

# BAHAI: The One True Religion?



by Chaplain Bart Larson

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## INTRODUCTION

If you are a Baha'i, thank you for being willing to examine the truthfulness of what I am about to share. The person(s) who gave this booklet obviously loved you enough to risk giving it to you. Out of respect for them, I hope you will give them (and me) the benefit of the doubt and at least read what I have to say. If you are a genuine seeker after truth then I believe you will be drawn to what I have to say, even if it takes you out of your comfort zone. At the very least I believe you will come away with a greater understanding of Islam, Christianity and the Baha'i faith. I guarantee you that it will not be a waste of your time.

I know that if I were in your shoes I would want to know whether what I had based my faith and eternal destiny on was actually true. The one thing neither of us wants to do is wake up on the other side of this life only to discover that we had built our lives upon lies and half-truths. "Oops" is one word we don't want to say after we die.

Concerning Baha'is I have known, I have consistently been met with gentleness, graciousness and warmth. Morally, the Baha'is I have known seem honest, trustworthy and people of integrity. The devotion and commitment I have witnessed among Baha'is puts many so-called Christians to shame.

There is a wealth of wonderful teachings to be found in the Baha'i faith. From a human point of view, I think the Baha'i faith is superior to most religions. It has the potential of bringing earthly peace among people who are willing to practice it. To me the Baha'i faith sounds good. It seems reasonable, and it seeks to unify a world torn apart by religion and war. The only problem, and it breaks my heart to say it, is that as good as it sounds, the whole premise upon which the Baha'i faith is built, I believe, is flawed. It is not based on sound history nor sound logic.

As you know, the Baha'i faith teaches that the major world religions are progressive in nature, with each building upon the former, with the Baha'i faith being God's way of unifying them all into one true religion. One of your own writers stated ". . . *Baha'u'llah disclaims any intention to belittle any of the **Prophets** gone before Him . . . to abrogate the **fundamen-***

*als of their doctrines, to disregard any of their revealed books . . .* [Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day Is Come*, page 108, emphasis mine.] Baha'u'llah and the Baha'i faith teaches that each of the *prophets*, their *doctrines*, and their *sacred writings* are to be honored and for all practical purposes be accepted as true. How can this be?

Also, in their attempt to unify all religions into one, realistically speaking, how many Jews, Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus, Christians, etc. are willing to give up what they believe in order to embrace the teachings of Baha'u'llah? Not many. Therefore the Baha'i faith, even though it seeks to bring unity, becomes just one more divisive polarizing religion in the world claiming to have a corner on truth. Even the Baha'i faith is *not* an all-inclusive faith. It is *exclusive* of those who disagree with them, and only *inclusive* of those who agree with them. True?

## APPLYING COMMON LOGIC

There are HUGE historical and theological contradictions between the different prophets, religions, and books which Bahais says are true and not to be *abrogated*. **Logically, there is no way in the world that they can all be true!** On virtually every area of importance, whether it be the nature of God, Heaven, Hell, sin, salvation, resurrection versus reincarnation, the nature of man, etc. all major religions make exclusive claims to having the truth, and on virtually every major doctrine of any importance they almost always contradict one another.

One of the basic foundations of logic is what is called the *Law of Non-contradiction*. From Aristotle to Plato to Socrates to Thomas Aquinas, virtually all philosophers and societies have universally accepted this law as a foundational principle (law) for all thought and communication. This law states that something cannot be both "A" and "non-A" at the exact same time in exactly the same way. In other words, the identical thing cannot be both true and false at the same time in exactly the same way. For example, it would be crazy for me to say that I have a basketball which is both round and square. That is a logical contradiction. If you ask a woman, "Are you pregnant or not pregnant," and she says "Yes," her answer makes no sense. She cannot be both pregnant and not pregnant. Either she is or she isn't. These are two examples of the law of non-contradiction.

The Baha'i faith teaches that each of the world's religions were/are *true*. The Law of Non-contradiction says such a statement has to be false given the differences of the beliefs. Let's take Hinduism as an example.

Hindus are *pantheistic*. [Pantheism comes from the Greek word *pan*, meaning *all*. Pantheism teaches that *all* things are God: you, me, rocks, good, evil, etc.] They are also *polytheistic*, meaning they believe in many *gods*. According to Hinduism, the *impersonal* Universal World Soul, *Brahma*, has many manifestations in the form of lesser gods.

By way of contrast, Judaism, Islam and Christianity are monotheistic [believing in only one God]. Islam, Judaism and Christianity are not pantheistic but they believe that God is separate from His creation, just as an artist is not to be confused with what he makes. Hindus believe God (Brahma) is impersonal. Islam, Judaism and Christianity teach that God is infinitely personal. Hinduism teaches that God is both good and evil [*Kali and Shiva*], whereas Islam, Judaism and Christianity teach that God is absolutely holy, pure, and without sin. God hates evil.

So, which is it? How can the Baha'i faith reconcile such contradictions? Logically, it can't. It is impossible! Just as no one is ever half pregnant, either they are or they aren't, in like fashion God is either personal or he is impersonal. He is either monotheistic or polytheistic. Either he has feelings or he doesn't. Either he is holy and all good, or else he is both good and evil (or all evil). Common sense tells us there is no way to reconcile Hinduism with the Christian, Jewish, and Islamic views of God. Sheer logic alone undercuts the whole premise of the Baha'i religion, no matter how good it may sound or how good its intentions are in bringing unity and world peace.

## IS TRUTH RELATIVE?

At the heart of all these differences is one over-riding question, "What is truth?"—Is truth relative, subject to change, or are God's ways, God's truth and God's character unchanging?—Why do I ask?—Because if God is unchanging as the *Bible* teaches [Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8], then there is no way to reconcile the differences between all of the various world religions. On the other hand, if truth is relative and not absolute in nature, then people can rationalize anything, including the contradictions between the different faiths.

The only way the Baha'i faith can logically reconcile these contradictory belief systems is to treat truth as relative (not absolute) and ignore the Law of Non-contradiction. The trouble, of course, is that if God speaks out of both sides of his mouth, then you really have no way of knowing anything. If one religion says Hell exists [Christianity], and another religion says Hell doesn't exist [Hinduism], and you say, "both are true," then by what standard or basis do you know anything?

Relativism is intellectual suicide. To say, "There are no absolutes," is an *absolute* statement. To remark, "There is no such thing as absolute *truth*," opens one to the question, "And you know this to be *true*?" If a person states, "You can't *know* anything for sure," I would reply, "And you *know* this for sure?" The very notion of relativism is based on logical contradic-

tions and lunacy. It is a type of insanity. In real life we call people who live this way schizophrenic, psychotic, out of touch with reality.

Can you imagine life in our world if we really tried to live by relativism? You might go to a hospital and the doctor could tell you, “It doesn’t matter which medicines you take as long as you are sincere. Everything’s relative.”—Would you keep going to that doctor?—No. In real life, belief in absolute truth matters. When you drive your car or fly in an airplane, do you act as though everything is relative? No. If I thought the law of gravity was relative, I’d never fly in an airplane again. I wouldn’t want to fly with a pilot who said that it doesn’t matter which is *up* and which is *down*, that it is all relative.

As you look at the world God created, does it seem that God established absolutes, or do we live in a relativistic universe where there are no absolutes, no certainties?—I think it is pretty obvious that God’s physical laws don’t change. Our understanding of them may change, and one law may counteract and over-power another law (such as the Law of Aerodynamics overpowering the Law of Gravity allowing a plane to fly), but the laws themselves do not change. If God’s physical laws don’t change, then why would we expect the nature of God, and God’s spiritual laws to change?

Truth is different than sincerity. Instinctively we know that. No matter how much you and I might want fairy tales to be real, the fact remains, that they are not true. Good stories?—Possibly. True?—No. Being sincere or wanting something to be true has nothing to do with whether it *is* true. I could wish with all my heart that all religions were equally true and that everyone is going to Heaven, and that we would all live happily ever after, but reality forces me to admit that it just isn’t so. This world of ours is filled with sincere people who are sincerely wrong. God gave us the ability to act wisely or not, to embrace good or to embrace evil. Sadly many choose wrongly. Unlike Hindus who believe the world is illusion (*maya*), I think in our hearts we all know better. We all know real good and real evil exist. No one who is sane lives as though life is an illusion, not even Hindus.

How do you think God feels about all the different religions? If you were the eternal Creator-God of the Bible, reigning in unimaginable glory, totally holy and blameless, would it matter to you whether people thought of you as a cow, or a snake, or some idol? Would it matter to you if they blamed you for evil when, with all of your being, you hated evil? I think it would.—According to the *Bible*, such people who turn from the truth to embrace idols and lies come under God’s holy judgment. [Read the first chapter of the book of Romans in the New Testament to see how God feels about such things.] That is why we need a Savior.

What we rightly or wrongly believe about God will not change the reality of who God is. However, what God thinks of us matters immensely, for it is he who will determine where we spend eternity. Therefore, it is imperative that we know the truth, and the way of salvation *he* prescribes. We cannot invent our own way to him. Genuine faith is not a multiple choice test. The wrath of God is the back side of his love. God by his very nature, if he is holy, must hate sin. Justice and righteousness demands it. God stands opposed to all untruth. God can only truly love that which is consistent with his nature.

The question then becomes, has God revealed the truth about himself and how are we as sinful human beings are to be forgiven for our deliberate choices to sin and rebel his righteous standards?

According to the *Bible*, God has revealed the truth about himself primarily in three ways: (1) through the awesomeness of creation, whereby we see his power and wisdom [Romans 1:18-23], (2) through the inspired Word of God, the *Bible* [Psalm 119; II Timothy 3:16,17], and (3) through Jesus who is the visible image of the invisible God [See: John 1:1-14; 14:6-9; Hebrews 1:1-3; Colossians 1:15].

If you want to research what I am about to present to you in this booklet, you will need a *Bible* and, if possible, a copy of the *Qur’an*. For the sake of space, in order to keep this booklet to a smaller size, I will not write out all the verses from the Bible but I ask that you look many of them up for yourself. [It is a good way to get to know your *Bible*.] Please don’t take my word for what the *Bible* says. Read it for yourself. Allow the power of God’s Word to speak to your heart.

Why are the *Bible* and the *Qur’an* of importance? Because the Bahai faith is built upon the foundations of Christianity and Islam. Islam and Christianity are historical religions with clearly defined beliefs which are recorded in the *Bible* and the *Qur’an*. Baha’u’llah claims to be God’s last major prophet, with Muhammad and Jesus his spiritual predecessors. Christianity and Islam are foundational faiths for Baha’is. **If Baha’u’llah was wrong about either Jesus or Muhammad, then it means he was also mistaken about himself and the way of salvation. It is that simple.** That is why, if you have never done a comparison between the true teachings of Islam and Christianity, you may be operating under some false assumptions. I will not be stating anything that you cannot easily check for accuracy. In most cases, except for the writings of the early church fathers, all it will take is a little time on your part to compare the *Bible* with the *Qur’an*. You owe it to yourself to know the truth.

The Baha’i faith cannot be true unless it can be shown that Muhammad was one of God’s true messengers. If it turns out that Muhammad was a false teacher, then the Baha’i religion cannot possibly be true. Wouldn’t you agree? The same is true regarding Jesus. Was Baha’u’llah correct in his assessment of Jesus? If he wasn’t, again the Baha’i faith will have been proved false. The whole premise upon which the Baha’i religion is built will crumble. If you are willing to honestly research what I am about to show you, the answer to these questions are clearly, unmistakably given to us in the *Bible*

and the *Qur'an*, both of which are historical documents which we have easy access to today.

I believe with all my heart that God wants to reveal the truth to you. If you humbly, honestly come before God asking for wisdom and a willingness to know and obey the truth, God is more than big enough you show you. I also believe there is a spiritual battle being fought for your very soul. Satan, who is very real, will do anything he can to keep you from the truth. He would love for you *not* to read this booklet and do the comparative work required for you to discover the real truth.—Before you read any further, may I suggest you pray the following prayer:

*“To the true and living God, Maker of heaven and earth, I pray that you will put within me a burning passion for the truth. Open my mind and heart to all that is true. Protect me from the evil one and from his lies. Confirm in my heart and my mind what is true. Grant me the faith to believe you, and the courage to obey you, no matter the cost. Amen.”*

## THE UNIQUE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY

Jesus once told his disciples, *“I am the way, and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father [God] except through me.”* [John 14:6b]. The apostle Peter in Acts 4:12 says, *“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”*—Christians believe there is salvation in only *one name*—and it’s not Muhammad, Buddha, Krishna, Confucius, Baha’u’llah, Moses, or Abraham, but JESUS.

Why are Christians so hung upon there only being one way to Heaven? It all hinges on the blood of Jesus Christ. According to the New Testament, when Jesus Christ died on a Roman cross almost 2,000 years ago, he wasn’t merely a good Jew, or some prophet dying a martyr’s death. The central theme and message of Christianity is that the eternal God chose to become a man, to write himself into his own story, so to speak [Philippians 2:6,7; John 1:1, 14], to die for the sins of his rebellious world [Acts 20:28; John 1:10-12; 3:16-18], to be buried, and then be resurrected on the third day [1 Corinthians 15:3-4].

Contrary to what you may have been taught, the evidence is overwhelming that Jesus claimed to be God-incarnate (God in the flesh). Jesus once told some religious Jews, *“... if you do not believe that I am (ego eimi in Greek) ...you will indeed die in your sins.”* (John 8:24). [*Ego Eimi* is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew name for God, “*Yahweh*” which, in Hebrew, comes from the words “I AM.” See Exodus 3:14 and John 8:58,59.] According to Jesus, to believe wrongly about him is a big deal. To die in one’s sins means to be eternally separated from God. If the Bible is correct, to knowingly refuse to consider Jesus’ claims, and who he really is, could be spiritual suicide.

Anyone who hopes to have salvation must place his/her faith in Jesus [John 1:12; Romans 1:16; 1 John 5:11-13, etc.]. Salvation is a gift that can be accepted or rejected. [John 3:16-18; Ephesians 2:8,9] The New Testament instructs Christians to *defend* this faith, which was *“once for all delivered to the saints”* [Jude 1:3]. The *Bible* makes no allowance for Christianity ever being modified. It was “once for all” delivered. The apostle Paul even went so far as to say that if anyone preaches a *different gospel*, even an angel, *“let him be accursed (damned)”* [Galatians 1:6-9].

The *Bible* teaches that salvation comes only through the sacrificial blood of Jesus. It is not found in some dark idol-filled Hindu temple with demon-looking gods, or by following Buddha’s Enlightened Way, or in surrendering to the teachings of Muhammad, nor Baha’u’llah’s creative blending of all religions into one. According to the New Testament, if salvation could be earned in any other way it would be like telling God, *“You made a mistake. You didn’t have to come and die. We found salvation another way.”*

The blood Jesus shed on the cross for the sins of the world is central to everything Christians believe. Christianity claims to be an *eternal* faith, bound by an *eternal*, unbreakable covenant, resulting in *eternal* redemption [John 3:16; Hebrews 9:12-28]. Either the shed blood of Jesus Christ on the cross paid the penalty for your sin and mine, or else the Christian message of eternal salvation being found only in Jesus was/is wrong; a cruel hoax foisted upon the world. The whole Old Testament sacrificial system pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God who would die for the sins of the world [Luke 24:25-27, John 1:29].

The New Testament says, *“If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth [speaking of Jesus’s sacrificial death], no sacrifice for sins is left [which rules out other religions and other means of salvation], but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. . . . How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant. . . .”* [Hebrews 10:26-29]

If the Baha’i faith is wrong about Jesus, as I believe it is since it contradicts the New Testament, and you fail to appropriate the forgiveness offered to you through the blood Jesus shed in dying for you, you risk coming before God unforgiven, having rejected the *only* way of salvation. I believe with all my heart that the love and peace you believe in, and want to pass on to others, is actually found in the person of Christ.—It is his compassion and love you long for in your heart of hearts, whether you realize it or not. When Jesus said that he was *“...the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me”* [John 14:6], he did not merely claim to be one of the ways, nor one of the roads to truth.



Rather, he stated that he *is truth*. He *is life*. He *is the way*. To miss him is to miss life itself. [Those are his words, not mine.]

## THE ISLAMIC FACTOR

Since a major premise behind the Baha'i faith is that each prophet is greater than the one before, with God's last and best prophet being Baha'u'llah, in practical terms this means that Islam should be greater than Christianity, and that Muhammad should be greater than Jesus. Which, of course, is a problem if Jesus is God. How could Muhammad, a man, be greater than the Son of God?

Muhammad, like Baha'u'llah, acknowledged that Jesus Christ was a true prophet and that the books about Jesus [the Bible] should be *believed*. Surah 3:84 [in the Qur'an] reads, "**We believe in Allah, AND in what Has been revealed to us AND what was revealed to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, AND the Tribes, AND in (THE BOOKS) given to Moses, Jesus, AND the Prophets, from their Lord we make no distinction**" (emphasis mine).

Muhammad stated that the "books" by "Moses" (e.g., the first five books of the Old Testament, known to Jews as the Torah), the "prophets" (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the 12 minor prophets), as well as the books about "Jesus" (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, the writings of Paul and all the other New Testament writers) were all to be "*believed*." Muhammad and Baha'u'llah both agree: the *Bible* is to be believed. Do you? I hope so.

Here is where the first major problem occurs. While Baha'u'llah and Muhammad both say the writings of the *Bible* are to be *believed*, the *Qur'an* denies virtually everything the *Bible* teaches about Israel, Jews, salvation, the Trinity, the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, grace, etc. Anyone who has read and studied both the *Bible* and the *Qur'an* will immediately see that there is no harmony between the *Qur'an* and the *Bible*. There is absolutely no way to harmonize the *Bible's* teaching with the *Qur'an*. The *Law of Non-contradiction* makes it an impossibility.

The New Testament emphatically teaches that Jesus, the Prince of Peace, will return one day to rule and reign over the world [Matthew 24,25; Revelation 19-22]. One in every 20 verses in the New Testament speaks of his second coming. Before this happens, Jesus predicted that there would be many false teachers and false Messiahs proclaiming other ways to world peace and other ways of salvation [Matthew 24:22-24]. According to the standards set forth by Jesus and the writers of the New Testament, both Muhammad and Baha'u'llah were false prophets since they preach a different gospel, a gospel based on man's works, not the free gift of God (John 3:16, Ephesians 2:8,9) offered to us through the death, burial and resurrection of the living Christ, who is God incarnate, who shed his blood for us (Acts 20:28).

Islam and the Baha'i faith place Jesus on a par with other men and other alleged prophets of God [Abraham, Moses, Krishna, Muhammad, etc.]. They teach that Jesus was a good teacher and prophet, nothing more. This is *not* the position of the New Testament. According to the *Bible*, God became a man in the person of Jesus Christ in order to die for the sins of the world. To put Jesus on a par with other men is to totally miss who Jesus claimed to be. He claimed to be none other than the eternal Creator-God become man [See: Hebrews 1:1, John 1:1, 10, 14, Colossians 1:16-18, 2:9, Philippians 2:6,7; etc.].

Time and time again in the *Bible*, Jesus is referred to by well-known Jewish names for God. The most sacred of all names for God was the name *Yahweh*, which, as mentioned earlier, comes from the Hebrew words, *I AM*. [See: Exodus 3:14.] That divine name was used of Jesus numerous times. [E.g., John 8:58; Mark 14:62, John 6:35, 48; 8:24; 10:7; 18:5.]

To say that the Jews of Jesus' day were upset by his use of this name is an understatement. They were furious and tried to kill him [John 8:58,59]. In fact, it was his claim to be God, the eternal "I AM," which led to Jesus being crucified.— In answering the high priest's question about whether he was the *Son of the Most High* in Mark 14:61-64, Jesus answered "I AM." [*ego eimi*]. In no uncertain terms, Jesus let it be known that he was God in human flesh. In John 5:18 we read, "*For this reason, the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.*" In John 10:33 the Pharisees were ready to stone Jesus. They said, "*We are not stoning you for any of these [miracles], but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.*" Even Jesus' enemies understood his claim to be God. Nowhere does the New Testament refute such an idea.

In some Islamic countries, to read the Bible is a crime, punishable by death. Why is that?—The answer is that it would destroy Islam. Logically, if the *Bible* is the inspired Word of God, as Muhammad said it is [Surah 3:84], and yet it obviously contradicts the *Qur'an* on almost major topic, then the *Qur'an* must be wrong. **The only way the Qur'an can be true is to discredit the Bible and say it somehow got corrupted over time.** Muslims say God preserved the *Qur'an* but not the *Bible*. If God is the divine author of both books, and both were/are equally inspired, why would God preserve the one and not the other? Isn't God's Word eternal and indestructible? [Matthew 5:17,18; 24:35] That argument does not make sense.

## HAS THE BIBLE BEEN CORRUPTED AS ISLAM TEACHES?

Historians says, “No!”

There are over 24,600 partial or complete ancient manuscripts of the New Testament in both Latin and Greek in existence today. Most very old documents have fewer than 10 original copies in existence, yet they are still considered “A-1” historical documents by historians. For example, there are only 7 copies of the works of Plato, 20 copies of Tacitus and 5 copies of the writings of Aristotle. Even non-Christian historians have to admit that by all scientific, archaeological, and historical standards applied to any ancient manuscript, the New Testament we have today is over 99.9 percent reliable. Not one word in a 1,000 is in question, and no major doctrine is in doubt. Anyone can dispute its message, not so its historicity.

Concerning the Hebrew *Bible* (Old Testament), most Jewish and Christian scholars had been using the Masoretic Hebrew text dated around 1,000 A.D. In 1947, a young shepherd boy discovered what we now call *The Dead Sea Scrolls* in the caves of Qumran [Israel] near the Dead Sea. Major portions of the entire Old Testament were found. They are easily dated around, or before, the time of Christ [100 B.C.-70 A.D.]. The *Dead Sea Scroll* copy of the book of Isaiah is virtually identical to the Masoretic Text. Out of the 66 chapters in Isaiah, only eight very *minor* variations have been noted; nothing that affects the content.

The *Bible* as a whole is a miraculous piece of literature. Its 66 books were written over a period of approximately 1,600 years, by 40 authors, on three different continents [Asia, Europe and Africa]. It was written in three different languages [Hebrew, Chaldean and Greek], with many literary styles (poetry, historical narrative, parables, proverbs, allegory), under all types of conditions [on the battlefield, in times of peace, in prosperity, in poverty, in captivity, at sea, in palaces, in the desert], by all sorts of people [fishermen, shepherds, kings, a physician, a rabbi, a tax collector, scribes, priests], and on about every topic imaginable [God, salvation, sex, money, marriage, family, war, politics, religion, relationships, leadership, business, etc.]. Yet considering all this, the Bible reads not as a fragmented mess, but as a unified whole. The Bible is truly amazing.

Sometimes I’m asked, “*What about all the contradictions in the Bible?*” I ask, “*Which ones do you have in mind?*” Usually, those who ask this question can’t mention a single contradiction. They are just parroting what they’ve been told. With advanced scholarship, such as found in *The Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* by Gleason Archer, *Evidence That Demands A Verdict (Volumes I and II)* by Josh McDowell, and other scholarly works, there are *no* unanswered contradictions. Paradoxes?—Sometimes. Contradictions?—No.

The next question, of course, is whether modern translations of the Bible are accurate translations of the originals. There are many different Bible translations on the market, which often confuses those not familiar with the Bible. Some mistakenly assume that because there are many different *Bible* translations, they must be saying contradictory things. Except for one or two *Bible* translations by cult groups, where they have intentionally altered a key verses to fit their theology, this is not true. For example, most *Bible* translations are translated from one of two basic New Testament Greek texts, considered to be most reliable by Biblical scholars, and one basic Old Testament Hebrew text. Thus, while they vary in style, they are all saying the same basic thing. To say, “*Howdy,*” “*Hello,*” or “*Hi,*” are all accurate ways of saying the same thing. The content is the same, but the wording varies. The same principle is true of Bible translations.

It is my personal belief that the original writings were “*inspired by God,*” perfect in every way [II Timothy 3:16-17]. Modern translations are not inspired by God, but most are accurate copies of those which were inspired.

Imagine a factory that had the one perfect yardstick in all the world and the factory burned down. Would the world be without a perfect yardstick? No, not as long as there were yardsticks exactly patterned after the first yardstick. The same is true with our copies of the New Testament patterned after the original.

The evidence is overwhelming that the *Bible* of Muhammad’s day is the same *Bible* we use today, just as the *Qur’an* of today is primarily the same *Qur’an* used 1,300 years ago. The followers of any particular religion generally take painstaking efforts to be sure that they accurately copy and/or translate the documents upon which their faith is founded. (That only stands to reason. Who’d want to mess up the inspired words of God?) There is no historical evidence for a significantly different *Bible* ever existing. The same *Bible* we have today is the one Muhammad said should be *believed*.

**While thousands of manuscripts support the New Testament, not one uncorrupted Bible has ever been found to back up Muhammad’s claim that such a Bible ever existed!** For example, there are no manuscripts, predating Muhammad, or any time for that matter, which deny the crucifixion and teach that Judas was crucified instead of Jesus. Even the Gnostic *Gospel of Thomas*, which many Muslims use to try to discredit the Bible, neither confirms nor denies the crucifixion.

The *Bible*, unlike the *Qur’an*, is based on verifiable, historical, *supernatural* evidence, such as prophecy. Islam tells us to believe in the *Qur’an* because it is so beautifully written, that it is its own best evidence. May I point out that the writings of Shakespeare are also beautifully written, but that doesn’t mean they are inspired by God. I see no verifiable *proofs*, no compelling evidence, that would make me reject the *Bible* in favor of the *Qur’an*. It simply isn’t there. Further,

having read much of the English translation of the *Qur'an*, it does not begin to compare with the beauty of the Bible, especially the Psalms. Read any section out of the *Qur'an* and then compare it to Psalm 23 in the Bible. Personally, I find the *Qur'an* very repetitive and for the most part boring. In English it is anything but beautiful.

### **THE QUR'AN CONTRADICTS THE BIBLE**

Let's look at some of the more notable contradictions between the *Bible* and the *Qur'an*. If you are Baha'i, here is where you have an advantage over Muslims. No one is going to kill you if you read the *Bible* and compare it with the *Qur'an*. You can easily check out what I'm about to show you. Read the *Bible*. Read the *Qur'an*. Go to any major university library and read the works of the early church fathers. You can easily verify everything I'm about to tell you.

1. Islam simply does not harmonize with Christianity and Judaism as it should if Muhammad is in the same biblical line of prophets as Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, and Jesus who were all Jews; Abraham being the father of both Jews and Arabs. Unlike the Bible, the *Qur'an* is blatantly anti-Jewish and anti-Christian. It teaches that the blessing of Abraham was passed on, not through Isaac, but rather Ishmael, the father of Arabs [Surah 2:125]. At times the *Qur'an* expresses a hatred for both Jews and Christians because of their rejection of Muhammad and their lack of belief in Allah. [Surah 5:33, 51, 72, 73, 78, 86; 9:63]. Enemies of Allah and Muhammad are to be fought against and killed [Surah 2:191, 193, 216; 4:89; 8:39; 47:4; 9:29, 73]. Observe the behavior of Islamic Fundamentalists today and you will see this same hatred and violence. They despise Israel and Jews. They want to wipe Israel off the map and kill all Jews. That is not the teaching of the New Testament. [Romans 1:16; 11:1-32].

2. The New Testament refers to Jesus as the *Son of God* nearly 80 times. It is a *figurative* term implying that Jesus was/is fully *God*, just as the *figurative* term, *Son of Man* [*mankind*, plural], implies that he was fully *man*. [See: Philippians 4:6,7.] It does not mean that God had sex with Mary and bore a son. The *Qur'an* denies that Jesus is the Son of God. Surah 9:30 says, "*Christians call Christ the Son of God. That is a saying from their mouth...Allah's curse be upon them: how they are deluded.*"

3. Islam denies the doctrine of the Trinity, that God exists as three in one. Surah 5:73 says "*They do blaspheme who say: Allah is one of three in a Trinity: for there is no god except One God.*" Jesus, on the other hand, taught, "...go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name [singular in Greek] of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." [Matthew 28:19]. The three comprise one *name*. Biblically, each member of the Trinity is referred to as *God*: [*Father*: Philippians 1:2; *Son*: John 1:1,14; *Holy Spirit*: I Corinthians 12:3]. Yet, the *Bible* clearly teaches that there is but *one God* [Deuteronomy 6:4, I Corinthians 8:4]. Just as man is three in one: mind, body, and spirit, God is also three in one.

Even the early Christian document, *The Gospel Of Thomas*, discovered in 1945, teaches the Trinity. A Muslim friend of mine gave me a copy of *The Gospel Of Thomas* thinking it would cast doubt on the historicity of the New Testament. Quite the contrary. In Logion 44 of *The Gospel of Thomas*, it states, "*One who blasphemes the Father, it will be forgiven him, and the one who blasphemes the Son, it will be forgiven him, but one who blasphemes the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either on earth or in Heaven.*"

There are a couple of crucial points to observe about this passage from the *Gospel of Thomas*. (1) This verse merely paraphrases Matthew 12:31,32 in the New Testament. (2) Since only God/deity can be *blasphemed*, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were all considered God/deity by the writer of the *Gospel of Thomas*. People are never "blasphemed." Blasphemy refers to taking God's name in vain. Only God can be *blasphemed*.

4. The central theme of the New Testament is that Jesus was crucified and shed his blood to forgive our sins [John 3:16, I Corinthians 15:3-8; Ephesians 1:7-10; Hebrews 9:11-10:39, Luke 23:1-24:53, Acts 20:28; etc.]. Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin [Leviticus 17:11; Hebrews 9:22]. The crucifixion was clearly foretold hundreds of years before Jesus was born [Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, and Zechariah 12:10].

Islam totally denies the crucifixion. Most Muslims think Judas was the one crucified, not Jesus. "*They say, 'We killed Christ...but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear...'*" [Surah 4:157]

Matthew 16:21 in the *Bible* says, "*From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.*" In I Corinthians 15:3-6 the apostle Paul wrote, "*For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred . . .*" In Revelation 1:17 Jesus said, ". . . *Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last, I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever!*"

Jesus Christ was publically crucified with many onlookers present, including His own mother. It is inconceivable to believe that Mary (his mother) could have mistaken Judas for her own son, especially since Jesus spoke to her from the cross (John 19:26). John, one of Jesus's closest disciples, considered the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus of such importance that he devoted half of his gospel to just the last two weeks of Jesus's life, with the main focus being upon

the crucifixion and resurrection. (Read the *Gospel of John* for yourself.)

Further, how could the enemies of Jesus, who wanted him dead, be so stupid as to crucify the wrong guy? Jesus had to endure several trials before his crucifixion (e.g., before Caiaphas, the Sanhedrin, before Pilate, before Herod, etc.) Who were they supposedly interrogating? Judas?—No. The *Bible* clearly teaches that after Judas's betrayal of Jesus, Judas went out and hung himself (Matthew 27:5). Judas was not crucified.

As I have pondered how Muhammad could deny one of the most well documented events of history, the crucifixion, I believe there is a simple explanation. He probably misunderstood what some Gnostic Christians tried to tell him about Jesus. Gnosticism was a false cult denounced in the New Testament [e.g., I John 4:1-4]. It taught that *spirit is good, and flesh is evil*. Gnostics used it as an excuse for sexual promiscuity, etc. They believed in the *deity* of Christ, that Christ was God, but they denied Jesus' *humanity*, which is just the opposite of Islam. [Islam denies the *deity* of Christ, but affirms his *humanity*.] Gnostics could not believe that God would come in the *flesh*, therefore they taught that Jesus only "*appeared*" to have come in the flesh. This would explain how Muhammad came up with his teaching that the crucifixion of Jesus never happened, but only "*appeared*" to have happened [Surah 4:157].

Muhammad's rewriting the historical account of Christ's crucifixion is one of the greatest and most tragic lies of all time. Whether he did it maliciously, whether he was misinformed, whether he was spinning a religious tale in the hopes of gaining political, economic, or military gain, whether he was deceived by some Gnostics, or whether he listened to some lying voice in his head, the truth is that almost one-sixth of the current world's population (the whole Islamic world) has believed his lie. Thus, the one thing above all else that the *Bible* says must be believed to receive salvation has been stolen from the hearts and minds of millions upon millions of people.

Further, Islamic history teaches that Muhammad was "*Ummee*" (unlettered, illiterate). Supposedly, Muhammad never read the *Bible*. Even had he been able to read, at the time he lived, there were no Arabic translations of the *Bible*. While I have no reason to doubt Muhammad's sincerity, from an academic viewpoint, he was in no position to say whether the *Bible* had been corrupted if he never read/studied it! That is why he could deny the crucifixion. He was unformed, *ummee*.

5. The God of the *Bible* is knowable, a God of infinite love [Ephesians 3:14-19, I John 4:16-18, etc.]. Christians talk about answers to prayer, of *knowing Christ* [Ephesians 3:17; Galatians 2:20, etc.]. Believers in Christ are God's *beloved children* (Ephesians 5:1). Allah, on the other hand, is more impersonal, distant, and transcendent. He is a God who illicit fear.

6. As mentioned, there was never a doubt that Jesus considered himself *God*. [See: Appendices I.] Muhammad, on the other hand, first believed that the sayings of the *Qur'an* came to him through demonic [*jinn*] voices in his head. It was one of his wives, Khadijah, who convinced him that they were from Allah and not from demons. Otherwise, there would be no Islam and no *Qur'an*.

7. Jesus treated women with honor and great respect [e.g., John 4:1-42; 8:1-11; 11:1-44; Matthew 28:1-10, etc.]. Women have an equal standing with men in Heaven [Galatians 3:28]. This stands in sharp contrast to the oppressive ways women are treated in most Islamic countries. The *Qur'an* even permits husbands to "beat" their wives "lightly" if they disobey [Surah 4:34]. Compare that with Ephesians 5:22-33 in the New Testament.

8. Jesus taught love and non-violence, that we are to love our enemies [Matthew 5:38-48]. The *Qur'an* teaches just the opposite: "*The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger...is execution, or crucifixion, or the cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides, or exile from the land.*" [Surah 5:33]. Christianity grew with the sword at its own throat, whereas Islam spread primarily through *jihad* (holy war), by putting the sword to the throats of others. Millions of Jews and Christians were forced to either convert against their will, be killed, or endure cruel enslavement.

Virtually all of Islam's growth in the centuries following Muhammad's death in June of 632 A.D. came not through love, grace, compelling preaching, or the moving of God's Spirit, where people could freely choose to believe in Islam. Rather, Islam grew primarily through military campaigns, threats, intense persecutions, burdensome taxation, slavery, and mass killings.—I'm not trying to be unkind, but this is documentable history.

History records that Islamic armies would come to a city (often a Christian city). People in the city would be given three choices: (1) convert to Islam (2) retain their religion and pay very burdensome taxes called *jizya* (which would force most Christians to convert to Islam over the next few generations or else force them to live in dire poverty), or (3) "*resist and we will kill you.*"—This is how Islam spread. About half of Christendom fell prey to Islamic rule as country after country was conquered through a reign of Islamic terror.

The military campaigns were first started by Muhammad. He unified Arabia by means of war and by making various tribal treaties. In one battle against the Koreish, in 627 A.D., history records he massacred 600 Jews in one day and sold their wives and children into slavery.

The "*believe as I do, or I'll kill you*" approach to spreading the Islamic faith worked quite effectively. With time those who converted to Islam may have rationalized their conversion. Those who defended the truth and their property rights,

out of personal conviction, were no longer a threat either.—They were killed.

In a few short years, Islam became exceedingly powerful. Within 21 years of Muhammad's death, Islam ruled a land mass equivalent to the size of the Roman Empire. Within a hundred years, Islamic armies had conquered most of the Middle East, and parts of India, North Africa, China and Europe.

Because opposing voices to Islam were swiftly silenced (killed or sold into slavery), it was easy for people raised as Muslims to assume their beliefs were of God. They never heard anything that would make them believe otherwise. Why? Because people were afraid to speak the truth for fear of being killed or punished. There was total indoctrination with no dissenting voices permitted.

Allow me to draw an analogy. Let's pretend a tribe of people believed the moon was made of cheese. Through various means they put together an army and systematically began conquering neighboring tribes. Everyone they conquered had a choice: confess that the moon is made of cheese, lose most of their wealth, or be killed.—Some died, some chose poverty, but most made the new confession of faith.

Soon this movement ruled a small country. Within a few more years it controlled most of a continent as its adherents numbered into the millions. All of their children were raised to believe the moon was made of cheese. Their books reflected this belief. Anyone who taught differently was killed or severely punished. Any son or daughter who converted to a different belief was either killed or disowned. Fear ruled the day—and in the minds of most the moon remained made of cheese.—Question: How is this story any different from Islam? To me the parallels are virtually identical. Islam, from my perspective, effectively built a spiritual and intellectual wall around itself through means of force and terror.—The sad fact is, very little has changed since then. Even my writing this booklet has put my life in danger.

**9.** Even though this last point is not comparing the *Bible* with the *Qur'an*, I urge you to go to the church history section of any major university library and simply read for yourself what the early first and second century Christian church fathers wrote. Read what Polycarp had to say about Jesus. He was a disciple of the apostle John (one of Jesus' twelve disciples). Polycarp calls Jesus "God." As you compare the writings of the early church fathers to those of the *Bible* and the *Qur'an*, again you will see that their writings harmonize with the New Testament, but they do *not* harmonize with the *Qur'an*. **Did you know that if all of the New Testament manuscripts were destroyed, we could still reconstruct all of the New Testament from the writings of the early church fathers before the year 325 A.D., with the exception of about eleven verses?!**

Because the Baha'i faith teaches that Islam and Christianity are compatible, and as you've just seen, they aren't. This means that Baha'u'llah's teachings about Jesus and Muhammad, the *Bible* and *Qur'an*, are wrong. Though probably sincere, and well-intentioned, Baha'u'llah, like Muhammad, was sincerely *wrong*. If Baha'u'llah's core teachings about Muhammad being the predecessor to Jesus was wrong, then the whole foundation of the Baha'i faith is undercut and sadly proved to be a false. I'm sorry! In regard to spiritual matters the Baha'i faith, in spite of all its good, will never get you to Heaven. It is one of the false religions Jesus warned would arise in the *last days* before his return, to draw people away from the truth. (Matthew 24:24,25)

Please weigh carefully what I am about to share. I know that I may have taken something away from you which was/is very precious. I am sorry for the pain. However, I don't want to take something away from you without giving you something which is even better to replace it with: truth. While the Baha'i religion may not be based on truth, the real truth about God has never changed. With all the love and passion I have, I'd like to tell you about the real Jesus. I don't ask that you agree with what I am about to share. All I ask is that you remain open to the evidence. Check it out for yourself. If you will give me a fair hearing, I think you'll be in for some wonderfully *good news*.

## RATIONAL, HISTORICAL EVIDENCE FOR CHRISTIANITY

Simply stated, I believe that God revealed himself to Israel, as recorded in the Hebrew *Bible* [Old Testament], and in these last days has revealed himself in the person of Jesus. Should you happen to ethnically be a Jewish, the name *Jesus* is an English transliteration of the Hebrew word *Yeshua*. The story of Jesus/Yeshua is recorded in what Christians call the New Testament of the *Bible*. The word *Testament* means *covenant*, or *legal agreement* between God and man.

The word *Christ* is the Greek word for *Messiah*. Thus, when Christians say, "*Christ Jesus*," a more accurate historical way of saying it would be to say, "*Messiah Yeshua*." Christianity began totally as a Jewish movement which then spread to the *goyim* (Gentiles, non-Jews). To gain the full flavor of the New Testament as it was originally written, I encourage you to purchase a copy of *The Jewish New Testament*, translated by David Stern, a Messianic Jew. [Contact: Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc. P.O. Box 615; Clarksville, MD 21029 USA.] It uses real Jewish terminology, not the English equivalents.

Do not judge Jesus/Yeshua by the religion some people have made through the use or misuse of his name, or through some possibly bad experiences you may have had with "Christians." As one man said, "*The thing which most drew me to*



*Christianity was Christians, and the thing which most turned me off to Christianity was Christians.*” The apostle Paul warned that wolves in sheep’s clothing would enter the church. Satan does his greatest work from within the church. Judge Jesus/Yeshua on his own merit, not by what some of his apostate followers have done in his name [e.g., the Crusades, Inquisition, etc.].

Some think of Christianity as “*escapism*,” or as “*pie in the sky*.” The real issue, of course, is whether it is *true*. To say, “*There is a tunnel under this prison*,” may be an escapist idea, but it may also be *true*. So how can you determine whether Christianity is true? Actually, it is not as hard as you may think. Christianity is a historical religion with historical facts, most of which can easily be investigated.

There are a lot of religions and people saying what God is or is not like, and whether or not he even exists. **The only one who can say for sure whether God exists, and what he is like, is God.** As simple as this is, it is an important point to grasp. *Only God can give the final word on himself.*

Suppose one day a man [Jesus/Yeshua] walked this earth claiming to be God, saying that he was “*THE way...THE truth...THE life*” [John 14:6, emphasis mine]. What if he said “*I AM*” God? [John 8:58.—cf., Exodus 3:14.] Now this would be something you could easily evaluate.—Any person claiming to be God would either be **psychotic**, with delusions of grandeur [crazy], **a deceiver** out to pull off one of the greatest scams of all time, or, this person might actually be **God**. Possibly God had chosen to write himself into his own story and become a man. In essence, this is what the *Bible* teaches concerning Jesus/Yeshua.

As mentioned, in the New Testament, hundreds of times, Jesus/Yeshua is called by virtually every major name and attribute used to describe God in the Old Testament: “*God*” [John 1:1,14; Hebrews 1:8], “*Yahweh*” [John 8:58; cf. Exodus 3:14], “*Lord*” [Acts 10:36], “*Creator*” [Hebrews 1:1,2; John 1:10; Colossians 1:16-18], “*Savior*” [Titus 2:13], “*King of kings*” [Revelation 19:16], “*the Alpha and the Omega*” [Revelation 22:12-16], “*Holy One*” [Acts 3:14,15], “*Rock*” [I Corinthians 10:4], “*Forgiver of Sins*” [Mark 2:1-12], “*Lord of the Sabbath*” [John 5:18; Mark 2:28], etc. [See the Appendices for biblical evidence for the deity of Christ and Trinity.]

Even though Jesus/Yeshua taught that God is the only one worthy of worship [Matthew 4:10], nonetheless, Jesus/Yeshua received worship [Matthew 28:9,17]. Even angels of God are told to worship him [Hebrews 1:6]. If Jesus/Yeshua were not God, then he had no right being called God or allowing others to treat him as God. It would be the ultimate in blasphemy and arrogance. Jesus/Yeshua, a Jew, would have known that only God deserves worship [Matthew 4:10].

To believe that Jesus/Yeshua was *just* a good teacher, assuming he really claimed to be God, would be out of the question. He would either be much more than a *good teacher* [i.e. God], or much less [i.e. a liar or lunatic]. Think of the hundreds of thousands who have died martyrs’ deaths because of his claims. If he is not God, these people died for a lie, for a blasphemous idol.

C.S. Lewis—author, professor, and Christian intellectual wrote, “*A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon, or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.*” [Mere Christianity, MacMillan Pub., N.Y.: 1978, P.56.—I highly recommend this book.]

There can be no middle ground. Either God or he isn’t. Lunatic, liar or Lord: you choose. If you really want to know the truth about God, it is not intellectually wise to ignore the life and teachings of the only major religious leader in all of history who actually claimed to be God. He is too important a figure to pass over lightly. He did live, and he stands alone in the claims he made, and the life he lived.

Jesus/Yeshua produced anger, hatred, or worship from the people of his day. To take a middle-of-the-road position concerning him is to totally fail to grasp the claims he made. His enemies clearly understood his claim to divinity. They tried to kill him for blasphemy, because he claimed *equality* and *oneness* with God [See: John 5:18; 8:58-59; 10:33, and Mark 14:61-64]. All of the main writers of the New Testament, such as Paul [*Sha’ul* in Hebrew] and the apostle John [*Yochanan* in Hebrew], clearly taught the deity of Jesus [e.g., John 1:1, 14; Romans 9:5; Philippians 2:6, 7; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:1, 8].

This is even more staggering when we realize that those saying, “Jesus is God,” were monotheistic Jews, people who believe in only “one God” [Deuteronomy 6:4]. They were not talking about Jesus/Yeshua being one of many *gods*, in some polytheistic, Hindu sort of way. No, they *worshipped* Jesus/Yeshua as the incarnation of God Almighty [e.g., Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 28:9; John 20:28; Philippians 2:6-11; Hebrews 1:6; Revelation 5:8-14].

Reason with me. For sake of argument, if Jesus/Yeshua is God, then he could state the truth about God [i.e. himself]. He could explain how to have a right relationship with God, because he is God.—Correct? Jesus/Yeshua could declare what is right and what is wrong. Why? Because he is God. He wrote the rule book. Like it or not, if he was/is God then he could

make such statements. If he wasn't/isn't God, then he was either crazy or a deceiver. Christianity would be false, and you should reject it and search elsewhere for God.

That is why Christianity is such an exclusive religion, and why Christians sometimes seem so narrow-minded. If Jesus/Yeshua's claims are true, then there is no other choice but to proclaim him as God. Intellectually, I am driven to this position, even though it is scary for me to take such a stand in today's politically correct, pluralistic, tolerance-based society. Jesus/Yeshua taught that he was the *only* way to God [e.g., John 8:24, 14:6; cf., Acts 4:12].

Christianity is not a matter of likes or dislikes, but an issue of whether Jesus/Yeshua was telling the truth. If true, his teachings are to be regarded more highly than any other religion, and with more authority than all other religious leaders in the world. It does not mean we are to be disrespectful of other religions, or that all they teach is wrong, but Christians have an obligation to tell the world about Jesus/Yeshua [Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8]. If Jesus/Yeshua is the eternal God become man [Isaiah 9:6], then the world should hear about it.

## **EVIDENCE THAT JESUS IS WHO HE CLAIMS TO BE**

Let me summarize some of the major evidence, as I see it, that Jesus/Yeshua was telling the truth. Again, you be the judge.

**1.** The first is Jesus/Yeshua's character. From the beginning of time, no other person has so powerfully affected life upon this earth as Jesus/Yeshua of Nazareth, Israel. His teachings are profound. [If you have never read the New Testament account for yourself, a good place to begin would be with the *Gospel of John* or the *Gospel of Luke*]. It is hard to read the account of Jesus/Yeshua's life and teachings, and maintain that he was either a liar or a lunatic [the only other two alternatives]. Either we believe his seemingly unbelievable claims [to be God], or we disbelieve his believable character.

**2.** The second is the historical evidence for his rising from the dead. This is crucial. Disprove the resurrection and you expose the New Testament as a false document, with Christians falsely worshipping a dead Savior. Christians in such a case, would be idolaters; worshipping that which is not God.

To disprove the resurrection one would have to explain what happened to Jesus/Yeshua's mutilated body. For example, why didn't the enemies of Jesus/Yeshua just produce his corpse if he never arose? How did the tomb, which was guarded by soldiers, get empty? Does it make sense that Jesus/Yeshua's disciples would steal the body of Jesus/Yeshua, when every Roman soldier knew that if a prisoner [in this case a corpse] escaped under his watch, it would be his life for the prisoners? Why wasn't there a fight, and why weren't some disciples killed? If the soldiers were asleep while on guard [which was also a crime punishable by death by Roman law], how could the disciples have rolled away a stone, probably weighing over one ton, without waking the soldiers?

Another theory says that Jesus/Yeshua, having been crucified by the Romans, swooned in a state of near death, suddenly revived, rolled away the stone, scared away the Roman soldiers, and told his disciples, "*Hey guys. Look, it's me. I've conquered death!*"—No way. It takes more faith to believe some of the theories, which try to explain away the resurrection, than to believe that Jesus/Yeshua did arise from the dead as he foretold, and as was prophesied in Psalm 16:10. And what about the disciples and more than 500 other people, who claimed to have seen him physically alive following his crucifixion? [I Corinthians 15]. What about Thomas who was told to put his finger into the nail prints in Jesus/Yeshua's hands [John 20:27-29]? What made the disciples, who were cowards before his death, suddenly change and begin preaching a message, under the threat of death, which eventually turned the whole Roman world upside down?—For further reading I highly recommend Josh McDowell's book *The Resurrection Factor*, and *Basic Christianity* by John R.W. Stott.

**3.** The third major piece of evidence is the documented accounts of Jesus/Yeshua's miracles from both Christian and non-Christian sources [e.g. the writings of *Josephus*.] If Jesus/Yeshua is God, then for him to heal someone or calm a stormy sea, would be no big deal, but merely a small repeat of what he did when he created the world. As mentioned, the New Testament teaches that Christ, as God, is creator [John 1:3,10; Colossians 1:15-18; Hebrews 1:1-2]. One reason Christianity spread so rapidly was because people saw the miracles Jesus/Yeshua and his followers performed. If you were born blind and you could suddenly see because Jesus/Yeshua touched you, you would probably believe too [e.g., John 9:1-34].

**4.** Fourth is the trustworthiness of the eyewitnesses themselves. If you can't trust them, you might as well throw out the first three pieces of evidence. Of the original twelve disciples, not counting Judas who betrayed Jesus/Yeshua [as foretold in Psalm 41:9], church history tells us that all but John were killed for their belief and bold profession that Jesus/Yeshua had conquered death, that they had seen him alive after the crucifixion, and that he was the one hope for mankind. Either we believe their testimonies, or we have to accept the fact that the disciples made up the whole story, they knew it was a lie, and they conspired to deceive the world.

That does not seem likely. Do you know why? Because they were willing to die for their beliefs. Would you knowingly die for a lie, especially if it involved saying that some man had risen from the dead, when you really knew his body was decomposing somewhere? I don't think you would, and neither would I. Further, they passed on to the world its highest moral and ethical teachings. Would these teachings have been founded on a lie? No, it doesn't make sense. The only logical expla-

nation is that they saw Jesus/Yeshua alive three days after his crucifixion, death and burial. This is the central theme of Christianity. [See I Corinthians 15:3-8.]

Also, in the gospel accounts, the disciples don't falsely cast themselves in a favorable light, as one would expect if they were making up the story. They recorded their own bickerings, Peter's denial, their cowardice, etc. Yet these Jewish followers of Jesus/Yeshua, who only believe in one God [the one religion in all the world least likely to entertain such beliefs about God becoming man], spoke of the glory and sinlessness of Jesus/Yeshua, and called him "Lord" and "God" [e.g., John 1:1,14; 20:28; Acts 20:28; Romans 9:5; etc.]. As mentioned, they even went so far as to worship him [Matthew 28:9,17], an act reserved only for God in Jewish teaching [Deuteronomy 6:13-15; Matthew 4:10].

Also remember, these followers of Christ/Messiah had lived with him, day in and day out, for three years, and yet they were willing to die for their belief that he was sinless and "God."—Could anyone live with you for three years, or even three days, and think you are God?

5. Fifth is the reliability of the *Bible* as a historical document. As I stated earlier, even if all of the New Testament manuscripts were destroyed, we could still reconstruct all of the New Testament, with the exception of about eleven verses, from the writings of the early church fathers before the year 325 A.D. The New Testament we have today is over 99.9 percent reliable. During the last 150 years, schools of higher criticism popularized the notion that the biblical texts had been hopelessly contaminated. Muslims and theological liberals applauded. However the facts simply do no back up their outdated theories and wishes.

6. Sixth is the testimony of believers. Whatever one says, there are many people, like myself, of every age, nationality, social class, or century, who say they have experienced the living Christ/Messiah. The accounts of restored lives, answers to prayer, healed bodies, and other evidences are hard, if not impossible, to explain unless Christ/Messiah is alive. Millions bear witness to a living, resurrected Lord who is alive, well, and able to change lives.

7. The last major piece of evidence is prophecy. Prophecy is God's ability to see history *before* it happens, and to record it hundreds, or even thousands, of years in advance. One book states: ". . . *new discoveries have confirmed [the Bible] as the only book on planet Earth that bears a message provably orchestrated from outside our space-time.*" [Alien Encounters by Missler and Eastman; Koinonia House, Coeur d' Alene, Idaho, 1997, P. 216.]

Few things confirm the reality and authenticity of both Judaism and Christianity like prophecy. There is absolutely no way to explain how the Bible could accurately, 100% of the time, foretell the future apart from it being divinely inspired. In love, I challenge you to research what I am about to show you.

There are well over 100 specific prophecies in the Bible foretelling the first coming of Christ. Humanly speaking, most of these prophecies were outside Jesus/Yeshua's ability to control or manipulate. For example, out of the tens of thousands of cities and villages in our world, the Old Testament predicted that the Jewish *Messiah* would be born in the tiny town of Bethlehem, a town that may have had a population of only around 1,000 people [Micah 5:2]. It was foretold that he would die having his hands and feet pierced [Psalm 22:16; Zechariah 12:10]. Isaiah, chapter 53, describes major scenes of the crucifixion and burial of Jesus with total accuracy. The *Bible* also prophesied that Jesus/Yeshua would be raised back to life following his death [Psalm 16:10; cf., Acts 2:22-36].

In fact, the *Bible* is so accurate in its predictions, that almost 600 years before Christ was born, in Daniel 9:24-27, Daniel prophesied the *exact* week Christ/Messiah would die. He said the Jewish Messiah would die 483 years after *the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem*. Using a Jewish calendar, which operated on a calendar year of 360 days, and starting at the exact day the Persian king Artaxerxes issued this decree [March 14, 445 B.C.], and counting forward 483 years, you not only arrive at the week Jesus/Yeshua was crucified, but you arrive at April 6th, 32 A.D., 173,880 days following Artaxerxes' decree. What is so significant about this day? It is what Christians call *Palm Sunday*, the only day that Jesus/Yeshua publically presented himself as King to the whole nation of Israel. [See John 12:12-19 and Zechariah 9:9.] Five days later they rejected him as their king and crucified him. To better understand Daniel's prophecy, get a copy of the small book: *Daniel's Prophecy Of The Seventy Weeks*, by McClain; Zondervan Pub., 1970.

According to Daniel 9:24-27, the Christ/Messiah had to be *cut off* [killed] before the destruction of the temple, which we know occurred in 70 A.D. What Jewish religious figure, claiming to be the Messiah, was born in Bethlehem, died having his hands and feet pierced, exactly 483 years from when Artaxerxes gave his decree, and all before the Jewish temple was destroyed in 70 A.D.? There is only one historical person who qualifies: Jesus/Yeshua.

How could the *Bible* predict such astounding events, hundreds of years in advance, if the *Bible* weren't true and if Christ weren't who he claimed to be? Out of the billions of people who have lived on earth, it is a virtual mathematical impossibility that any one man could fulfill even a hand full of these exact prophecies by chance, yet Jesus/Yeshua fulfilled *all* of them. It was God's way to be sure we wouldn't mistake his coming. In the Bible you will find no clear prophecies about Muhammad or Baha'u'llah. Jesus stands alone.

Would you care to predict 700 years in the future the name of a tiny town in which the world's most influential religious leader of all time would be born? Could you also predict 600 years in advance the exact year and week this great religious

person would die, as well as the details of his death? The *Bible* did!

Critics of Christianity like to say that the writers of the *Bible* rewrote past events to make it sound like they were yet future. Such theories are easily disproved. With the discovery of the *Dead Sea Scrolls*, we can now prove that all the prophecies about Jesus/Yeshua were written *before* they actually occurred. For example, in Jerusalem at a museum called the *Shrine of the Book*, there is a complete copy of the book of Isaiah from the Dead Sea Scrolls, including chapter 53, which describes how and why the Jewish Messiah must die for the sins of the world.

Concerning Daniel's prophecy in 9:24-27, there is no way this passage could have been altered or rewritten following the death of Jesus/Yeshua. How do we know? Because the *Septuagint* [the Greek translation of the Old Testament] was written in 270 B.C., over 200 years before Christ/Messiah was born, and it records this same passage from the book of Daniel, word for word.

If you want more information and proof regarding prophecy, I recommend you read Josh McDowell's book, *Evidence That Demands A Verdict, Volumes I and II*. While many prophecies have been fulfilled, there are many prophecies yet to be fulfilled, especially concerning Jesus/Yeshua's second return to earth. According to the *Bible*, God will not let sin and evil go on forever. There is a *day* coming when Christ/Messiah is going to return and set up his Kingdom, headquartered in Jerusalem. As C.S. Lewis says, "*When the Author walks onto the stage, the play is over.*" [From *Mere Christianity*, MacMillan Pub.]

Concerning Jesus/Yeshua's second coming to earth, Jesus said that no one would know the exact day or hour of his return, but that we would know his return was getting close when we began to see certain signs [Matthew 24:33].

If you went to a theater to see a play which you had seen once before, and you happened to arrive late, you could tell just by looking at the props on stage, what act was coming next. The same is true about the Lord's return. The *Bible* is very clear concerning the props which must be in place before Christ returns.

At the outset, let me say that sincere Christians disagree on how end-time Bible prophecies will all play out. I don't claim to have it all figured out. The *Bible* clearly talks about a seven year period of great tribulation which will come upon the earth [Daniel 9:26-27; Matthew 24; Revelation 4-19; Jeremiah 30:7; etc.]. Some Christians believe Christ will come for his church before the seven years start (called the Pre-tribulation Theory). Others believe he will return at the halfway point (called the Mid-tribulation Theory). Some believe he will return somewhere during the last half of the tribulation before God begins to pour out his wrath (called the Pre-wrath Theory). Still others believe Christ will not come until the end of the seven years (call the Post-tribulation Theory). Some believe that the majority of the prophecies of Revelation refer symbolically to first century happenings, such as the destruction of the temple by the Romans and the persecution of Christians under Roman emperors such as Nero, Domitian, etc. (called the Preterist Theory or Partial Preterist Theory).

Regardless of which view one adopts, *all* Christians who believe the Bible cannot miss the fact that Jesus unmistakably said he was going to return to earth (Matthew, chapters 24, 25; Acts 1:9-11; Revelation, chapters 19-22; etc.). While I have my own personal beliefs, I don't get all bent out of shape about which view is correct. I have close friends in most of the different camps, yet we all believe Jesus is coming again.—That is the real issue at hand.

While we may lovingly agree to disagree about the exact time Christ is coming back, most Christians will agree that the signs Jesus predicted are starting to be fulfilled before our very eyes. Let me highlight a few of them. These predictions, made 2,000 years ago, read as though they are off the front page of today's newspapers.

**a.** Many prophecies center around Israel, because God has not forgotten his promises to the Jewish people. [There are also some wonderful prophesies for non-Jews.] The Bible predicted that Israel would become a nation again [Daniel 9;27; Ezekiel 37;1-14]. After almost 2,500 years, Israel became a nation in 1948. Let me share a quote from Dr. Paul Meier concerning Israel's rebirth:

*"In the Torah, Moses wrote [Leviticus 26:18 and elsewhere] that in the future, whenever Israel sins greatly as a nation God will allow calamity to come their way. He will however, give them time to repent. If they, as a nation, do not repent after their warning period, then the remainder of their punishment will be multiplied by seven.*

*Over 600 years before the birth of Jesus, God used Ezekiel, a contemporary of Daniel, to show Israel her sin. In Ezekiel 4:3-6, God told the prophet to lie on his side for 430 days to signify the 430 years Israel would spend in exile for her sins. Another contemporary of Daniel's and Ezekiel's, the prophet Jeremiah, predicted that the first 70 years of that 430 years would be a Babylonian exile [Jeremiah 25:11]. That was Israel's warning period.*

*Sure enough, as predicted, Nebuchadnezzar came along and transported the Jews from Jerusalem to Babylon in 606 B.C. Then 70 years later; Cyrus the Great of Persia [possibly Queen Esther's son] conquered Babylon in 536 B.C. and said he would pay for the millions of Jews to go back to Jerusalem. But the Jews refused. Only 50,000 devout Jews went back. The rest didn't want to interrupt their businesses in Babylon [now Iraq].*

*This obviously made God angry. So take 430 years of exile, subtract 70 years of warning, and multiply the remaining 360 years times 7, as Moses instructed in the Torah. You will get 2,520 prophetic years of 360 days each = 907,200 days from the day Cyrus made his decree to return to Jerusalem, which comes out to May 14, 1948, the day Israel became*

a nation.”

Coincidence? Has God forgotten his people? No. He was merely carrying out the prescribed judgment on them, brought about when they chose to disobey and reject him. [Do you get the idea that God takes our choices seriously? I do.]

**b.** As mentioned, the *Bible* has a great deal to say about a seven year period on the earth known as the Great Tribulation. It is also called the 70th week of Daniel [Daniel 9:24-27]. It is a time when *all hell will break loose* on earth. Revelation 8:7-11 describes some of what will happen during this time. Among other things, it says that a third of the earth will be destroyed by fire, and a third of the world’s waters will turn to *wormwood* [poisonous]. Did you know that the Russian word *Chernobyl* means *wormwood*? Chernobyl, as you recall, was the nuclear power plant that underwent a meltdown and spread radioactivity over parts of Europe and Russia. I believe the waters turning to *wormwood* may refer to nuclear fallout. For example, after the U.S. dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima in World War II, thousands of people died, not only from the bomb, but also from drinking water contaminated by radioactive fallout.

**c.** The *Bible* warns that four angels [demons?] bound at the Euphrates River will be released, that a 200 million man army out of the *East* will come toward Israel and will kill one-third of mankind (over 2 billion people) in the great battle of *Armageddon* [Revelation 9:14-17; 16:1-21]. Red China has already boasted that it can muster an army of 200 million. It is also interesting to note, in light of recent wars in Iraq and the Middle East, that the Euphrates River runs through Iraq. The *Bible* also says the Euphrates River will dry up before this massive 200 million man army [Revelation 16:12]. Did you know that the Euphrates River now has a dam across it in Turkey? The Euphrates River stopped flowing for one month while the Turkish government had the lake behind the dam filled. It would be easy to stop its flow of water to make way for this army. And remember, these prophecies were written when the entire earth’s population was not much larger than 200 million, and huge dams did not exist.

With all that is going on in Iran, Iraq, North Korea, India, Pakistan, and then we factor in the U.S.A., Russia, China, and Israel, and the different alliances that exist between these countries, we see how such a war could easily erupt.

**d.** The *Bible* predicts that there will come a man called the Anti-Christ, who will proclaim himself to be God, and that he will rule the world during much of the seven years of Tribulation [II Thessalonians 2:1-4]. In Revelation 13, it says he will make everyone take a *sign* on the hand or forehead [the number “666”] called the *Mark of the Beast*. People who do not have it will not be able to buy or sell. With RFID technology, small computer chips about the size of a grain of rice, can be implanted in animals or people. Though small, they have enough memory to include DNA profiling, health records, etc. Some can even be tracked by satellite. A friend of mine works for a company that sells this technology. She says most world governments and agencies are clamoring for it. All the technology needed for the *Mark of the Beast* is already here.

**e.** The *Bible* predicts that during the Tribulation, there will be plagues and diseases that will wipe out one-fourth of the world’s population [Revelation 6:7-8]. With AIDS, the ebola virus, germ warfare, SARS, the Avian Bird Flu, new drug-resistant strains of tuberculosis, and other diseases, this is already a possibility. Even as I write this, one-fourth of Africa may be dead of AIDS within the next ten years. Some are predicting a major killer flu pandemic just around the corner.

**f.** In Matthew 24:6-8, Jesus/Yeshua spoke of an increase in *wars, famines and earthquakes*. We have already had two world wars, and a third could be soon. Besides wars and earthquakes, which we frequently hear about on the news, famines have been increasing worldwide. One in every six people on planet Earth suffers acute, chronic hunger. Over-population is becoming a significant problem as the number of people living on our planet recently passed the six billion mark and is rapidly increasing. In Luke 21:25 it says people will live in fear at the “*roaring and tossing of the sea.*” With the increase of major tsunamis and hurricanes, millions of coastal people now live in fear of the *tossing of the sea*.

**g.** The *Bible* predicts that there is one city, like a dynamite cap, which will set off an explosion of irreversible events leading to the return of Christ. The city?—Jerusalem. [See: Zechariah 12:1-10; 4:1-9; Revelation 11:2]. The *Bible* predicts that the Jewish temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem [implied in Daniel 9:27 and Matthew 24:15]. I understand that Israel already has a temple designed. In Jerusalem, Orthodox Jewish priests are already being trained to perform temple sacrifices as prescribed by Jewish Law. There is serious discussion of building a new temple just north of the Dome of the Rock (The Mosque of Omar), one of Islam’s three holiest sites. If you listen to the news, much of the tension between Israel and its Arab neighbors is focused on the temple mount. Muslims don’t want Israel to build this temple. The building of a temple could lead to World War III and the Battle of Armageddon, or it could lead to the peace treaty spoken of in Daniel 9:27, which the Anti-Christ will break half-way through the seven years of tribulation. It boggles my mind that these *Bible* predictions, made over 2,000 years ago, are what we now hear being discussed in the news.

**h.** In Matthew 24:22, Jesus/Yeshua said that unless he returned to earth, there would be *no life* left on this planet. Do you realize that when Jesus spoke these words the Roman two-edged sword and catapult were about the two most powerful weapons on earth? Now think of the nuclear, biological, and chemical weaponry that could be unleashed, and ask yourself, “*How much longer can our world survive?*” We *already* have the capability of destroying *all life* on earth in a matter of minutes. One major nuclear multiple-warhead bomb has more explosive power than all the bombs and munitions used by *all nations* in World Wars I & II combined. Jesus’ return is the only thing that will save us.

i. Revelation 11:7-11 says two prophets of God will be killed during the reign of the Anti-Christ. It says that people from all around the *world* will view their bodies. *Bible* critics used to make fun of such a notion—until satellite TV.

There are other astounding prophecies I could list, but I wanted you to see why I believe we are living in the last days before Christ/Messiah returns. As you read Biblical prophecy, especially the book of Revelation, it is so much easier to believe and understand now than when it was written almost 2,000 years ago. Some of my guesses on how these individual prophecies will be fulfilled may be wrong. Only God knows, but many prophecies, such as the foretold rebirth of Israel, and the world being on the brink of annihilation, are beyond dispute.

I believe that *Bible* passages which many Jewish teachers for centuries allegorized and spiritualized will actually come true, literally, when Jesus/Yeshua their long-awaited Messiah returns to establish his kingdom. The *Bible* says that the Jewish people will look upon him who was *pierced* [e.g., as Jesus/Yeshua was pierced on the cross] and mourn for him as one mourns for an *only son* [Zechariah 12:10]. God is not done with his church, nor with Israel [Romans 11:1-32].

I Thessalonians 4:16-17 says, “*For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.*”

I believe all of the signs point to one inescapable fact. Jesus’ return is getting very close. The question is, “*Are you ready?*”

## STEPS TO KNOWING GOD

Most who call themselves Christians, I think, will agree with what I am about to say. This section is extremely important. I don’t ask that you automatically believe the facts I present. If you are serious about God, then do your homework. Take the time to look up the *Bible* verses I cite. Ask God to confirm in your heart whether what I say is true. Seek God and the truth with all your heart.

In this section I intentionally list references from the Old Testament, because I want you to see that these same New Testament truths are/were clearly taught and/or prophesied in the Old Testament. The *Bible* is a unified whole, with Jesus/Yeshua being the unifying one who ties them together.

I believe the following four spiritual laws are clearly taught in the Bible.

**Spiritual Law #1: God is a God of love and holiness.** God created this world perfect in the beginning [Genesis 1,2]. God loves us and wants us to be in fellowship with himself. It is in this fellowship that we discover the joy and peace of knowing God and of having him lead and guide our lives [Proverbs 3:5,6; I John 4:16; John 3:16; 10:10, Ephesians 2;10]. What God wants for you and me is awesome beyond belief [Ephesians 3:14-21].

**Spiritual Law #2: Man blew it and is spiritually separated from God.**—So, what went wrong? Why aren’t more people experiencing what God intended? This may be a tougher concept to grasp, but the *Bible* says that it is our *sin* that separates us from God who is *holy* [Isaiah 59:2; Romans 6:23]. Sin is active or passive rebellion against God. It is us stubbornly choosing to do our own thing. Because God hates sin, and we are sinners, it means we are under God’s holy wrath and judgment because of our sin and rebellion against him [Ezekiel 18:20,21; Romans 1:18; 5:9; Ephesians 2:1-4].

Since God is “*holy*,” totally without sin or wrongdoing, we cannot just bop into God’s presence [Isaiah 6:1-5, I John 1:5]. Just as you wouldn’t be allowed to walk on someone’s expensive white carpet if you had oily, muddy shoes, neither will God tolerate sin in Heaven. If we went to Heaven without a basic change in our sin nature we would corrupt and pollute Heaven, just as we have the earth.

We all fall short of God’s standard of perfection. If we all lined up in front of the Grand Canyon and tried to jump across it, some might jump further than others; but the point is, we would all fall short. [Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:23]. It is a hard truth to accept, but none of us deserve Heaven. When Adam and Eve chose to sin, the Bible teaches that their sin nature got passed on to all of us [Genesis 3; Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12-21].

According to the *Bible*, sin is more than murder, stealing, or adultery. From God’s perspective sin is such things as boasting in our own achievements. Sex outside of marriage is sin. Lying, gossip, slander, cheating, cowardice, yielding to fear, not trusting God, coveting what others possess, not acting in faith, being disrespectful, putting worldly success or money before God, unforgiveness, lack of prayer, not keeping our promises, looking lustfully at someone, swearing, not acting in love, and a host of other things, are sin [Exodus 20; James 4:16; Galatians 5:19-21; Revelation 21:8; Romans 1:18-32; 14:23; Matthew 5,6; etc.].

According to the *Bible*, we all stand guilty before God, whether we have sinned a little or a lot [James 2:10]. It is like the man who said, “*But Judge, look at all the people I didn’t kill.*” The point is that we have all sinned against God. Stating it bluntly, unless God forgives us, we’re all in *big* trouble. Because God is a righteous judge he will not, he cannot, just sweep

our sins under the carpet and pretend they never occurred.

**Spiritual Law #3: We need a Savior.** I once spoke with a woman who said she felt she wasn't good enough to go to Heaven. I said, "*You're not.*" Her eyes got big. I then told her, "*That's why we need a Savior.*" Then I shared with her the story of the brother and sister who had gotten their school pictures. The sister complained about how poorly she looked. She said, "*These pictures don't do me justice.*" Her brother responded, "*You don't want justice, you want mercy!*"—I don't know about you, but I *don't* want God's *justice* on judgment day. I want and need God's *mercy*.

According to scripture, Jesus/Yeshua is the only way to God. Because God loves us, Jesus died to pay the penalty for our sin. The *Bible* says that the penalty for sin is spiritual death [Isaiah 59:1,2; Romans 6:23]. By his death, Jesus/Yeshua bridged the gap between a holy God and sinful man [John 3:16, 14:6; Romans 5:8; Acts 20:28; II Thessalonians 1:8-9; I Timothy 2:5]. Either we go to God by way of Jesus/ Yeshua, or we do not get to God at all [John 8:24; 14:6].

The story is told of a woman who received a phone call from the emergency room of a hospital late one night stating that her dad might be dying. She hastily threw on some clothes, and began frantically driving the 200 miles to where her father was. As she was going through one small town, she looked in her rear view mirror, and the local town sheriff was chasing her. Because she was going so fast, the officer didn't merely give her a ticket, he arrested her. The next day she appeared before the county judge. As he looked at the officer's report, he said, "*Ma'am, what were you thinking? Do you realize you were going almost 50 miles above the speed limit?! Your fine is either \$300 or three days in jail.*"

The young woman said, "*Oh no, your honor, you don't understand. My father is dying. I can't spend three days in jail, and I'm sorry, but I left in such a hurry that I left my purse on the kitchen counter. I have no money.*" The judge said, "*I'm sorry too, young lady, because the law says you must pay \$300 or spend three days in jail!*"

Well, the woman was crushed, and she began to weep. For some reason it touched the old judge's heart. To the surprise of everyone in the court, he stood up, stepped down from the bench, walked over, took off his robe, put on his sports coat, walked around in front of the bench beside her, pulled out his checkbook, wrote a check for \$300, and laid it on the bench. Then he walked back around, took off his sports coat, put his robe back on, and resumed his seat. He said, "*Young lady, the law says you must pay \$300 or spend three days in jail, but I see that someone has paid the fine for you. Case dismissed!*" As the young woman turned to leave in stunned disbelief, the judge said, "*I also want you to know that this ticket has been wiped from your record and will never be held against you.*"

In essence, that is what God did for us. When we stood condemned, without hope, deserving hell, God took off his robe of deity, put on a robe of humanity, became a man in the person of Jesus/Yeshua, and died to pay a fine we could never pay [Isaiah 53:4-6,11; Romans 5:6]. According to scripture, Jesus/Yeshua is both God and man. He has two natures: one human, the other divine [Philippians 2:6,7; Romans 1:3,4. Also see the Appendix on page 51.]. If we accept his offer of forgiveness, when we stand before God as Judge, we will be standing before the One who loved us and paid the fine for us: "*Case dismissed! Your sins will never be counted against you.*" [Isaiah 1:18; Romans 4:7,8]

**Spiritual Law #4: We must personally receive Jesus/Yeshua.** Knowing the first three laws is not enough. It takes a response on our part. While we cannot earn salvation, it is nonetheless a *gift* which must be *received* [Isaiah 64:6; Ephesians 2:8-9]. John 1:12 says, "*Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.*"—How do we *receive* God's gift of salvation?

First we are asked to *believe* several wonderful truths: (1) that Jesus/Yeshua loves us, (2) that he died for our sins: past, present and future [John 3:16, Romans 5:8], and (3) that he arose from the dead [I Corinthians 15:3-5].

Since it is our sins that have been keeping us from God, we must be willing to turn from our sin [Mark 1:14,15]. The *Bible* calls this *repentance*, which simply means to *turn around*. For example, if you are going the wrong direction on a one way street, away from God, you need to turn around and begin moving toward God. Or putting it another way, it means being willing to get out of the driver's seat, and inviting Jesus/Yeshua to take over the control of your life. He can turn your life around and get you going in the right direction.

The tale is told of a man who tightrope-walked across Niagara Falls with a 200 pound sack of sand on his back. Upon successfully completing his feat he turned to a spectator and asked, "*Do you believe I could do that again?*" The guy said "*Sure!*" The tightrope walker tossed down the sand and said, "*Then climb on my back.*" Real believing is more than giving mental assent to the claims of Christ. God asks you to *climb on board*, and commit yourself to him. It is more than believing something to be true in your head. It is a commitment of the heart.

If you confess your sins to God and ask him to forgive you, the *Bible* promises you will be forgiven. No matter how big or awful your sins are, God is more than willing to forgive you [Isaiah 1:18; I John 1:9]. And more incredible still is the fact that these sins will *never* be held against you [Romans 4:7,8; 8:1].

Since we are weak and rather powerless when it comes to sin, when we receive Christ, God places his Holy Spirit in us in order to help us keep from sinning. In other words, if you allow him, the Holy Spirit will empower you to live a godly life full of meaning and purpose [Jeremiah 29:11-14; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 1:7-14, Galatians 2:20; I Corinthians 10:13; Philippians 4:13]. With God's Spirit living in and through you, you can also begin to experience God's peace and joy [John



14:27; Galatians 2:20, 5:22; Romans 7:14-8:11].

And last, but not least, when you receive Christ/Messiah into your life, you become a child of God, part of God's family. Let me share a simple illustration. Would you go to a stranger's funeral and ask the family of the deceased for a share of the inheritance? You might tell them, "I'm a good person, and I do nice things for others." Would that impress them? No. They'd say, "I'm sorry, but the inheritance is for family members only. We don't know you."

Well, the same is true with God. You must be adopted into God's family if you expect to *inherit* what is God's. His inheritance is for his children, for those who *know* him. That is why Jesus/Yeshua said unless a person is *born again*, he or she will never see the Kingdom of Heaven [John 3:3-18]. The moment you *believe* and place your faith in Christ/Messiah, you are legally adopted into God's family. You inherit eternal life, you become part of a larger family, you are loved, and glory beyond your wildest imagination awaits you [I Corinthians 2:9; 3:21-23; Ephesians 1:3; Romans 8:31,32; John 14:1,2; Revelation 21:1-4].

When you die, you can also be assured that you will go to Heaven. The *Bible* says, "And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may *KNOW* you have eternal life." [I John 5:11-13, emphasis mine]. How can you *know* you have eternal life? Does it depend on feelings, or upon circumstances? No. It depends on God's promise. God *promises* that if you *believe* in Christ/Messiah, you can *know* you have eternal life.

Scripture also says that if you ask *anything* according to God's will, God will hear and answer you [I John 5:14]. So, is it God's will that you *believe* in Jesus/Yeshua and *receive* him? Yes. [See II Peter 3:9.] Therefore, if you sincerely pray to God, and invite Jesus/Yeshua into your heart, you can do so with complete confidence *knowing* that God will hear and answer your prayer. This is where *faith* comes in: simply believing that what God promises us is true.

I invited Christ into my heart when I was 14 years old. To my amazement, it worked. God's peace flooded through me. Old feelings of guilt were gone. As I began to read the *Bible*, it finally made sense. The *Bible* came alive. I also began seeing God answer specific prayers.

Once, while in high school, I was driving an old pickup truck with a load of wheat to the grain elevator during wheat harvest. At the top of one hill was a blind intersection with a row of hedge trees and a stop sign. Every time I would stop and try to start again, the clutch would slip, and the pickup would jerk violently. So I did a foolish thing. I thought the odds of me being hit were nil, so I floor-boarded the accelerator and I was going to run the stop sign. It was as though God [or an angel] reached in and turned off the ignition. I had never had the pickup stall on me before. As the engine died, a huge two-ton truck, loaded with wheat, zipped in front of me going about 50 miles an hour. Had my engine not stalled, I would have been splattered all over the road.

Then, about a mile down the road, on the same trip, my heart still pounding, I was coming up over the crest of another hill when an audible voice, not my own, out of thin air, said, "Pull over." It startled me, but it was unmistakable, "Pull over!" As I pulled over, a car from the other direction came shooting over the top of the hill in the middle of the road. Had I not pulled over I would have been hit. Twice, within a couple of minutes, God had spared my life.

In college, my roommate encouraged me to make a list of people to pray for on a regular basis. I put about 30 names down on a notecard and I began to faithfully pray for these people. After a couple of months of doing this, I began to wonder if it was working. Then at a prayer meeting with some other students, a girl mentioned that she was starting a Bible study in her dorm and asked that we pray for two non-Christian girls she had invited to attend. As she told their names, both of those girls were on my prayer list! In a university of nearly 13,000 students, I was amazed that God had answered my prayer.

I could tell you story after story of answers to prayer that I've seen, as could most other genuine Christians. My point? Jesus is alive and knowable.

I would be lying if I said that being a Christian has always been easy. Sometimes it has been incredibly hard. Initially, many of my friends rejected me because of my faith. I have gone through some extremely hard trials, yet I wouldn't trade the joy of knowing Christ for anything in the world. I have learned not to doubt in the darkness the things that God has shown me in the light. My faith and love for God have grown so much over the years as he has, time and time again, proven himself faithful.

## A TIME OF DECISION

No matter how much evidence I present, the final step in becoming a Christian is always one of faith, even though there is solid evidence upon which to base that faith. For example, I can't *prove* that George Washington lived, but I can show overwhelming evidence that he did. By *faith*, I believe George Washington lived, and by *faith*, I believe Christianity is true; based on evidence, and the fact that it works. Jesus/Yeshua has changed my life. He can change yours too.



If you still have doubts, a simple way for you to test the truthfulness of what I've said is for you to actively, honestly, seek God on his terms [as best you understand], with a willingness to follow the truth, whatever that is. Not to honestly seek God with all of your heart is to gamble with your soul. Choosing not to decide is a decision. To do nothing is the same as saying "No."

To start with, you may want to pray something like this: *"Dear Lord God, if you're there, and what this booklet says is true about Jesus/Yeshua, then I want to know. Please show me the truth."* Praying this prayer will not make you a Christian, but it is an honest first step in coming to God.

Secondly, read the *Bible* for yourself. Don't just rely on what you have heard. Look up the *Bible* verses I've cited. *Think* with your mind; *listen* with your heart. Allow God to speak to you. Read some of the books I have mentioned in this booklet. There are well thought-out answers to virtually any question you may have. If you have never read the *Bible*, may I suggest you start in the New Testament with the Gospel of John.

Someday you will stand before God, either forgiven or unforgiven. It will either be a day of sheer joy or utter terror. Hell is one of those horrible doctrines most Christians, including myself, don't like to discuss. However, Jesus/Yeshua talked about Hell more than all the other *Bible* writers combined. Not to choose God and accept his offer of forgiveness, is to choose a life of eternal separation from him [Daniel 12:2; Revelation 20:11-15; II Thessalonians 1:8-9; Matthew 13:40-43]. God is serious when it comes to sin. God hates and judges sin. If you refuse his forgiveness, and if you hang on to your sin, you will die with your sin, just like a person refusing to get off the Titanic. If there were any other way, Jesus/Yeshua would not have had to die. There is no other payment for sin acceptable to God other than the death of Jesus/Yeshua on the cross. Scripture says, *"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved"* [Acts 4:12].

I know that for some of you this is a hard decision. Much is at stake. You may risk family and friends rejecting you. If you receive Jesus/Yeshua as Lord, it will cost you. Some of you may even face the danger of being killed for the sake of Christ. If/when you are persecuted, the *Bible* says to "rejoice, for your reward is great in Heaven." [Luke 6:22,23]—Jesus/Yeshua was willing to die for you. He asks you to be willing to live for him, no matter what the cost. It is better to lose our life here and gain eternal life, than to save our lives here and lose our souls.

For some of you, I cannot imagine how scary it must be for you to even consider the truthfulness of what I've written. The teachings of the Baha'i faith have probably been programmed into the very fabric of your being. However, if you have the courage, I'd like to ask you to do something that will in no way violate your faith. Please pray this simple prayer: *"To the one and only true God, I come seeking truth. Please make yourself, and the truth, known to me in ways I can clearly understand. Do not allow me to be deceived by Satan. As you give me the courage and the strength, I promise to follow the truth you show me, no matter where it leads. Thank you for hearing this prayer. Amen."*

If you are someone with a history of physical, emotional, sexual, or spiritual abuse, you may have major trust issues. The thought of committing yourself to anyone, even God, may terrify you. All I can tell you is that God can be trusted. He is not an abusive parent. I believe God's heart ached over your abuse, and that he will hold accountable those who abused you [Matthew 18:7; Romans 12:19].

Ultimately, no one has a deciding vote in this decision but you. God votes for you. Satan, who is also very real, votes against you. I pray that you will cast your deciding vote before it is too late. Scripture seems to indicate that there are no second chances after death. [See Hebrews 9:27] There is no reincarnation. Jesus/Yeshua stands at the door of your heart knocking. The question is, "Will you open the door and let him in?" [Revelation 3:20]

The story is told of an elderly man, a widower, who had an only son. Over the years he had amassed several hundred thousand dollars in valuable paintings. It was his desire, upon his death, to leave his inheritance to his only son. However, Vietnam came along, his son got drafted, and in the course of the war his son was killed. Upon hearing of his son's death, the old gentleman sank into a deep depression which lasted almost two years.

Then, one day, there was a knock at his front door. When he opened the door, there stood a rather young hippie-looking fellow with a beard and long hair. The young man said, *"Sir, you don't know me, but I served in Vietnam with your son. In fact, if it weren't for your son, I wouldn't be here today because he gave his life to save my life. Now I know you collect artwork, and while I am not a great artist, I painted a portrait of your son when I was in Vietnam and I would like you to have it."*

Well, sure enough, it wasn't great artwork, but it really did capture the likeness of the son. The father loved the painting so much that he took down one of his very valuable paintings above his fireplace and hung the picture of his son there. Often at night he'd have a fire going, some soft music playing, and as he'd look at the painting, his heart would warm and the depression would lift.

As the years went by, eventually the old art collector died, and because there was no one to leave his inheritance to, art dealers from all around the world came to bid on his very valuable paintings, which were to be auctioned off.

As the auctioneer began the auction, he said, *"It was in the father's will that the first painting to be auctioned off is the*



picture of his son.” Well, as you can imagine, no one wanted it because it wasn’t great artwork, and so there was silence. Eventually, the old gardener spoke up. He said, “*You know, I worked for that family for many years, and their son was like a son to me. Now, I’m not a wealthy man, but I will gladly bid \$35.00.*”

And, again, there was silence. Eventually the auctioneer said, “*Going . . . going . . . Gone!*” Then he said, “*The auction is now over.*” There was a loud gasp and a stunned silence. Then the auctioneer spoke, “*It was in the father’s will, that whoever receives my son, receives it all.*”—Once you receive Christ, you receive it all [Ephesians 1:3-14; I Corinthians 3:21-23, II Corinthians 5:17].

If you have felt the Spirit of God speaking to you, and you have become convinced in your heart and mind that what I have written is true, and you want what I’ve talked about, then you must be willing to *receive* Jesus/Yeshua. When you do, you *receive it all*. John 1:12 says, “*To as many as received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.*”

If you are ready to open the door of your heart to him, then please pray the following prayer with me. What greater joy could you have than to know your sins are forgiven, that you have been given eternal life, and that you are prepared to meet your Lord when you die? These words are not magical. The important thing is that you mean them.

*“Dear Jesus/Yeshua, I thank you for loving me. I am sorry for my pride, my stubbornness, my rebellion, my sin, and all that has kept me from you. I believe you died on the cross for my sin. As best as I know how, right now, I invite you to come into my life. Please forgive me, and cleanse me. Heal my wounded heart. Deliver me from all evil and make me the person you want me to be. Calm my fears and help me to know your love. Thank you for hearing my prayer. Amen.”*

Once you have invited Jesus/Yeshua to be a part of your life, I encourage you to find a loving church where the *Bible* is both honored and taught. Make your commitment to Christ/Messiah public by getting baptized as he instructed [Matthew 28:19,20; Acts 10:47, 48a]. Visit several churches before you pick one. Some churches are alive and vibrant. Others are dead or legalistic. Ask God to lead you to the right church. Listen to your heart. When you attend a particular church, do you feel further from God, or closer to him? Finding the right church is like trying on a new pair of shoes. You don’t necessarily have to buy the first pair you try on. Shop around until you find just the right church for you.

Continue to pray, read scripture, and allow God to speak to you. If you’re a student in high school, check out such groups as Campus Life (Youth For Christ), Young Life, or Fellowship of Christian Athletes. If you are in college, there are some wonderful college ministries such as Campus Crusade for Christ, the Navigators, Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, etc. Groups such as these are a great way to begin to grow spiritually. Even if you are not a student, call one of these groups and ask them to suggest some good churches in your area.

The story is told of a native witch doctor who had done much evil in his life, causing much needless suffering through his witchcraft. As a result of the love and work of some Christian missionaries, he yielded his heart to Jesus/Yeshua. Later, he called a tribal meeting to share with his village the transformation that had occurred in his life. He said that before he came to know Christ/Messiah, it was as though there was an evil dog in him that made him do cruel, hateful things. When he repented, and asked Christ/Messiah into his life, he said it was as though a powerful dog of love and peace came to live in him.

As he spoke, a small lad who was listening began thinking about the two dogs. When the lad could take the suspense no longer, he blurted out, “*Did the bad dog leave?*” The former witch doctor paused and said, “*No, son, he still hangs around.*” The boy asked “*How do the two dogs get along?*” The old man replied, “*They fight all the time.*” The little boy, with great concern in his voice said, “*Well, which one wins?*” The old man, with a smile and a twinkle in his eyes said, “*The one I feed the most!*”—How true.

I urge you to *feed the good dog* by regularly attending church, praying, studying and memorizing scripture, reading good books, listening to Christian music, etc. If you have access to a computer, you can find some wonderful *Bible* study resources at: [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) or [www.gospelcom.net](http://www.gospelcom.net).

Now that we’re almost to the end of this booklet, I hope you have found it worth reading. My hope and prayer is that not only have you come to believe in God’s existence, but that you have also encountered God through the Lord Jesus/Yeshua. If you have Christ/Messiah living inside you then the best trip of all awaits you: Heaven. Let me conclude with these few thoughts about Heaven.

In a very moving book, *The Journey of Desire*, John Eldredge points out that *it is impossible to hope for that which we do not desire*. In discussing Heaven you may ask, “*How can I desire a place I’ve never seen or been?*” Let me try to answer this question, if I may. I truly believe that if you learn to *desire* Heaven, then you will *hope* for Heaven, and it will change the course of your life, and will help keep your faith alive and growing. [Read Romans 8:18-25 and II Corinthians 4:16-18.]

To start with, think of the most beautiful place you’ve ever seen. What was your *Kodak moment*? For me it was the summer of 1978. I’d just driven across western Kansas and eastern Colorado in rain. As I approached Denver, the storm passed, and there before me were the snow-capped Colorado Rockies. It was near sunset and the air had that fresh lumi-



nous quality. The sky was filled with about every shade of purple, lavender, pink, peach, and orange colors you can imagine, capped with a bright red sun just above the mountain peaks. And to top it off, behind me where the storm had just passed, was a brilliant rainbow arching its way across the sky. As I recall, there may have even been some geese flying south. It was so incredible that I pulled off the highway and stared. My heart was overflowing with joy and thanksgiving. But do you know what? Within about twenty minutes it was gone and I felt so sad.—“*Oh, if it could have just lasted! If only I could have entered into the beauty and stayed.*”

Or again, have you ever been to a music concert that is your type of music, whatever that might be, and for a couple of hours it seems as though you are suspended in time? But then what happens? The lights come on, the curtain drops, and it’s over. Again, that little arrow pierces your heart, and you think: *if only it could have lasted longer!*”

Or, do you recall your first feelings of romantic love, possibly in junior or senior high school, and how wonderfully exciting it was? Question: what happens if you marry that person? Do you still love the person? Hopefully so, but do you still have those wonderful romantic feelings? Not always. Reality sets in. While you may still deeply love whomever you’re with [if you are with someone], you may discover that he snores, she can’t cook worth beans, he/she squeezes the toothpaste the wrong way, etc.—Things are never quite the same.

Or, have you ever seen someone’s face and been drawn to it like a magnet? You feel you could stare into the beauty of those eyes of love and acceptance forever. And then what happens? The person gets up and leaves, or he/she passes you by, and that same old arrow pierces your heart.

Think with me. What would it be like if you could live some place where the beauty never faded, where the music never had to end, where all of those wonderful feelings of passion, love, excitement, travel and adventure never diminished, and where for all eternity you could stare into the face of perfect love, into the face of God?—You see, whether you realize it or not, I believe you have just described your longing and *desire* for Heaven.

Ever since you were born, God has planted the longings for Heaven in your heart. The heartaches, the deep longings, those feelings of desire, the passions, the thirst for adventure and acceptance, your yearning after something you can’t quite put into words; they all point in one direction, and that is toward God and Heaven.

From the day you were born until now you have longed for Heaven. “*God has set eternity in the hearts of men,*” says Solomon [Ecclesiastes 3:11], and we won’t be content until we are home in Heaven. To use John Eldredge’s analogy, we are like an ocean seal; lost, living by a small muddy pond. Our hearts won’t be satisfied until we are where we were meant to be, set free in the pure ocean of God’s love.

Like the warm aromas coming from your mother’s or grandmother’s kitchen when you were a child, we only get tantalizing whiffs and foretastes of Heaven now. The beauty and the glory of nature we see, as C.S. Lewis writes, are “*only the first sketch.*” Lewis states, “*Joy is the serious business of Heaven.*” Paul declares, “*No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.*” [I Corinthians 2:9]

To me, the existence of God and the reality of Heaven are *self-evident* truths. Listen to your heart, and your heart will tell you that these longings are true. If you know Christ, then your life on this earth is but the first chapter of a never-ending story, where each chapter is better than the one before. With all your heart live for Christ today, for how you live your life here on earth will echo for eternity. Allow him to write the remaining chapters of your life.

May his grace and peace be yours, now and forever.

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## APPENDICES

### EVIDENCE FOR THE DEITY OF CHRIST AND TRINITY

#### I. The Deity of Christ

One of the strongest proof that Jesus is God, is that he co-equally shared the same names, titles and attributes as God:

**Jehovah:** John 8:58 [In the Greek, the words “I AM” are present tense, not “I was.” For example, the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, translates “I AM” in Exodus 3:14 as *ego eimi*. Exodus 3:14, you recall, is where God declares His name to be “**I AM**” [translated Yahweh, or Jehovah]. The same Greek words, *ego eimi*, are also used in the following passages where Jesus says, “**I am** the bread of life,” “**I am** the living water,” “**I am** the door of the Sheep,” “Unless you believe **I am** he . . .,” “**I am** he,” etc. See also: **Mark 14:62, John 6:35, 48; 8:24; 10:7; 18:5.**]

**God:** Hebrews 1:8, II Peter 1:1 [In Greek, both God and Savior modify Jesus Christ], John 1:1 [cf. verse 14], Titus 2:13; Acts 20:28.

**Alpha and Omega:** Revelation 22:13 [cf. v. 16],

**First and Last:** Revelation 2:8 [cf. Isaiah 44:6]

**Lord:** Philippians 2:10-11 [and many, many other times in the New Testament, *Lord* is used of Jesus in the divine sense.]

**Savior:** Isaiah 43:10 vs. Titus 2:3, 13,

**King:** Revelations 19:16,

**Judge:** John 5:22,

**Holy One:** Acts 3:14,

**Light:** John 8:12,

**Rock:** I Corinthians 10:3,4,

**Redeemer:** Psalm 49:7; 130:7-8; Acts 20:28,

**Shepherd:** I Peter 5:4,

**Healer:** Acts 9:34,

**Creator:** Hebrews 1:1,2; John 1:3,10; Colossians 1:15-18,

**Giver of Life:** I Corinthians 15:45; John 17:2,

**Forgiver of Sins:** Mark 2:7-11,

**Omnipresent:** Matthew 28:20,

**Immutable (unchanging):** Hebrews 13:8,

**Eternal:** Isaiah 9:6,

**Spoke as God:** Matthew 23:34-37, and

**Was worshiped as God:** Hebrews 1:6, John 9:38; Matthew 28:17 [In each instance, it is the same Greek root word as Matthew 4:10, where Jesus told Satan that only God is to be *worshiped*. The NWT Bible translates the same Greek word as *worship* in Revelation 5:14. Question: why do you suppose the NWT changes the word *worship* to *obeisance* in passages related to Jesus, and yet translates the same Greek word as *worship* in passages referring to God?]

## II. The Trinity

I have chosen to include a condensed overview of the doctrine of the Trinity. While the term “*Trinity*” is never used in scripture, there is overwhelming evidence to support this doctrine. My goal is not to explain the Trinity (I can’t), but rather to show that it is Biblical. This topic could easily be another book/booklet in itself, therefore, I have chosen to follow an outline format with little elaboration. I encourage you to look up the scriptures for yourself.

Succinctly stated, I define the doctrine of the Trinity (the tri-unity of God) as follows: The one, eternal, creator God has eternally existed as three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each member of the Godhead bears the name “God” (as we shall see). They stand in an I-Thou relationship (i.e., there is love and communication between the members of the Godhead). Each one bears all the attributes of Deity, including personality, feelings, omniscience, eternalness, etc.

### 1. Grammatical Evidence For The Trinity:

#### A. Plural Pronouns Used For God

1. *Elohim* is the Hebrew word for God. It comes from two Hebrew word, *El* (or *Eloah*), which is the word translated “*god*.” “*In*” is the plural ending. For example, in Genesis 1:1 it says, “In the beginning God (plural) created (singular) the heavens and the earth.”
2. The terms *us* or *our* are sometimes used by God when referring to Himself (Genesis 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; Isaiah 6:8).
3. In Ecclesiastes 12:1 the word *creator* is actually plural in Hebrew. In Isaiah 54:5 the word *maker* is plural in Hebrew. This is consistent with the concept of the Trinity, as **all three members of the Godhead are said to be creator(s)**.  
**Father:** Genesis 1:1; Psalm 95:5-6  
**Son:** John 1:2-3,10; Colossians 1:15-18; Hebrews 1:2,10.  
**Holy Spirit:** Genesis 1:2; Psalm 104:30.
4. Deuteronomy 6:4 is one of the premiere verses in all of scripture expressing the oneness of God. What is not often realized is how the plurality of God is shown in this verse. The verse reads “Hear, O Israel: The LORD (Yahweh, singular) is our God (elohim, plural). The LORD (Yahweh, singular) is one (plural).” [We are used to thinking of the word “*one*” as singular. In this case it is plural; just as man and woman become *one*.]
5. In the New Testament, Matthew 28:19 gives one of the clearest evidences for the doctrine of the Trinity. Jesus said we are to “. . . baptize in **the name** (singular) of the **Father, Son and Holy Spirit**” (emphasis mine). This verse shows that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit comprise one name. If they were not one, the verse would read “names.”
6. In numerous places in the Old Testament two Yahweh’s or two elohim’s are mentioned: Genesis 19:24; Psalms 45:6-7; Isaiah 44:6; Hosea 1:7; Zechariah 1:12-14; 2:8-9.

**B. Other Places In The Bible Where The Trinity Is Indicated:** II Samuel 23:2,3; Isaiah 48:16-17; 59:20-21; 63:8-16.

**C. Places In The New Testament Where The Trinity Is Shown:** Matthew 3:16-17; 22:43-45; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 1:35;

3:21-22; John 3:34-36; 14:26; 16:13-15; Acts 2:32-33,38-39; 20:21-23; Romans 15:16,30; I Corinthians 12:4-6; II Corinthians 3:4-6; 13:14 (cf., Numbers 6:24-26); Ephesians 1:3-14 (vv. 3-6 = **Father**, vv. 4-12 = **Son**, vv. 13,14 = **Holy Spirit**); Ephesians 2:18-22; 3:14-17; 4:4-6; II Thessalonians 2:13-14; I Timothy 3:15-16; Hebrews 9:14; 10:7-15; I Peter 1:2.

**D. The Interpersonal Relationships Between The Father, Son and Holy Spirit Are Clearly Shown:**

**1. Between The Father And Son:**

- a. **They are one:** John 8:19; 10:28-30; 12:45; 13:20; 14:7-9; II Corinthians 1:21; Colossians 1:15.
- b. **They are distinct:** Psalms 2:7,11-12; 110:1; Daniel 7:13; Matthew 11:27; Luke 3:22; John 3:16-17; 5:17,23,26; 14:23; 15:1; 17:5; 18, 21,23; Hebrews 12:23-24.

**2. Between Jesus And The Holy Spirit**

- a. **They are one:** John 7:37-19; Acts 16:6,7; Romans 8:9-11; Galatians 4:6 (cf., 3:5,14); I Peter 1:11; I John 5:7 (cf., John 14:6); Revelation 19:10.
- b. **They are distinct:** John 14:16,-17; 16:7,14; Romans 8:26-27,34; I Corinthians 12:3.

**3. The Father And The Holy Spirit**

- a. **They are one:** I Corinthians 12:3; Matthew 10:20; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 2:22; Hebrews 10:15-16 (cf. Jeremiah 31:33).
- b. **They are distinct:** Isaiah 48:16; John 14:26; I Corinthians 2:10,11.

**D. The Deity Of God The Father And The Son:** I have tried to show that Jesus and the Father coequally share the same names and attributes. They each are referred to as eternal, omnipotent, omnipresent, worthy of worship, etc.

**E. The Deity Of The Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is the third member of the Trinity. Contrary to the teachings of some, the Holy Spirit is not an *it*, or some impersonal energy force. As you will see, the Holy Spirit bears the attributes of deity. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God Himself.—He:

- 1. **Is called God:** I John 4:2,3; I Corinthians 2:4-5,10-16; II Corinthians 3:17; Matthew 10:20; John 4:24; Acts 28:25-28.
- 2. **Is called Jehovah (Yahweh):** Hebrews 3:7-11 (cf. 4:4); 10:15,16; Numbers 11:29.
- 3. **Is “Most High”:** Luke 1:35.
- 4. **Speaks:** II Samuel 23:2-3; Mark 13:11; Acts 1:16, 13:2; 20:23; I Corinthians 12:3.
- 5. **Teaches:** Nehemiah 9:20; Luke 12:12.
- 6. **Is omnipresent:** Psalm 139:7.
- 7. **Is referred to with personal pronouns:** John 16:14; Acts 13:2.
- 8. **Was lied to:** Acts 5:3,4.
- 9. **Performs miracles:** I Corinthians 12:9-10.
- 10. **Is Christ’s Spirit:** Romans 8:9.
- 11. **Commands:** Acts 8:29; 13:2-4.
- 12. **Gives life:** John 6:63 (cf., Psalm 36:9 [Father], John 5:21 [Son]) and II Corinthians 3:6.
- 13. **Can be blasphemed** (a clear sign of deity!—One does not blaspheme an “*it*.”): Mark 3:29.
- 14. **Thinks:** Romans 8:27.
- 15. **Bestows eternal life:** Galatians 6:8.
- 16. **Has emotions:** Romans 14:17; Ephesians 4:30.
- 17. **Is omniscient:** I Corinthians 2:11; 12:8
- 18. **Is eternal:** Hebrews 9:14 . . . and the list could go on an on.

**G. Conclusion**

Is the term Trinity used in scripture? No. Is the concept clearly taught. Yes.