made a choice. The inspired record tells us that "true worship" (John 4:23-24) consists of five specific acts. The church which the apostles guided ate the Lord's supper and exhorted one another in the word of God (Acts 20:7). They prayed (Acts 12:12), they sang spiritual songs (Colossians 3:16), and they contributed

freely for the work of the church and the care of the needy (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).

It is natural to expect a member of the church to worship God. A Christian has been purchased with the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28), separated from worldly vices to live by Christ's doctrine (2 Corinthians 6:14-17), and enlisted in the army of the Lord (2 Timothy 2:3-4). We expect Christ to call him to worship, and a Christian would want to answer that call.

On the other hand, God's word applies also to the person who is *not* in the church. God "is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). He has told the world how to avoid perishing (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10) — all who do not obey the gospel will be separated from Him eternally. Those who do obey the gospel are saved and added to the church (Acts 2:47). Only in the church which Jesus will save (Ephesians 5:23) can a person worship God "in spirit and in truth" (Hebrews 2:12).

Everyone in the world can be a member of "the body of Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:27), "the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth" (1 Timothy 3:15). The church which Jesus built (Matthew 16:18) — of which He Himself is the only Head (Ephesians 1:22-23) — still worships today exactly as He directed in the New Testament. We invite you to search the scriptures like the noble Bereans and to worship God with us in spirit and in truth.

A. L. Parr, Jacksonville, TX

The Role of Husbands and Fathers A Serious Responsibility.

In the beginning God created them male and female (Genesis 1:27). The man was delegated as the head of his home; to watch over, to love and protect his wife. Ephesians 5:25 says, "Husbands love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it." Again, wives are told to be in subjection to their own husbands as unto the Lord (Ephesians 5:22). This is God's divine order. When individuals comply with this divine order, our Heavenly Father is pleased. The role of husband is not to be taken lightly, for upon it, hinges the path of the family. He is to be the leader in the home; the spiritual guide. Ephesians 5:28 teaches he is to love his wife as his own body. We can see what a serious responsibility a husband has toward his wife.

Also even as great as that is the duty that men have toward their children. Children are a blessing from God Almighty, who was quite specific about how he wanted His little ones reared. God wanted His commandments, statutes, and judgments taught to the little ones on a daily basis. In Deuteronomy 11:19-20 we read, "And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates." This scriptural information should be the example we follow as we endeavor to teach and rear our children in the way of the Lord.

It would be a wonderful thing if it could be said of all fathers as it was said of father Abraham: "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Genesis 18:19). This *should* and *would* be said of every father if he were obeying the will of God as it relates to him concerning his parental responsibility in bringing up his children in the way God would have them reared and taught.

Fathers are taught their responsibilities by the apostle Paul. In Ephesians 6:4 we read, "And ye **fathers**, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." A grave responsibility rests upon the shoulders of all fathers. I believe that the word "bring" in this passage needs to be emphasized, because it suggests parental examples. Some fathers do little more than bring the children into the world and bring the money home for their livelihood. This is not pleasing to God. Fathers are to be the heads of families, leading the way in obedience to all of God's commandments.

Examples should be forthcoming from all parents who strive to bring their children up in the way of the Lord. Every informed person will agree that we train or teach our children more easily when we give them examples to follow.

The home must not be under-emphasized in the giving of direction to our young people. "Children obey your parents in the Lord. And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:1-4). Parents are going to give direction to their children — either the right kind or the wrong kind. Fathers, let us pray that we fulfill this sacred trust. Let us as husbands and fathers be what the Lord would have us to be.

Bill Goring, Lee's Summit, MO

The Christian in Time of War

War may be defined as "a state of usually open and declared armed hostile conflict between states or nations, a state of hostility, conflict, or antagonism, or a struggle between opposing forces or for a particular end."

As long as good and evil exists, there will be war, a struggle between opposing forces. In Genesis 14, four kings of the East were the aggressors against five small cities around the Dead Sea. In the defeat of these cities, Lot and his family were captured and carried north to Hobah which was near Damascus. Abraham, the friend of God, and Lot's uncle, mustered his 318 armed servants and pursued the aggressors and killed them, rescuing Lot and his family. Down through the ages, the righteous have had to protect and defend themselves against wicked aggressors.

What should the Christian's stance be regarding war? First, he must put God first. Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God..." (Matthew 6:33.) Second, he must obey the government under which he lives (Romans 13:1-7). Third, if the government or a commanding officers calls upon one to carry out that which is contrary to God's law, then he must obey the superior law, God's law, rather than man's law (Acts 5:29). When soldiers approached John the Baptist inquiring as to what their duty was, he said, "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages" (Luke 3:14). He did not tell them to resign. Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, was a soldier in the Roman army, yet neither was he required to resign from his post (Acts 10).

Fourth, a Christian is to pray for all men, for kings and for all who are in authority in order that he, as well as others, might lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty (1 Timothy 4:1-4).

Ben F. Vick, Jr., Indianapolis, IN

THINK IT OVER



When you are told by the attending physician that you have only a little while left to live, you will not regret one moment you have spent in the study of your Bible. After all other books are laid aside, this Word will still face you in God's judgment! We plead with you to carefully use this sacred volume in this life! It is God's personal message to you. Don't ignore or neglect it (Acts 20:32).

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Does God Work Miracles Today?

Because of “the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 12:31), any study that concerns the Holy Spirit must be approached in all seriousness. Also, because lives are at stake, both spiritually and physically, a study of miracles must be approached with objective reason and not subjective emotions.

Sometimes people use the term “miracle” to refer to phenomenons. They will say something like, “the miracle of birth” or “life is a miracle.” However, true miracles are extraordinary events that surpass natural forces. They are supernatural in character and transcend human knowledge and experience. Though birth and life are phenomenal, they are ordinary events that occur every day. Unlike the ordinary, when Jesus and His apostles healed, there were no need for doctors, medicine, and hospitals. Also, the need for convalescence was nonexistent for the miracles were immediate, and those healed were made completely whole. Furthermore, there were no failures (Acts 19:13-18; Matthew 4:23; 9:35) which demonstrate God’s power over nature, disease, demons, material things, and death.

The purpose of the miracles of the New Testament was twofold. First, they were for confirmation. They confirmed who Jesus was (Acts 2:22), and they confirmed that His and His apostles’ message was from God (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4). Second, they were done to cause belief in Jesus. John wrote, “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:30-31). Notice these ideas are closely related. By confirming who Jesus is and from where the apostles received their message, the miracles lead to belief in Jesus as the Son of God.

Though miracles benefitted individuals, their actual purpose was not for any individual’s physical benefit. Often they were motivated by compassion (Matthew 14:14), and yet their primary purpose was for confirmation. God could have shown compassion in a number of ways without miracles. He can providentially work through medical

professionals or new discoveries or nutrition. This is brought out by the fact that there were great men of faith such as Paul who were not healed (2 Corinthians 12:7-10), and there were miracles clearly not for the benefit of the recipient (Acts 5:1-10; 13:9-12). Would Lazarus, the friend of Jesus, be benefitted when he was brought back to physical life (John 11)? He would have been in paradise and then brought back to this world of woes! His resurrection was not for his benefit, but it confirmed Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

Since God confirmed His word through miracles, signs, and wonders, then He does not need to reconfirm it to this generation. In fact, through His word, He has provided for us all things that pertain unto life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3), and His word will furnish us completely unto all good works (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Paul wrote when the “perfect” comes, the “in part” will be done away (1 Corinthians 13:8-12). In this passage, the “perfect” is contrasted to the “in part.” The “in part” is named as tongues, knowledge and prophesy — all having to do with revelation. The “perfect” or the mature, then must be the completed revelation of God. When God completed His revelation to man, the “in part” would “fail,” “cease,” and “vanish away.” To drive this home, Paul used three illustrations of growing to maturity — the child becoming a man, from a mirror to “face to face,” and partly known to fully known. Now here is the point: Since we have the complete revelation of God, then we no longer need the “in part,” that is, the miracles used to confirm the word.

Miraculous power was passed on by the laying on of the apostles’ hands. In Acts 8:18, when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles’ hands, the Holy Spirit was given, he offered the apostles money to purchase this power. Simon recognized an important fact: Only the apostles could pass on the miraculous gift of the Spirit of God. This is an important concept in our study. Since no one today could possibly qualify as an apostle of Jesus (Acts 1:21-22), then no one today could possibly have the power to do miracles. That power ceased with the death of the apostles.

As stated, this topic is an emotional one. We can choose to believe personal phenomenal experiences, or we can believe the Bible. The Bible’s testimony is clear — miracles confirmed the word, were prophesied to cease, and ended with the death of the apostles.

Chuck Northrop, Conway, AR