CHRISTIAN FUNDAMENTALS PART II:

WHY WE BELIEVE

CHRISTIAN FUNDAMENTALS:

Remaining Schedule

5/11/21: Are science and faith at war?

5/18/21: Why does God allow suffering?

5/25/21: What about other religions? / Is Christian experience valid?

6/1/21: How to defend our faith with non-believers.

1. Does Archeology Verify Scripture?
2. The Role of Archeology:
3. Background of Archeology
4. In the early years of the 19th century, a new door of information opened to uncover the earliest roots of humanity in the Near East thanks to travel and increased exploration.
5. Archeologists dig below in the ground to uncover mankind’s past, found in ancient palaces, buried temples, and animal stables.
6. The historical and geographical reliability of the Bible has been repeatedly affirmed by the discoveries and research of archeologists. Biblical scholars have found rich background for the biblical history of Israel and its neighbors.
7. W.F. Albright of John Hopkins University states, “*There can be no doubt that archaeology has confirmed the substantial historicity of Old Testament tradition.”*
8. Biblical History Confirmed
9. Some specific biblical events previously doubted and ridiculed have been verified.
10. The overall background of the culture and practices in general of the biblical times were filled in.
11. Some points of apparent conflict between the biblical record and the information previously available have been surprisingly cleared up as more information has been obtained. Therefore, when we encounter apparent conflicts still exist, rather than conclude the Bible is wrong, a more reasonable position would be to admit the problem exists and to hold it open pending further discoveries.
12. We do not prove the Bible by archeology, nor do we believe the Bible on the basis or archeological proof.
13. “*Although Archeology can sometimes provide independent evidence for the existence of certain places, persons or events mentioned in the Bible, it can say nothing at all about whether God had anything to do with any of it. That still comes down to faith.”- H. Darnel Lance*
14. Sources of Archeologists
15. More than 25,000 sites showing some connection with the Old Testament period have been in Bible lands.
16. Most of the major cities of the Bible can be identified either by geographical considerations or by tradition or even by current use of an ancient name.
17. Ancient Middle Eastern inscriptions give insightful comparison with the Bible.
18. Stones, Pottery, walls, and other places show writings in neighboring languages. Pictures and other artifacts open details of the cultures.
19. Excavations have opened whole civilizations and their actual existence.

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1. Biblical Confirmations
2. Old Testament Events Verified
3. Worldwide flood
4. The world of Canaanites
5. Abraham and the world in which he lived.
6. King David Confirmed by Stone Inscription in 1993
7. King Solomon’s wealth, and building projects have been confirmed.
8. Israel’s Conflict with Moab from *2 Kings 3*
9. Mysterious ending of the Jerusalem Siege by Sennacherib in 2 Kings 18
10. Babylonian Exile and Restoration
11. Daniel and Belshazzar
12. Page 120-121 of the book give us a principal that archeological silence is not evidence against the Bible, and this principal has played out many times over the centuries where the Bible is criticized only to later be verified.
13. New Testament Verified
14. Unlike the Old Testament, a lot of New Testament archeological searching is focused on written documents rather than digging.
15. Some written documents discovered alongside the New Testament have helped show the connection between the everyday life and language of the culture that the New Testament was written in, which was Greek.
16. Stone Inscriptions have helped verify some of the political leaders that the New Testament mentions that are in power.
17. Coins have provided some background information on parts of New Testament history.
18. Sacred sites have been identified where some of the great New Testament events transpired.
19. Jerusalem, though destroyed and rebuilt as a pagan city temporarily, still has yielded some of the main sites that the New Testament reports on such as the temple area and the pool of Siloam.

“Thus far, no historical statement in the Bible has proven false on the basis of evidence retrieved from archaeological research.”- Keith Schoville

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1. Are Miracles Possible?
2. Supernatural
3. Is God bound by natural law?
4. Scoffers will often ridicule us for believing in the miracles of the Bible, but the real question we need to ask is, what are miracles and are they possible?
5. If God is all-powerful, and we acknowledge His existence and character, if Genesis 1:1 is true, we should have no problem accepting everything else after it as true.
6. Theism Vs. Deism
7. Naturalists often define a ‘miracle’ as a violation of natural law, yet God is not bound by the very laws He instituted. God is over, above, and outside of natural law.
8. Natural law is simply what we typically observe happening daily.
9. What is a Miracle?
10. We use the term ‘miracle’ to mean anything that is unusual or unexpected that is a fortunate outcome.
11. Miracles, as recorded in the Bible are acts of God. The biblical use is an act of God breaking into, interrupting, or changing the ordinary course of things.
12. Some miracles recorded in the Bible may have a natural explanation, such as attempts at explaining away the events of Exodus. However, even if God uses natural means to bring about an outcome, it is still miraculous because of the timing, all of which still points towards God’s intervention.
13. There are many miracles recorded in Scripture which have no natural explanation, such as the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
14. Some have claimed that the miracles recorded in the Bible were purely psychosomatic responses, but this simply does not fit with the nature of the miracle healings from diseases and blindness, for example, recorded in Scripture.
15. Another charge made against the miracles of the Bible is that the people of biblical times were too gullible, ignorant, and superstitious. This does not fit to explain away however the very grounded situations that some of Jesus’ miracles overlapped with, such as the case of the blind man in John 9. Even back then, people knew that blind man from birth do not get their sight back, at least not naturally.
16. Professor J.N. Hawthorne once said, “Miracles are unusual events caused by God. The laws of nature are generalizations about ordinary events caused by Him.”
17. Examples of Biblical Miracles
18. Biblical miracles are never capricious or fantastic in contrast to miracle stories found in Pagan literature, and those of other religions.
19. Biblical miracles always had a clear order and purpose to them. They typically cluster around three periods in Scripture:
20. The Exodus
21. The Prophets
22. The Time of Christ and the Church
23. In the biblical recordings of miracles, they always ultimately served to confirm faith. They authenticated the message and the messenger. This also continues to seem to be the case in modern day.
24. Miracles were never performed for personal prestige or to gain money or power.
25. Jesus said the miracles He did helped speak for Him (John 10:25) and pointed to them as evidence that He is who He claimed to be.
26. Modern Day Miracles
27. Critics often ask if God did miracles in biblical times, why not now?
28. The author reminds us about the story of the Rich man and Lazarus, from *Luke 16:31* and the principal that if people’s hearts are closed to the message, they will not be swayed by a miraculous display.
29. Our Postmodern thinking rules out the possibility of miracles, perhaps this plays a factor in why modern-day biblical miracles are seldom reported in the West.
30. Biblical miracles were toward the end of teaching spiritual truth and bringing glory to the Lord.
31. There is no biblical evidence that miracles, signs, wonders, or spiritual gifts have ceased (*Ex: Acts 2, 1 Corinthians 12-14, John 14:12).*
32. Reliable Records for Biblical Miracles
33. Biblical miracles have reliable and adequate testimony.
34. Jesus’ miracles were performed in public, not in private. Notice that Jesus’ enemies never denied the reality of the miracles he has done.
35. Jesus’ miracles were done before non-believers, unlike supposed miracles of cults and other religious groups where skeptics are seemingly never present for the miracle.
36. Jesus’ displayed a variety of miraculous power from power over nature to power over demons.
37. The testimony of the cured is undeniable.
38. Compared to non-Christian religions, the New Testament accounts of Jesus of Nazareth are extraordinarily unique.
39. The fundamental question over whether miracles are possible is not a scientific question, but rather a philosophical one.

“All the essentials of Hinduism would I think remain unimpaired if you subtract the miraculous, and the same is almost true of Islam, but you cannot do that with Christianity. It is precisely the story of a miracle.” -C.S. Lewis

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