

ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS OUTSIDERS MOST OFTEN ASK US

Part I: Answering The Five Questions Unbelievers Most Often Ask Us

E. Answering The Question About Proving Christianity Scientifically

I. Introduction

- A. Though many people have many questions about our Christian faith, we have noticed over the years ten questions that people outside of our Church *most often* ask us, questions 1 Peter 3:15 calls us to **answer**.
- B. Five of the questions come from unbelievers and five from believers, so we answer them in this lesson series, and I am indebted in part to Josh McDowell, A Ready Defense, 1991, p. 405-424 for the format of the lessons.

II. Answering The Question About Proving Christianity Scientifically.

- A. This question can be stated as follows: "How can Christianity be true if you can't prove it scientifically?"
- B. To answer, we admit we can not prove our faith scientifically, for that would involve "showing that something is a fact by repeating the event in the presence of the person questioning the fact" (Ibid., McDowell, p. 422), what is **impossible** with any "person or event in history" like the origin of Christianity. Also, the "scientific method isn't appropriate for answering questions like, 'Did George Washington live?'" or "'Was Martin Luther King a civil rights leader?'" (Ibid., p. 423), but no one asking about proving Christianity scientifically would dare question if George Washington existed or if Martin Luther King was a civil rights leader!
- C. However, those who ask about proving Christianity scientifically often do so to suggest that Christianity's stand for pure creation is unscientific and so false versus evolution that is held by them to be a scientifically proved fact! Yet, evolution is not a scientifically proved fact, and we cite evolutionary authorities to that end:
 - 1. "Colin Patterson, senior paleontologist at the British Museum of Natural History, confessed after more than 20 years' involvement, '(T)here was not one thing I knew about it [evolution]. It's quite a shock to learn that one can be misled for so long.'" Patterson "started asking other scientists to tell him one thing they knew about evolution . . . Says Patterson: 'I tried that question on the geology staff at the Field Museum of Natural History and the only answer I got was silence. I tried it on the members of the Evolutionary Morphology Seminar in the University of Chicago, a very prestigious body of evolutionists, and all I got there was silence for a long time and eventually one person said, 'I do know one thing -- it ought not to be taught in high school.'" (Don Hunt, "Evolution or God's Word?" in The Berean Call, Feb. 1977, in citing Thomas E. Woodward, "Doubts About Darwin," Moody, Sept. 1988, p. 20)
 - 2. L. Harrison Matthews' introduction in the 1971 ed. of Charles Darwin's The Origin of Species stated: "Belief in the theory of evolution is thus exactly parallel to belief in special creation -- both are concepts which believers know to be true but neither, up to the present, has been capable of proof," L. H. Matthews, "Introduction," The Origin of Species, 1971, p. x-xi, cited in L. Sunderland, Darwin's Enigma, 1984 p. 30f.
- D. Since the Christian faith must rely on the evidences of history for validation rather than the scientific method, it passes this test in great fashion: "Harvard law professor Simon Greenleaf, a man who lectured for years on how to break down testimony and determine whether or not a witness is lying," writing about the testimony of Jesus' disciples, "concluded: 'It was therefore impossible that they could have persisted in affirming the truths they have narrated, had not Jesus actually risen from the dead, and had they not known this fact as certainly as they knew any other fact. The annals of military warfare afford scarcely an example of the like heroic constancy, patience, and unflinching courage. They had every possible motive to review carefully the grounds of their faith, and the evidences of the great facts and truths they asserted.'" (Simon Greenleaf, An Examination of the Testimony of the Four Evangelists by the Rules of Evidence Administered in the Courts of Justice, 1965 (reprint of 1874 ed.), p. 29 as cited in McDowell, p. 239-240)
- E. This same observation is certified in Scripture: Jesus noted how Peter would glorify God by his martyrdom by crucifixion for his Christian faith, cf. John 21:18-19. In Peter's case this is a remarkable reality, for Jesus predicted he would die by crucifixion in John 21:18 after Peter had initially denied Christ three times for fear of being physically persecuted for following Him in John 18:17-18, 25-27.

Lesson: *Christianity cannot be proved scientifically as that would require the repeating of its origin in the presence of the questioner, what is impossible in regard to any historical event or person. However, neither can evolution be proved scientifically, what those who question us about proving Christianity scientifically errantly presume is a scientific fact. As to its historical evidence, Christianity stands on firmer ground than any other historical entity.*

Application: *May we trust in Christ to be saved (John 3:16) and answer every man about our faith, 1 Peter 3:15.*