Four reasons to believe in God

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by Brian Johnston

1. Creation

It's a slang English expression – the saying, 'he doesn't have a leg to stand on' – but perhaps most will have heard of it. In any case, if you haven't, it means a person can't even begin to defend his or her point of view. What you may not be aware of is the fact that more or less that very same expression is found in the New Testament of the Bible – twice in fact – and both within the space of a few verses found towards the end of Romans chapter one and beginning of chapter two.

'Apologetics' is the name given to defending Christianity. Which is what we're called on to do in 1 Peter 3:15 – that is, to make a defence of the Christian hope within us. Sometimes, it seems as if we're on the back foot when doing this. The Media, often with inaccurate conclusions drawn from an all too simplistic misunderstanding of science, dismisses what it scornfully sees as our indefensible position. At times an atheistic scientist promotes a one-sided account of his or her specialist subject and so becomes the Media's favourite poster child. Even an expert scientist can be a very amateur philosopher, and straying into that territory he or she can make an impressive, but flawed, attack on Christianity.

So, the Bible calls upon Christians to make a defence of their position. But it goes even further than that: it goes on the offensive. And it does that in the section of the Bible letter which the apostle Paul wrote to the Christians who were then at Rome. Twice, very boldly, the Bible says there (Romans 1:20; 2:1) that it's those who refuse to acknowledge God who are quite literally in an indefensible position! They are said to be 'without excuse', meaning they have no defence. Of course, they would be the last people to think that! This is very far from their perception of reality while they continue to 'suppress the truth' (1:18), having 'exchanged the truth of God for a lie' (1:25) – for 'even though they knew God' (1:21), they no longer 'see fit to acknowledge God' (1:28). In place of the popular assumption that it's Christianity which doesn't have a leg to stand on, the Bible presents the opposite view that it's actually atheism which has no leg to stand on. Although in Romans chapter 1 Paul is arguing against polytheism, those arguments can

equally apply in principle to today's atheism.

But, as we all know, it's one thing to make a claim, it's quite another matter to support it convincingly with compelling arguments. But Paul goes on to do exactly that. In fact, he gives four main supports. All are contained in the first three chapters of the letter which was first written to the Romans and which is preserved as the sixth book of the New Testament. In this booklet I'd like to look at each one of them in turn. We begin with the first, which is found in Romans chapter one, and concerns **the evidence from creation all around us**. Its testimony points to the existence of the one true God whom the Bible reveals. Here's how the apostle Paul makes that point:

For [God's] invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they [that is, those who deny the true Creator God] are without excuse. (Romans 1:20)

Simply put, what Paul is saying is this: creation is evidence of a creator, as design is evidence for a designer. In particular, life is evidence for a life-giver in the shape of the living God. The extremely delicate complexity of the arrangements necessary for life on this planet are far less well explained by the assumption or belief that life is purely the result of an accidental combination of chance events.

Then, again, in the words of Stephen Hawking, "The laws of science, as we know them at present, contain many fundamental numbers – [these numbers are associated with gravity, magnetism, nuclear energy, how carbon-based life works and indeed how the universe is expanding, ... Hawking continues] – the remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life." Scientists say that if any one of these numbers was different by as little as one part in a thousand, life as we know it would not seem possible.

And this is such a remarkable fact that Antony Flew, an academic philosopher who promoted atheism for most of his adult life, stated that the fine-tuned universe arguments convinced him to the point where he said, "I am very much impressed [with] the case for Christianity" (A.Flew, There Is A God). It was as if he finally accepted that he was 'without excuse' in refusing to believe in God. His last book is called *There is a God: how the world's most notorious atheist changed his mind.*

Some strident atheist voices today are quite mistaken as to the true nature of faith, and seem to think it's only some kind of poor substitute for evidence. They keep demanding that we should go by empirical results – meaning opinions based on experience and observation rather than vague theory. Well then, science at its most empirical says: life comes from life; life doesn't come from non-life.

The ancient Greeks had believed that small animals such as worms, mice, and maggots sprang to life automatically from the non-living matter around (such as rotting flour, a sweaty shirt, or decaying meat). This belief that living matter arose from non-living material is called spontaneous generation. The idea of maggots coming spontaneously to life out of decaying meat was successfully challenged in 1668 by Italian biologist Francesco Redi. When he covered the meat with gauze to prevent flies from laying their eggs on it, no maggots appeared in the meat. (The maggots are actually the larvae which hatch from flies' eggs.)

150 years ago, Frenchman Louis Pasteur confirmed this result, proving once and for all that spontaneous generation doesn't happen. So there's no empirical evidence for life arising without the necessity for the existence of God. There's no such thing as a simple cell. The so-called simplest bacterial cell is still a veritable factory of a hundred thousand million atoms – much more complex than anything which we humans have ever made. The gulf between this and anything non-living is as vast and absolute as anyone could care to imagine. Antony Flew, the converted atheist whose comments about the fine-tuned universe we quoted earlier, also concluded from the microscopic world of the cell that the almost unbelievable complexity of the arrangements which are needed to produce (life), [shows] that intelligence must have been involved.

But you may vaguely remember a recent news headline claiming life had been artificially created in the laboratory (the work of Craig Venter). Headlines are, however, often misleading. Let's try to explain what really happened. Just as computers use a computer code made up of programmed instructions, the cells in our body use the genetic code. In other words, cells process information (in order to make proteins and other cell bits) in a similar way to computers. The living cell is like an incredibly powerful computer.

What was done recently in that publicised lab experiment was the equivalent of making a careful copy of one version of

Microsoft Windows, and turning to another computer which had previously been using a different version of Microsoft Windows and loading instead this new copy version onto it, so that when we next switch it on, that computer can now do some things it couldn't do before. But this process doesn't involve developing a totally new brand of software; nor does it involve building computer hardware that did not exist previously. It used a software design and a computer which already existed – which means the headline about life having been created in the laboratory was very misleading.

We said that cells are like computers, and most of the workings of the cell are best described, not in terms of material stuff – which we might call the hardware – but in terms of information or software. So, trying to make life by just mixing chemicals in a test tube – as in earlier laboratory experiments (e.g. Stanley Miller's) - is like soldering switches and wires in an attempt to produce Microsoft Windows. That's confusing hardware with software. Which leaves scientists (e.g. Paul Davies) to this very day still puzzling over how life could have arisen from non-living chemicals. The key question is, how did the hardware of non-living molecules ever manage to write its own software?

You see, understanding the chemistry as we do still doesn't help us to explain the origin of information. It's clear that the physical layout of letters on a printed page is independent of the chemical make-up of that printed page, and it's also true that the physical order of the chemical DNA letters is independent of their chemistry. But it's precisely the arrangement of letters – either on a page or in our cells – that gives meaning and holds the vital information. And so it follows that chemistry experiments can never explain life's origin. Only the existence of God can explain the origin of information, and so atheism is indefensible.

2. Conscience

Each summer I'm involved, with many others, in running Bible camps for youngsters. The aim is to train young people to think through for themselves what the Bible teaches. Camps like this have been taking place for many decades around the world. They're still effective. They're even seen to be effective. That must be the case, because they're being copied by those who have an alternative agenda. Rival camps have in recent years been launched in the United Kingdom (e.g. CampQuest UK) – camps which are aimed at promoting a humanist or atheist philosophy. Promotional material for these camps stress they aim to encourage critical thinking and a scientific approach – all geared to helping youth reach their own conclusions.

Well, any Christian camp I've ever been involved in has also aimed to encourage critical thinking skills and personal decision-making. So what's the difference? Simply a different framework of beliefs. No evidence – certainly none about past events – speaks for itself. It has to be evaluated using critical thinking. But that thinking itself operates based on a set of background beliefs or assumptions – whether atheistic or Christian. To imply otherwise is to admit we're self-deceived. For the reality that all human reasoning takes place within a framework of beliefs has readily been acknowledged by some great men of science (e.g. Michael Polanyi FRS, 1891-1976). The whole point then becomes: which belief system is the best to reason from when explaining the evidence?

At the beginning of the letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul sets out how the Christian belief system can be easily defended. This, it has to be said, was not his primary goal, but in the space of the first three chapters of Romans, the apostle Paul uses no less than four arguments which can serve the purpose of defending the Christian faith at the most basic point of arguing for the existence of God. And the provocative claim of the Bible found twice in Romans chapters one and two is that it's really the humanists and atheists who have no defence – who are simply 'without excuse.'

So we come to the second of those four arguments, which is found in Romans chapter two,

and concerns **the testimony of our conscience**.

There, Paul writes:

For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus. (Romans 2:14-16)

Many everyday expressions in the western world have come from the Bible in its King James Version form. And what we've just read contains an example – when we read the words: 'a law to themselves.' Interestingly, when we hear people being accused of being a law to themselves, it seems to be generally implying that they're rebellious and out of control. But that's not how the Bible uses it here. In fact, it's the very opposite! Paul was saying that it was to the Jews that the Law was given with its Ten Commandments. These commands weren't formally given to non-Jews or Gentiles. But even so, when Gentiles end up doing, by instinct, the very things which the Law commands then they're demonstrating that the same Law has in fact been written on all our hearts. So it's correct behaviour that becomes evidence of a hidden law – written, not on external stone tables – but actually inside us on the tables of human hearts. And notice that Paul describes it as 'the Law': it's God's Law. This Law, written on human hearts, is the basis for our conscience. This is what shows that we're moral beings.

But how is this a second evidence for God's existence? Paul has already used the wonder of creation as his first evidence back in chapter one of Romans (v.20); now in chapter two (v.15) he proceeds to a second form of evidence. Because it's here that he draws our attention to 'the moral law within'. Those last four words were quoted from Immanuel Kant, the 18th century German philosopher, who said, "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe …: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me." These two things mentioned by Immanuel Kant capture respectively the two points we're drawing out from the apostle Paul's first two chapters written to Christians at Rome.

So how is this 'moral law within' a second evidence for God's existence? Well, from the atheistic point of view, apart

from their social consequences, there's really nothing basically wrong with many socially unacceptable things – things like when a man rapes a woman. Because without God there isn't any absolute standard of right and wrong which imposes itself on our conscience. Without God, morality becomes nothing more than a matter of personal taste or social conditioning. This is exactly the point many people have pressed on me in conversations about faith when they try to tell me that our attitude to something like rape basically only comes down to what our parents and society have taught us. You've got to then ask them where their parents got their values from ... and where their grandparents got theirs from ... and so on all the way back to the first ever humans. And at that point it's a problem. For blind forces of nature can't explain the origin of any absolute morality.

The late J.L. Mackie of Oxford University, one of the most influential atheists of our time, admitted, "If … there … are objective values, they make the existence of a god more probable than it would have been without them ... [there is] … a defensible argument from morality to the existence of a god. …"

Notice his words: 'a defensible argument.' On the other hand, Paul, in Romans, has just said atheists have no defence for their claim that there is no God (Romans 1:20; 2:1), while proceeding to give at least four defences of Christianity in terms of assuring his readers of God's existence. So Paul's locked horns with the atheists, and we're faced with a clear-cut choice, but it's one we can easily put to the test. On the one hand, the Word of God says objective moral values really do exist, and deep down we all know it; on the other hand, atheism says objective, absolute moral values don't exist – while admitting that if they did exist, that would give the game away. Richard Dawkins agrees that rape is wrong, but concedes that in arriving at that view, his value judgement is every bit as arbitrary as the fact we've evolved five fingers rather than six. We quote professors Mackie and Dawkins only so as to give assurance that atheists as well as Christians agree on this as a fair test. It's fair and accurate to judge the question of God's existence based on judging the question of the existence or otherwise of objective, absolute moral values.

So then, suppose you take a group of people and ask each of them, "Do you like vegetables?" Some will say, "I like vegetables," others will say, "I don't like vegetables." And that's fine. It's a subjective thing, a matter of personal taste. But

what if, instead, we were to ask, "Is it okay to torture children for fun?" You'll surely agree that we've crossed a boundary line. You wouldn't expect the same group of reasonable people whose personal tastes on vegetables varied, to show the same spread of opinion on this question, would you? But why not? Because – I submit – this is no longer a subjective matter of personal taste. We've moved on to an altogether different matter: one that's an objective matter of right and wrong.

One famous writer (C. S. Lewis) illustrates the difference by making this comparison, he said: 'The reason my idea of New York city can be truer than yours is because New York is a real place existing apart from what either of us thinks.' On the other hand, if we were trying to compare ideas about some imaginary city, then neither idea could be truer than the other because there's no basis for any comparison.

Our first example about vegetables was like that, but returning to our second example of torturing children, the reason why we'd agree that one reaction is truer than the other is because a real standard of absolute morality exists apart from whatever happens to be our own personal tastes and preferences. Torturing children for fun is not a morally neutral act – it's an outrageous moral abomination. It wouldn't matter in which culture we performed the experiment. We have identified a consensus on morality which transcends culture.

Actions like rape, torture, child abuse, and so forth, are not just socially unacceptable behaviour. They're moral abominations: things which are absolutely wrong. Similarly, love, equality, generosity and self-sacrifice are really good. And the point is this: if objective values cannot exist without God, but we find that they do exist, then it logically follows that God also exists.

3. Communication

Atheism is indefensible. How often have you heard anyone say that? Probably, not very often or not at all nowadays!

But the Bible goes on the offensive in the early chapters of the apostle Paul's letter to the Romans which we're featuring in these pages. Twice, very boldly, the Bible says around the end of Romans chapter one that it's those who refuse to acknowledge God who are quite literally in an indefensible position! They are said to be 'without excuse,' meaning they have no defence.

Of course, they'd be the last people to think that! This is very far from their perception of reality as they 'suppress the truth' (1:18), having 'exchanged the truth of God for a lie' (1:25) – for 'even though they knew God' (1:21), they no longer 'see fit to acknowledge God' (1:28).

This exposure of such a deep-seated agenda shows that even when we're equipped with a good defence, many debates will still not be winnable. Recent outreach experience again demonstrated this. We were out on the streets of a busy shopping centre engaging passers-by in conversation about Christianity. Aware of how sceptical the mood is in western Europe in the 21st century, we were challenging the public to demonstrate any meaning in an alternative point of view. Not a few conceded that their outlook was bleak, but they claimed to genuinely feel that there was nothing beyond. The apostle Paul was no stranger to sceptics, even in the first century.

The kind of reasoning, explaining and giving of evidence (Acts 17:2,3) which he engaged in was also balanced with discernment of the predisposition of unpersuaded sceptics. But this still resulted at the end of the day in some sneering, others requesting a second hearing, while yet others ended up believing (vv.32-34). Jesus, in his testimony before Pilate, spoke of those who were 'on the side of truth' (John 18:37 NLT). They were the ones to hear his voice. Sometimes our defence will be more about honouring God than winning arguments, whenever we encounter those whom God himself has given over to a reprobate or 'depraved mind' (1:28).

But by the time Paul reaches Romans chapter 3, he's not yet

done with his audience. He has already presented two important strands of evidence. He's talked about 'the starry heavens above and the moral law within.' Both point to the God who's there. But now, at the beginning of Romans chapter 3, the apostle Paul introduces a third supporting strand of evidence – evidence which supports the contention that God exists. Paul asks:

Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God. (Romans 3:1-2)

By 'oracles', Paul is speaking about God's revelation, especially in its written form as had been entrusted to the Jewish people in terms of the writings of Moses and the other prophets as well as the writers of psalms like King David. Including now the New Testament, to which Paul himself contributed 13 letters, the completed Bible was written over a period of some 1600 years and penned by some 40 different individuals over that time.

What's more, the Bible contains many predictions. In fact, it's been estimated that at the time of writing some 25% of the Bible was prophecy, in other words claims about the future. Now, anyone can make predictions, but having those prophecies fulfilled is something else. What's the chance, for example, of predicting in which city some future world leader is going to be born? Or the exact way in which he's going to meet his death? But this is what the Bible did – hundreds of years in advance of the events.

The late Professor Emeritus of Mathematics and Astronomy at Pasadena City College, Peter Stoner actually calculated the chance or probability of one man fulfilling the major prophecies made in advance in the Bible about the Messiah, Jesus. The estimates were worked out by twelve different classes which amounted to some 600 university students.

Professor Stoner also encouraged other sceptics or scientists to make their own estimates to see if his conclusions were more than fair. Finally, he submitted his figures for review to a committee of the American Scientific Affiliation (Peter Stoner, Science Speaks, Chicago: Moody Press, 1969, 4).

For example, concerning Micah 5:2 which says that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, Stoner and his students determined the average population of Bethlehem from the time of the prophet Micah right through to the present; and then they divided it by the average world population over the same period. By expressing

that ratio, they calculated that the chance of one particular man being born in Bethlehem was one in 300,000 (in the same sense as the chance of getting 'heads' in any one flipping of a coin is one in two).

Then they examined not one but eight different Bible prophecies about Jesus, the Messiah. The likelihood of them all being true by chance was found to be so small that we'll have to describe it by means of an illustration. If you make a mark on one out of ten tickets, and then place all the tickets in a hat, and thoroughly stir them, and then ask a blindfolded man to draw one, his chance of getting the one ticket which you've marked is one in ten. Now suppose that instead of tickets we take silver dollar coins -and not just 10 of them – but we take a very large number of coins. Next, let's suppose we lay all these silver dollars all over the state of Texas in the US until we cover the whole of that state to a depth of two feet or in other words to a depth of about 60cm. Now once again let's mark just one out of all these silver dollars and stir the whole lot of them thoroughly, all over the state. By the way, you may be interested to know that Texas is almost 3 times the size (area) of the UK. Once again we're going to blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes within Texas, but he must pick up just one silver dollar and hope that it's the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? [It's actually 1 chance in a 1 followed by 17 zeros]. Just the same chance - Professor Stoner worked out - that the prophets would've had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time, providing they wrote them in their own wisdom alone, assuming God had nothing to do with the Bible.

But, of course, there are many more than eight prophecies. In another calculation, Stoner used 48 prophecies and arrived at the estimate that the probability of 48 prophecies being fulfilled in one person is one chance in an exceedingly large number, a number which is a 1 followed by 157 zeros! Remember, for the sake of comparison, a one in a million chance is one chance in a number which is a 1 followed by only six zeros. But here we're talking about one chance in a number which is a 1 followed by – not six – but 157 zeros. So, to all intents and purposes, 48 Bible prophecies have a zero chance of being fulfilled on the basis of blind chance!

But even that's the result of considering only 48 of the Bible predictions about the coming Messiah – all of which in fact came true in Jesus of Nazareth hundreds of years later. One

Bible expert (Edersheim) reckons there were actually up to 456 different prophecies available for Professor Stoner to select from had he so wished. Obviously, the chance of all this being pure coincidence is vanishingly small.

There can really only be one explanation for the Bible. One preacher, R.A. Torrey, said: suppose stones for a temple were brought from quarries in Rutland, Vermont, Berea, Ohio, Kasota, Minnesota, Middleton and Conneticut. Each stone was first hewn into its final shape at its own quarry before being transported to the actual temple site. Among the stones was a great variety of sizes and shapes, like cubes and cylinders. But when they were all brought together, it turned out that every stone fitted perfectly into its allotted place. What would that show? It would show, Torrey said, that at the back of all these individual quarry workers was a single architectural mastermind.

He went on to say that it's exactly like that with God's temple of truth: the Bible. How else could some 40 different human authors contribute to this one, vast project spanning some 1600 years from start to completion? The marvellous cohesion, the wonderful consistency of the Bible, with its focus on the central picture of Christ can only mean one thing – that behind all those individual human authors there stands one divine author, who masterminded the Bible as his communication to this world.

4. Christ

If there is a God, you'd certainly expect him to communicate, wouldn't you? And as we saw in the previous chapter, the evidence is that the Bible is just such a communication from the God who's there and who gave his Son, Jesus, for us.

In the early chapters of his Bible letter to Christian believers at Rome 2,000 years ago, Paul presented four indisputable evidences which point beyond the shadow of a doubt to the existence of God. But, you may ask, have they become weakened over the 2,000 years which have since run their course? Not a bit of it! In fact, they seem much more impressive today than they could ever have appeared to be some 2,000 years ago.

And they're also easy to remember as the fours 'C's of Creation, Conscience, Communication and finally, Christ. Yes, to complete our list of four Cs, we have Christ himself, bringing us to what Paul writes in Romans chapter 3:

… for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation [or sin atoning sacrifice] in His blood through faith. (Romans 3:23-25)

One very clear case of atheists not having a leg to stand on occurs in connection with what Professor Richard Dawkins says about Jesus Christ. He says: 'It is possible to make a serious case that Jesus never existed.' This is nonsense. I'll confine my comments to two points. First of all, the historian Tacitus – no connection with the Bible - wrote in 115 AD of Jesus' existence by recording how Nero in AD 64 put the blame for the fire of Rome onto the hated class of Christians so-named after their founder whom he states suffered the death penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of the then proconsul Pontius Pilate.

Then there's W H Lecky who wrote a history of Europe in which he stated that the impact of the three public years of Jesus' ministry had a more profound impact than all the writings of moralists and philosophers have ever had.

More recently, former US president, Ronald Reagan, made

a similar point when he said: "meaning no disrespect to the religious convictions of others, I still can't help wondering how we can explain away what to me is the greatest miracle of all and which is recorded in history. No one denies there was such a man, that he lived and that he was put to death by crucifixion. Where … is the miracle I spoke of? Well consider this and let your imagination translate the story into our own time -- possibly to your own home town. A young man whose father is a carpenter grows up working in his father's shop. One day he puts down his tools and walks out of his father's shop. He starts preaching on street corners and in the nearby countryside, walking from place to place, preaching all the while, even though he is not an ordained minister. He does this for three years. Then he is arrested, tried and convicted. There is no court of appeal, so he is executed at age 33 along with two common thieves. Those in charge of his execution roll dice to see who gets his clothing -- the only possessions he has. His family cannot afford a burial place for him so he is interred in a borrowed tomb. End of story? No, this uneducated, property-less young man who … left no written word has, for 2000 years, had a greater effect on the world than all the rulers, kings, emperors; all the conquerors, generals and admirals, all the scholars, scientists and philosophers who have ever lived – all of them put together. How do we explain that? … unless he really was who he said he was."

Notice Reagan said the opposite to Dawkins when he spoke of Jesus' historical existence as indisputable. In fact there's much more documentary evidence for the life of Jesus Christ than there is for Julius Caesar – and you don't hear many people questioning Caesar as a historical character, do you?

No fictional life could have the lasting impact which the life of Christ has had. Christianity continues as it began – with the testimony of transformed lives. One of the primary evidences for the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead on the third day is the radical transformation of the earliest disciples from being fearful to becoming fearless witnesses who were prepared to die for their beliefs. But there are other major evidences for Jesus' resurrection, like the fact that it's exceedingly unlikely that a whole bunch of people were prepared to die for a hoax or lie which they had deliberately invented.

Then there's the evidence of a generation of numerous eye-witnesses to the resurrected Christ; and the clearest evidence of all – which people hostile to

Christianity at that time tried to actively suppress – the empty tomb itself. Its existence – its empty existence – was conceded by those who had everything to gain by simply producing a body – if they could. Yes, you can explore all the options – like Jesus only swooned and later revived; or his body was stolen; or his gullible followers were only hallucinating – but none of these fit the facts as well as the account which says Jesus actually did rise from the dead. But don't just take my word for it. Simon Greenleaf was a professor at Harvard. A professor of Law, in fact: an expert in handling the laws of evidence. He was supremely qualified to make a pronouncement on the quality of the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ after making a detailed study of all of it. And he did this from an initially sceptical point of view. He set out – as others have done – to demolish the myth of Jesus rising from the dead – but his integrity forced him to change his opinion completely once he'd studied everything. He concluded that the resurrection of Jesus Christ was, in fact, the best supported event in all history.

The apostle Paul says that if Christ has not been raised from the dead then our faith is vain (1 Corinthians 15:14) – in other words he admits this one event of Jesus' resurrection is the all-important test. And the thing is it's something which can be tested – it's not something purely subjective in the mind of the believer. We can do what Simon Greenleaf did. So there is this real objective test which is decisive for Christianity – and in this post-modern age that's vitally important. If you're serious about discovering the truth, you owe it to yourself to really investigate this one claim that Jesus did rise from the dead.

I would also like to quote the refreshingly frank and even eloquent tribute given thoughtfully by Napoleon Bonaparte after he'd a lot of time for reflection during a period of exile in his life. It's recorded that he said to one of his associates that he, Napoleon, had inspired multitudes with such an enthusiastic devotion that they'd have died for him. But he said to do that it'd been necessary for him to be visibly present with the electric influence of his looks, words and voice. Napoleon went on to say that Christ alone had succeeded in so raising the mind of man toward the unseen that it became insensible to the barrier of time and space. Across a chasm of 1800 years, Jesus Christ, he said, made a demand which is beyond all others difficult to satisfy ... [Jesus] asks for the human heart. He demands it unconditionally and

forthwith his demand is granted. Wonderful! In defiance of time and space, the spirit of man with all its powers and faculties becomes an annexation to the empire of Christ. All who sincerely believe experience that supernatural love towards him. Napoleon commented, this phenomenon is unaccountable, and he said it was this that showed convincingly the divinity of Jesus Christ.

And so we remind ourselves we've been looking at the early chapters of Paul's Bible letter to Christian believers at Rome 2,000 years ago. There Paul presents four indisputable evidences which point beyond the shadow of a doubt to the existence of God. And they're easy to remember: as all beginning with the letter C. There's the evidence from Creation (Romans 1:20); the evidence from human Conscience (2:14-16); the evidence of Communication (3:1,2) as we considered the claim of the Bible to be the Word of God – a direct communication to us from the God who's there; and the best evidence of all is Christ himself (3:23-25).

Finally, let me tell you about a woman catching a flight at the airport. She's in a mad rush, hasn't had time to eat on the way there, so stops at the newsstand to buy a pack of cookies, and then sits herself down at gate where there's a table between her and an older gentleman. But soon she can't believe her eyes when the man stretches over, picks up the pack of cookies from the table and helps himself to one. She's shocked but doesn't want to make a scene so she just takes one herself, placing the pack back on the table – surely the man won't have the nerve to repeat his action! But he did, again he picks up the pack, looks at it thoughtfully, takes another cookie and after a little nibble, proceeds to gobble it up. By now she's pretty well hopping mad, how dare he just help himself to her cookies! Quickly she takes another herself – now there's just the one left. Unbelievably, the chap reaches across again and picks out the last cookie, smiles at her, breaks it in half, and pushes the last half towards her. She's ready now to make a scene, but the boarding call comes and the chap jumps up and with another smile he's gone. At the gate the woman opens her bag to get her boarding pass and it's then she discovers her pack of cookies still in her bag – she'd been the one helping herself not him! The moral of that is that sometimes reality is a lot different from what we think – and we're in too much of a rush to check it out. We have our misconceived ideas about where we come from;

what the purpose of life is; and where we're going afterwards because we just feed on what society and the media around us tells us, all the time wrongly believing it to be the truth. I urge you to take a fresh look at things! Please check out whose bag of cookies you've been eating from!

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Sunday on TWR Malawi FM Network at 06.45 UTC+2 (89.1 - 106.5 FM)

Ontario, Canada

Tuesday at 14.15 EST, on JOY1250

Listen live online at www.joy1250.ca

South Pacific & South East Asia on HCJB Western Australia

Friday to South Pacific at 8.00 UTC, 19m band SW (11750 kHz.)

Monday to South East Asia at 13.15 UTC, 25m band SW (15540 kHz.)

Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon

Sunday on TWR Benin, at 17.50 UTC+1 (1566kHz.)

India

Tuesday and Friday on TWR Guam at 14.00, 31m band SW (9975 kHz.)

Thailand

Wednesday on TWR Guam at 8.20, 19m band SW (15170kHz.)



Search for Truth,

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