

Why I Believe: Revisited

(10/01/03)

Greetings to the Church That Used to Meet at Betsy's House,

Good-bye Isabel-----you were a bad girl anyway!

We lost our power, water, telephone and TV just like many, many other people. We got our telephone back first, after about 4 days, but didn't get power and water until after 7 days. You sure come to appreciate a hot shower.

Well it looks like we're back on track and will be meeting this coming Friday night at 7:30 PM at Piccadily's on Midlothian Turnpike. Plan to be with us, I have some new things to share with you.

Now to the task at hand, "Why I Believe".

As I have written before faith (i.e. believing) is a powerful, powerful reality in everyone's life. That is true whether or not a person is a "Christian" or not. Faith is the fuel that directs every action and thought of our existence. It determines how we think about everything, it colors our perceptions and causes us to make things "fit" according to what we believe. Every idea or circumstance is seen in light of what we believe. If it doesn't fit it is shaped to somehow make it fit in in some fashion or another.

Faith, therefore, is a important issue to consider. It will transform people whether they are "Christian" or not. It will color our thinking and cause us to act in conformity to the object of that faith. Faith always requires an object and does not exist in a vacuum. Faith, therefore, cannot prove anything except the power of faith itself.

Consequently, I would like to consider a couple of ideas set forth in Christian circles which people put their faith in as "proofs" that the God of the Bible is the One True God.

Let me take the first "proof", answered prayer.

Whenever a person prays there are generally 3 possible responses.. Those responses to a prayer of petition are, yes, no or wait. If I believe that God answers all prayers, and I do, the outcome of my petition does not "prove" anything because all the bases are already covered. In addition to that is it possible that somewhere some other person who believes in something different that the "Christian" gets the same answer/answers?

Let's take it one step further and, for the sake of illustration, assume a person is praying for a "healing" of physical malady. Let's further assume that the doctors have ruled it a impossible and hopeless case. Then out of the blue the person's illness is "cured". Those kinds of miracles, so-called, are often cited as a proof that the God of the Bible is true.

Now, we must ask ourselves some important questions relevant to that sort of "proof".

First, we must ask have those kinds of things ever happened to anyone who has not prayed to the God of the Bible?

Second, do we, as finite and incomplete humans, know all that there is to know about what really is happening in us and around us? Is it possible that there may be some other reason, unknown to us, that could bring about this "miracle".

Now I wouldn't say it wasn't God's action that did bring about that healing but I cannot say with absolute certainty that it was. So I must conclude, since it is not positively clear, I cannot prove anything absolute by that result because my beliefs have colored my perceptions of that result. In debate that is called circular reasoning. That is I use the result to prove the truth of what I say which is the basis for I claim to hold as true.

Let me say at this junction that anytime we use external events to "prove" anything about the God of the Bible we are on very shaky ground, foolish and superficial. We, however, like those "proofs" because they appeal to our physical senses and, as humans, that is the arena in which we are most comfortable.

Next, let us take reason, as a method of proving. That one is very easy and one I, myself, have been prone to for years.

Reason assumes that the "reasoner" has all the information and is capable of seeing everything in a complete, intelligent and objective fashion. That means that person is an objective genius who has no beliefs prior to what they are considering. They would be the ideal objective scientist. Reason fails because of information, ability and condition of the "reasoner".

Now, let's take a frequently used one, the argument from design. That argument says that because creation bears the mark of a creator it proves that the God of the Bible is true. That one is equally easy to dismiss as some kind of proof.

Once again, reason will have to admit that we as limited and finite, don't know all the facts. There may be some other explanation that is outside of our immediate knowledge or abilities to perceive. In addition, even if one were to admit to a design/designer argument it could easily be argued that that "Designer" may not be the God of the Bible.

Anytime, anyone can raise an issue that could have some possible alternate explanation it loses its power to be an absolute proof of anything.

Now I can hear someone say, "okay, but when all those things are taken into consideration together they are proof".

Again, I will take my stand and say all those things, by themselves, are merely circumstantial evidence and not enough for a conviction.

Is there anything then that we can base our faith upon? Is there anything that is absolute and sure?

The resounding answer is yes, yes, yes!!

However, and this is a big however, we are left totally to the testimony of one witness. This witness's testimony is open for all to examine carefully. It is complete and documented. It has been scrutinized and cross examined by many, many adversaries who have sought to prove it a lie. It explains, in detail, the important aspects of existence. The witness is unflinching and audacious. The explanation is not only plausible it is constantly being affirmed by other means. It is supported by other testimony. The key here is that other testimony doesn't prove anything it only confirms the truth of the one witness.

Truth, for all Christians, hinges on the word of one witness. Without that clear witness we would all be left to our own devices. That witness makes bold claims that are constantly held up to ridicule and scorn. Those who do so never engage the witness's testimony but seek to take the argument elsewhere, to the event, the idea or the circumstance.

That Witness is God's Sworn Testimony about Himself. We know it as the Bible and, as believers in Christ, are to rely upon it as the rock upon which our faith stands. Christ, Himself, is called the Word!!

Don't worry about all those who would argue with you about what you believe. Rather become rock solid in His Word and have an answer that has stood the test of time and challenge. Don't get drawn into arguments that are outside of His Word. Always refer them to the Testimony of the Absolute, the God of the Bible.

In His Love,

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