
Creation Answers

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Who does this newsletter?

This newsletter is produced by Wayne Spencer on a Quarterly basis. Its purpose is to bring creation research within the reach of Christians and provide up-to-date reliable information on creation issues. Wayne Spencer is a creation author and former teacher who has presented papers at the International Conference on Creationism and has published in various creation publications, such as the Creation Research Society Quarterly, Creation magazine, the Journal of Creation (TJ), and Origins (from the Biblical Creation Society, UK).

This newsletter is meant to help people plug into creation resources and get informed about creation and evolution. It is provided free of charge on request. Using the free Adobe Acrobat Reader is necessary for viewing the newsletter. There are no restrictions in copying this newsletter or passing it on to others. To request to be placed on the e-mail list, send a request to wspencer@creationanswers.net.

More information on Wayne Spencer's education and publications can be found on the creationanswers.net web site. You'll also find many other resources. <http://creationanswers.net>

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A Personal Note from Wayne Spencer

Greetings,

First I'd like to welcome a few new readers who've recently asked for my newsletter. I normally focus on issues related to science, creation, and Genesis. This time I decided to deal with some broader issues of Apologetics. In recent months I have been learning about ideas known as Postmodernism and the troubling influence it is having among Christians. My main article here is a response to that and an attempt to explain my own thinking on the reasons for my faith.

I would like to encourage you to share this issue with friends or family. I would appreciate comments. I see my faith as a Christian as explaining both my daily experience and the realm of the factual and logical. Today Christians need to get back to a proper view of Absolute Truth. Not so we can beat people over the head with it, but so that we know what we have.

The second article on the Wind of the Exodus is about a proposal from some new scientific research that attempts to explain how the crossing of the sea happened with the Israelites in the Exodus. I certainly believe that science confirms the Bible in many ways. But we must be careful that science not be misapplied or based on incorrect interpretations of the Bible. The issue of where the Israelites crossed the sea is an ongoing mystery. But in this article I raise some thought provoking possibilities.

Wayne Spencer, M.S., Physics

Why Believe Christianity?

Many people think that when someone gets involved with a church, or some religious group, they are just choosing something that suits their own values and preferences. So, you can pick a religion as you want because one is as good as another. Freedom of choice is a good thing and Americans value it very highly. But if the Bible is true, choosing a belief system is not a matter of choosing among an array of equal options. According to Christianity you can be right or wrong about beliefs the same way you can be right or wrong about giving someone street directions for how to get to the hospital. Some criticize Christians for being "too exclusive." Perhaps Christians have sometimes deserved this criticism because they may not always had a right attitude or treated others as they should. As Jesus taught and dealt with different people he clearly presented the truth as exclusive. In John 14:6 Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Yet Jesus cared very much about people. Jesus was not criticized much for being too exclusive, he was criticized by Jewish religious leaders at the time (a strict legalistic crowd) for touching prostitutes and for having dinner with people of bad reputation.

In this article I would like to address some basics about what Christian faith is and address the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. There is a lot of skepticism about religion today, yet many people are still religious. Some atheists argue we should not believe in God because of all the problems that have been caused by religion. But I would say there is evidence of something real and true in Christian faith that is not available from any other belief system. It seems today's popular understanding is generally that religion is not universally true (true for all people across time) and it is not applicable to all of

life. There are important exceptions to this for some religious groups, such as Muslims, and certain cults.

Postmodernism

Today there is a prevalence of a mindset known as Postmodernism (see this Charles Colson article for more explanation).

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2002/april22/31.96.html>

Many people have a postmodernist attitude without knowing what to call it. Postmodernism is skeptical of any authority that makes claims about there being certain truth that is true for all. Science sometimes makes such claims. Religious leaders of many religions in the world have made such claims. History has seen many who have made claims of truth who have wrongly tried to use their knowledge or their beliefs to manipulate or control others. But is this all there is to the question of truth?

Postmodernists also see people as inherently determined by the social and cultural background they come from. The skepticism of Postmodernism makes virtually everything relative and nothing certain. Even language itself becomes relative according to Postmodernism, so it becomes absurd in the Postmodern mindset for one to believe that all people could read something like the Bible and get the same message from it. This line of thinking regarding language also implies there is no reason it really matters what the original intent of Bible writers was, since our cultural climate and mindset is different today. The Biblical view of things is very different from the entire Postmodernist way of thinking. The Bible says God has revealed to human beings using written language and God has told human beings who have a relationship with him to communicate the message in this revelation to people all over the world. It would not make sense for God to command this in the Great Commission if it were impossible to communicate his message to all mankind. A Postmodernist might ask, "but how can God rely on human beings to do this and expect

the message to get communicated properly?" This is a bit of a mystery, and sometimes the message does not get communicated properly. But the limitations of human beings do not mean the message is not there or that it cannot be communicated.

Postmodernists gravitate toward emphasizing their personal experience and the subjective because they do not trust the objective or the analytical. One problem with this, from a Biblical perspective, is that since we all have a fallen sinful nature, we have trouble interpreting our experience. If someone judges what is right and true and best for them by their experience, they may change their values with their life circumstances. They may say "It just felt right" for example about an important moral question without considering what is right according to the Bible. People can sometimes change their minds about moral and spiritual issues for trivial reasons. Someone judging truth from experience may also be easily manipulated or deceived by others who know how to manipulate their experience and their emotions. Modern media is sometimes used this way, but religious, academic, and political leaders can sometimes be skilled at manipulation also. We need a revealed Truth to test our thinking against.

The Bible gives us a source of universal Truth that is true for all people. It tells us the truth about ourselves and our problems, as well as telling us the truth about the world outside ourselves. It came to us by the supernatural inspiration of God revealing unlearned truth to imperfect human beings. The Apostle Paul wrote this about the "Gospel" that he preached in Galatians 1:12 in the New Testament, "I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ." The fact that the Truth of Scripture came to imperfect people and is communicated by imperfect people is

paradoxical but it does not make the Bible any less trustworthy or authoritative.

One of the reasons many people think of all religions as alike I think is that they understand religions as invented or made-up by human beings. People make up world view ideas to attempt to explain their experience, perhaps sometimes to justify their experience, and to guide them in life. How successful have people been (considering all of human history) in creating world views that explain human experience?

I would say that one way in which Christianity is different from other beliefs is that when people believe it and really live it, it works for the person over the long term. Not only does it help them live life, but it helps them cope with adversity, and it particularly helps people face death. But I would say the way Christian faith helps people live life is not always very evident over the short term. It is seeing the trends of a Christian believer living out their faith over the course of their whole life that demonstrates God being at work in their life. Every Christian falls short sometimes, but isolated failures do not break a Christian's relationship with God. The reality of God in someone's life is demonstrated more by the long term direction of their life than by any particular dramatic or spiritual experience along the way. I'm not saying there cannot be dramatic changes when someone becomes a Christian, or at other times in their life. In fact, there was very significant change in my life when I became a Christian. But the dramatic initial changes can be difficult to maintain over the long term. The initial early memories and experiences from becoming a Christian are not enough to enable us to stay true to our faith over the long term. Thus, we need revealed truth that was not made up by man to guide us, which is what the Bible provides.

Human Nature

We do not change our basic nature and makeup as human beings, though we can

learn many ways of responding to things around us. I do not refer here to the things that make us unique individuals, but to the things that just make us human. People are able to rationalize almost anything, but there is a reality that exists apart from what we believe or experience. So if someone says we make up concepts of God and right and wrong, they're saying so does not change what human beings are, or what God is like. So when people do something that is morally wrong, there is some consequence to that which the person has to live with. This is not changed by any arguments the person has that they did not do wrong. Thus living in a way that is contrary to God's standards is not healthy. Sin not only offends God, it hurts us because it is contrary to the way we are designed to live. The existence of Jesus Christ, as the Bible presents Him, does not depend on whether people experience his presence or not. Christianity is not true because people feel like it's true. When human beings make up beliefs, they don't fit reality very well or explain human experience well. People who have experimented with many religions often say it is a frustrating experience. All human beings make moral judgements and I think have a sense of searching for something beyond themselves. It stands to reason that if there is a truth that is true for all, and binding on all people, it would address felt needs in real life experience. Christianity does address felt needs, and it explains the human conscience, but it is based on objective truth.

What are we as human beings? Why do people imagine God at all? Why do people imagine time, space, and reality? Was there some random mutation in a hominid's brain (an ape-man intermediate) that made it imagine God for the first time two million years ago? Of course, some would argue that because we evolved from lower life forms our nature is determined by the processes of evolution, not that we are designed by God to live as he designed.

According to an evolutionary view of man, we acquired many of our characteristics from lower animals that are in our remote ancestry. But Biblically, we have characteristics like animals because we are creatures made to live on the same planet. Also, Biblically, we are given rule over animals and so the similarities we share with animals should help us care for, manage, and enjoy them. An evolutionary view of man fails to explain how we are different from all other animals. Our uniqueness as human beings is something not explained adequately by any belief system except the Biblical view. All non-Christian beliefs tend to devalue human beings in some way. But the Bible teaches we are created in God's image (Genesis 1:26-28).

It is often looked at suspiciously if you claim to be certain of what to believe about God or morality. The Bible suggests Christians can have confidence of their salvation and eternal destiny (see I John 5:11-13). It is true that sometimes organized religion has confused people instead of helping them find answers. But the errors of the Church and of Christians do not mean there is no true way to God worth finding. By the same token local churches with problems do not mean it is impossible to have a healthy church. Some people will say that they doubt the Bible and Christianity because of how Christians they've known have fallen short or mistreated them or failed in some way. But if a person is a poor example of a Christian, why should they be used to judge Christianity? If you want to judge Christianity by someone's life, doesn't it stand to reason that you would find a good example? Even nonchristians are usually very well able to judge the difference between a good example of a Christian and a poor example. Therefore Christians who do not live out their faith well do not disprove Christianity in any way. They just make things difficult for others.

The Uniqueness of Christianity

Christianity answers both the intellectual questions about the meaning of our existence and it also explains our day-to-day experience about being human. Some would say it doesn't matter what religion you follow, that any of them would have similar benefits to a person. It is true that there are some benefits in living by the beliefs of various religions, but they do not explain all of life like Biblical Christianity. Non-Christian religions also I think do not give the person the assurance about facing death that a Christian has. Non-Christian religions are not equivalent to experiencing life as a Christian. They do not have the same power to make lasting changes in people's lives. Many have tried living by various religions, only to finally become Christians after being totally frustrated with the other beliefs.

Is living a moral life evidence that a person is right with God? I would say not always. People may live moral lives for a variety of reasons. Some atheists live a moral life in many respects for purely pragmatic reasons, reasoning that it avoids practical difficulties. Mormons or Muslims often live very moral lives, as do some others of other religions. So what makes the difference between them and a Christian? I would say the difference is not whether they are moral in their behavior (though all people should live a moral life). I would say it is the motivation for living a moral life that makes a Christian different than all the others. It makes a big difference whether you live a right life out of gratitude to God and love for Him, compared to doing it out of fear or pressure from others. The first can be sustained because it is in the context of a real relationship, the second often cannot be sustained or is at least unsatisfying.

Living and experiencing the Christian life is a personal and subjective thing in many ways. But as Josh McDowell has pointed out, it is important to realize that

across the world, many people from different nations and walks of life have had a similar subjective experience of their life being changed in positive ways, based on the same objective reality. That objective reality is faith in Jesus Christ and his resurrection. I would say that reality includes the acceptance of the Bible as the revealed word of God. I am not referring here to what someone must believe in order to be saved. That is fortunately very simple. As John 3:36 says, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him." I'm addressing what the logical basis is for what Christians believe. Jesus Christ was a real man who lived in history. Anyone who claims there is no historical evidence for Jesus Christ or for the events of the New Testament is just ignorant. There are a good sources on this. (See for example, [this article](#) from Apologetics Press.)

Faith and History

The Bible tells a story that is rooted in history. The Bible includes a number of different types of literature and thus speaks in different ways for different needs but even the poetry of the Psalms often have a historical context. When people make up religions they don't have to make them rooted in history. In fact, made-up religions tend to either invent a completely false history or treat things as if the connection to history does not really matter. Of the religious beliefs in the world, only Christianity cares about the connection to history and about being true to reality. Some religions only care about history in the sense of depending on the founder of the religion being a real historical person who did what is believed. In fact, often the actual history of the religion's founder is rather different than what the religion's adherents believe.

This is not the case regarding Christ, according to historical evidence. There is also historical evidence that substantiates the Old Testament. The whole of the Bible's

teaching about mankind's need for a savior depends on there being the story of the Fall from Genesis 3, when human beings first sinned against their Maker. Because much of the Bible's narratives are about real people, places, and events, if the history of the Bible is wrong, it calls into question many things in the Bible that follow. Thus, as it has been said, the New Testament rests on the Old Testament, and the Old Testament rests on the book of Genesis. Note that though Islam does accept Genesis and acknowledges Moses (for example) as a prophet, they give priority to the writings of Muhammad and they often do not consider the Old Testament to be inerrant.

Jesus

Christianity also has a unique savior in Jesus Christ. First, no one has found any substantial evidence that Jesus did not live by what he taught. This cannot be said of the founders of a number of other religions. The movie *The DaVinci Code* based on the book by Dan Brown, brought to popular culture's attention some ideas questioning the basic integrity and life of Jesus Christ presented in the New Testament. But the entire *DaVinci Code* story badly distorts the real facts. The Gospel of Thomas which was considered part of the basis for the *DaVinci Code* ideas was a document written after all the Apostles were dead, so it did not come from the Apostle named Thomas. It includes some ideas similar to Gnosticism and some ideas very different from Jesus' teaching. After the Apostles were dead there were false Christs and false gospels that had some influence. There was confusion about doctrines regarding Christ that was largely settled in various early Church councils. But the four gospels in the New Testament, as well as the rest of the canon of Scripture, have always been well agreed upon for the most part. It seems to me that from what I have learned of history, it has been pretty easy to identify false gospels and false Messiahs. The

challenging question is are we willing to acknowledge the real Messiah when we find him?

Jesus made unique claims about himself and had a remarkable ministry ending in his being unjustly crucified under Roman law. He claimed to fulfill Old Testament Scripture and a number of details about his birth, life, and death were prophesied by Old Testament prophets hundreds of years prior to the events. He forgave sins, miraculously healed, raised the dead on a few occasions, walked on water, and did a variety of other miracles. If the claims of the miracles were not reliable or trustworthy, you would think there would be indications in the rest of the accounts that the they were not reliable in other respects as well. But the four gospels of the New Testament are well attested in all the historical details that can be checked. Of course we cannot really scientifically prove miracles, or even prove historical events since they are one-time events and are thus unrepeatable. But neither can science disprove them. The issue of believing in miracles is understandably difficult for some people. It was something I struggled with for some time after I became a Christian, as a physics major in college. But if you can accept that the God of the Bible is all powerful as the Creator, the miracles of Jesus' life are not really an issue. The New Testament is a reliable source about Jesus' life and ministry.

Jesus was also a real human being. He ate, cried, laughed, thirsted, slept, and lived like other people in first century Israel. For most of his life prior to about age 30 he apparently did very little that was particularly unusual, having grown up as the eldest son (but not biological son) of a carpenter. But when he started his ministry, it changed all of history. Jesus confronted the hypocrisy of the Jewish religious leaders. He taught in a way that amazed people and he trained 12 men to follow after him. The most well educated Jewish scholars of the time gave

up trying to trap him in what he said (see Matthew 22:46). But he was finally crucified like a common criminal. Jesus told his disciples over and over that he was going to be rejected in Jerusalem and crucified. But the disciples did not understand until it happened apparently. Jesus thought of it as God's purpose for him to die for others sins. He did not do it for some sort of sick glory for himself. He did not even try to defend himself at his own trial. He allowed himself to be taken and abused by the authorities when he would have had the power to stop it, since as God's son he could have called down angels to come help him (Matthew 26:53). He told his disciples before it happened that he would rise from the dead, and then he did it, just as he said! He went through slow torture and death for us, if we can just accept it.

The resurrection accounts in the New Testament cannot be explained away in a way that really is plausible. The disciples could not have just taken and hidden the body and made up the resurrection story. It would have taken a small army to get past the Roman guards, the twelve disciples could not have done it. The resurrection was not expected by the disciples when it happened. Some of the disciples had trouble believing the resurrection even after they were told. Also, if the resurrection was made up by the disciples, why would they die for something they would have known was a lie? The tomb was well guarded by Roman soldiers who would normally have been executed if they went to sleep on the job and let something get by them. The resurrection could not have been merely hallucinations either. Jesus appeared in a variety of places and settings, to both individuals and groups, including to people who did not expect it, and to a group of over 500 people. (See I Corinthians 15:3-8). Everything about his life, death, and resurrection points to Jesus being both fully God and fully human, and the only savior of mankind.

A number of people have set out to disprove the Bible and ended up believing it when they seriously looked into it. One famous example of this is Josh McDowell. In practice, people become Christians for personal reasons often having to do with realizing their need for God in some sense. It is not normally a very logical decision to become a Christian, though it could be. It is not that there is no logical reason to become a Christian, there is every logical reason to. But, it takes a major change in someone's heart and mind for them to be ready and willing to make the step of faith. People do not attack Christian beliefs out of logic either, though they may think that they do. It is more often that people just don't want to surrender to God or live his way. They would rather come up with some other world view to explain life to their satisfaction so they can justify their unbelief in the God of the Bible.

I do not mean to condemn people who do not believe like I do, because I am not their Judge. But I would like to persuade people to be open to consider Christianity and to have confidence in the reliability and authority of the Bible. In my next article I will address more specifically why we should believe the Bible.

The Wind of the Exodus

Recently there have been some news reports regarding research on a wind effect applied to explaining the crossing of the Red Sea in the Exodus account. This is an interesting attempt to relate science to the Exodus, but how should Christians respond to this? The report comes from research at an organization called UCAR, the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research. Software Engineer Carl Drews, a Christian, was interviewed by ABC News and an article about it appeared on the Foxnews website.

Drews suggests how a wind effect known as Wind Set-Down Relaxation at the Nile delta region could explain the Biblical account from Exodus 14. In Exodus it

indicates an East wind blew all night prior to the Israelites crossing the sea. The thought is that there is a place in the Nile delta region where you have shallow water only about 5-6 feet deep on a sloping surface, almost along the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. The new research from UCAR shows that an East wind could push back a few feet of water and create a land bridge that would allow people to cross. The land bridge in the computer simulations would be about 3-4 km long and 5 km wide. It remains open for 4 hours in the simulations. It is also suggested that the Egyptian chariot wheels would get stuck in the mud, making it impossible for the Egyptians to follow the Israelites. I would recommend watching the ABC News video on this ([click here](#)), interviewing Drews and showing an animation of the idea.

Though this computer study of the wind set-down effect may be good science, I doubt this scenario mainly because of its location. There are a number of controversies about the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. Many scholars do not even believe the Israelites were ever in Egypt, let alone that they left Egypt! I completely accept the historicity and accuracy of the Biblical account. But even given that the Bible is accurate, there has been much controversy about the path taken by the Israelites in the Exodus. This new research requires shallow water, not deep water and it would only work in a special location with fortunate topography. I think it is doubtful the Israelites ever crossed water essentially at the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, where this would be. However there may be possible sites in the Northeast corner of the Nile delta region where certain lakes once existed that are no longer present. We do not actually know the exact topography of the area from the time of Moses, so there is much we cannot be certain of.

It seems to me the proposal from Drews does not fit the Biblical account well.

The computer study above showed the land bridge only being exposed for about 4 hours. This may be problematic because of the large number of people in the Exodus. Would up to one million or more Israelite refugees make it across 3-4 km of ankle deep mud in 4 hours? The Israelites also presumably had carts carrying gold and supplies from Egypt. If the mud stopped the Egyptians, wouldn't it also stop the Israelites? I also think it is doubtful that a few feet of water would wipe out the Egyptian army. I suspect horses and soldiers may have survived the water coming back over the supposed Nile land bridge suggested by Drews. The Wind Set-Down effect does not suggest anything like the "wall of water" on the right and left of the Israelites which the Exodus account describes twice (see Exodus 14:22,29). The location proposed allows water to flow downhill to low areas on either side of the exposed ground. In fact, it states more than once in Exodus that they crossed on dry ground, not muddy ground. It would have been too difficult for the Israelites on muddy ground. So this new study seems to only accept the Exodus account loosely, not in every detail. I would say you can't explain the Biblical account by ignoring the details in it.

There are other theories on the path taken by the Israelites and where the sea crossing took place. I do not see this as something anyone can be certain of. Before you deal with how the crossing took place you must first carefully work through the Exodus account to determine where the crossing took place. This has been a very challenging issue for archeologists for a long time. A good organization that has some solid research regarding Egypt and the Exodus is Associates for Biblical Research. (See their website at <http://www.biblearchaeology.org>). They put the date of the Exodus at 1400 B.C. and the sea crossing around the Northeast edge of the Nile delta region, but not along the Mediterranean coast. The sea crossed,

according to their website, may have been an ancient lake which no longer exists. This is based on detailed archeological study to determine the sites mentioned as having been visited by the Israelites during their journey ([click here](#) for details).

Another theory for where the sea crossing was is presented in an interesting Christian video called "*The Exodus Revealed*" by Questar. This program looks at evidence for where the Israelites would have been in their path away from Egypt but comes to a different conclusion than the article above. There is a beach (geologically known as a "fan" structure) in the middle of the Gulf of Aqaba near a mountainous area. It is known as Nuweiba beach. The mountains of this region together with the beach could explain why the Israelites would be effectively trapped and vulnerable. The fan structure at this site essentially makes what would be an underwater land bridge, if the water level were lower or the water was somehow moved out of the way. The Gulf of Aqaba is very deep on either side of this underwater "land bridge." But this land bridge is still in water reportedly about 800 feet at the deepest point. Thus when the water, which was apparently miraculously in a wall on both sides of the land bridge, fell back down it would have great force that could wipe out an army.

A significant thing about this site is that there is coral that has grown on chariot wheels and these wheel structures are found on both the Western and the Eastern sides of this fan structure in the Gulf of Aqaba. The wheels look like wheels known to be in ancient Egyptian chariots. This theory apparently first began to be promoted by a man named Ron Wyatt. Ron Wyatt published a number of books and videos and made many extravagant claims regarding Noah's Ark and various archeological issues related to the Bible. I would say Ron Wyatt's work is completely

unreliable, though he is not the only one who has investigated the Nuweiba area.

Some have charged that Wyatt planted the chariot wheels then went back later to photograph them and reveal the story. I am not sure of the feasibility of planting the chariot wheels in Aqaba and of the coral growing on them in a reasonable time frame. I am also not sure if these coral structures could last from the time of Moses. It has also been suggested that since there was trade across the Gulf of Aqaba during the reign of Solomon, the wheels could have come from ships transporting goods during that period, or maybe ships that sank. More investigation of the Nuweiba land bridge may be needed, though Saudi Arabia would likely not allow such investigations on their territory.

I have no objection to the UCAR research on the plausibility of wind aiding the crossing of the sea. I do not question the science of the report by Drews. If it would have happened as Drew suggests, that would still be a miracle because it would have been timed to occur just when the Israelites needed it. I just doubt that this new report accounts for all the other facts and all the details of the Exodus account properly. So I would say the crossing of the sea by the Israelites happened just as the Bible says but I do not think science can explain this miracle. Nor does it really need to.