

[A SURE AND CERTAIN HOPE.](#)

It is a truly amazing thing the way in which the world in general, and the religious world in particular accept without criticism then attach themselves to the dominant theory and hypotheses of the so called "experts." People accept their ramblings as if they were part of an unspoken creed. Yet, if they stopped for one moment and critically examined and questioned these spurious assumptions they would find that in fact they are totally untenable.

The sceptics of this age delight in putting down Christ and His church as it is revealed in the New Testament record. However, it is really only within the last 200 years, that denominational scholarship so called has decided that in their view the Bible is a book full of myth and legend. Therefore as such the historical Jesus did not exist.

Albert Schweitzer wrote a book called "[In search of the historical Jesus.](#)" Others too such as Baur, Renan and Strauss also added their works to the effort and now the consensus of denominational thought is that since the Bible is a book of myth and legend we cannot prove the historicity of Jesus Christ at all.

This type of attack is not new at all since many of the "Higher Critics" have done the same thing. Back in 1895 the [Graf - Wellhausen hypothesis](#) was born. This heathen document gave us the so called [Jahvist](#), [Elohist](#), [Deuteronomic](#) and [Priestly code](#). It also claimed that there was behind the scenes an invisible and unknown redactor was busy writing, updating and rewriting the "stories." It is because of this that people now believe that the book of [Isaiah](#) has two authors and two dates. They name it as [Deutero-Isaiah](#).

So just like Darwin's evolutionary theory these atheistic ideas have filtered down into the modern psyche and they have meekly accepted the poisoned chalice and drunk deeply from it not feeling the numbing effects it has. So then men have ridden roughshod over truth and have

played into the hands of the sceptics and atheists of our time who have accepted it with great delight.

Given then, the above, it will come as no surprise that we of the Lord's true church are now very much in the minority when it comes to belief about Christ and the Bible. This is so because we believe that the Bible is the literal "God breathed" [**theopneustos**] **truth**. Plus we also believe that the New Testament of Christ and His apostles is the authentic depiction of Him. That He was born of a virgin named Mary, He was condemned to death by **Pontius Pilate in 30 A.D.** Was resurrected, ascended into heaven and has all authority in matters of religion, and will return one day to claim His true church. In short then we believe that this IS the historicity of Jesus Christ who was the true word [**logos**] of God who was made flesh. He also lived and taught among the people of His day confirming His word with signs and miracles.

Now it is because we believe these things that we are in the minority. The Lord's church is relegated to the lowest minority in the postmodern religious world. Yet, it wasn't always this way, for in the Roman empire in some places at least there was **50%** of entire cities and provinces who were true Christians. **Bithynia** was one such province.

One of the greatest falsehoods perpetrated on the Lord's church in the 21st century comes from the so called "religious community" and that is this. You of the so called Lord's church **CANNOT PROVE** That Jesus Christ really existed in the Bible way. Further it is of no use to go to the New Testament since it is full of myths in any case. We according to them got the New Testament in the late second and early third century A.D. and, it was the Roman Catholic church that gave you the New Testament canon. Therefore you cannot rely on the New Testament record for an accurate portrayal of Christ.

This is what the MAJORITY of denominational preachers teach. Thus the New Testament is relegated to a book of good philosophy with excellent moral/ethical standards but nothing more than that. Yet, these same people still

try and cling to the idea of Biblical inspiration. They just cannot see that these two propositions are **MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE**.

How then are we to respond to this as the Lord's church? One thing is immediately clear and that is we must educate ourselves and especially our children who are the next generation of church leaders. This is a very important issue and we must be able to **give a defence** for our position on it. But how? What do we do when a denominational person says, "I believe in the Bible too but my minister says it is a book full of myths." They then begin to laugh at us for our belief that the Bible is word for word literally true.

Our children (and us) meet this from their schools, peers, and religious "friends" thus we need to educate ourselves in order to offer an apology (defence) for our position.

Perhaps too when we study with a person who has no religious background it might be better to begin by showing them that the men who wrote the Bible did exist in reality, they were real people. Having then established that then go to the Bible for then both we and they will have a deeper understanding of it. Also we need to establish the geographical and chronological facts since all these elements are vital to the understanding of God's word.

The religious world at large tells us that in order to believe the things we do we must take a giant leap of [blind] faith. But do we? The answer is an emphatic NO! For if one cares to look there is much evidence for the historicity of Jesus.

One great and largely forgotten reason is this:

There is 300 years of blood that was shed in Roman times by our brethren so that the New Testament could be preserved for us here now. No one can in one fell swoop wipe out that record. The souls of those brethren still sit by the throne of God crying out for

vengeance. The religious world at large betrayed them by cheapening the blood our brothers and sisters spilt. We can't agree with such an abominable act. Christ's blood too was shed He is our elder brother His blood too cries out as a witness against these traitors.

We will now turn to the issue at hand. The first thing we will look at is the non Biblical support for the historicity of Christ. And, there is much support from pagan peoples which comments on matters such as these.

(1) **Celsus**: He was a second century opponent of christianity, a man who ridiculed our brethren. He lived and wrote around 170 A.D. and was an Epicurean/Platonist philosopher or at least fancied himself as one. The thing to note is that he quoted heavily from the New Testament. These are the type of thing we are looking for. Here we have a man quoting from a book that modern day critics and pagans say **did not exist at this time**. Yet there are some **80 quotations** in his writings from the New Testament which he uses to argue with and satirise the christians of his day. The important thing is to see that Celsus took it for granted that the christians knew of and believed in the passages he used.

If then the The New Testament was of a later origin and did not exist in Celsus' day Why would he assume that the christians knew and believed in them? The other important thing to note is that it takes the date back considerably from the time when he wrote. He doesn't make up any arguments, and of note, he does not use any of the spurious Gnostic gospels [Thomas, Barnabas, Judas or Mary] for example. He uses only books from the New Testament. Here is a sample from Celsus.

Insisting that Jesus though believed by the christians to be the son of God had taught only a short while before his own time (death). Celsus presented the things he thought a Jew of Jesus' time might

have said to him by putting them into the mouth of a Jewish interlocutor. He accused Jesus of having made up the story of his birth from a virgin whereas actually he came from a Jewish village and from a poor country woman who got her living from spinning. She was thrown out as an adulteress by her husband who was a carpenter, wandering about in disgrace she secretly gave birth to Jesus whom she conceived from a Roman soldier named Panthera. After growing up in Galilee Jesus went as a hired labourer to Egypt, there he learned some of those magical rites on which the Egyptians pride themselves. He came back (to Palestine) hoping for great things from his powers and because of them, he proclaimed himself a god.

This story was in circulation about **150 A.D.** when it was recited by Celsus. Origen [185-254] gives it credence also in his "**Origen contra Celsus.**" Now the name Panthera is an unusual one and it was thought to be an invention of Celsus, however, a first century tombstone unearthed in Bingerbruk Germany. The inscription reads:

**"Tiberius Julius abdes PANTERA of Sidon
aged 62. A soldier of 40 years service
of the first cohort of archers lies here."
[Ian Wilson, "Jesus the evidence."]**

What then are we to make of this? Well first of all as we have said, Celsus took it for granted that the christians knew these things. The point is, he does not deny them, rather he ridicules and minimises them. Look at what he assumes christians to believe. (1) The virgin birth. (2) Christ's father was a carpenter. (3) Christ performed miracles. (4) That Jesus claimed to be a god [the son of God.] This is evidence that the New Testament existed by 150 A.D. and that christians believed what was written in it as truth. What do you think? **Why else would Celsus and others ridicule them in this way?** Remember Celsus used over **80 quotations** from the New Testament in this

fashion to ridicule our brethren.

(2) **Lucian of Samosata**: This man was a second century satirist and he wrote:

"The christians to this day worship a man who introduced them to their novel ways and was crucified on that account. These misguided creatures start from the point that they are immortal for all time which explains their contempt of death. Then it was impressed upon them by their original lawgiver that they are all brothers, from the moment they are converted they desert the gods of Greece and worship the crucified sage and live after his laws, and all this they take on faith with the result that they despise all worldly goods alike, regarding them as common property."

Lucian too did not believe in christianity yet he gives a full account of what is going on in his day in the second century that was common among christians. Again there is no denial for if there were Lucian would not be satirising christians in this way.

(3) **Mara bar Serapion**: He wrote a letter to his son from prison in 173 A.D. encouraging him to learn lessons from the past. He told him.

"What advantage did the Athenians gain by putting Socrates to death? Since famine and plague came upon them as judgement. What advantage did the men of Samos gain by burning Pythagoras? For in a moment their land was covered in sand. What advantage did the Jews gain by killing their wise king? It is just that their kingdom was abolished (70A.D.) God justly avenged these three wise men. The Athenians died of hunger,

those of Samos were overwhelmed
by the sea and the Jews were expelled
from their land and had their kingdom
abolished."

Now we can see that Mara was free with his interpretations but he did get one thing right, that pertaining to the Jews. Mara was not encouraging his son to become a christian but he was commenting on the fact that christians existed in the time that the Jews killed Christ and in the time they lost their kingdom.

Juvenal wrote on a similar subject but made veiled reference to the torture of christians by Nero in Rome.

(4) **The Jewish/Babylonian Talmud:** This document makes considerable reference to Jesus, usually in the most insulting and denigrating way. In the [Babylonian Sanhedrin 43A IV:3](#)

we have this written:

"On the eve of the passover, they hanged Yeshu of Nazareth. And a herald went before him for 40 days saying 'Yeshu of Nazareth is going forth to be stoned in that he hath practiced sorcery and beguiled and led Israel astray. Let everyone knowing aught in his defence come and plead for him.' But they found naught in his defence and they hanged him on a tree and crucified him."

Compare this to [[Galatians 3:13](#)] where it is said that Christ was hanged on a tree. The things to note here are: He was hanged on a tree, it did take place at the passover, there were no defence witnesses, and He was accused of sorcery and blasphemy.

In that same Babylonian Sanhedrin [107B](#) we have written:

"Rabbi Joshua was reciting the Shema [Deuteronomy 6:4] when Jesus came before him. He intended to receive him and made a sign to him. He (Jesus)

thinking it was to repel him put up a brick and worshipped it. 'Repent,' said Rabbi Joshua to Jesus. Jesus replied 'I have learned this from you, he who causes another to sin is not afforded the means of repentance.' And a Rabbi has said, Jesus [or Yeshu] the Nazarene practiced magic and led Israel astray."

These things show us that the New Testament record was alive and well long before the second and third centuries.

(5) **Pliny the younger:** This man was a prolific writer who lived in the first century. He was an eyewitness to the eruption of Mount Vesuvius that destroyed Pompei in 79 A.D. He wrote extensively on that event. What is of note is the fact that in 112 A.D. Pliny wrote a letter to the Emperor Trajan who was reigning from 98 to 117 A.D. Now we are firmly in the first century and this evidence is indisputable and he writes a very revealing letter to his emperor. Writing in his **10th Book** while he was governor of Bithynia. On his arrival there he writes that he found the temples deserted and the pagan rituals were severely depleted. Not only so but he lamented that there were few buyers for the sacrificial animals.

Now Pliny is more than willing to persecute the Christians and to be sure there was plenty of persecution going on but he wanted explicit instructions from Emperor Trajan on how to go about it. Especially he is wanting to know what to do if the Christians repent. Pliny goes on:

"They [Christians] are in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day [Sunday] before it is light when they sing a hymn of alternate verses to Christos, as to a god. And they bound themselves to a solemn oath not to do any wicked deeds, not to commit any theft, fraud or adultery, Never to falsify their words, or deny trust whenever they were called upon to

deliver it up. After this it is their custom to separate then reassemble to partake of food of an ordinary and innocent kind. It is my constant custom sir in all matters to refer to you on things in which I had any doubt.

Remember now that this was written in 112 A.D. He goes on:

For who better to help me when I hesitate, or instruct me where I am ignorant. I have never been present at any christian trials so that I know not well what is the subject matter of punishment or the enquiry of what strictness ought to be used in either. Nor do I know of any account is to be made of age, if young or old, feeble or robust, or if all are to be treated alike. Whether repentance should entitle pardon or whether all who had once been christians ought to be punished, or whether those who just wear the name itself where no crime has been committed, or crimes only belonging to the name ought to be punished? Concerning all these things I am in doubt. In the meantime I have taken this course. I put the question to them whether they are christians upon their confession I repeated the question a second time, and then a third also threatening to punish them with death. Those who persisted I ordered away to be punished for it was no doubt to me whatever be the nature of their opinion, their inflexible obstinacy ought to be punished.

He didn't care if they were christians or not but thought that anyone that stubborn and stupid ought to have been put to death anyway. He goes on:

There were others of the same infatuation who are Roman citizens that I've noted

down and sent to the city for you to judge. In a short time the crime is spreading itself even under persecution and as is usual in such cases divers sorts of people come in my way and information presented to me without mentioning the author containing the names of many persons who upon examination denied that they were christians or had ever been so. Who repeated after me an invocation to the gods and with wine and frankincense made supplication to your image together with the statues of the deities. Moreover they reviled the name of Christ. None of which things as is said by they who are really christians can be compelled by any means to do and say these things. These I thought proper to discharge."

Again we are to remember that all this was written in 112 A.D. Now notice this. Pliny says that the temples were almost deserted when he got to Bithynia. but by persecuting the christians we are getting a better attendance back in them.

"I have every confidence we will build things back up again by putting a lot of christians to death."

The big point is that christianity is alive and working and is in good heart despite all this persecution in this part of the Roman empire in 112 A.D. Pliny goes on to say;

"I've found two maidservants who are ministers. I have discovered nothing more than a bad and excessive superstition."

Notice too what he was asking them to do. Just acknowledge Caesar as lord, with a pinch of frankincense and a handful of grain do homage to his statue and the deities and I will let you go. Pliny thought that any reasonable [person] would do that and save their lives but found that those who were really christians refused to do it.

When we think on this, think also about the spread of christianity. 200 years later **50% of Bithynia was Christian.**

So is it any wonder that Pliny was saying that the temples were becoming deserted? Christianity was having a profound effect there in Asia minor. Then by 400 A.D. the gospel had reached Britain and all over the known world of that time.

Trajan wrote back to Pliny and told him that if christians repent free them. He was not to just take anyone's word for it that they are a christian. Under Nero it had been very different. If anyone said you were a christian you were considered as a plotter against Nero and died, no trial, no right of reply.

Trajan is much more humane than that for he tells Pliny to actually try the case. Hadrian was emperor from 117-128 A.D. and he wrote to much the same effect telling the govenor to deal with the issue in a legal and upright manner,by actually examining the case and not taking the accusation on face value.

Notice now, we are getting back into the first century with the writings of Trajan and Pliny the younger,in 112 A.D. Christians existed then so did the New Testament. Thus to state as fact and teach that it was a second or third century book is palpably false and we of the Lord's church can say so with full confidence.

(6) **Suetonius:** He was one of the most important Roman historians and was also the chief secretary to Hadrian, and wrote from 117-138 A.D. Now the important point to remember here is the fact the Suetonius, because of his position, **had access to the imperial records of Rome.** He writes for example:

"Because the Jews of Rome caused constant disturbances at the instigation of Christos he expelled them from the city."

This was written in his book on **Claudius** referring to

between 41 and 51 A.D. and it is recorded in **(Acts 18:2)**. when all the Jews were expelled from Rome. There were waves of riots that broke out in 49 A.D. among a large community of Jews in that area.

Suetonius says: "this was blamed on Christ." But, whatever the case, the influence of Christ was used as blame. Or alternatively it could be seen as blasphemy by the Jews.

He writes again concerning Nero:

"After the fire of Rome punishment was inflicted on the christians who were described as a sect promoting a new and mischievous religious belief."

Again we having an influence very early on in the first century. Remember too that Suetonius is writing with access to the **imperial records of Rome**. Going much further back into the first century.

(7) **Josephus**: Born 37 A.D. He was a Jewish historian and in 97 A.D. he became secretary to the court historian under Vespasian who was then a Roman General. It is interesting to note that in applying the prophecies of Daniel 2, he applies them to Vespasian. That aside he writes in the **"Antiquities"** (90-95 A.D.)

"There was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man. He was one who wrought surprising feats. He was the Christ. He appeared again alive to them on the third day as the divine Prophets foretold."

There is, however, a problem with this particular passage in that it appears in every copy of Josephus **after 300 A.D. but not before 300 A.D.** Now Josephus is not a christian so why is he saying this? Part of this statement appears to be amended by christian historians after 300 A.D. so it is in

dispute. However, this passage is quoted by Eusebius another historian but many think that the christian references are interpolations.

Even so if this is not true it would be surprising if Josephus did not write about christians who had been having a lot of influence and were blamed for the fire of Rome.

Josephus, however, does make another refernce to Jesus by referring to James the Lord's brother. [Antiquities chapter 9](#).

"And now Caesar upon hearing of the death of Festus, sent Albinus into Judea as procurator; but the king deprived Joseph of the high priesthood, and bestowed the succession to that dignity on the son of Ananus, who was also himself called Ananus. Now the report goes, that this elder Ananus proved a most fortunate man; for he had five sons, who had all performed the office of high priest to God, and he had himself enjoyed that dignity a long time formerly, which had never happened to any other of our high priests; but this younger Ananus, who, as we have told you already, took the high priesthood, was a bold man in his temper, and very insolent; he was also of the sect of the Sadducees, who were very rigid in judging offenders, above all the rest of the Jews, as we have already observed. when, therefore, Ananus was of this disposition, he thought that he now had a proper opportunity to exercise his authority. Festus was now dead and Albinus was but upon the road;

so he assembled the Sanhedrin of the judges. and brought before them the brother of Jesus who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others,[or some of his companions] and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned:"

This passage is not challenged at all and in fact lends support to the first passage some of which seems factual. This was written in 95 A.D. so again we are back to the first century.

(8) **Cornelius Tacitus**: He is perhaps the greatest of the Roman historians, certainly he is the best known of them. He lived from 55 to 120 A.D. living through the reign of six emperors. His two best known works are: "[The annals, and the Histories of Rome.](#)" Some have been lost so we do not have all of them. But he does explain **Nero's position on the christians in Rome during the fire.** All historians agree on this point that Nero blamed the christians for the fire. Tacitus writes:

"Consequently to get rid of the report Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations called christians by the populace. Christos from whom the order was named suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius by one of our procurators Pontius Pilate. Thus a most mischievous superstition was checked for the moment."

The implication here seems to be that christianity was spreading rapidly. Remember that some 40 years later Pliny the younger wrote to Trajan complaining that the temples of Bithynia were being deserted. Tacitus goes on to say:

"Christianity again broke out not only in Judea the first source of the evil but even in Rome where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular. At first an arrest was made of all who pleaded guilty then upon their confirmation an immense multitude was convicted not so much of the crime of firing the city as of hatred of mankind. Mocking of every sort was added to their death, covered by the skins of beasts they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed on crosses or were condemned to the flames to serve as a nightly illumination when daylight had expired. Nero offered his garden for the spectacle was exhibiting a show in the circus while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer and stood aloft on a chariot. Hence even the criminals who deserved extreme and exemplary punishment, there arose a feeling of compassion for it was not as it seemed for the public good but to glut one man's cruelty that they were being destroyed."

(9) **Seneca:** He was Nero's teacher and perhaps the second highest in Rome at that time. In the government of Rome he was the foremost philosopher in the empire. There is quite a body of belief that Paul quoted Seneca and vice versa, at the least, a lot of their phrases are alike. They may have read each others material. Seneca in one of his documents ["On the reasons for withdrawing from the world."](#) He describes the cruelty of Nero on the christians.

So here they were in Rome being written about having grown to this point. Seneca wrote in 64-65 A.D.

Especially note that Suetonius, Josephus, Tacitus and Seneca were all **court historians** all high up in the empire, and as such, **all of them had access to the Imperial Records of Rome.** Every governor including **Pilate** were sending back records to Rome as reports on the daily activities of their provinces. All riots and crucifixions and suchlike were reported to Rome.

Pliny's letters show this clearly. Because these men had access to these records it pushes the validity of that information back into the early first century.

Modern denominational scholarship seems to think that the New Testament was written in a vacuum. That is not true and it is ridiculous to think that **non christians were not writing about what was going on.** When christianity began it started small and then became a crescendo within the first century Roman Empire. It is just as ridiculous to think that the New Testament wasn't being written at the same time.

NON BIBLICAL CHRISTIAN SOURCES.

Consider the date of these. We are told that Catholicism somehow gave us the Bible and the biblical canon at the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. (According to the Catholics) along with other councils. That too is false for in 325 they simply certified what was already widely believed and accepted from the **apostles** and we need to understand this point since others do not and try to use it against our beliefs.

Christianity did not have to wait over 300 years for its scriptures if so. how did they preach and teach in the first century? Early christians had been reading and accepting New Testament books very early on and it was also accepted that these writings came from the apostles themselves. We will start from about 200 A.D.

(1) Origen: He like Pliny the younger was a prolific writer he wrote against **Celsus** as we mentioned earlier in his

"Expositions." He names **all the New Testament books** this is NOT 325 A.D. but 200 A.D. His father Leonides was martyred in Alexandria under Septem Severus (193 - 211) He was a teacher in Alexandria and later visited Palestine, Syria, Greece and ended his life living in Caesarea being tortured at Tyre.

He says all the New Testament books were in existence at this time and were commonly recognised by christians in all these areas as being from the apostles and as being inspired.

(2) **Clement:** [162 - 220] He too was of Alexandria and followed Origen he had been a pagan but was converted. He studied in Greece, Syria, Egypt, Palestine and other places. He comments on all the New Testament books except for Philemon, James, II Peter and III John he may of known of them, he just doesn't quote them so it doesn't necessarily mean they didn't exist. He states:

"Preserving the tradition of the blessed doctrine delivered directly from the holy apostles Peter, James, John and Paul. The son receiving of the father. Few who were like the fathers came by God's will to us to deposit these ancestral and apostolic seeds."

As he referred to these books. This was not in a vacuum.

(2) **Tertullian:** [160 - 240] He quotes from all the New Testament books except II Peter, James, II and III John. And cites the Gospels as having come directly from the apostles.

"If that is from the beginning which has the apostle as its author then it will certainly be evident that that which comes down from the apostles which has been kept as a sacred deposit in the churches of the apostles,"

He says those New Testament books were not simply read, they were treated as the word of God being kept as a sacred deposit and he quotes in his writing all except 4 books. He goes on:

"Come now you who would indulge a better curiosity, run over to the apostolic churches in which the thrones of the apostles are pre-eminent in their places in which **their own authentic writings are read.**" uttering the voice and representing the face of them severally."

He is referring here to the original manuscripts at this point

He continues:

"Achaia is very near you, Corinth, Athens, not far from Macedonia you have Philippi, the Thessalonians, since you are able to cross to Asia you get Ephesus. Moreover you are close to Italy, you have Rome. **Go to those churches if you doubt the documents are there their own authentic writing was being preserved in these places.**"

These types of evidence can be multiplied so God has not left Himself without witness and nor were these things done in a corner. By studying and educating ourselves we can have a fortified faith knowing that what we do and who we are is in fact the truth of the matter.

No amount of spurious "scholarship" can take that away from us and as we have said our brethren paid the ultimate price for their faith. Let us never forget that and let us never forget the truly awful and horrendous treatment they received so we can have the word that saves our souls. The whole history has been written with the blood and tears of our brethren. We salute them by staying faithful.

There has been considerable debate about the dating of the New Testament books yet we know that Paul's letters were written before the gospels. The gospels were written some 5 to 10 years later.

Polycarp and others wrote citing the gospels and letters but they never cited the gospel of John. This is because John's gospel was not yet written down.

What is of interest however, is the fact that there is a period of about 20 years from the beginning of Christ's ministry to about 50 A.D. where the gospels were transmitted orally. People heard the words of the apostles and in turn told others what had been communicated. The apostles did not write everything down straight away after the resurrection of Christ. There was simply an oral transmission by the inspired apostles.

This fact has led to over 200 years of religious scepticism. The Lord's church however, should recognise that it still was the truth being spoken by these inspired men during this time. The inspired men told others (the great commission) what God wanted. The sceptics on the other hand do not recognise this fact of 20 odd years of inspired oral teaching. They consider it simply as word of mouth teaching that constantly changed as different people passed it on rather like "Chinese whispers." Thus they start from the assumption that there were vast amounts of error during that 20 year oral teaching phase of the New Testament.

Thus myths and changes came about. From this the sceptics go on to say that miracles never really occurred they were put there to bolster the Son of God claims made by Christ. They also put their own ideas and used them as doctrines.

Before we move to the legitimacy of the writings, questions of the history of the book and the documentation of the book need to be answered.

First, no-one comes to the Bible as a believer we have

other thoughts in mind when we begin that journey. The Bible speaks of the period of oral transmission as "difficult." In

(I Corinthians 13) "Love never fails," yet all other things cease. Paul says, "we know **in part** which means that this was a difficult period, they had no writings so they had to wait for and rely on the inspired preacher to tell them of the events and the truth of those events.

But when "the perfect, or perfection comes," the imperfect will be done away with. The **oral** period of transmission will cease and all will be **written down** and this would **solidify God's inspired word**. This is the perfect law of liberty we are to abide in (James 1:25.) Paul then is saying that something better than oral transmission is coming that is the written New Testament and this is what we now have.

In Luke 1 the writer says, "many have undertaken to compile (write down) an account of what happened." Then in verse 2 he says, "just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the **word** have handed them down to us. In verse 3 he goes on "it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully **from the beginning to write it out in consecutive order**, most excellent Theophilus." Now Luke was a Gentile and not a disciple yet he wrote down the things he had verified so Theophilus could know with certainty that what he was taught was the whole story he had written down.

The four gospel writers wrote down what they wanted to say yet it is clear that they never wrote down all that Christ did. It is also clear that they quoted each other in the writings

(John 21:30-31). Note the phrase "These are **written** so now people did not have to depend on oral transmission alone.

This leads us into the field of Biblical criticism. There are higher and lower critics of scripture. The higher critics concern themselves with **sources**, and the lower critics

are concerned with **outfall**.

Higher critics ask when was it written, and the forms used in that writing this is called **form criticism**. Parables, miracles performed etc., these were teaching lessons that the apostles wanted taught, it teaches about the life of Christ and His abilities

Lower critics got into textual criticism, the accuracy of the texts themselves, are the scrolls they were written on accurate, are the translations accurate and so on. The higher critics in the last 250 years say that they are not sure if Christ really died on the cross. He may have simply been drugged and revived later. Others say he merely fainted or swooned. Others argue that He was not buried. All of this however, is simply a way of denying that the tomb was empty. These critics do not believe in the resurrection of Christ from the dead and so attempt to explain away the resurrection.

This leads to a blanket assertion that all the miracle stories are false and are simply myths to bolster these outlandish teachings. This reasoning though is fallacious and it goes like this. Any account of a Biblical miracle is not true, why is this? Because they did not happen. That is circular reasoning of the worst kind assuming the very thing they need to prove.

The church according to them concocted this hoax yet note that it is not the early church of 30-60 A.D. but the later church 100-200 A.D. Why do they do this? Simply because the earlier Christians believed these things and had the evidence for them. So they take it forward and then go on to say that the gospels **must have been written later** and thus embellished. So they assign a late date to the gospels which were made up of oral traditions. The problem though for the higher critics is of course that the early Christians had **eyewitness accounts**. These eyewitnesses did not all die when Christ ascended back into heaven. If then the critics want to make all this false then they must account for the hundreds of eyewitnesses for example 5,000 saw the miracle when Jesus fed them.

One critic says of this that Jesus had all the food hidden in a cave and it was done with slight of hand yet 5,000 never noticed it (perhaps they were hypnotised). You would if this were true have 5,000 idiots at worst or 5,000 liars at best and both these put Christ in the category of a liar thus disqualifying Him as the Son of God.

This also says to us that the oral tradition cannot be a complete falsification of events. How though can we account for a different standard before and after the resurrection?

The early church was heavily involved with the Holy Spirit one of the evidences of this was the ability to speak in tongues. But how many accounts of tongue speaking do you find in the Gospels? **None.** If it is true that the early church concocted these stories then why is there no account of tongue speaking before the resurrection? Since that would be part of the whole story. If the later church wrote the story, the historical perspective would be the same. The apostles would have been speaking in tongues before the resurrection. But the sources who did write the gospels made it clear that apostolic tongues were not part of the gospel period. It is this fact that that proves that there is a difference in historical perspective between the gospels and the apostolic period. The source was Christ Himself.

Higher critics speak of the falsification of the "lives" of Christ. They speculate on His inner motivation and from that postulate different groups. They especially highlight the Essenes. The Protestant secularists of 1750-1800 did this.

Then followed classical Protestant liberalism from 1800 – 1914. These people denied the gospel accounts. Jesus is spoken of as an example to the living and by doing this they are in fact saying that the resurrection is not the major thrust of the gospel.

The resurrection becomes simply a story for the benefit of the living so one can have a better life. Miracles are treated as being completely non historical and are

rejected as a rationalisation of nature. For example, when Jesus walked on water He just happened to know where there were some stones just under the water. Others deny miracles even happened. This however, undermines the entire historical basis of the gospels themselves.

The theology of these people was totally dogmatic and they dismiss Jesus' claim of Deity. To them He was simply an exemplary man. This of course denies what is written in the book of Philippians 2. This group too held an evolutionary anthropology which involved humans reaching a higher level of consciousness. Jesus is then held to be a man who rose above His status and His problems, and it is in that sense that we should look at it and bring ourselves up from whatever ails us. This thinking came out of WW1 when up to half of the young men in it were killed this crushed any thought of rising above the world. World War 1 changed the philosophy and thinking of people, especially in Germany, who 20 years later would bring Nazism, Thus any idea of intrinsic goodness in man was lost by World Wars 1 and 2.

This was followed by neo orthodoxy which covered 1918 – 1970. Karl Barth was the leading light of this movement. He stressed God's sovereignty and sin, but he de-emphasised any idea of the historical Jesus.

Rudolph Bultmann was another leading light in this movement who in 1941 wrote an essay on New Testament mythology. He popularised the concept of demythologising the Bible. He said you need to read it to find out where the true bits are. This of course de-emphasised any notion of the evidential foundation of faith. This became the so called "leap of faith" one has to make as a Christian. The Bible then is demythologised and makes no literal sense at all.

If then the early Christians believed it then they were quite simply wrong. Thus any transcendent language of the Bible must be reinterpreted as to its **existential meaning** of life and this is all the Bible is worth to that school of thought. They argue that Paul's writings have

few historical details, and the gospels being written later shifted the emphasis to a more recent life of Jesus. Thus according to them the church was revising the truth.

When Paul wrote he was in the first century and names contemporaries, Peter, James, John, the 500. They were still alive when he wrote. From this you cannot get the shift in the church to revise the truth Paul and the witnesses were there. The higher critics also claim that Christianity borrowed from the mystic religions of Greek and Roman times but this is no more than a smoke screen, What they are trying to do here is to explain the resurrection in the early second century. The Greeks and Romans had by this time made up their own resurrection stories. None of them had them in the first century.

During this time however the apostles were mostly in Jerusalem and there were no mystic religions for them to borrow off and the second century is too late for them to borrow from since they were now all dead. However, the critics need this so they can postulate their late date for the writings. They go on to say that there were no writings before 90 A.D.

This then rules out all the gospels and Paul's writings which were written earlier. They refused to authenticate normal historical sources. Bultmann tries to put limitations on the historical Jesus by saying that we cannot know about His life and personality. This of course challenges the historicity of Jesus and the truth of the bible and it portrays the resurrection as a myth.

Problems that arise from this are obvious since the bible claims to be based on accurate historical accounts. The accounts of Bultmann and others are completely without investigation and thus are simply assumptions. They have no historical analysis to back their claims. The form criticisms do not work with secular writings, eg Plato, Homer and others. The bible however, is unique, there are no other examples of such writings. Most of Acts can be confirmed by independent historical sources the New Testament is textually verified, and we also know that

there are non biblical references to Jesus, Josephus, Tacitus and others.

One of the theories picked up on in this is the **swoon theory**. Written by a Jewish author Hugh Schonfield in his book "The Passover Plot," according to Schonfield, Jesus passed out on the cross and then revived in the cool of the tomb and went over to Peter's house where his wounds were patched up. This of course brings up the question of how he could do that in the state he was after the Roman scourging and crucifixion. How could Peter and others conspire to come up with a story like that especially since they were ready to die for the fact of the resurrection? If Christ were to die later on this would be a preposterous claim.

The apostles knew where the tomb was, further swooning would not happen in a crucifixion, why? Since the chief cause of death was the inability to breathe. The Romans knew this. If one simply passed out one would still be breathing. Jesus however was not breathing and that is one of the reasons why they never broke His legs. They knew he was dead. If the spear thrust had shown Him to still be breathing they would not have taken him down. Also if He passed out he could not have pushed up on the nails so He could breathe, and He was not doing that when the Roman pierced His side.

Still others say that Jesus was an Essene from Qumran. There are many Essene plots, which say another died in His place. The Muslims also say this. The answer to this is simply to say that Jesus was not an Essene. The Dead sea scrolls try to perpetuate this myth. Jesus was sinless yet the Essenes immersed (baptised) themselves more than four times a day for ceremonial cleansing and saying that even the Messiah when he came would have to do likewise this of course would be to render the Messiah ritually unclean.

The ministry of Christ was public but the Essenes were private, and monastic. Christ associated with sinners while the Essenes never did. Christ's teachings were oral while

the Essenes were written. Christ's teachings were close to the Rabbinical school and not like the Essenic school.

Because there are no writings about Jesus from age 12 to 30 it is assumed that He was with the Essenes during that period yet that gap in no way changes anything in the New Testament account and doesn't alter His character or what He taught. What scholarship does with all this subterfuge is to try to tell us that the gospels were rewritten in the second century and that Pilate was the only one to blame for his death, and that, Caiaphas' plot and the Jews screaming for His crucifixion was a second century myth. The Romans had a grudge against Christ and they took Him up to Pilate who had him killed. Thus the gospels were written long after the events occurred.

The Jewish nation was in crisis and that is why things were changed. The gospels then were not historically accurate but were simply "Faith narratives." The question to ask here is how would a saving faith be built on such premises? It is this type of theological teaching that is responsible for the denominations teaching the very same error.

The synoptic gospels however say that Jesus claimed Deity for Himself He taught that He was the Son of God as well as the son of man and further claimed that salvation comes only through Him and no-one else. He also claimed only He had the power to forgive sins. He claimed a unique relationship to god by calling him Abba an Aramaic word meaning daddy in English it is a word that a small child uses to address its father. Nobody else had ever done that in the New Testament. Nobody altered these facts and if the second century writers wanted to add in things to deny his claim they would have edited all these facts out of the narrative.

Paul in Romans 1 confirms the Deity of Christ in verse 4. Christ then is God over all. If you can find Paul writing of the Deity of Jesus then none in the second century needed to "jack up" the case in the second century to make it more meaningful. These writings are the early

books written before anything could be manufactured in Rome or in modern times for example the "Da Vinci code.

The Gnostic gospels were written between 140 – 400 A.D. Most were found in about 1945 and written in English in 1970. They are called the Nag-Hamadi texts. The gospel of Thomas has secret sayings of Jesus written around 140 these have always been regarded as heretical so there is not a lot of competition from them regarding the truth of the biblical text. The biblical canon is early not late.

I Timothy 5:18 says: "For the scripture says, you shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing and the labourer is worthy of his hire." This is from Deuteronomy 25:4. The second part of the quotation goes back to Deuteronomy 24:15 and Luke 10:7. "The scripture says." Paul wrote I Timothy about 66 A.D. and he is already quoting scripture. Thus we can be sure that the Gospel of Luke had been written already if this is not the case then Paul could not quote it as a source of his teaching.

II Peter 3:9 Regarding the patience of the Lord Peter here quotes Paul (Romans 13:11 and I Timothy 2:4). So Paul's letters were written earlier than Peter's who quotes him even saying that some of Paul's letters were "hard to understand which the ignorant and unlearned twist to their own destruction.

Ignatius, Polycarp and others of that era all say that the apostles wrote at an early date. This provides us with ex-Biblical truth for the time of the writings.

An outgrowth of these types of teachings came from the so called "Jesus movement" who said that "the scholarly New Testament and the gospel of Thomas say that only 18% of what Jesus said is written down." That then means that, 82% was not written down. It was Rudolph Bultmann, who started this by saying that the resurrection never occurred. He also stated that we "cannot believe in a mythical spiritual world which the New Testament gives in our time." Others say that Jesus could not have cured any diseases nor could He raise the dead. Anyone who

believes such stories is a "naïve fundamentalist." This is the way the world sees it today.

They also say that any healing and raising from the dead took place after the fact, in other words, they are lies added to the text. Also, anything that Jesus spoke after his death are not subject to historical investigation and cannot then be true. Christ, they say, was left up on the cross and was torn apart by wild beasts, or, He was buried in a shallow grave and the dogs would have eaten Him up. The Romans didn't care what happened to him so no-one knows for sure whether it is true or not.

Now we move on to orally transmitted statements of belief. They are also known as "creed - statements." These date from a very early time and these verbal statements were to be remembered. Some were hymns, some were easy to remember and memorised. All these type of statements take us back to the early first century church, the original days of the apostles teachings for example I John 4:2, and Philippians 2:6.

This takes the statements back before Paul actually wrote them down they were thought to be put in the form of a hymn and thus were easy to memorise and to pass on to the Christians. II Timothy 2:8: "**Remember**" and so on Romans 1:3-4 "declared to be the Son of God with power." I Timothy 6:12 "fight the good fight." Peter quotes Paul on occasions and this means that Paul's letters were written very early on and are the best documented in the New Testament. We know when and where they were written and there is little historical argument no myth can be found in them even by those who attack the bible.

We find then that between 50 – 68 A.D. the earliest writings of the New Testament, however, these come from an even earlier time for we find Paul quoting things before they were written down.

All of this then takes us back to the events themselves. The closer we take the statements the closer we get to

the Lord's church. Modern sceptics will not do this they will only go to the second century. But the closer to the event a passage is then the ability to falsify them is lost.

The resurrection did not happen according to modern sceptics. But does the evidence hold? The word never walks away from it and the evidence places the books back to that event. There is universal agreement that Paul's letters were written in this time frame within a year or two at the outside.

I Corinthians 15:1-8 Paul says to remember the gospel that he preached to them and this takes it back to an earlier time back to the resurrection itself. Paul is saying, what I received I passed on to you. Christ died according to the scriptures He was buried and He rose again on the third day.

Verse 4 is a credal statement and it contains the core teaching of the gospel itself. How do we know that this is a quotation? Paul uses two technical terms [1] "Delivered to you." [2] "I received." Received is from *paralambano* to receive something by oral transmission, by the narration of others or by the instruction of teachers. Deliver is giving over a teaching by word of mouth or written document.

In Acts 15 the letter was taken to those who were to abstain from fornication and from blood. In I Corinthians 15 though he is quoting it is poetic in form and it is Hebrew Paul uses the name Cephas for Peter and this too points to an earlier source than the Greek translation for his name.

Paul would not speak this way if he was addressing a Greek church. But it would be the way he would use it if he was quoting it from a source.

"According to the scriptures." Most people including modern theologians say that these statements go back to the mid 30's A.D. 3 to 5 years after the crucifixion of Christ 35 to 37 for this statement. Christ died in 30 A.D.

Paul was converted about 33 or 34 and was in Jerusalem 36 to 38. In Galatians 1 Paul uses the name of those who saw the risen Christ. If he received this in Damascus he would be in a 33-35 time frame he was in Jerusalem in 36-38. So this would have been told before Paul heard it. This means then that the events are pushed back to very near the time they occurred.

This is very important since it reduces for us the period of oral transmission to nil, and it takes the events in I Corinthians right back to Christ's death 30 A.D. this account meets all the demands of historical reliability that could possibly be needed. The text is valid and Paul wrote it.

The text preserves early and verifiable testimony. It meets every reasonable demand of historical reliability. C.H. Dodd says that Paul's preaching has a special stream of Christian tradition which derived from the mainstream very near to its source. Anyone who says that this is not authentic must bear the burden of proving it to be false.

The primitive Gospel of the death, burial and resurrection stands true to this day to disprove it one would have to be reading far away from the New Testament. This establishes that very early people were teaching, that Christ died, He did not swoon or faint. This counters all the claims to the contrary eg that He was married, went to India and suchlike.

He died, was buried and He rose again. This fact implies the empty tomb. More importantly, however, it denies the idea that the later church had of His not being raised from the dead. This also shows that there was no time to mythologise it, no time to invent a story. If it was a lie then all those who invented it were willing to die for it there was just no time for anyone to mythologise the reports, and there were witnesses who were still alive and Paul refers to them.

Also when Paul uses the phrase "according to the scriptures." He is saying that there was a fulfillment of

prophecy. Most critics on the other hand dismiss prophecy by calling it a coincidence or an invention. Christ however, not only fulfilled all prophecy He in fact fulfilled **the entire plan of God from eternity.** (This is what is implied by the term "according to the scriptures.")

Those who deny the resurrection laugh at the idea of fulfilled prophecy and then go on to say that it was concocted to "look as though it was fulfilled."

Given the early life of Jesus and His coming back out of Egypt, there is no time to concoct any stories. We also know that the dating is very accurate. Then in Luke 24, Christ tells the disciples "This is what I told you," then He opened their minds to the scriptures.

Rising on the third day was not an element of Old Testament prophecy. As such, a lot of people challenge it. They say it was only written in the gospels **after it happened.** So how do we know that Jesus rose on the third day? It is never mentioned in the Old Testament. The significance is found in the fact that Paul wrote it, and it is part of a credal or oral statement, as such it takes us back to the event itself. Again there is no time to invent the third day. Paul simply reported what had happened.

Paul also **named the witnesses of the event.** Peter, the five hundred, James, and himself note also that this is not a full list of all whom had seen the risen Christ. This is done to **show apostolic authority.** Paul tells the people to go and talk to the witnesses themselves. Again it shows very clearly that the resurrection was not some second generation hearsay or third generation exaggeration. The critics try to put this into 100 years or later. The 4th generation then would make it simply a myth. This is why Paul takes us back close to the source and says, "talk to the witnesses."

Why though does Paul say that he was "last of All?" The theologians say that if the resurrection was not a myth then it was simply a lot of people having "subjective visions." This of course is part of a psychiatric illness. This

elicits the question: **How did 500 people all go insane at the same time?** Others say that the apostles wanted Jesus to be alive so much that they thought that He was. But why does Paul say that he was last to see the risen Christ. Others said they had seen Him. If they were objective visions then why did God stop sending them? If they were psychic experiences why did they stop with Paul? There is no for ending them other than the fact of it, Paul says, "this is it, the last one to see Christ was me."

How about the statement "He died for our sins?" Again there was no time to invent this doctrine at this early date. The apostles remember were in shock and despair when Jesus was crucified, to them it was the ultimate tragedy. Paul mentions here and in Ephesians 1:7, that Christ died for us, and he is saying it from the very earliest days of Christianity, and Paul refers to the blood of Jesus shed for our sins. So we have here this teaching and not just the tragedy of His death.

The early apostles were teaching this and Paul was joining himself with them. In Ephesians 1, Paul uses the word **we**. Again it shows that there was no time to invent such a story and it was this that changed all their lives. The message says Paul is what I received and delivered [Christ died, was buried, and rose on the third day.]

Thus by the time we get to I Corinthians we have reduced the oral transmissions back to a year after the resurrection and maybe even closer. It is taken back to the event itself and since this is so we can now have the comfort of knowing that the core elements in the New Testament are taken all the way back to the events themselves. Also we can know that the rest of the books can be trusted having been written by men who were teaching what had been taught in the earliest times. We can trust this on two counts. (1) that it was an accurate historical document set in the time it was authored. And (2) we can understand the process of inspiration. That the Holy Spirit worked through these men. So we can trust the word on an even greater level. Thus, we can confidently say as Peter did, "we have a more sure word

of prophecy.

Now we will look at Paul's vision and the resurrection of Jesus. There are basically five major miracles recorded in the bible. (1) the feeding of thousands Luke 9:12-17. (2) The man who had been born blind cured John 9. (3) Resurrection of Lazarus (4) The resurrection of Jesus. (5), The conversion of Saul. Acts 9:22-26. I Corinthians 9:1-3. I Corinthians 15:1-9. "Last of all He appeared to me one abnormally born." I Timothy 1:12-17, "the chief of sinners."

The question must arise, was Paul faking all this, did he go from one extreme to another? Remember that he was a mad fanatic, who by his own admission wasted and hammered the Christians, even consenting to the death of Stephen. He also dragged Christians out of their homes and had them put in prison. Given this, and his high standing as a Pharisee who had studied under Gamaliel why would he then fully embrace a religion that was perceived as begun by a bunch of fishermen and a dead carpenter? Further Paul never knew any of them. He loved power and he was mad with it.

The conversion of Saul then shows us the view of God's integrity for Saul was acting ignorantly in unbelief thus the conversion of Saul is very powerful evidence for the Bible if the vision is real.

Some describe it as an objective vision rather like a hologram from God. Others suggest it was a subjective vision, which, means in short that he made it up. Still others say that he had a temporal lobe seizure and thus was mentally sick. Then there are those who say it was a psychic vision. So he was mad anyway.

Yet, in Acts 26:19 Paul says to Agrippa, "I did not prove disobedient to the **heavenly vision.**" The Greek word he uses here is **optasia**. A sight or a vision an appearance **Presented to one either asleep or awake.** This word is only used four times in the New Testament [Luke 1:22] The vision of Zacharias. [Luke 24:23] at the empty

tomb.[II Corinthians 12] One caught up into the third heaven. And the one in [Acts 26:19.]

Paul had other visions of Jesus but uses a different word **Opama**. It is also used in [Acts 7:56] Stephen's vision. [I Corinthians 15:8] [Acts 10:11] Peters vision. Paul does not use any of his subsequent visions to prove that he had seen the Lord. He always refers to the first one (**Optasia**) and uses only that term to address it. Peter in Acts 10 had a vision that nobody else had seen, thus it was private and has a different classification.

In [I Corinthians 15:8] Paul uses the term "last" after listing others who had seen the risen Lord this puts him on a par with other Apostles and this also makes the distinction between other visions. This applies today as well since nobody can now claim an **optasia vision**. In [I Corinthians 9] Paul affirms his apostleship. Matthias, was chosen by lot

But Paul was chosen directly by Christ Himself. When that happened there were other witnesses with him who fell to the ground when the light shone around them. They also did not understand the voice that spoke to Paul either.

It is evident too that the episode where Saul held the coats of those who stoned Stephen to death has been grossly underrated.

There are eight passages that allude to this sad period (where Saul persecuted the Christians). It is only when we comprehend the significance of the terms used that we get to feel the remorse that laid, on Paul as well as the taunts that came from his enemies.

In [Acts 9] the people were not sure of Paul at all this was one who had **ravaged the church**. This term is used as one who ravaged a vineyard, or one who was compared to destroying a conquered country with fire and sword. Paul even got letters that allowed him to act as the arch inquisitor who would drag both men and women into prison who belonged to "the way." [Acts 9:2].

Imagine too what Ananias must have thought when he was told to baptise Paul. This man devastated the church in Jerusalem. Then in two speeches and four letters twice to the Galatians, he speaks of his crimes. He also mentions it in Corinthians and Philipians. He could not forget what he had done, he knew he had been forgiven yet it still weighed heavily upon him. He said that he had persecuted Christians even to their death, so can we imagine what was going through the mind of Ananias? Can we imagine baptising one whom had our child or parent killed? Can we imagine sitting next to or singing with such a person or welcoming him as a brother?

In Caesarea Paul adds more. To those who were to die he gave his vote, he had letters from the high priest to arrest anyone who was a Christian. He beat people until he made them blaspheme. He tortured Christians. He says, "I persecuted the church of God **beyond measure, I wasted it.**" This man in the full fury of his zeal suddenly stopped and became a Christian. He gave up power, money, and education and associated instantly with fishermen, tax collectors.

In 37A.D. Theophilus was the high priest. He had been promoted by Vitellus. Theophilus was a Sadducee and a son of the hated house of Hanan, Yet Paul managed to get a letter from him. He **wanted to go** to Damascus. This is where the whole story began for Saul, it came from inside himself. He asked to go, and he was a Pharisee, yet, the Sadducee's did not mind him going at all so they gave him that letter. Saul then says that he was born out of due season, **an abortion** of the old life when Jesus appeared to him. He was **immediately converted**. It was once and final. The aborted life of ignorance became the new life of truth.

Materialists put all these visions of Jesus down to hallucinations. However, when we look at some of them we find that some did not even recognise Him. Mary Magdalene didn't she thought he was the gardener. The two on the road to Emmaus were prevented from recognising Him. Peter was sceptical at first also. This

shows us that the visions were real. Even Thomas wanted to see the evidence of the resurrection of Christ. Thomas saw Him thus he had sight, he then was told to touch Him, "handle me and see." A Spirit does not have flesh and bones. For 40 days Christ was seen.

In Acts 26:9 we see that Paul was not conflicted it was sudden. "I wanted to do what I was doing, then suddenly a light from heaven came." Paul, however, also tells us that he had lived in all good conscience. He was never conflicted, at least not according, to Philipians chapter 3.

Modernists say, that if Peter and Paul had had a good psychiatrist, there never would have been a Christian church. What they needed was counselling.

There are two things necessary for a subjective vision. (1) Is a belief in the possibility of it, like expecting the resurrection. Martha had no such expectation regarding Lazarus. The women who went to the tomb of Christ went there expecting to find a dead body and not an empty tomb.

(2) Most people **want a vision to be true**, yet these had no such expectation at all. Did Saul expect to see Jesus on the road to Damascus? We know he didn't he had no such expectation at all. What about the disciples, do we not find them going fishing, back to their old vocations? Here we have an amazing thing, **they were caused to believe, not forced to believe**. Thus they were changed from without rather than from within.

The disciples were incensed that someone had the temerity to **steal Christ's body**. They had been absolutely shattered by the events and this is not what sets up a vision. When others claimed they had seen Him, they didn't believe them at all. Mary went with spices to annoint a dead body, and when she did see Him, she thought it was the gardener. The disciples thought they had seen a ghost. These are not subjective visions these by their nature are short.

The road to Emmaus was a lengthy affair, which ended

with a meal. Christ appeared to 3 women, 12 apostles, and also to 500 disciples at one time. Subjective visions usually occur in familiar surroundings. Emmaus was going out of Jerusalem, and the others were going back to work.

Christ appeared in different places at different times and these were not fleeting things. Why did they stop after 40 days this was an **abrupt halt**. Then Paul was the last to see Him. You cannot take away the ascension without coming up with something else in its place. This is why the sighting of Christ ended abruptly. So, if a hallucination were really happening it would not end abruptly as it did here. People come up with these things to deny the empty tomb. The resurrection and ascension explain the empty tomb. Now Christ sits at the right hand of God.

Once it is established that Jesus did live and see in history that it is true, and when we also realise that the Biblical texts have been scrutinised more than any other ancient works, we must then answer the question is all this simply man's opinion? It may be good that Peter and Paul and others verify it but is it based entirely on their thoughts and memories? We must then look at the process of revelation and inspiration, which are miracles in their own right.

Consider too that before any testimony in court is valid, questions have to be answered. (1) Is the author of this testimony honest? (2) Did the writer have the ability to put down truthful statements? (3) How many witnesses were there, and were they all consistent in their reports?

Modernists disbelieve because they have not **seen** a healing or one being raised from the dead, and on this basis they challenge the truth of the Bible. They forget, however, the eyewitness accounts. The Bible also talks of historical events that are verifiable and even though rigorously attacked it always comes up with the truth.

If God speaks to us through the Bible then He does so in order to be understood. Thus, it uses words in the ordinary sense so it can be understood. The Biblical

revelation is that which is in harmony with mankind. It speaks to us in the state we are in as human beings. The Bible comes from the more simple in the Old Testament to the more complex of the New Testament and at every stage it is appropriate to mankind's state.

Also, God speaks to **all collectively** and not individually, so that if He did speak to individuals differently we would be just like the animals, instinctive and plugged in to its own nature and the message would be different for everybody. From this only confusion could reign since God would be telling one person one thing, and another person another thing [just as the charismatics do.] The Bible is given in dramatic narrative form capable of being understood by all rational persons, it covers history, philosophy, poetry and suchlike. It is also impressive and permanent. Christ chose the men He wanted to get done what He wanted to be done.

General revelation is where God reveals Himself through **nature** Psalm 8, psalm 19, cover both general and special [specific] revelation. Romans 1:16 starts with special (v.19) general. Acts 17 [general] then [specific] "God commands men everywhere to repent." There was a time where you could ignore general revelation but now there is something specific to **all men and that is to repent.** The existence of conscience may be credited to general revelation in Acts 14 and Romans 1 it was obvious but man did not want to acknowledge God. Man has a deformed view of God in his own mind and it is this that prevents him from knowing the true God and His revelation both general and specific. This is clearly shown in the world about us.

We are subjected to time and space, then in Romans 8, we are told that the whole creation groans waiting for redemption. Yet even though bound by space, time, and death, it is through special revelation, we can look back and see the purpose of God through that special revelation. Through it, we can gain durability. I Peter shows us that we are not born of corruptible seed but incorruptible seed through the word of God that is, special

revelation. "The grass fades, but the word of the Lord lasts forever.

Every other thing we see fails, is destroyed, or dies. There is no hope in these things it is only in the word of God (special revelation) that we are born again of incorruptible seed that will never die.

General revelation alone is both inadequate and dangerous for it renders us without excuse. [1] Divergent concepts of God cannot be corrective since He has not fully expressed Himself in nature. His omnipotence cannot be deduced from nature. The existence of God cannot be empirically expressed by studying nature and general revelation. Moral ideas cannot be enforced by general revelation either. Even Adam had to have specific revelation by being told what to do, "tend the garden and, do not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil."

Schemes of salvation cannot be taught by general revelation either. God has to specifically reveal that to us. Cain and Abel had special revelation regarding sacrifices. "By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." Then in Romans 10:17, we are told that "faith comes by hearing the word of God." In general revelation Cain's sacrifice was as good as Abel's but specific revelation superceded it and Cain refused to listen to God's special revelation on that point.

If Christianity is robbed of special revelation then we don't have Christianity. We are left with only general revelation and as we have said that simply leaves us with no excuse, and no way to remedy that problem. This is why Muslims, Buddhists, and denominational "worship" is tolerated and accepted by so many people. People simply do not believe in specific or special revelation anymore, and that is to their eternal hurt.

Now the question is, did the New Testament become formalised by the early church? Is inspiration continuous and formulative today? Latter day saints, Ellen G. White, the Pentecostals and charismatics seem to think so

So then, is revelation of ideas or concepts or is it dictation? Most theologians ridicule the idea of dictation to them it was ideas and concepts. To them, Paul sat down and wrote a nice piece on love in I Corinthians 13.

In dictation, however, can we account for the different styles, personalities and vocabularies of the different writers? For example John is different from Matthew in word and form. Therefore it is obvious that two different people wrote the gospels. How do we account for Old Testament quotations and the apochryphal books or the quoting of pagan poets in Acts 17? Why does Jude appear to quote from the book of Enoch? The Holy Spirit spoke **their language**. God used the tongue of Paul like we would use a pen. God then used the tongue and pen of men in that day.

In Mark 13:11, the apostles are told not to be anxious about what they would say if arrested, but they were told to say whatever was **given to them by the Holy Spirit**.

In

I Corinthians 2, we have general and specific revelation. There was also hidden wisdom which was special revelation and not general. The apostles spoke as the Spirit directed them, and the Spirit led them into **all truth**.

If then we don't believe in the written account what then are we to believe in? It is a very significant point that Jesus makes when speaking in Luke 16 about the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man asked Abraham to send someone back to warn his brothers about Hades, he was told that his brothers had "Moses and the prophets. So let them read them." From this we realise that immediately after death nobody who ends up in that punishment is not suddenly concerned about their families. Yet, the word is the same. "they have the written New Testament which explains how one should live, so let them read that and then act in faith on its precepts. "Blessed are those who hear and do the word of the Lord".