Why I Believe
(Part 1)

Introduction:
How can someone as well educated and intellectually astute as you appear to be…really believe in a literal Jesus and all this “born-again” stuff?

Dr. Al Platt
Dept. Chair WLSC, 1976

The Question:
Do you have to throw your “brains in the trash” to believe in Christ?

The Journey:
Is there intellectually feasible evidence to support a faith in the Jesus of the Bible with His claims of deity, eternal life, and absolute truth?

The Central Issue:
1 Corinthians 15:13-19
Christianity rises and falls on the truthfulness and reality of the resurrection.
7 Reasons Why I Believe in the Resurrection:

1. The **HISTORICITY** of Jesus of Nazareth is airtight
   - Biblical manuscripts – quality and quantity
   - Extra Biblical Sources – Josephus, Pliny, Tacitus
   - Archeological confirmation

2. The **CHARACTER** of Jesus is unquestioned
   - Friend and foe agree – great man, moral teacher
   - Claimed sinless life
   - Affirmed by history and impact
   
3. The **WORKS** of Jesus went unchallenged
   - Fact of miracles, feeding 5000, etc. not disputed
   - Eyewitness accounts validated miracles
   - Acts 2 sermon – even unbelievers acknowledged His works

4. The **IDENTITY** of Jesus was confirmed
   - By Himself
   - By God
   - By His followers
   - By His enemies
   - By extra Biblical sources – Pliny A.D. 111
   - Fulfilled over 700 Old Testament prophecies
5. The DEATH of Jesus was undisputed

- At the time by friend and foe
- By His flogging, beating, and crucifixion
- By medical evidence – water and blood indicate puncture of pericardium
- By burial preparation – 70 pounds of spices and linen

6. The BURIAL of Jesus was public and secured

- Joseph of Arimathea’s tomb
- Roman guards
- Roman seal
- Size of tombstone – takes 20 men to roll away
- Penalty of death for guards sleeping

7. The EVIDENCE for Jesus’ resurrection is convincing

- Predicted by Old Testament prophets
- Jesus predicted it openly and numerously
- Appeared 12 different times to over 500 eye witnesses
- Appeared in multiple locations, times, over 40 days
- The transformation of the disciples
- Explosion of the church – “in Jerusalem”
- Disciples all willing to knowingly “die for a lie” – inconceivable
- Conversion of Saul of Tarsus
- Transformation of Roman empire and the world – test of time
- Best legal minds – the evidence is conclusive!
- My testimony – “He changed my life”
So, What Does This Mean to You?

The Resurrection…

1. **VALIDATES** Jesus’ Claims

   John 14:6

2. **Gives** **ABSOLUTE HOPE** for the Future

   *Because I live, you will live also.*

   John 14:19 (NIV)

3. **It Offers** **SPIRITUAL LIFE** Right Now!

   
   God so loved _______________ that He gave His one and only Son

   that if _______________ believes in Him, _______________

   shall not perish but have eternal life.

   
   For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn______________,

   but to save _______________ through Him.

   John 3:16-17

Your response… what will you do with the evidence?

Reject it, OR Accept it?    Explore it, OR Forget it?

For Further Study/Resources:
* The Case For Christ by Lee Strobel
* Who Moved The Stone by F. Morrison
* Did Jesus Rise From The Dead? by Habermas & Flew
* Why I Believe – Audio/Video study from Chip Ingram
7 Evidences for an Afterlife:

1. Nature
2. Anthropology
3. Psychology
4. Ethics
5. Philosophy
7. Jesus and the Bible

Conclusion:

The cumulative evidence of nature, psychology, anthropology, science, philosophy, the Bible, the testimony of Jesus and personal experience make belief in an afterlife the most rational, plausible, and intellectually defensible conclusion to the question… “Is there life after death?”
What Does the Bible Teach about the Afterlife?

Four Summary Statements:

1. At death, every person’s soul/spirit enters immediately and consciously into the relational aspects of eternal existence.
   - Jesus’ Paradigm of the Afterlife
     - Luke 16:19-31 (NIV)
   - Paul’s Paradigm of the Afterlife
     - 2 Corinthians 5:1-8 (NASB)
       - Philippians 1:22-24

2. Every person will one day be resurrected and live forever.
   - Acts 24:14-15 (NIV)
   - Luke 14:14
   - Revelation 20:11-13

3. Every person will be judged and granted the “extended capacity” to fulfill in eternity the deepest yearnings and desires of their hearts while on earth.
   - Hebrews 9:27 (NASB)
   - Luke 12:8
   - John 5:25-26 (NIV)

4. Every person will spend eternity in heaven with Christ and fellow believers, or in hell separated from God forever.
   - Matthew 25:46 (NIV)
   - Revelation 20:14-15
   - John 5:24 (NIV)
Why I Believe
(Part 2)

Why I Believe in Life After Death

A Preview of Heaven – The Great Adventure:

- **God is There**
  - Revelation 21:1-3
- **Beauty, Light, Warmth**
- **Wonderful Relationships**
  - Hebrews 12:22-24
- **Incredible Accommodations**
  - John 14:1-3
- **A Fresh Start**
  - *A New Nature*
  - 1 John 3:2
  - *A New Body* 2 Corinthians 5:1-5
  - *A New Vocation* Revelation 22:5; 1 Corinthians 6:3
- **Various Levels of Reward**
  - 2 Corinthians 5:10
- **Complete Rest, Protection, Contentment, Security, Peace, Purpose, and Rest**
  - Revelation 21-22
- **Unbridled Joy, Celebration, Worship, Laughter, and Music**
  - Matthew 26:29
  - Revelation 21-22
- **Learning, Growing, Fellowship, Worshipping, Serving, Eating, and Discovering the Infinite Majesty of God and His Universe** (yet unrevealed to us)
  - Revelation 5:8-9
  - Revelation 21-22
- **Forever**

A Preview of Hell – The Horrible Choice:

- **God is Not There** 2 Thessalonians 1:9
- **Punishment and Torment** Revelation 14:10-11
- **Varying Degrees of Punishment** Matthew 11:21-24
- **Outer Darkness** Matthew 8:12
- **Weeping** Matthew 8:12
- **Wailing** Matthew 13:40-42
- **Gnashing of Teeth** Luke 13:28
- **Forever** Hebrews 6:2, Revelation 14:11
Why I Believe in Life After Death

Why There Must Be A Hell:

- Man’s Dignity and freedom demand a Hell.
- God’s Holiness and justice demand a Hell.
- Sin’s seriousness demands a Hell.
- Evil’s defeat demand a Hell.

Conclusion:

*Will your eternal future be a blissful adventure or a horrible choice?*

Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss the various arguments for life after death. Which are the strongest in your opinion? Why?
2. Discuss the four summary statements concerning the Bible’s teaching on life after death. What was “new” to you? What was helpful? What raised questions?
4. What action step of faith do you sense God would have you take in response to this message?

For Further Study/Resources:

- Evidence of Life After Death
- Life After Death
- Recollections of Death
- The Great Divorce and The Problem of Pain
- The Real Heaven

USA Today – 10.9.2014
by Dr. Kenneth Ring, Psychologist
by Dr. Michael Sabom, Cardiologist
by C.S. Lewis
by Chip Ingram
Introduction: Is it intellectually feasible to believe the Bible really is God’s Word?

Five Crucial Questions About the Bible:

1. Is the Bible the word of men or the very words of God?

2. Is the Bible full of myths, legends, and fairytales, or historically reliable?

3. Is ALL of the Bible true and trustworthy or only portions of it?

4. Can a Bible that has been translated so many times for so many hundreds of years really be accurate?

5. What makes the Bible so different than all other religious writings and their claims to truth?

7 Reasons Why I Believe in the Bible:

1. **ARCHEOLOGY** – The Bible is a **historically accurate** document.
   - Hittites Empire Discovered
   - Moses’ writing of 10 Commandments
   - Solomon’s Reign – 1,000s of horses
2. **REVELATION** – The Bible claims to **infallibly reveal** the very words and mind of God.

- “All Scripture is God breathed…”  
  2 Timothy 3:16 (NASB)
- Biblical Proverbs = Scripture  
  1 Timothy 5:18 (NIV)
- “…Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him.”  
  2 Peter 3:16 (NIV)
- 3,000 inferences of Divine authority

3. **ORIGIN** – The Bible’s unity, structure, and subject matter argue for a **supernatural authorship**.

- 40 authors, 3 languages, 1,500 years
- Central theme is Jesus Christ
- 2 billion publications since 1455
- Who would write such an honest account (even unfavorable) of themselves?  
  i.e. David, Solomon, Paul

4. **JESUS** – believed the Old Testament to be the very words of God and predicted the New Testament to be likewise.

- Not “concepts” or portions, but the actual words are “God-breathed”
- The scope of the whole Old Testament  
  Matthew 5:17-18 (NIV)
- Jesus’ view of the resurrection is based on the tense of a verb  
  Matthew 22:29-32 (NIV)
- Paul’s argument based on plural vs. singular use of “seed”  
  Galatians 3:16 (NIV)
- Jesus’ view of Adam, Noah, Jonah, Sodom & Gomorrah
5. **FULFILLED PROPHECY** – sets the Bible apart from all other religious writings

- Judgment of Tyre  
  Ezekiel 26
- Succession of World Empires  
  Daniel 2, 7
- Fulfillment of Jesus as Messiah – 300 Predictions  
  (probability of 8 predictions = 1 out of $10^{17}$)*

*Stoner says that by using the modern science of probability in reference to eight prophecies, “we find that the chance that any man might have lived down to the present time and fulfilled all eight prophecies is 1 in 10 to the 17th.” That would be 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000. In order to help us comprehend this staggering probability, Stoner illustrates it by supposing that ‘we take 10 to the 17th silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man.

Peter Stoner, *Science Speaks*

6. **TRANSMISSION** – The Bible’s purity and perseverance throughout the centuries is nothing short of miraculous

- Meticulousness of Copyists in Transcriptions
- Proximity of Manuscripts
- Over 24,000 New Testament Manuscripts
- Dead Sea Scrolls
7. **IMPACT** – The Bible’s power to transform lives and the history of nations is overwhelmingly documented

Joshua 1:8

Jeremiah 15:16

Psalm 119:9, 11

Matthew 4:4

1 Peter 2:2

Hebrews 4:12

**Your Response – 3 Challenges:**

- I am willing to **examine** the evidence to my honest questions about the Bible.
- I am willing to **read** the New Testament and make up my own mind concerning the Bible.
- I am committing to **live** my life based on biblical convictions rather than on contemporary culture.

**Resources:**

*Seven Reason Why You Can Trust the Bible*, by Erwin W. Lutzer

*Is the Bible True?*, article by ChristianAnswers.Net

*From God to Us – How We Got Our Bible*, by Norman L. Geisler & William E. Nix
Introduction:

Is it intellectually feasible to believe that a supernatural, intelligent being (God) created the world, the universe, and all living things?

OR

Is evolution a scientific fact that has empirically and logically been proven by means of “scientific method” ~ (observation, hypothesis, testing, and predictable results) that life is the product of purely material universe that came into being by random chance and/or accident?

Defining our Terms:  Micro Evolution vs. Darwinian Macro Evolution

Exposing the Controversy:

- The Classic Position ~ Carl Sagan
- The New Voices – Colin Patterson, Michael Denton, Philip Johnson, Michael Behe
- The Christian Evolutions – Denis Alexander, Francis Collins, Kenneth Miller
Examining the evidence for yourself:

1. **How did life begin?**

   **Evolution…**
   
   “An unsupervised, impersonal, unpredictable and natural process.”
   
   ~Association of Biology Teachers
   
   “A random, undirected working without either plan or purpose.”
   
   ~Prentice Hall Text Book
   
   **Creation…**
   
   “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”
   
   Genesis 1:1 (NIV)

2. **Why did life begin?**

   **Evolution…**
   
   Pure accident, random chance.
   
   **Creation…**
   
   God created man in His own image to share relationship with Him, glorify Him and steward the Earth.
   
   Genesis 1:27-28 (NIV)
3. **How did various plants and animals develop?**

   **Evolution…**
   
   A simple cell evolved to more complex plants and animals through the process of time, chance, natural selection, mutations, and survival of the fittest over a period of billion years.

   **Creation…**
   
   God created various plants, animals, kinds, and species in a harmonic balance to reflect His attributes and character.
   
   Romans 1:20; Psalm 19

4. **Which theory / claim best explains the fossil record?**

   - Darwin’s admission
   - Darwin’s confidence of future discoveries
   - The present state of fossil records

5. **Which theory / claim best explains our most recent biological discoveries?**

   “If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down.”
   
   Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*

   - **In Astronomy/Physics – The Big Bang**
     Hugh Ross, *The Fingerprint of God*
   
   - **In the Fossil Record**
     *The Cambrian Explosion, TIME, December 5, 1995*
   
   - **In Molecular Biology**
     Michael Behe, *Darwin’s Black Box*
   
   - **In Genetics – DNA – Coded Information**
     Michael Denton, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*
   
   - **In Genetic Codes – Sequencing The Human Genome**
     Francis Collins, *The Language of God*
6. **Which theory / claim has had the greatest moral and social benefit to mankind?**

- Darwinism and Humanism – God dethroned
- Darwinism and Morality – Relative truth birthed
- Darwinism and Racism, Nazism, Sexism

7. **Which theory / claim reflects most accurately the laws of empirical scientific research?**

- Great scientist's historical presuppositions
- Law of Cause and Effect
- Law of Thermodynamics

8. **Which theory / claim has the best archeological track record for their position?**

- Our “Common Ancestor” - undiscovered
- The multiple “Missing Links” – discredited
- The Biblical archeological track record
Conclusion ~ questions to ponder:

1. Is Darwinian evolution really the “airtight,” scientific fact that we were led to believe it was, and were taught in school?

2. Should the current crises among top, non-Christian scientists cause you to reexamine your view of evolution’s validity?

3. Since science overwhelmingly argues for creation as impossible without “intelligent design,” what are the implications for knowing or believing in a Designer?

4. Could evolution be a mask we have collectively “hid behind” in order to avoid the accountability and implications of answering to our Creator?

5. Could Darwinian evolution be the intellectual justification for racism, Nazism, sexism, and moral relativism? Could you defend Darwinian philosophy applied to these arenas?

6. What do you believe concerning the origin of life? Why? Based upon? Does your life demonstrate an intellectual consistency with what you say you believe?

Resources:

- Darwin on Trial, Reason in the Balance, Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds, by Phillip E. Johnson
- The Face That Demonstrates the Farce of Evolution, by Hank Hanegraaff
- The Facts on Creation vs. Evolution, by John Ankerberg & John Weldon
- Evolution: The Challenge of the Fossil Record, by Duance T. Gish, PH.D.
- The Case for A Creator, by Lee Strobel
- The Biblical Basis for Modern Science, by Henry M. Morris
- What Is Creation Science?, by Henry M. Morris & Gary E. Parker
- Evolution: The Challenge of the Fossil Record, by Duane T. Gish, Ph.D.
- Darwin on Trial, Reason in the Balance, Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds, by Phillip E. Johnson
- Creation or Evolution, by Denis Alexander.
- The Fingerprint of God, by Hugh Ross
- What’s So Great About Christianity, by Dinesh D’Souza
- Dinesh D’Souza Interview - You Tube Video - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XGH6ey6c2rQ
**Introduction:**

Is it intellectually feasible to believe that a supernatural, intelligent being (God) created the world, the universe, and all living things?

**OR**

Is evolution a scientific fact that has empirically and logically been proven by means of “scientific method” ~ (observation, hypothesis, testing, and predictable results) that life is the product of purely material universe that came into being by random chance and/or accident?

**Defining our Terms:**  Micro Evolution vs. Darwinian Macro Evolution

**Exposing the Controversy:**

- The Classic Position ~ Carl Sagan
- The New Voices – Colin Patterson, Michael Denton, Philip Johnson, Michael Behe
- The Christian Evolutions – Denis Alexander, Francis Collins, Kenneth Miller
Examining the evidence for yourself:

1. **How did life begin?**

   **Evolution…**

   “An unsupervised, impersonal, unpredictable and natural process.”

   ~Association of Biology Teachers

   “A random, undirected working without either plan or purpose.”

   ~Prentice Hall Text Book

   **Creation…**

   “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

   Genesis 1:1 (NIV)

2. **Why did life begin?**

   **Evolution…**

   Pure accident, random chance.

   **Creation…**

   God created man in His own image to share relationship with Him, glorify Him and steward the Earth.

   Genesis 1:27-28 (NIV)
3. How did various plants and animals develop?

**Evolution…**

A simple cell evolved to more complex plants and animals through the process of time, chance, natural selection, mutations, and survival of the fittest over a period of billion years.

**Creation…**

God created various plants, animals, kinds, and species in a harmonic balance to reflect His attributes and character.

Romans 1:20; Psalm 19

4. Which theory / claim best explains the fossil record?

- Darwin’s admission
- Darwin’s confidence of future discoveries
- The present state of fossil records

5. Which theory / claim best explains our most recent biological discoveries?

“If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down.”

Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*

- **In Astronomy/Physics – The Big Bang**
  Hugh Ross, *The Fingerprint of God*

- **In the Fossil Record**
  *The Cambrian Explosion, TIME, December 5, 1995*

- **In Molecular Biology**
  Michael Behe, *Darwin’s Black Box*

- **In Genetics – DNA – Coded Information**
  Michael Denton, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*

- **In Genetic Codes – Sequencing The Human Genome**
  Francis Collins, *The Language of God*
6. Which theory / claim has had the greatest moral and social benefit to mankind?

- Darwinism and Humanism – God dethroned
- Darwinism and Morality – Relative truth birthed
- Darwinism and Racism, Nazism, Sexism

7. Which theory / claim reflects most accurately the laws of empirical scientific research?

- Great scientist's historical presuppositions
- Law of Cause and Effect
- Law of Thermodynamics

8. Which theory / claim has the best archeological track record for their position?

- Our “Common Ancestor” - undiscovered
- The multiple “Missing Links” – discredited
- The Biblical archeological track record
Conclusion ~ questions to ponder:

1. Is Darwinian evolution really the “airtight,” scientific fact that we were led to believe it was, and were taught in school?

2. Should the current crises among top, non-Christian scientists cause you to reexamine your view of evolution’s validity?

3. Since science overwhelmingly argues for creation as impossible without “intelligent design,” what are the implications for knowing or believing in a Designer?

4. Could evolution be a mask we have collectively “hid behind” in order to avoid the accountability and implications of answering to our Creator?

5. Could Darwinian evolution be the intellectual justification for racism, Nazism, sexism, and moral relativism? Could you defend Darwinian philosophy applied to these arenas?

6. What do you believe concerning the origin of life? Why? Based upon? Does your life demonstrate an intellectual consistency with what you say you believe?

Resources:

- Darwin on Trial, Reason in the Balance, Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds, by Phillip E. Johnson
- The Face That Demonstrates the Farce of Evolution, by Hank Hanegraaff
- The Facts on Creation vs. Evolution, by John Ankerberg & John Weldon
- Evolution: The Challenge of the Fossil Record, by Duance T. Gish, Ph.D.
- The Case for A Creator, by Lee Strobel
- The Biblical Basis for Modern Science, by Henry M. Morris
- What Is Creation Science?, by Henry M. Morris & Gary E. Parker
- Evolution: The Challenge of the Fossil Record, by Duane T. Gish, Ph.D.
- Darwin on Trial, Reason in the Balance, Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds, by Phillip E. Johnson
- Creation or Evolution, by Denis Alexander.
- The Fingerprint of God, by Hugh Ross
- What’s So Great About Christianity, by Dinesh D’Souza
- Dinesh D’Souza Interview - You Tube Video - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XGH6ey6c2rQ
Introduction:

- My personal journey
- The goal of this series / message
- Clarifying our pre-suppositions and focus

❖ "Aren’t all religions essentially the same?"

Answer = No – not all religions lead to the living God

❖ "Does it really matter what a person believes as long as he / she is sincere and practices those beliefs?"

Answer = Yes – Jesus said, “narrow is the gate…”

Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

Jesus of Nazareth ~ Matthew 7:13-14
7 Reasons Why I Believe in the God of the Bible:

1. **The Historical Evidence**

   Christianity is subject to objective verification
   - Historical Events
   - Trustworthiness of Biblical Records
   - Manuscript Evidence
   - Extra-Biblical Sources
   - Eyewitness Accounts of the Resurrection

2. **The Prophetic Evidence**

   Predictions of specific future events with 100% accuracy confirm authenticity.
   - The Isaiah Principle Isaiah 44:6-7, 24-28 (NIV)
   - The Test of a Prophet Deuteronomy 18:21-22 (NIV)
   - The Fulfillment of Hundreds of Specific Prophecies

3. **The Philosophical Evidence**

   The triune nature of God and testimony of Scripture best answer life’s most timeless questions.
   - The Problem of Unity and Diversity
   - The Problem of Evil and Justice
   - The Origin of Personality
   - The Enigma of Man
4. The evidence of impact

The long-term fruitfulness and greatness of Israel and the church argues for its truthfulness.

- The great nation of Israel
- The great laws of Israel
- The mustard seed conspiracy of Jesus
- The liberation of women, slaves, caste systems, basis of jurisprudence, economic impact, care for the poor, orphans, widows, and the disenfranchised of every age

5. The pragmatic evidence

The teachings of Jesus and the New Testament work in real life!

- They promote healthy relationships, strong marriages, honest business, positive parenting, racial reconciliation, cultural kindness, and champion the value and dignity of all humans regardless of creed, race, sex, nationality, or orientation.

6. The evidence of uniqueness

God’s chief messenger (Jesus) and message (grace) stand in contrast to all religions and religious teaching.

- **The Messenger: Jesus**—Deity (John 1:1-18), Sinless (John 12), Creator (Colossians 1:15), Savior (John 3:16), His Outrageous Claim (John 14:6).

- **The Message: Grace**—the unconditional, unmerited love of God toward every human being that compels Him to forgive and reconcile them to Himself (all who are willing) based solely on the work of Christ on the cross, not on any religious performance or righteous works of their own… i.e. “a gift” (Ephesians 2:8-9).
7. **The existential evidence**

The millions of “changed lives” in the last 2,000 years argue experientially that Jesus is alive and is who He said He is.

- “I was **blind** but now I **see**.”
- “I was **lost**, but now I’m **found**.”

**Summary:** So why don’t people believe?

1. **Ignorance**
   - Romans 10:14-15
2. **Pride**
   - John 12:42-43
3. **Moral problem**
   - John 3:19-20

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Why is it so important for us as believers to know “why we believe?”

2. Which of the six messages in this series helped you the most? Why? (Why I Believe in...the Resurrection, ...the Bible, ...Life After Death, ...Creation, ...the God of the Bible.)

3. Which aspect of today’s message strengthened your faith the most? Why?

4. What keeps you from believing fully in the God of the Bible...Ignorance? Pride? Moral Problem? What are you going to do about it?