

Apologetics Summary for the Bible

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1. INTRODUCTION

The search for the meaning of life is the most pervasive one found in philosophies that humans have developed throughout history. Seeking out answers to the question what caused us to exist, what are we and where are we going appears to be important questions to many humans. If there is a rational answer to these questions then there needs to be an explanation that not only could develop such inspirations in humans but also explains the cause that provides the rationale for a meaningful explanation for humans. Having a cause for a meaningful explanation means that there must of been some entity in the past which somehow had the meaningful plan in mind. For example, my wife's decision to marry me is a meaningful event in my life. If at the time when she first mentioned an interest in marrying me, she had never thought of marriage or a relationship with me, rather the mention of marriage was just a random event which spontaneously came forth with no prior thinking, then there would be actually nothing meaningful about this event. If there was no prior planning for a human experience, then there is no reason to consider that there is a purpose for it. Thus, it is apparent that the ultimate source for a meaningful explanation needs to be a planner.

An ordered arrangement of atoms can to some extent develop through evolution without a direct cause but an indirect one called natural selection as defined by the leading evolutionist Richard Dawkins (31).

"All appearances to the contrary, the only watchmaker in nature is the blind forces of physics, albeit deployed in a very special way. ... Natural selection, the blind, unconscious, automatic process which Darwin discovered, and which we now know is the explanation for the existence and apparently purposeful form of all life, has no purpose in mind. It has no mind and no mind's eye. It does not plan for the future. It has no vision, no foresight, no sight at all. It can be said to play the role of the blind watch maker."

In the evolution process, fundamentally the direct cause for new information is mutations or mistakes in the DNA copying process. According to the theory of evolution, if some impersonal molecule did not randomly interfere with the DNA replication of some past creature's (i.e. single cell bacteria or ancient ape) DNA, then humans most likely would have never come into existence. If evolution and the natural impersonal laws did exclusively produce humans, then the good morals that both atheist and theist have are just a matter of chance and very likely would be completely different if some other impersonal molecule interfered with the past DNA replication process. In other words, ultimately there would be no good purpose behind the good morals that atheist and theist do have, rather they were just obtained by accident. This is a significant point especially considering that if this theory is completely true, then there is no free will for humans (30) so not only is human moral behavior obtained by accident, it is not even the choice of humans. Even the atheist's belief that there is no God would not be her/his choice. Clearly, evolution cannot provide a rationale for a meaningful explanation for humans (35). Therefore, even if evolution completely explains the physical origins of human life (it is my impression that an objective evaluation of all the data pertaining to origins of life presents serious problems for the theory of evolution, Ref. 21) there is still a real need for an alternative cause which had a plan in mind in order for there to be a rationale that has a meaningful explanation for humans. Since cause and effect relationships are ongoing processes and a process with no plan cannot produce a real meaningful plan, there is a real need for there to have been a planner in existence for past eternity. This is the entity that is typically referred to as God. Thus, my search is to find God which is the potential source of the meaningful explanation for humans.

As with any search for something, one must first identify its characteristics. Considering the astonishing order of life on earth and the vastness of the universe and the remarkable nature of humans, it is evident that if there is a God who was directly involved with causing humans to come into being, this God must not only be able to plan but also

be a supreme super natural being. Thus, I have a starting point by which to define God. I believe that some of the fundamental characteristics of God are: purposeful planner, eternal existence, omniscience (all self consistent knowledge that exist) and omnipotence (all self consistent power that exist). In addition, if God is good rather than bad, I believe God would have these traits: holy (perfectly good), good purposes and loving.

A rational approach for identifying the intervention of the super natural is presented in Ref. 40. Searching for God involves finding evidences of these characteristics in a certain being. Each evidence has certain value in a search. Critical value is placed on evidences that are unique to the thing being sought. For instance, finding a car that is red does not necessarily mean I have found my red car. However, finding a red car with my California license plate number which uniquely identifies my car means I can know with confidence I have found my red car. Thus, special attention is paid to evidences that can be only from God and not just from a person, because my search is for God-not for a person nor a person's creation of a god.

In addition, I am open to the possibility that there is a real God that I am responsible to. If God created humans, it is not appropriate for humans to expect God to follow their rules. If it turns out that God is good then I hope to give God the respect that God deserves. If one is not open to the possibility that there actually is a good God that they are responsible to, there may be no purpose for them reading further.

The focus of further discussion is to investigate the God of the Bible to see if there is evidence for this God actually fulfilling the characteristics listed above. Section 2 of this discussion lists evidences in the Bible for the God of the Bible for each of the characteristics of God listed above. Naturally, the source of many of the evidences for the characteristics about the God of the Bible are from the Bible itself. Thus, the reliability of the Bible needs to be evaluated. Section 3 attempts to address this concern by presenting evidence that supports that much of the Bible is a reliable source of information. Section 4 provides resources for a well summarized critic of the points I make in this article. I believe a fair evaluation of any issue involves hearing out the best arguments from the different positions as is theoretically done in the court room. Thus, in Section 4 I provide references to the best and easily available criticism of the points I make in my article.

2. EVIDENCE FOR INSPIRED BY GOD

2.1 Eternal Existence

For every effect there must be a cause. Clearly things do exist today; thus, something must have existed in the eternal past. It is most sensible to consider God, the supreme being, to have been the thing that existed for all eternity.

“Even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.” (Psalm 90:2)

2.2 Omniscience (all knowing)

2.2.1 Knowing the past

Jesus knew that a certain woman had 5 husbands even though she had kept this a secret and He had never met her before (John 4:18).

2.2.2 Knowing the present

A Roman soldier asked Jesus to heal his servant miles away. Immediately Jesus healed him and knew of it even though He was miles away (Matthew 8:13).

2.2.3 Knowing the Future

2.2.3.1 Knowing the future about Jesus (Messianic Prophecies)

The gospels are full of claims that Jesus's life was predicted by OT prophecies. Thus, Messianic prophecies are an important issue concerning the claim that Jesus was the divine Messiah. There are about 30 OT passages that are specifically quoted in the NT as messianic prophecies. The Messianic prophecies are summarized in Ref. 1 and critiqued by Ref. 22. Responses to the criticisms can be found at Ref. 37 & 38. Ref. 36 conveniently lays out a list of about 200 prophecies that different modern authors have proposed. This allows one to as best possible critique the Messianic prophecies and make a judgment for themselves.

Much of the criticism (Ref. 22,33) points out that many of the OT messianic prophecies do not clearly state they are Messianic. However, many of them actually referenced in the Gospels do have clear messianic implications such as Micah 5:2 mentioned in Section 2.2.3.1.3 which says the individual existed eternally in the past. Ref. 37 proposes there are consistent patterns (Typology) in these OT prophecies that indicate clues that they point to the Divine Messiah.

Most all of the prophecies could have been concocted up by the Gospel writers. The critics (33) claim this is evidence that the prophecy fulfillment presented in the Gospels were actually concocted up. However, this argument cannot stand on it's own because it cannot explain all the relevant data such as the remarkable prophecy listed in Section 2.2.3.1.1 which could not have been concocted up.

Concocting up the messianic prophecies would require an extensive amount of intentional coordination for the purpose of deception which raises another question; why did these individuals intentionally make up lies and then go sacrifice their lives for them (according to the early christian church) all the apostles died a martyrs death except for John) and get so many followers for good morals and the crazy idea of a resurrected body and a public display of miracles?

2.2.3.1.1 Prophecy of the time of Jesus's coming

In Daniel 9:24-27, an OT passage, there is a prophecy of the Messiah. Daniel says from the time when a decree is issued to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, there will be 7+62 weeks until the Messiah will come. It then says the Messiah will be cut off (killed). The decree was made on Nisan 1 (March 5) 444BC (Nehemiah 2:1-8) (5). Nisan 10 (March 30) AD 33 the Bible records that Jesus entered into Jerusalem (15). In this case the Hebrew the word for "week", "shabua" was used to describe 7 years (15). This prophetic year is considered to be 360 days (which is justified by Rev. 12:13-14 & Gen. 7:11-8:4).

$(7+62) (7\text{proph. year}) (360\text{day/proph. year}) = 173,880 \text{ predicted days}$

$444\text{BC March 5 to AD 33 March 30: } 476 \text{ solar years}(365.242\text{day/solar year}) + 25 \text{ solar days} = 173880 \text{ actual days.}$

The above dates can be directly related to dates in the conventional chronology (20) described in standard references (16). The are unknowns involved with this prophecy. Ref. 20 consider them conservatively and estimates a maximum probability of 0.0071. Within these unknown is the essentially perfect prediction calculated above. Contained within this small variation is a straightforward prediction that is well justified as discussed in Ref. 20. Since this prophecy was written well before Jesus's humans life, it could not have been concocted up; thus, this clear and precise messianic prophecy produces a result that is difficult for the legend hypothesis to explain. Also, it withstands the best criticism (20). Extraordinary evidence for an extraordinary claim!

2.2.3.1.2 Prophecy of Jesus's descendants

The OT passages Genesis 49:10 and Isaiah 11 predict that Jesus would be born from the lineage of Judah and Jesse. These prophecies were fulfilled when Jesus was born into the family of Joseph and Mary, descendants of Judah and Jesse, (Matthew 1). If Jesus was just a man, there is no way He could control the outcome of this prophecy.

2.2.3.1.3 Prophecy of Jesus's birth place

The OT passage Micah 5:2 predicts that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem. This was fulfilled when Jesus was born on the first Christmas Eve in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1). There is no way Jesus could control the outcome of this prophecy unless He was God.

2.2.3.1.4 Prophecy of Jesus's resurrection

The OT passage, Psalm 16:10, predicts that Jesus's body would be resurrected. According to the NT passage Matthew 25:8 this was fulfilled (Easter Sunday #1). Also, Jesus predicted His own crucifixion (Matthew 26:2) and resurrection (Mark 10:34). Also, see Section 2.2.3.1.6. If an ordinary man made a prediction that some individual would rise from the dead, his prophecy would not come true.

In addition, a skeptic of the resurrection should consider evidence (19) for the resurrection by the implied testimony of hostile witnesses which does not fit well into the legend hypothesis which the critics propose. Also, contrary to the critics claim that the resurrection accounts are contradictory, these accounts can be shown in a reasonable manner to be consistent and compliment each other in a remarkable way (29).

2.2.3.1.5 Prophecy of Jesus betrayed for 30 silver pieces

The OT passage Zechariah 11:12 predicted that Jesus would be betrayed for the price of 30 pieces of silver. This was fulfilled by the traitor Judas (Matthew 27:3). This prophecy involves exact detail. Critic's complain that these pieces were nuggets which were not in common use at the time of Jesus. However, the greek term *argurion* (means "pieces" not "nuggets" as critics claim) is the same term Matthew 25:18,27 & 28:12,15 where it obviously means coins and the term "weighed out" could have been an old term that people at the time of Jesus could have understood for passing out money.

2.2.3.1.6 Prophecy of Jesus Suffering and Triumph over Death

Isaiah (written 700BC) 52:13-53:12 gives a descriptive account of Jesus's suffering, death and triumph over sins. For example, 53:10 says that after being crushed the Messiah's days will be prolonged on earth which implies a resurrection. Originally the official position of Judaic scholars was that this passage referred to the Messiah; however, because it paralleled so close to Christ, in the 12th century AD they switched this position to this passage referring to the nation of Israel; however, the passage does indicate an individual (18). On the other hand, the many critics (22) take the position that the disciples concocted up the resurrection of Christ based upon this passage because it matches so well with Gospel portrayal of Christ. The critics claim that the early Christian Church concocted up this Messianic prophecy fulfillment; however, they were not at all in control of the certain people who caused Christ suffering by crucifying Him. Even the critics (24) agree that Jesus must have died by some sort of lamenting death.

Typical sane human would not intentionally want to go through that described in Isaiah 52 & 53. But all the data we do have on Jesus indicates that He had good, morale and sane character so this raises the question, what could have motivated Jesus? Jesus as God the sacrificial redeemer answers this question very well.

Many more other OT prophecies were made about Jesus's first coming in the NT which happened hundreds of years after these prophecies (1). Amazing!

2.2.3.2 Knowing the future about things other than Jesus

2.2.3.2.1 Prophecy of the unique destruction of Tyre

The OT passage Ezekial 26:3-14 predicts that the city of Tyre would be destroyed by many nations including Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar did destroy the mainland portion of city as predicted in V.8. Specifically, verse 12 says that Tyre would be thrown into the water. Some 300 years later Alexander the Great came through and fulfilled this prophecy. Using the rubble from the destroyed mainland portion of the city, he built a causeway through the ocean in order to attack the island portion of the city just off the coast. In this way he literally threw the mainland portion of the city into the ocean. One can still see today the rubble of Tyre which was thrown into the ocean. Alexander the Great did not even believe in the Bible; however, he fulfilled it in an amazing way. Very seldom is a large city thrown into the water. Why would anybody predict such a crazy thing unless he knew it was going to happen some 300 years later?

2.2.3.2.2 Great Empires

Daniel chapter 2, 7 & 11 predicts the coming of three Great Empires to conquer the land of Israel; the Medo-Persian Empire, the Greek Empire and the Roman Empire. In addition, detail of 8 Kings from the Syrian region and 6 kings from the Egyptian region were predicted which according to archaeological findings came true.

2.2.3.2.3 Return of Jews to Egypt

Deuteronomy (according to tradition written in 1400BC by Moses) 28:68 proclaims that the Jews would be returned to Egypt in ships and so many sold into slavery to the extent that there will be no buyer. The critical scholars of DH (see section 4.1) try to conform this data to a reference to the Jews which fled to Egypt when the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem so that this prophecy ends up not as a fulfilled prediction, rather a fabricated prophecy after the fact. Thus, they propose it was a late addition to the book of Deuteronomy in the early 6th century BCE. However, these Jews traveled by foot and took refuge in Egypt and were not sold as slaves. The Babylonians from the East would obviously not have boats and the Jews did not have boats themselves. Thus, there is no good explanation why some hypothetical scribe trying to concoct up prophecy or writing it post-datum would think or expect the Jews to be sent to Egypt by boat. However, in 70AD after sacking the Temple for the last time, the Romans deported many Jews by ship to Alexandria, Egypt and sold them all as slaves to the extent that it flooded the market of largest slave selling center in the world at that time, Alexandria. So considering all relevant data Deuteronomy 28:68 is a remarkable fulfilled prophecy that does not fit DH, but does fit well with the view inspired by God.

2.2.3.2.4 Cyrus the Persian

Isaiah 45:1 predicts by name, 150 years prior, that Cyrus (the Persian) would conquer the Middle East Region. Critics propose that was inserted in after Cyrus conquered Persia.

2.3 Omnipotence (all powerful)

2.3.1 Creation

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1).

Jesus created enough food from just 5 loaves of bread and two fish to feed 5000 people (Matt. 14:14-21). No ordinary person can create something out of nothing.

2.3.2 Force

God parted the Red Sea and held the waters aside for the Jews to pass through (Exodus 14:21). No person can cause matter to break the laws of physics. Only God could.

2.3.3 Power over death

Jesus raised a widow's son from the dead (Luke 7:11-15). Jesus, Himself, resurrected from the dead (Mark 16:6). Ordinary people do not have power over death; these sort of powers could only come from another source.

2.4 Perfection, Holy (no sin)

God is pure and righteous. There is no sin in Him (I John 1:15). The Bible teaches since God is perfect we cannot be in an eternal relationship with Him (heaven) unless we are perfected; thus, there is a need for the perfect payment of sins which is described in Section 2.6.

Certain religious leaders are uncomfortable with the concept that God will judge people and send them to either Heaven (eternity with God) or Hell (eternity without God) because they feel it is not respectful towards humans. No human has the right to judge another for the purpose of determining their eternal destiny with God. Only God has the right to determine who He will spend Eternity with. Thus, it is not appropriate for humans to expect God who created them to follow their rules concerning eternity. Humans should be open to the possibility that God has revealed His eternal plan and if they are convinced that God has indeed revealed His plan and it is good, then there is good reason to accept it. This is the approach that shows appropriate respect to both God and humans while the alternative just focuses on humans.

2.5 Purposeful

The most significant and common personal desire and need among men and women is for relationships. The Bible says the main reason God created the human race was for the purpose of having a perfect personal relationship with humans. Thus, God clearly has a purpose for man and woman.

2.6 Loving

According to the Bible, sin separates man from God (Roman 3:23), therefore, man cannot have the relationship that God originally intended. However, God sent His Son, Jesus, down to Earth to be crucified for humans (John

3:16). In this way Jesus paid the punishment for human sins that humans could not, so that if humans believe in Him as their savior they will have an eternal relationship with God (Ephesians 2:8,9). There is no greater act of love than to lay down your life for a friend. According to Genesis 3:15 this loving plan was in God's plan since at least the first humans which are according to the Bible, Adam and Eve.

What about those that never get an fair opportunity to understand the significance of Jesus or have never found sufficient reason to believe in Jesus as the Divine Messiah? The Bible teaches that God has a fair way of judging all people by what they observed of their own conscience and what they observe in nature (Rom. 1:19,20).

3. SUPPORT OF RELIABILITY

The previous section has shown that the Bible does claim to fulfill key unique characteristics of God. The purpose of this section is to address the issue of whether or not the Bible is reliable source of information. Three basic questions arise. Question 3.1: Are the texts we have today the same as the original text written thousands of years ago? Question 3.2: Were the original texts historically accurate. Question 3.3: Were the original text inspired by God?

3.1 Reliability of Modern Text

3.1.1 Old Testament (OT)

3.1.1.1 Dead Sea Scrolls

Before finding the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947, the oldest known manuscripts of the OT in existence was the Cairo Codex (6). It was written in 895AD and is kept by the British museum. Most of the Dead Sea Scrolls were found between 1947 and 1956 in the Qumran caves around the Dead Sea. All the books of the OT except for Esther are contained in these scrolls. From archaeological findings of these caves it is clear that they were inhabited between 150BC & 68AD (2). Cloth which the scrolls were wrapped in was carbon 14 dated to be in the range of 168BC-233AD (3). Studying of the writing style of the scrolls and their content (paleography) has given further specific dating for the time period (225BC-68AD) when each of the different scrolls were written. For example, the writing date for one of the scrolls containing the book of Daniel was determined to be around 160BC (2).

The actual content of the scroll has shown that the OT text was not perfect but very well kept through thousands of years of meticulous hand copying. For example, of the 166 words in Isaiah 53 there are only 17 letters in question. Ten of these letters are simply a matter of spelling, which does not affect the sense. Four more letters are minor stylistic changes, such as conjunctions. The remaining three letters comprise the word "light" which is added in verse 11 and does not affect the meaning. Thus, in over a thousand years no significant change in this passage has occurred (4). In general, the Dead Sea Scrolls do show that the OT, as we know it today, has been accurately passed down over time.

3.1.1.2 Septuagint

The Septuagint is a translation of the complete Hebrew OT into Greek which was started during the reign of King Ptolemy of Egypt (285- 246B.C.). It was completed about 150BC This text is also in correlation with the modern OT. The book of Daniel quoted in Section 2.2.3.1.1. is found in the Septuagint.

3.1.2 New Testament (NT)

The NT text is the best kept ancient document. No other manuscript was so often copied and circulated. Over 24,000 ancient manuscripts (MS) (before printing press, 1454AD) containing parts of the NT exists today (1). A very condensed list includes: John Ryland's MS (130AD) contains a portion of the Gospel of John, Bodmer Papyrus II MS (150- 200AD) contains most of John, Chester Beatty Papyri MS (200AD) contains a majority of the NT and Codex Vaticanus MS (325AD) contains all of the NT. Comparing these many ancient texts written over thousands of years, shows that only about 400 words (.2%) are in question (4). Thus, studying the ancient manuscripts shows that today's NT text is essentially the same as the original texts written 40AD to 100AD.

3.2 Historical Reliability of Text

3.2.1 Old Testament (OT)

3.2.1.1 Elba Kingdom

Around 1974 archaeologists discovered in northern Syria the ruins of the Elba Kingdom. This kingdom was destroyed around 2250BC by Naram-Sin. Since 1974 an immense collection of over 17,000 tablets have been removed and studied from this region. These tablets appear to mention the five cities of the plain (Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zedolin, Zoar) (1). Prior to 1974 they had never been mentioned in other known ancient texts aside from the OT in Genesis 14. As a matter of fact, Sodom and Gomorrah are the two cities the OT mentions that God destroyed. This conflicts with DH (see section 4.1) which claims this story was fabricated around 800BC.

3.2.1.2 Campaigns of Sennacherib

Located in the British museum is a clay tablet that was made sometime around 505BC (6). This tablet describes in detail the military campaigns (705-680BC) of Sennacherib, King of Assyria, against Israel. The description is consistent in detail with the same military campaign mentioned in the OT (2 Kings 18:17-19:36).

3.2.1.3 Belshazzar the Babylonian

Ancient historians such as Herodotus (450BC) falsely claim that Nabonidus was in charge of Babylon when it was conquered by the Persians. However, the book of Daniel explains it was Belshazzar which recent archaeological

findings (Persian verses) have confirmed. This supports the view that the author of Daniel had first hand knowledge of the events of 6th century BC.

3.2.2 New Testament (NT)

3.2.2.1 Flavius Josephus (ancient historian born 37AD)

Flavius Josephus wrote several books on the history of the Jews and Romans. In one of his books (7) he mentions that there was a Jesus (19).

3.2.2.2 Cornelius Tacitus (ancient historian born 52AD)

Cornelius Tacitus wrote several books on the history of the Romans. In one his books (8) he mentions that there was a Jesus who was put to death by the Roman governor Pontius Pilot.

Other ancient historians also mention Jesus (1).

3.3 Spiritual Reliability of Text

3.3.1 Self Claim

The Bible (written by men) itself claims that it is inspired by God such that what is meant by the text is what God meant to be said. 2 Timothy 3:16 says, "All Scripture is inspired by God". The wording of much of the text is as though the author is writing God's direct words. Many cases are quotes of God; for example, the Gospels in the NT often quote Jesus.

3.3.2 Inferred

3.3.2.1 By Characteristics and Actions in a Critical Environment

No historical figure even claims the extent of powers and miracles (examples: section 2) that the Bible credits to the God of the Bible. Many of these claims were recorded in the scriptures while both friendly and hostile witnesses were still alive. For example, the gospels which record the life of Christ are typically considered to be written 30 years after Christ died. Thus, witnesses of Christ life would have been around that could have critiqued the content of the Gospels.

The book of Daniel which contains the amazing prophecy in section 2.2.3.1.1 exists in all ancient OT texts (Christian and Jewish). This prophecy gives evidence that Jesus is the Messiah which the Jews have traditionally disagreed with. Thus, obviously the Jews would not falsely enter such a prophecy into all of their texts. Critics give a date for the book of Daniel no later than 160-150BC. Thus, this remarkable prophecy about Jesus is strongly supported by even the critics to be real. In addition, such criticism does not explain facts such as that mentioned in section 3.2.1.3 and others mentioned in Ref. 11.

4. COMPARISONS, CONTRADICTIONS, CRITICISM AND CONSISTENCY

The typical and appropriate critic of the Bible and any other sacred religious text is that it is just a creation of man with no inspiration from God, in other words, just another legend. Since the late 1800's, a very extensive effort has been made by academia to develop a critical view of the Bible. These arguments are explained in References 24, 25 & 26 and good summaries of them can be easily obtained from the internet site at Ref. 22. As shown in the previous section the Bible makes serious attempts to not only claim but show that God must have been involved with the creation of the original text.

The Bible does have it's difficulties of which most all can be resolved in a reasonable manner. In some cases, conjectures not implied from the archaeological record are necessary (as is the case with reconstructing most ancient history because the data is so sparse) in order to produce a consistent historical reconstruction. If these proposed conjectures are not accurate then the original Biblical text may actually have inaccuracies. There are passages that definitely present real difficulties such as the Genesis creation and the flood account. However, just because there are errors are even the influence of legends, does not necessarily mean that God did not at all inspire the Bible because the imperfect people that put the Bible together could have included some of their imperfection along with God's perfection. According to the famous christian philosopher C.S. Lewis (39), "The Divine Inspiration of the Bible was not always present in the same mode and degree". The previous Sections in this article do provide evidence that based upon a straight forward rationale, indicate that God was at least part of the process that produced the Bible. In addition, there are consistent themes throughout the whole Bible such as humans should be good, there is one holy God that has a good plan for humans, humans are imperfect (sinful) and they need a perfect sacrifice to pay for their sins so that they can have a relationship with this perfect God.

Typically, the critics try to maximize the amount of Biblical problems by a means which is not necessarily appropriate. Ref. 28 summarizes many of the alleged contradictions within the Bible which are readily available at the internet site Ref. 22. Ref. 26 and other critical articles often leave out key information; thus, they should be compared to the responses given Ref. 11-14,17,18, 23, 26, 29 & 32 in order to make a fair evaluation. The text of the Bible is not comprehensive on each issue it discusses so it is appropriate to consider additional information not in the Bible to resolve conflicts within the Bible. As with most ancient texts, the text of the Bible is not always precise; thus, the context and relevant themes from other sections should be compared in order to make the best assessment of the actual meaning of the Biblical passage. The critics typically ignore this approach and choose a contradictory interpretation that is not necessarily justified. For example, in the critical quote below, the critic connects Alexander the Great with the 4th animal so the prophecy finishes prior to their hypothetical date (164BC) for Daniel. However, the third animal (leopard Daniel 7:6) has four heads obviously connecting it to the four way split up of Alexander's

kingdom. Thus, the fourth beast was the Roman Empire, but the Roman Empire came in 63BC which is past the critic's late authorship date; therefore, they do not choose the most straight forward choice only because it does not fit with their scheme.

The following critical quote comes from Ref. (10), *"While the book of Daniel was set in the second half of the 6th century BCE, the book was most likely written in the 2nd century BCE. The prophecy (Daniel 7:1-28) is then a prophecy after the fact and the four beasts or kingdoms represent the Babylonians, the Medes, the Persians and the Greeks."* Because the Daniel 7:1-28 prophecy is so amazing these critics claim that it must of been written after the predictions came true making it just a fabricated prophecy. Ref. 10 is a fairly objective study of the Holy Scriptures of all of the major religions and many other smaller ones too. The Bible is the only sacred Scripture that Ref. 10 identifies with such remarkable claims as shown above. This is consistent with my own observations. I have read through much of the Sacred Scriptures (40) from other religions and have never found such remarkable evidence supporting the supernatural origin of a religion as I have found in the Bible. If there is as or more remarkable data then I would be pleased to be inform.

4.1 OT Criticism by Documentary Hypotheses (DH)

The DH alleges that the important first five books of the OT (Torah) were written by 4 basic sources rather than Moses as the Torah states. The sources are labeled by letters "JEPD". "J" WHO uses the name Jehovah (Lord), was from the southern part of Palestine (Judah) was a Levite priest of the Moses lineage; thus, was Pro-Moses, Anti-Aaron. J presents a personal and merciful God and was written around 850BC. "E" uses the name Elohim (God), was from the northern part of Palestine (Israel), was a Levite priest from Shiloh was of the Moses lineage; thus, was Pro-Moses, Anti-Aaron. E also presents a personal and merciful God and was written around 750BC and was a reaction against King Jeroboam who gave the priestly powers to the Aranoid Priest. J and E were combined around 700BC. "D" which wrote Deuteronomy was Pro-King Josiah who gave the Priestly power to the Levites and called for centralization of sacrifices supposedly in order to promote Josiah. "D" was written by a Levite during the time of Josiah (early 600's). These "D" folks also supposedly wrote Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings. "P" was Pro-Aaron and presents a less personal God emphasizing worship and law and God's judgment. It was written around 500BC. These sources were all supposedly combined by Ezra in the 400's.

The DH proposes that the different priest were attempting to gain control of the sacrifice procedure so that they would control this source of food and income; thus, they concocted up stories in the Torah that showed God favored them and God did not approve of those Kings or other Priest that got in their way. The DH claims it has successfully separated out these sources by literary analysis of the Torah which Ezra combined. They focus on the style of the text and the historical developments of the time period between 1000BC and 400BC. However, this alleged success only appears so if just the positive arguments are presented. In addition, the wide variety of versions of the DH from critics shows that the approach can accommodate and conform to most any data because of the freedom to speculate about motivation. Even with the extensive amount of effort by critical scholars to make DH explain the OT data, there are still many features of the Torah that are inconsistent with straight forward predictions of the DH as pointed out in Section 2.2.3.2.3, volume II of Ref. 1 and Ref. 18. There are significant problems for even key points of the DH. Proponents of DH claim that these problems are due to the tailoring that was done by others and Ezra when he combined JE, P & D; however, the Torah may have just as well been a combination of information that Moses had or was given to him by God at the time when he was according to the Bible spending the 40 years in the wilderness.

4.2 NT Criticism of the Gospels

A leading NT critical scholar, Bultman approach was to consider the Gospels to be of no historical value and propose a own history based upon theories about motivations to promote the early christian church. Since then a "new quest" has developed amongst critical scholars whose position is that there was a ordinary Jesus who has some natural traces in the Gospels. The Gospel they considered first to be written, Mark, the Gospel of Action, has a Jesus that constantly does miracles that are publicly proclaimed. Thus, any straight forward approach to the Gospels presents a super natural Jesus. Critics have proposed quite a few quite different theories but have not come to a consensus on which is the correct one. This indicates that there is no definite evidence for a general theory about how the Gospels were concocted up. The Jesus Seminar proposes the Gospel of Thomas was written before the four Gospels in the NT (33). However, Bloomberg in Ref. 34 points out that the Gospel of Thomas was discovered in a collection of Gnostic literature, it does have a Gnostic style and it does include parallels to every one of the four NT Gospels and to every "layer" of the NT Gospel tradition. Since Gnostic literature was developed in the second century, there is no historical basis for placing the Gospel of Thomas at the beginning of the development of the NT Gospels

Because of the testimony of external historians such as those mentioned in Section New Testament (NT)3.2.2. Traditional and much of critical (24) scholarship agree that there was a historical Jesus from Galilee who was a peaceful teacher that taught a loving message, was originally thought of as a wonder worker, Messianic claims were made for him and he was executed by Pontius Pilate 30-33AD. Further claims of the are viewed with skepticism by the critics. The critics basic claim is that since the Gospels were written with a purpose, the Gospels writers and their sources fabricated most of their information to promote Christianity as explained in Ref. 22 & 24. It is true that the Gospel are organized according to certain topics showing the purpose to communicate certain points; however, this

may just as well due to a sincere desire to show certain characteristic of Jesus by a best assessment of a collection of eyewitness testimony. In addition, this explains the many alleged chronological problems because the Gospels are mostly organized topically rather than chronologically (23). With the help of the Gospel of John a consistent chronology of all the Gospel data can be put together (5). Even the critics typically date the completion of the Gospels by at least the 90's when eye witnesses would still be around. There are strong arguments for dating several of them no later than the 50's and 60's.

Luke references to 32 countries and 54 cities have been proven to be accurate, showing a genuine interest in accurately reporting history (12,27). He claims that his Gospel is a collection of eyewitness accounts (Luke 1:1-2) of a public ministry not some secrete private ministry. Contrary to the critic's secrete Messianic theory, most all of the Gospel of Mark's miraculous accounts state that the miracles were publicly proclaimed. This questions the justification of modern Gospel criticism which is essentially based upon speculation about motivations to create fraud in order to propagate the early Christian church, especially considering that high ethical teaching in the Gospel that even the Critics accept as Jesus's teachings. The main motivation of the Early Christian Church would have been to promote these unselfish ethical principals which does not fit well with the critic's speculation about fraudulent motivations. In addition, the Early Christian Church got started in Palestine by preaching that the miracles of Jesus were publicly known, which if they were not real, the people of Palestine at this time would have known; thus, the Early Christian Church would have had no credibility and would have most likely not gotten started in the manner it did. However, by 65AD while eyewitnesses of Jesus were still alive, it had flourished to the point that Christians were made the scape goat of the fire of Rome.

5. CONCLUSION

Realizing that I am not God, but just a human, it is possible that I may be wrong, so I will always continue my search. Up to now, I have searched many religions (40) and have not found such remarkable evidence supporting the supernatural origin of a religion as I have found in the Bible. Evidences presented in this discussion have well supported the view that the message of the Bible is truly from God. God certainly could have produce a stronger case, but still crucial features including ones converging toward Jesus are difficult to explain by even the best of legend hypothesis. The Bible shows this God had from the very beginning a good meaningful eternal plan and explanation for humans. If God was not involved with the Bible, then clearly a major fraud and hoax has been put together by men. Imagining how (consider section 3.3.2.1) these individuals put the complete fraud together challenges anybody's imagination.

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