

The Christian Faith—Why It's True, Part Two

By Dr. John Ankerberg, Dr. John Weldon

A further reason that those of other religious persuasions, secularists too, should be receptive to Christianity is because we live in an increasingly poisonous age experientially. In our pluralistic and pagan culture, almost anyone is a viable target for conversion to any of a wide variety of false beliefs and their consequences—from various cults and New Age occultism to solipsism and nihilism. Philosophies of despair and potent occult experiences can convert even those who think they are the least vulnerable. “There is a great deal of research that shows that all people, but especially highly intelligent people, are easily taken in by all kinds of illusions, hallucinations, self-deceptions, and out-right bamboozles—all the more so when they have a high investment in the illusion being true.”¹¹ In other words, even in this life the personal welfare of the non-Christian may be at risk.

When one examines the arguments and attacks made against Christianity for 2,000 years, by some of the greatest minds ever, guess what one finds? Not one is valid. Not one, individually or collectively, disproves Christianity. Even with the most difficult problems, such as the problem of evil, Christianity has the *best* answer of any religion or philosophy; the best solution to the problem.

If the leading minds of the world have been unable to disprove Christianity, this may explain why many of the other leading minds in the world have accepted it. As James Sire correctly points out in *Why Should Anyone Believe Anything At All?* an argument for belief, religious or other, must be secured on the best evidence, validly argued and able to refute the strongest objections that can be mustered against it.¹² The Christian faith fits these criteria.

Obviously, if the God of the universe has revealed Himself and is the only true God, and if Christ is the only true way of salvation, then we would expect convincing evidence to substantiate this. Not just some evidence, or inferior evidence—so that a person has a dozen equally valid options in the choice of their religion—but superior evidence. Dr. John Warwick Montgomery asks:

What if a revelational truth-claim did not turn on questions of theology and religious philosophy—on any kind of esoteric, fideistic method available only to those who are already “true believers”—but on the very reasoning employed in the law to determine questions of fact?... Eastern faiths and Islam, to take familiar examples, ask the uncommitted seeker to discover their truth experientially: the faith-experience will be self-validating.... Christianity, on the other hand, declares that the truth of its absolute claims rests squarely on certain historical facts, open to ordinary investigation.... The advantage of a jurisprudential approach lies in the difficulty of jettisoning it: legal standards of evidence developed as essential means of resolving the most intractable disputes in society ... Thus one cannot very well throw out legal reasoning merely because its application to Christianity results in a verdict for the Christian faith.¹³

So, let's assume that a God of truth is dedicated to truth and that He desires that people find Him. Indeed, “From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us” (Acts 17:26-27). What is the most logical place to begin our search for divine revelation? Wouldn't it be the one religion that God has

made stand out from all the rest? Logically, the best and only practical way to see if one religion is absolutely true is to start with the largest, most unique, influential and evidentiary religion in the world. "In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given *proof of this* to all men by raising him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31). It seems more reasonable to determine whether or not *this* religion is true than to seek another approach such as examining, one by one, all religions from A to Z, or picking one randomly by personal preference, or by accepting a religion as a result of subjective experience.

The problem is that, not being grounded in objective, historical evidence, all non-Christian religions are experientially based. As such, they prove nothing because of their inherent subjectivism. Thus, having even profound religious experiences, alone, cannot prove one's religion is true. And, obviously, to attempt to examine *all* religions (whether the sequence is random, preferential or alphabetical) would be a daunting, confusing and in the end an impossible task.

If there is only one God, and if only one religion is fully true, then one should not *expect* to discover sustainable evidence in any other religion. And indeed, no other religion, anywhere, large or small, has sustainable evidence in its favor. If no credible evidence exists for any other religion, and if only Christianity has compelling evidence on its behalf; why should time be spent examining religions that have no basis to substantiate their claims, especially when there may be significant negative consequences for trusting in them, not only in this life but the next life as well?

It is much easier, and more logical, to start by examining the probabilities of truth on the highest end of the scale. We examined some of these in our book *Ready with an Answer* (Harvest House, 1997). In "The Value of an Evidential Approach," William J. Cairney (Ph.D., Cornell) discusses some of the possibilities that constitute genuine evidence for the fact God has inspired the Bible and the Christianity based on it:

History Written in Advance. We can all write history in retrospect, but an almighty, omnipotent, Creator would not be bound by our notions of space and time, and would thus be able to write history before it occurs. Suppose that we encountered a sourcebook that contained page after page of history written in advance with such accuracy and in such detail that good guessing would be completely ruled out.

Prescience. Suppose that in this same sourcebook, we were able to find accurate statements written ages ago demonstrating scientific knowledge and concepts far before mankind had developed the technological base necessary for discovering that knowledge or those concepts....

Historical Evidence. Suppose that in this same sourcebook, we were to find historical assertions that time after time were verified as true as historical scholarship continued....

Archeological Evidence. Suppose that in this same sourcebook, statements that are difficult to verify are made about people and places, but as archeology "unearths" more knowledge of the past, time after time the sourcebook is seen to be true in its assertions.

Philosophical and Logical Coherence. Suppose that this same sourcebook, even though written piecemeal over thousands of years, contains well-developed common themes and is internally consistent.

And suppose all of these evidences hang together without internal contradiction or

literary stress within the same anthology. Collectively, we could not take these evidences lightly. ¹⁴

Indeed, and this is why, overall, the evidence strongly asserts that Christianity *is* true, whether or not anyone agrees. The evidence for Christianity remains powerful whether it is internal (the documents), philosophical, moral, historical, scientific, archeological or when compared with the evidence found in other religions. For example, “The competence of the New Testament documents would be established in any court of law,” and, “Modern archeological research has confirmed again and again the reliability of New Testament geography, chronology, and general history.” ¹⁵ (This is especially true in the biased, liberal biblical studies cited by the cults to reject biblical faith, where we find the paradox of those being closest to the truth often snubbing their noses at it. As the noted classical scholar Professor E. M. Blaiklock points out, “Recent archeology has destroyed much nonsense and will destroy more. And I use the word nonsense deliberately, for theories and speculations find currency in biblical scholarship that would not be tolerated for a moment in any other branch of literary or historical criticism.” ¹⁶)

In conclusion, no one can successfully argue that Christianity and its origins have not been thoroughly investigated—as if some unrecognized aspect of it might yet prove its downfall. As the fifth edition of *Man’s Religions* by John B. Noss points out, “The first Christian century has had more books written about it than any other comparable period of history. The chief sources bearing on its history are the gospels and epistles of the New Testament, and these—again we must make a comparative statement—have been more thoroughly searched by inquiring minds than any other books ever written.” ¹⁷ In essence, only Christianity meets the burden of proof necessary to say, “This religion alone is fully true.” When the cults claim otherwise, they are mistaken.

Notes

11. Maureen O’Hara, “Science, Pseudo-Science, and Myth Mongering,” Robert Basil (ed.), *Not Necessarily the New Age: Critical Essays* (New York: Prometheus, 1988), p. 148.
12. James Sire, *Why Should Anyone Believe Anything at All?* (Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), p. 10.
13. John Warwick Montgomery, “The Jury Returns: A Juridical Defense of Christianity,” in John Warwick Montgomery (ed.), *Evidence for Faith: Deciding the God Question* (Dallas: Probe Books, 1991), pp. 319-20.
14. William J. Cairney, “The Value of an Evidential Approach,” in Montgomery (ed.), *Evidence for Faith*, p. 21.
15. Montgomery, “The Jury Returns: A Juridical Defense of Christianity,” in Montgomery (ed.), *Evidence for Faith*, pp. 322, 326.
16. E.M. Blaiklock, *Christianity Today*, Sept. 28, 1975, p. 13.
17. John B. Noss, *Man’s Religions*, 5th ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1974), p. 417.

Recommended Reading

John Ankerberg, John Weldon, *Ready with an Answer*;
_____, *Knowing the Truth about Salvation*;
C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*;
Francis Schaeffer, *He Is There and He Is Not Silent*;
Norman Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*.

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