

One Minute Answers to Skeptics by Charles H. Campbell, Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, OR: 2005 (43 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

1. "What evidence do you have that there is a God?"

The very existence of the universe itself is evidence that there is a God. Let's think about this for a moment. There are only three options for the existence of the universe. One is that it has always been. Another is that it came into being by itself. The third is that it was created.

The first option, that the universe is eternal, has been utterly rejected by the scientific community. The motion of the galaxies, the background radiation echo, and other evidences all overwhelmingly point to the fact that the universe sprang into existence at a particular point in time, something scientists call the Big Bang.

The second option, that the universe created itself, is philosophically impossible. Of course, before the universe existed it would not have been around to do the creating. Obviously, a nonexistent universe could not have done anything! It did not exist. We all know that nothing cannot do anything. Nothing is nothing. It (if we could even call nothing an it!) cannot see, smell, act, think, or create. So option one and two can be thrown out on scientific and philosophical grounds.

The third option, that something or someone outside of the universe created the universe, is the only reasonable option.

Let's imagine I am holding up a painting. When you see a painting, what proof do you need to establish the fact that a painter exists? Nothing besides the painting itself. The painting is absolute proof that there was a painter. You do not need to see the painter to believe that he or she exists. The painting is all the evidence you need. It would not be there if the painter did not exist, and so it is with the universe. The existence of the universe itself proves absolutely that there is a creator.²

2. On Atheism

"I am persuaded that men think there is no God because they wish there were none. They find it hard to believe in God, and to go on in sin, so they try to get an easy conscience by denying His existence." --Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892), British preacher and author.

3. "What evidence do you have that the Bible is actually true?"

If I had to answer this question with just a few evidences, I would probably mention fulfilled prophecies, archaeological discoveries, and the Bible's amazing unity.

The Bible, unlike any other religious book, has demonstrated itself to be the Word of God through its ability to rightly predict the future. There are literally hundreds of very

specific prophecies in the Bible that were fulfilled hundreds of years after they were spoken.³ No other religious book can verify itself in this way.

The Bible has also been proven to be historically reliable by numerous archaeological discoveries. To date, more than 25,000 archaeological discoveries have verified the names of persons, places, events, and customs mentioned in the Bible.

Finally, the Bible's unity is amazing. Here is a book that is actually a collection of 66 different books written down by more than 40 different authors over a period of more than 1500 years on three different continents and in three different languages. It addresses life's most controversial topics from beginning to end. You might expect to find chaos, confusion, and contradictions, yet the Bible miraculously remains absolutely consistent and internally harmonious from beginning to end.⁴

These three evidences (fulfilled prophecy, archaeological discoveries, and the Bible's amazing unity) build a compelling case for the divine origin and historical reliability of the Bible.⁵

4. On Archaeology:

"Archaeological work has unquestionably strengthened confidence in the reliability of the Scriptural record. More than one archaeologist has found his respect for the Bible increased by the experience of excavation in Palestine."

Millar Burrows (1889-1980), author and professor.

What Mean These Stories? (American Schools of Oriental Research) 1941. p. 1.

6. "How do you know Jesus even existed?"

Of course, the New Testament, which has proven to be a reliable historical record, attests to Jesus' life. On top of that, at least 39 sources outside of the Bible attest to more than a hundred facts regarding Jesus' life, teachings, crucifixion, and resurrection.¹⁰ For example, Flavius Josephus, a first-century Jewish historian, affirms not only that Jesus lived but also that He was "a doer of amazing deeds," that "Pilate condemned Him to be crucified to die," that He was a teacher who "won over many Jews and many of the Greeks," and that He was reportedly seen alive by His disciples after His crucifixion.¹¹

The Babylonian Talmud is a collection of ancient Jewish writings. This extrabiblical source also mentions Jesus, even saying that He was killed on the eve of Passover, just as the biblical account describes.¹² Other noncanonical sources include the Roman historian Tacitus, the Didache, Pliny the Younger, Suetonius, and the Gnostic Gospels (such as the Gospel of Thomas). The *Encyclopedia Britannica*, fifteenth edition, devotes 20,000 words to the person of Jesus Christ and never once hints that He didn't exist. The evidence is certain. Jesus of Nazareth was a real person.¹³

7. On Jesus:

"At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. And His conduct was good, and

He was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and the other nations became His disciples. Pilate condemned Him to be crucified to die. And those who had become His disciples did not abandon His discipleship. They reported that He had appeared to them three days after His crucifixion and that He was alive. --"Flavius Josephus (AD 37-c. 100), first-century Roman historian. *The Antiquity of the Jews*, 18:3.

8. "How can you say Jesus is the only way to heaven?"

That is what the Bible teaches.¹⁴ Let's imagine for a moment that you have just hurt my feelings in a terrible way. You said and did some really mean things to me. Would you be able to go to just anyone and apologize to them in order to make *our* relationship right? Of course not. The same is true in our relationship with God. Mankind has sinned against God by the things we have said and done.¹⁵ Therefore, to have our relationship restored, we must go back to Him, not to Buddha, Allah, Krishna, or some other imaginary, man-made deity. A person must go to Jesus and through Jesus because He is God. He is not a city, like Rome, of which it might be said, "All roads lead to Rome."

God is a personal being who has provided the gift of salvation (Romans 6:23) to all who will put their trust in His Son, Jesus. If people put their faith in another savior (such as Buddha, Brahman, or Allah), they will find on judgment day that their god has done nothing for their eternal well-being, because their "so-called god" (1 Corinthians 8:5) does not exist (Isaiah 43:11; 45:5).

9. On God:

"To look out at this kind of creation and not believe in God is to me impossible." -- John Glenn (1921-), astronaut and U.S. senator, as he looked out of the space shuttle *Discovery*, November 4, 1998. Quoted in Chuck Colson, "Astronauts Who Found God," *Breakpoint*, November 5, 1998.

"God's nature is revealed most perfectly in the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, as recorded in the New Testament of the Bible, who was sent by God to reveal the divine nature."--George F.R. Ellis (1939-), theoretical cosmologist, professor, **author, and recipient of the Templeton Prize. Nancey Murphey, et al., eds., *Quantum Cosmology and the Laws of Nature* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1997).**

9. Doesn't it seem unfair and narrow that God would save people only through Jesus?"

I do not see it that way. I think the question we should be asking is, "Why would God seek to save us at all?" When I consider my own sinfulness and the rampant rebellion and sinfulness that exists in the world today, I find it absolutely amazing that God has offered to save us at all!

Far from being narrow or unfair, God's offer of salvation is very gracious and broad. The Bible says that God loves the whole world (John 3:16; Romans 5:8), that Jesus died for the

sins of all mankind (1 John 2:2), and that God is making salvation available to people on every continent. The gospel message is not just for Americans or Europeans or some other people group. Jesus told His disciples to take the good news "even to the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8 NASB). The book of Revelation tells us that heaven will be populated with people "from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues" (Revelation 7:9 NASB). God's offer of salvation is broad and gracious.

10. On the Resurrection:

"If Jesus remained dead, how can you explain the reality of the Christian church and its phenomenal growth in the first three centuries of the Christian era? Christ's church covered the Western world by the fourth century. A religious movement built on a lie could not have accomplished that.. All the power of Rome and of the religious establishment in Jerusalem was geared to stop the Christian faith. All they had to do was to dig up the grave and to present the corpse. They didn't." -- Henry Schaefer III (1944-), professor and Nobel Prize nominee. "Questions Intellectuals Ask About Christianity," www.leaderu.com/offices/schaefer/docs/questions.html.

11. "How can a loving God send somebody to hell?"

The last thing God wants is for anyone to end up in hell. The Bible says that God is "not willing that any should perish" (2 Peter 3:9) and that He "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). God did more than simply proclaim His desire that none should perish. He actually *proved* His desire to save people when He left the glories of heaven in the person of Jesus and came to earth to die on the cross for our sins (John 3:16; Romans 5:8). Having paid the penalty for mankind's rebellion, God now graciously offers forgiveness and everlasting life as a gift (Romans 6:23) to all who will put their trust in Jesus.

If people reject God's grace; turn away from the testimony of their own conscience (Romans 2:15), the testimony of creation (Psalm 19:1-6; Acts 14:16-17), and the wooing of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8); and say, "I will have nothing to do with God," God will, in the end, allow them to have their wish (2 Thessalonians 1:9). As C.S. Lewis said, "The damned are, in one sense, successful, rebels to the end...the doors of hell are locked on the inside."¹⁹ In the end, those people who end up in hell will have only themselves to blame. Hell is the end of a path that is chosen to some degree in this life, here and now, day by day.²

12. Thy Will Be Done:

"There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, in the end, '*Thy* will be done.'" --C.S. Lewis (1898-1963), professor and author. *The Great Divorce* (Mac-Millan, 1946), p. 72.

13. "Isn't there a conflict between the God of God of the Old Testament, who is often portrayed as cruel, and the God of the New Testament, who seems very loving?"

Not at all. The God of the Old Testament is the very same loving God spoken of in the New Testament. The Old Testament says He is "gracious and merciful; slow to anger and great in lovingkindness" (Psalm 145:8 NASB). God says in Mala-chi 3:6, "I am the LORD, I do not change."

The Old Testament does contain more stories of God's judgment against sinners than does the New Testament (including the flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah). Keep in mind, though, that the Old Testament covers about four thousand years of history, and the New Testament covers less than a hundred years. The God spoken of in the New Testament is just as serious about sin as He was in the Old Testament. The New Testament tells of a time when God's judgment is going to come upon the whole earth in the last days (Matthew 24:21; 2 Peter 3:7; Revelation 6-18). Beyond that, the New Testament clearly talks about a time when unrepentant, unforgiven sinners will stand before God to be judged for their sins (Revelation 20:12-15).

14. On the Bible:

"I have a fundamental belief in the Bible as the Word of God, written by men who were inspired. I study the Bible daily." -- Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), physicist, mathematician, astronomer, inventor, philosopher, and alchemist. Quote cited at BlueLetterBible -org.

15. On Evolution:

"In grammar school they taught me that a frog turning into a prince was a fairy tale. In the university they taught me that a frog turning into a prince was a fact."-- Ron Carlson, Christian apologist. Cited in Dr. Norman Geisler and Frank Turek, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist* (Crossway, 2004), p. 137.

16. "Doesn't the Bible have a bunch of contradictions in it?"

No. Some verses in the Bible seem to contradict one another, but with a little investigation into the original languages, the context of the various passages, and the cultural and geographical settings in which the Bible was originally written, they are easily reconciled. Here is an example.

Luke 18:35 says that Jesus healed a blind man "as He was coming near Jericho." Mark 10:46 says Jesus healed the man "as He went out of Jericho." Critics contend that either Luke or Mark must have made a mistake. That does appear to be the case. What is the solution?

A German archaeologist named Ernest Sellin, working on an excavation in

Israel between 1907 and 1909, discovered what have been called the twin cities of Jericho. One was the old Hebrew city, and the other was a newer Roman city. The two cities, both called Jericho, were separated from one another by about a mile. Knowing that there were two cities called Jericho in Jesus' day solves the apparent contradiction. Luke referred to the city that Jesus was approaching. Mark referred to the one that Jesus had left. The healing of the blind man occurred as Jesus traveled between the two. It is not the gospel writers who erred, but the critics of the Bible who are unfamiliar with first-century geography of the Holy Land.²⁵

17. On The Gospel:

"All I am in private life is a literary critic and historian, that's my job... And I'm prepared to say on that basis if anyone thinks the Gospels are either legends or novels, then that person is simply showing his incompetence as a literary critic. I've read a great many novels and I know a fair amount about the legends that grew up among early people, and I know perfectly well the Gospels are not that kind of stuff." --C.S. Lewis (1898-1963), professor and author. *Christian Reflections* (Eerdmans, 1967), p. 209.

18. "How can you be sure Jesus rose from the dead?"

Here are a few quick reasons we can be sure. First, Christianity turned the world upside down 2000 years ago, beginning in the very city where the people demanded Jesus' crucifixion and where Jesus was publicly crucified and buried. The best explanation for the sudden birth of Christianity and its phenomenal growth is that Jesus really did rise from the dead.

Second, the early Christians were willing to suffer agonizing martyrdoms in order to testify that Jesus was alive.³³ The best explanation for their boldness and willingness to die was that they really did see Jesus alive after His crucifixion (1 Corinthians 15:3-7). Nobody willingly and knowingly dies for a lie.

Third, the Old Testament prophesied that the Messiah would rise from the dead (Psalm 16:10), and the New Testament says that Jesus did rise from the dead (Matthew 28:6). Hundreds of fulfilled prophecies, thousands of archaeological discoveries, and dozens of external sources (such as Flavius Josephus) have established the fact that the Bible is, at bare minimum, a historically reliable book.

Fourth, I would tell you about my own personal experience. Years ago I cried out to Jesus and said, "If You are alive, come into my life, forgive me of my sins, and be the Lord of my life." Many things since then have convinced me, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that He heard that prayer and is indeed alive and at work in my life.

19. On the Resurrection:

"Why would the apostles lie?... Liars always lie for selfish reasons. If they lied, what was their motive, what did they get out of it? What they got out of it was misunderstanding, rejection, persecution, torture, and martyrdom. Hardly a list of perks!" -- Peter Kreeft, professor of philosophy. Norman L. Geisler and Paul K. Hoffman, eds., *Why I Am a Christian: Leading Thinkers Explain Why They Believe* (Baker, 2001), p. 232.

20. "What about evolution? Haven't Darwin's theories disproved God's existence?"

Darwin's theory of evolution does not in any way disprove the existence of God. The theory of evolution seeks only to explain how existing life forms have changed over time. Nobody disagrees that life forms have the ability to adapt to their environment. I believe this ability to adapt to the environment is actually evidence of design. And I am in good company. Hundreds of scientists from leading universities acknowledge that life is far too complex to have come about by some mindless process and random series of accidents.³⁴

And evolutionists would be the first to admit that Darwin's theories do nothing to explain how life originated, or for that matter, how the entire universe came to be. If you hold to Darwin's theory of evolution, do not allow that to keep you back from acknowledging that there is a God who created the world and that you are a sinner in need of His grace and forgiveness. By believing that God exists, you'd be following in the footsteps of Antony Flew, who was widely considered the world's most influential atheistic philosopher, author, and debater. In 2004 Flew abandoned his atheism and acknowledged that God must exist. He said, "It now seems to me that the findings of more than fifty years of DNA research have provided materials for a new and enormously powerful argument to design." "What I think the DNA material has done is show that intelligence must have been involved."³⁵ What changed his mind? The complexity of the DNA inside living cells. Scientists are discovering that living cells could never have come into being apart from an intelligent designer. They are that complex.³⁶

21. On Evolution:

"To suppose that the eye, with all its inimitable contrivances for adjusting the focus to different distances, for admitting different amounts of light, and for the correction of spherical and chromatic aberration, could have been formed by natural selection, seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest possible degree." -- Charles Darwin (1809-1882), British naturalist. *On the Origin of Species*, 1859, chapter 6. Available online at www.literature.org.

22. "Can God make a rock so big He cannot move it? Yes or No?"

A simple yes-or-no answer will not suffice for the question when it's worded this way. Either answer would suggest that God is not omnipotent (all-powerful), but the Bible clearly affirms that He is (Genesis 18:14; Luke 1:37). Your question is like asking

someone, "Have you stopped beating your wife yet? Yes or No?" For the person who has not been beating his wife, a simple yes-or-no answer will not do. If he says yes, he implies that he used to beat his wife. If he says no, he implies that he is still beating his wife. The same is true with this question. A yes-or-no answer will not work.

God is omnipotent, so He can create any kind of rock He wants to, and He can lift any rock that He creates.³⁹

23. On Apparent Design:

"A commonsense interpretation of the facts suggests that a superintellect has monkeyed with physics, as well as with chemistry and biology, and that there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature. The numbers one calculates from the facts seem to me so overwhelming as to put this conclusion almost beyond question." -- Fred Hoyle (1915-2001), British astronomer and professor. *The Universe: Some Past and Present Reflections* (Dept. of Applied Mathematics and Astronomy, University College, 1982) 20:16.

24. On the Fossil Record:

"The extreme rarity of transitional forms in the fossil record persists as the trade secret of paleontology. The evolutionary trees that adorn our textbooks have data only at the tips and nodes of their branches; the rest is inference, however reasonable, not the evidence of fossils." --Stephen Jay Gould (1941-2002), paleontologist, author, and professor. *The Panda's Thumb* (Norton, 1982), p. 181.

30. "How could dinosaurs fit on Noah's ark? If dinosaurs were on Noah's ark, why aren't they around today?"

Those are great questions. First, bear in mind that the ark described in the Bible was not the 45- to 50-foot model made popular in children's books. It was extremely large. According to the measurements given in the Bible (Genesis 6:15), it was about 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet tall (4.5 stories)!

Second, remember that not all dinosaurs were large, like the brachiosaur. Many of them, like the compsognathus, were quite small, even just a few pounds. Even the biggest dinosaurs came from eggs no larger than footballs.⁴⁵

Third, Noah probably took young dinosaurs with him, rather than the older and larger ones. The smaller ones would have been easier to fit in the ark, feed, and take care of, and they would have been in better shape than older ones for repopulating the earth.

Fourth, remember that Noah was not required to bring two of every type of dinosaur on the ark, but only two of every kind (Genesis 6:20), a much smaller number.⁴⁶ Fitting the dinosaurs on the ark would have been no problem.⁴⁷

As for why we do not see dinosaurs around today, keep in mind that the flood occurred

approximately 2300 or 2400 years before Christ, more than 4000 years ago. As for those dinosaurs that survived the flood aboard Noah's ark, we are not sure why their offspring did not continue indefinitely. They may have died off for some of the same reasons other creatures have become extinct. Perhaps they were overhunted. Perhaps an ice age or severe change in the environment that came after the flood affected the lush vegetation that many of them depended on for food. Only God knows for sure. The existence of billions of dead animals, including dinosaurs, encased in sedimentary rock (which, interestingly, is rock that has been laid down by water) averaging a mile deep on all seven continents, is an amazing evidence that the flood actually did occur (Genesis 6:17; 7:4).⁴⁸

31. "Don't all religions basically teach the same thing?"

That is a popular belief, but the answer is no. The religions of the world are vastly different and even contradictory in many of their core teachings.

For example, consider some of the different views regarding the nature of God. Some religions, like Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, teach that God is the transcendent Creator of the world and that He is distinct and separate from His creation. Other religions, like Hinduism, teach that God and the physical universe are one and the same. Some religions teach that God is a he, some say a she, some say an it. Mormonism, Shinto, and different tribal religions teach that there are many gods. Adherents to the New Age movement and Christian Science believe that *we* are God.

Consider the different views of salvation and what that even means. Judaism, Islam, and Christianity teach that salvation means eternal life in heaven. To Buddhists, it means an indescribable, almost nonexistent state known as parinirvana. To the majority of Jehovah's Witnesses, it means everlasting life on earth. The goal of Hindus is to break free from the cycle of life, death, and reincarnation and have their individual personality annihilated by becoming absorbed into Brahman.

Consider how salvation is obtained. The Bible teaches that salvation is a gift given by a gracious God to all who receive it by faith. The Quran says you can obtain salvation if you submit yourself to Allah and His laws and your good works outweigh your bad works. Hinduism's ultimate goal is said to be obtained by achieving a certain state of consciousness in which people realize their identity with God. Buddhism's ultimate goal is said to be achievable to those who eliminate all desires—even the desire to live. When it comes to the nature of God, salvation, and how that salvation is obtained, the world's religions contain many contradictory teachings.

32. "Don't Christians worship the same God as Muslims?"

No. There are some major differences between the god presented in the Quran and the God of the Bible. The Quran teaches that Allah is not triune (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), but the God of the Bible is. To say that God has a Son, as the Bible does, is an unforgivable sin known as *shirk* to Muslims.⁵⁰

God's love also sets Him apart from the god put forth in the Qur'an. The Quran states over and over again that Allah does not love ungrateful sinners, unbelievers, the proud, or the extravagant.⁵¹ The God of the Bible loves the whole world, including sinners. Jesus said, "For God so loved the world [that would include everyone] that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). The Bible says elsewhere that "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). That is good news for those of us who realize we are sinners.

The Bible also teaches that those who put their faith in Christ are adopted into God's family (Ephesians 1:5) and can personally address God as "Father" (Matthew 6:9; Romans 8:15). The God of the Bible offers mankind a personal relationship of great intimacy. That is not the case in Islam, which has no fatherly concept of God. To most Muslims, Allah is seen more as a remote judge who is not personally involved with mankind. Islam is not about fellowship with God, but service, submission, and allegiance to God.⁵²

These are just some of the differences between the god put forth in the Qur'an and the God of the Bible. The god portrayed in the Qur'an is not the God spoken of in the Bible and, in fact, does not even exist (Isaiah 46:9).

33. On God:

"I, even I, am the LORD, and besides Me there is no savior. . . I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me." -- Isaiah 43:11; 46:9

34. "What makes you think the Qur'an is not divinely inspired?"

There are numerous reasons for doubting that the Qur'an is inspired.⁵³ First, it contradicts authentic Scripture, the Bible. For instance, it teaches that God does not love sinners (see, for example, Surah 2:276) and that people obtain salvation when their good works outweigh their bad works (Surah 23:102-3). The Bible teaches that God loves sinners (Romans 5:8) and that salvation comes to us solely through God's grace (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Second, it contradicts known facts of science. For example, it teaches that the sun actually descends down into a muddy spring on the earth (Surah 18:86). You could get away with a statement like that in certain parts of the world in the seventh century. Obviously, today, we know that the sun is actually on a circuit through space.⁵⁴

Third, the Qur'an contradicts known facts of history. For example, it denies that Jesus of Nazareth was crucified on a cross (Surah 4:157), something that has been substantiated not only by the Bible but also by extrabiblical sources, such as the Jewish Talmud and Flavius Josephus.

Fourth, the Qur'an is plagued with internal inconsistencies."

Fifth, there are no particularly good reasons to accept the Qur'an as inspired Scripture. The most popular evidence that Muslims put forth for the divine inspiration of the Qur'an is its literary beauty, but this is a highly questionable means of testing a document for divine inspiration. What would stop us from believing that Shakespeare's writings were also divinely inspired? For these reasons, and others, it is safe to conclude that the Qur'an is not divinely inspired.

35. On the Crucifixion:

"As a Muslim I came to believe that the crucifixion of Christ was an undisputable historical fact that no honest person that deals with evidences of history could deny."

Abdul Saleeb, coauthor of *Answering Islam: The Crescent in the Light of the Cross* (Baker, 2002). See his testimony at www.leaderu.com/wri/pages/abdul.html.

36. "What makes you think the Book of Mormon is not trustworthy?"

The Book of Mormon is riddled with problems.

- It contradicts authentic Scripture (the Bible).⁵⁶
- It contains false prophecy.⁵⁷
- Many doctrinal and grammatical changes have been made since its initial publishing in 1830.⁵⁸
- It contains extensive plagiarism of the King James Version of the Bible.⁵⁹
- Independent, non-Mormon archaeological verification is absolutely lacking.⁶⁰
- If that were not enough, the Book of Mormon is permeated with scientific problems.⁶¹

The open-minded individual who is willing to follow the evidence (or in this case, lack of evidence) wherever it leads can easily see that the Book of Mormon is an early nineteenth-century piece of American fiction. Orson Pratt (1811-1881), one of the early leaders in the Mormon church, said, "The Book of Mormon claims to be a divinely inspired record...If false [he did not think it was], it is one of the most cunning, wicked, bold, deep-laid impositions ever palmed upon the world, calculated to deceive and ruin millions."⁶² The Book of Mormon *can* be proven to be false, and therefore Pratt's words stand. I could not have said it better myself. *That* is what the Book of Mormon is.

37. On the Book of Mormon:

"Archaeologists and other scholars have long probed the hemisphere's past, and the Society does not know of anything found so far that has substantiated the Book of Mormon."

From a letter from the National Geographic Society dated August 12, 1998. View the entire letter at irr.org/mk/national-geographic.html.

"One of the most modern pretenders to inspiration is the Book of Mormon. I could not blame you should you laugh outright while I read aloud a page from that farrago."

Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892), British preacher and author.

38. "If Christianity is true, why can't different denominations agree on what to believe?"

Actually, Christian denominations agree on many important issues. When it comes to the core, foundational beliefs of Christianity, Christian churches are very unified. They do have different opinions on some issues (such as what kind of worship music is best and how a local church should be governed), but when it comes to the authenticity of the Bible, the deity of Christ, what His death on the cross accomplished, His bodily resurrection from the grave, and His second coming, there is great harmony.

It is important to realize that disagreements over the facts do not weaken or negate the facts. For centuries man debated and disagreed about the shape of the earth. Some said it was round. Some thought it was flat. During that time, the earth never ceased to be round. The same is true with Christianity.

The different denominations may disagree about certain aspects of church life or worship styles, but the facts stay the same. Jesus is both Lord and God, and He is worthy of our trust and worship.

39. On Jesus:

"This Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar, Mohammed, and Napoleon; without science and learning, He shed more light on things human and divine than all philosophers and scholars combined; without the eloquence of schools, He spoke such words of life as were never spoken before or since, and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet; without writing a single line, He set more pens in motion, and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, learned volumes, works of art, and songs of praise than the whole army of great men of ancient and modern times." -- Philip Schoff (1819-1893), historian. *The Person of Christ* (American Tract Society, 1913), pp. 29-30.

40. "Does it really matter what people believe as long as they are sincere?"

'It certainly does matter. Regarding faith in Jesus, the Bible says that "there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12 NASB). People cannot put their faith in the god of Mormonism, a god who (according to Joseph Smith) was once a mere man who became one of many gods, and hope that god will save them or forgive them of their sins. That god does not exist. That god was a nineteenth-century invention by Joseph Smith.

Millions of sincere Muslims around the world are putting their faith in Allah, the god set forth in the Qur'an, but how is Allah going to save them? The god described in the Qur'an does not exist.⁶³

No amount of sincerity in the heart of a Mormon or Muslim will raise either one of these

gods into being. Sincere faith is only as useful as its object. A person can sincerely put his faith in a piece of yarn tied around his ankle as he bungee jumps off of the Empire State Building, but the yarn will not save him.

People who sincerely believe in Jesus, the true and living God who actually exists, are in good hands (John 10:27-30). Sincerity is important (Joshua 24:14; John 4:24), but God desires that we sincerely put our faith in *Him*, for He alone can save a person (Hosea 13:4). The gods of Hinduism, Mormonism, and Islam do not exist (Isaiah 43:10) and therefore cannot save even the sincerest of followers.

41. On Facts:

"If Christianity was something we were making up, of course we could make it easier. But it is not. We cannot compete, in simplicity, with people who are inventing religions. How could we? We are dealing with Fact. Of course anyone can be simple if he has no facts to bother about." --C.S. Lewis (1898-1963), professor and author. *Mere Christianity*, 1960, p. 145.

42. "Isn't being a good person enough to get to heaven?"

That is certainly a popular belief today. From man's perspective, a person might appear to be a good person, but to God, who sees into the human heart, we are all unrighteous.⁶⁴ Jesus Himself said, "No one is good but One, that is, God" (Luke 18:19). Romans 3:10 says, "There is none righteous, no, not one." Isaiah 53:6 says, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way." Obviously, some people are not as evil as they could be, and some are worse than others. The bottom line is this: We all need the grace and forgiveness God offers if we are to escape the judgment we deserve and go to heaven. Two thousand years ago, God, out of His great love for you and me, came to earth as a man and died on a cruel Roman cross. There on the cross, He took upon Himself the punishment and judgment that was due sinners (Isaiah 53:5). He rose from the grave three days later and is now graciously offering forgiveness and everlasting life (John 3:16) to all who will acknowledge their sinfulness (1 John 1:8-10), turn from their sins (Acts 17:30), and put their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior (Romans 10:9-10). If you do that, you will be saved (Acts 16:31). The Bible teaches that if you go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, "there is only the terrible expectation of God's judgment and the raging fire that will consume his enemies" (Hebrews 10:27 NLT). The best decision you could ever make is to turn to Jesus, even right now, before it is too late.

43. On Salvation:

"We have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made right with God by faith in Christ, not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law...For if keeping the law could make us right with God, then there was no need for Christ to die." (Galatians 2:16,21 NIT)