Almost Too Easy to Believe

What an Amazing book the Bible is:
Century follows century (70)-There it stands.
Empires rise and fall and are forgotten-There it stands.
Dynasty follows dynasty-There it stands.
Kings are crowned and uncrowned-There it stands.
Despised and torn to pieces-There it stands.
Storms of hate swirl about it-There it stands.
Atheists and Agnostics smile cynically-There it stands.
Profane punsters caricature it-There it stands.
Unbelief abandons it-There it stands.
Higher critics deny its inspiration-There it stands.
Thunderbolts of wrath smite it-There it stands.
As an anvil that has broken a million hammers-There it stands.
The flames are kindled about it-There it stands.
The arrows of hate are discharged against it-There it stands.
Radicalism rants and raves against it-There it stands.
Fogs of sophistry conceal it temporarily-There it stands.
The tooth of time gnaws but makes no dent in it-There it stands.
Infidels predict its abandonment-There it stands.
Modernism tries to explain it away-There it stands.

It is amazing but it is more than amazing:
Look at the Bible itself and you can clearly see that it is supernatural. God doesn't say to blindly believe Him. God says to look at all the evidence and have Faith in Him.

God proves Himself and His Word to be true.
  • Prophecy proves that God's Word is True.

Isaiah 7:14: (700 years BC)
Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

Micah 5:2 (400 BC) "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."

Jesus dying for mankind on the cross: Isaiah 53

1 Who has believed our message
   and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?
2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot,
   and like a root out of dry ground.
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

3 He was despised and rejected by mankind,
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.
Like one from whom people hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

4 Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.

5 But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.

6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before its shearer is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

8 By oppression[a] and judgment he was taken away.
Yet who of his generation protested?
For he was cut off from the land of the living;
for the transgression of my people he was punished.[b]

9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
and with the rich in his death,
though he had done no violence,
nor was any deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it was the LORD’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer,
and though the LORD makes[c] his life an offering for sin,
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,
and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.

11 After he has suffered,
he will see the light of life[d] and be satisfied[e];
by his knowledge[f] my righteous servant will justify many,
and he will bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,[g]
and he will divide the spoils with the strong,[h]
because he poured out his life unto death,
and was numbered with the transgressors.
For he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.

Road to Emaus – Jesus (after his Death, Buriel, Resurrection) explains prophecy about Himself. Luke 24
25 He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. After Jesus departed they said “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”

We don’t know what Scriptures Jesus shared with them but undoubtedly it include the passage we just read and the passage of the Passover lamb. Probably he took them to Abraham’s 3 day trip to Mount Moriah to sacrifice his son (which God stopped) which just happened to be the very Mount that Jesus was sacrificed by His Father.

- Prophecy Proves that God’s Word is Supernatural and True
- Creation proves that God is True.

One of the world's most famous scientists, Sir Francis Crick, the British co-discoverer of the structure of DNA, a Nobel Prize winner who has won all the prizes. Crick is also a fervent atheist. In his autobiography, Crick says very candidly biologists must remind themselves daily that what they study was not created, it evolved; it was not designed, it evolved. Why do they have to remind themselves of that? Because otherwise, the facts which are staring them in the face and trying to get their attention might break through.

Romans 1:20 states ... 20 For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

That creation looks designed is not controversia. Richard Dawkins, another atheistic materialist and the world's most prominent proponent of Darwinism today, begins in his own masterpiece, The Blind Watchmaker, with the statement that biology is the study of extremely complex things that look as if they were designed by a creator for a purpose. “It is the job of the biologist to show that this is not so, that it is an illusion and that they are really produced by the mindless, purposeless process of a Darwinian evolution.” Dawkins goes on to basically say that it would take a God to be the creator of life. These scientist start with their own theory that God does not exist and with that hypostasis they try to figure out how we could possibly have the orderly design of everything.

The problem with evolutionists are that they are only one dimensional. They do not consider the supernatural or spiritual side of things. They do not look scientifically at Word of God. One atheist who did approach God’s Word with a scientific eye in order to disprove it was C. S. Lewis. He worked his way through the Bible and a kind of dread came upon him, the kind of dread that tells you that what you have been building your life around is completely false.
"You must picture me alone in that room in Magdalen, night after night, feeling, whenever my mind lifted even for a second from my work, the steady, unrelenting approach of Him whom I so earnestly desired
not to meet. That which I greatly feared had at last come upon me. In the Trinity Term of 1929 I gave in, and admitted that God was God, and knelt and prayed: perhaps, that night, the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England." – Surprised by Joy

"Atheism turns out to be too simple. If the whole universe has no meaning, we should never have found out that it has no meaning. . ."

- Prophecy Proves that God’s Word is Supernatural and True
- Creation proves that God is True.
- The change in the Disciples proves God’s Word is True.

All the Disciples were fearful and cowering men after the crucifixion of the One they thought was God. But after the resurrection they all became bold men because they finally understood the Truth, that Jesus came to die for sins. They proclaimed that Truth to their dying breath and all died in poverty and as martyrs. They had nothing to gain but everything to lose but they were willing to lose it all in order to share the Truth with everyone.

We will get to that truth right now.

God reveals Himself in the Bible and there are some basic things He wants you to know about Himself. 1) God is Love 2) God is Merciful 3) God is Full of Grace 4) God is Just 5) God is Holy These 5 attributes are woven into the fabric of God’s very Being.

- God is Holy and Everyone else is a sinner. The great barrier.
To my shame I remember shooting a 22 bullet into a glass window of a chicken house. That tiny bullet shattered the whole window. There isn’t a person alive who isn’t a liar, there isn’t a person alive who is not a thief. To a Holy God, that alone shatters the window. Romans 6:23 declares All have sinned … Maybe I can do something good to make up for my sinning. Something to balance the scales. Isaiah 64:6 But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; Illustration: A friend sees you have a great need and he has come into some money and visits you one day and offers you a gift of $5000. You gratefully accept it. Change the scenario: A friend comes by one day and pulls out a gun and kills your spouse with one shot. A couple months later he comes by again and says that he is sorry that he killed your wife and he wanted to make amends by giving you $5000 to help pay your bills. Now his money has become filthy rags … you won’t touch it. You have pulled the trigger of sin and so now there is nothing you can offer God as something good “All your righteousness is as filthy rags.”

- The Justice of God requires Sin to be dealt with.
We understand the need for Justice. Life would be a sham if there were no ultimate Justice for killers, for swindlers, for rapists. But God says all sin, even your little itsy bitsy sins will have to be dealt with in Justice. Romans 6:23 “The wages of sin is death” Let’s see what that looks like. John was revealed the Future so that he could write it in God’s Word for a warning.
Rev. 20
11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. 15 Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

Maybe my Good Works will help. Woops, all my good works are really filthy rags.

Is there no hope, can anything save me from this fate?

Let’s finish the verse in Romans 6:23 “The wages of sin is death **but** the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”

Listen to this amazing verse:

John 3:16-17 16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

1 John 2:2  God sent his son to be the atoning sacrifice for my sins.

1 Peter 3:18 18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.

God’s gift to you is His Son’s death that paid the penalty for your sins. It is the Just, sinless son of God who died in your place so that you will not be judged at the great white throne.

OK, you say, I think I understand this and I think I probably believe this. Now what, am I automatically saved from Judgment fires of Hell?

Remember it is God’s gift to you but gifts have to be received and opened to do any good.

John 1:12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God

**But how do I receive.**

Romans 10:

If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. 11 As Scripture says, “Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.” 12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, 13 for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Wait a minute, I do believe so that is good enough. I really don’t think the calling is all that necessary. Big mistake, let’s read on.

5
14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? 15 And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

There is a true story that is told of a man who strung a rope across Niagara Falls in 1859, his name is Blondin the Great. One part of his act was to push a wheelbarrow to the middle of the falls and bring it back. Of course the people would cheer. He would say do you believe I can do it again. They would cry out yes, do it again. Do you really believe I will be safe in doing this again. Yes, do it again. Then he would ask, will one of you volunteer to ride in the wheelbarrow, he never got a taker.

You see there are degrees of belief or faith. God says that if you really believe that Jesus died for your sins then you need to get in the wheelbarrow by verbally calling out to God proclaiming Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

You may be thinking but I’m not ready, I need to straighten out my act first. I need to give up drinking or smoking or swearing or cheating or my anger issues … and the list goes on.

But God says your works, your changes have nothing to do with his gift to you.
Ephesians 2:8-9
For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

(give illustration of diamond ring for shoe shine if time allows)

Imagine that Joel and I are friends, which we are. Now starts the imagining part. Imagine that I have an expensive diamond ring that was passed down from my father to me. And now imagine that I appreciated Joel and wanted to show that appreciation by giving him that diamond ring as a gift. So I give Joel the ring but Joel says, well Gary I appreciate this but I really would feel better if you would let me do something for it. I have noticed that your shoes have been looking pretty rough lately and so what I would like to do is have you come in early on Sundays the next four weeks and I will polish up your shoes for you. I say well, OK if that will make you feel better and so we do it. I give Joel the ring and Joel starts showing it off to his friends. He says Gary gave me this diamond ring and all I had to do was polish his shoes four times for it … What does that do? It cheapened the gift by making it a works based gift. It was no longer Grace but something that was earned and God is not about to cheapen the Gift of his Son for shoe shines or anything else you might do.

Charlotte Elliott’s experiences God’s Gift.

When poet Charlotte Elliott (1789-1871) was 46 years old, an elderly man approached her at a dinner party and asked if she was a Christian. She considered him rude and unkind, and that his question was inappropriate. After the man walked away, Charlotte could not get his question out of her mind so she went to find the man, and to ask what she had to do to become a Christian. The man said Charlotte, there is nothing you can do, just admit that to God and gladly believe and receive what Jesus has already done for you and come as you are. That night she called out to the Lord and received Jesus as her Lord and
Savior. Soon thereafter she wrote Just As I Am as a testimony to her newfound faith, and as a tribute to the man who had told her that she could come to Christ, 'just as she was'.

Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, though tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need in Thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because Thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Where do you stand today?
1. Do you think this is all just a fantastic myth and mock the whole thing?
2. Do you think this might be true and maybe you ought to hear more?
3. Do you know that this must be the Truth and if you died today without calling on Jesus then you will have to pay of your sins yourself in Hell?

If you are number 2 or 3 you need to get this taken care of immediately, your are taking a great risk in putting off what needs to be done. Its almost too easy because you can do nothing but cry out to God to save you. Do it today.