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### Presenting Evidence That Demands a Verdict

Of the four approaches profiled in this book, the classical and evidentialist approaches are the closest to each other. Indeed, many apologists, such as William Lane Craig, J. P. Moreland, and Richard Swinburne, cannot for various reasons be neatly placed into one approach rather than the other. One reason this is so is that the second ‘step’ or stage of the classical apologetic uses many if not all of the very same arguments that are part of the evidentialist arsenal. That is, after showing that God exists, classical apologists turn to evidences showing that God has revealed himself in the Bible and incarnated himself in Jesus—and these evidences will be the same evidences that are crucial to most evidentialist apologetics. Another reason for the similarity between these two approaches is that evidentialism is by nature eclectic, and therefore evidentialists freely use classical apologetic arguments, including those used by the classical apologist to establish theism.

Despite the similarities between the two approaches, there are some differences that justify recognizing them as two distinct ‘families’ or types of apologetics. As we have already noted, the main difference is that classical apologetics builds the case for Christianity in two stages: first the evidence for God (theism), and second the evidence for Christianity. The rationale for this approach is that the miracles of Christianity can be viewed as credible only within a theistic worldview. Evidentialists, on the other hand, think the case for Christianity can

be most effectively presented using evidences for creation, for the historicity of Jesus and especially his resurrection, and other evidences in one ‘cumulative case’ for Christian theism.

## Scripture as Source

According to John Warwick Montgomery, “The final and best evidence of God’s existence lies in his Word—in the triple sense of Christ, the gospel he proclaimed, and the Scripture that infallibly conveys it.”<sup>1</sup> This statement nicely captures the spirit of the evangelical evidentialist apologetic. Rather than developing an apologetic for theism as preparation for considering the specific claims of Christ to reveal God to us and to reconcile us to God, the evidentialist views Christ and the Bible, in which we learn about Christ, as the best source for a Christian apologetic.

The first step for evidentialists such as Montgomery, then, is to defend the biblical writings, not as infallible Scripture, but as historically credible and reliable documents. Securing belief in God is not considered a prerequisite to taking this first step; only clearing away any methodological or philosophical assumptions that prejudge the question of the truth of the biblical narratives is necessary. So, for example, in his book *History and Christianity*, Montgomery details “four common errors” in the anti-Christian polemic of philosopher Avrum Stroll before beginning his apologetic proper: (1) Stroll relies almost exclusively on modern “authorities” of a radically rationalistic sort (17-18).<sup>2</sup> (2) Stroll ignores the evidence of the earliest primary documents, specifically the letters of Paul (18-19). (3) Stroll begs the question by assuming that the miraculous events reported in the Gospels could not have happened simply because they were miraculous (19-21). Note that Montgomery does not argue here that miracles

are possible; he simply objects to the assumption that they are *impossible*. (4) Stroll engages in groundless historical speculation when he suggests that the Christian view of Jesus was the product of “messianic fever” in first-century Judaism (21-22).

Having cleared away these errors, Montgomery begins his positive case with this disclaimer: “We won’t naively assume the ‘inspiration’ or ‘infallibility’ of the New Testament records and then by circular reasoning attempt to prove what we have previously assumed. We will regard the documents, even though today they are usually printed on fine India paper with verse numbers, only as documents, and we will treat them as we would any other historical materials” (25-26).

To assure his readers he is employing an unbiased method of treating the historical reliability of the New Testament, Montgomery chooses tests of reliability drawn from a textbook on English literary history by a military historian.<sup>3</sup> These are the bibliographical, internal, and external tests (26). Montgomery and other evidentialists use this threefold test regularly to defend the historical reliability of the New Testament.<sup>4</sup>

The **bibliographical test** seeks to determine whether the existing or extant copies of a document are reliable reproductions of the wording of the original document. Montgomery emphasizes that we have many more manuscript copies for the New Testament writings than for other ancient writings, and that the time gap between the earliest complete copies and the originals is smaller for the New Testament than for other ancient writings (26-29). “To be skeptical of the resultant text of the New Testament books is to allow all of classical antiquity to slip into obscurity, for no documents of the ancient period are as well attested bibliographically as the New Testament” (29).

The bibliographical test does not establish the factual accuracy of the historical narratives in the documents, only that the documents as we know them are substantially the same as they were when originally written. Accurate copies of fables would still be fables. But the claim is so often made that the New Testament writings are unreliable because of mistakes in the copying process that apologists find it necessary and helpful to point out the evidence for the textual reliability of the Bible.

The second and third tests address the historical reliability of the contents of the biblical documents. The **internal test** considers the claims of the writings as to their historicity and internal consistency. Here Montgomery and other evidentialists insist “that the benefit of the doubt is to be given to the document itself, not arrogated by the critic to himself” (29). Paul’s writings claim to be written by Paul, and the Gospels, especially Luke and John, claim to be recording history based on eyewitness testimony (29-30). These claims should be accepted at face value as truthful unless and until evidence to the contrary is produced.

The **external test** asks whether the testimony of the biblical writings is corroborated or undermined by extrabiblical sources. Here Montgomery focuses on the Gospels. Luke’s accuracy is confirmed by the archaeological and geographical investigations of William Ramsay toward the end of the nineteenth century (31-32). Second-century Christians who knew the apostles or their immediate disciples testified that the Gospels were based on eyewitness testimony. Thus Mark’s Gospel was based on Peter’s recollections; Matthew, himself an apostle, wrote his Gospel while the other apostles were still alive; Luke was written by Paul’s traveling companion; and John the apostle wrote the Gospel bearing his name (32-34).

Montgomery concludes “that on the basis of the accepted canons of historical method . . . the New Testament documents must be regarded as reliable sources of information” (43). This

line of argument “depends in no sense on theology. It rests solely upon historical method, the kind of method all of us have to use in analyzing historical data, whether Christians, rationalists, agnostics or Tibetan monks” (44).

Besides passing tests of general historical reliability, Scripture functions in more profound ways as the source of evidence for its own truth and the truth claims of Christianity. Evidentialists marshal evidences from a number of directions to build a cumulative case for the truth of the Bible. These evidences include the miracles of the Bible, the uniqueness of the Bible, and fulfilled prophecy. Later we will consider the evidentialist approach to the miracles of the Bible; here we will highlight the argument from fulfilled prophecy.

Fulfilled prophecy, while it has always had a place in apologetics,<sup>5</sup> has a distinctive use and emphasis in evidential apologetics, especially since the nineteenth century when books like Alexander Keith’s *Evidence of the Truth of the Christian Religion Derived from the Literal Fulfilment of Prophecy* went through many editions.<sup>6</sup>

Evidentialists note that “fulfilled prophecy was part of the means of establishing Old Testament religion.”<sup>7</sup> John Bloom, for example, quotes the Lord’s challenge in Isaiah issued to idols and all false gods to prove themselves by predicting the future (Isaiah 44:21-23; 44:7-8), and comments: “The God of the Bible is calling for a rigorous test which involves the objective prediction of future events in human history. . . . Logically, we can reverse this challenge to other ‘gods’ and ask if the God of the Bible can predict the future Himself. If He can, and if no other religion can substantiate a similar claim, then we have an objective, historically testable verification that the God of the Bible alone exists.”<sup>8</sup>

Bloom identifies four criteria that need to be satisfied in order to conclude that a genuine prophecy has been given. (1) It must be clear. (2) We must know that it was given before the

event. (3) It cannot be fulfilled by the actions of the human person making the prediction. And (4) its content must be unusually specific or long range so as to make its fulfillment remarkable. Bloom then implicitly adds a fifth, namely, that the successful prediction must not be accompanied by a number of false predictions. Thus Jeane Dixon might be given some credit for predicting John F. Kennedy's assassination but for the fact that so many of her other predictions have failed.<sup>9</sup> Anyone making dozens of unlikely predictions year after year is bound to get a few of them right!

Evidentialists point to three clusters of fulfilled prophecies as evidence for the divine inspiration and truth of the Bible. First, the Old Testament contains numerous prophecies concerning the rise and fall of various nations and cities surrounding Israel, such as Egypt, Tyre and Sidon, Babylon, and Nineveh. There is some dispute about the details of the Tyre prophecy in Ezekiel 26, but evidentialists are confident that the chapter, properly interpreted, was dramatically and literally fulfilled.<sup>10</sup>

Second, evidentialists cite the existence and history of Israel as an amazing fulfillment of biblical prophecy.<sup>11</sup> Robert Newman tells the story of the skeptical Frederick the Great, who asked his court chaplain for a good argument for God, to which the chaplain replied, "The Jew, your majesty!"<sup>12</sup> The Bible predicts that the Jews would fall into idolatry and be chastised, yet would later be returned to the land. Evidentialists point out that nations have repeatedly tried to annihilate the Jewish culture and people and yet have failed; they see this as evidence of God's remarkable providential care for the Jewish people.<sup>13</sup>

Third, evidentialists are especially impressed by the fulfilled prophecies in the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The Gospels, especially Matthew, strongly emphasize the idea that Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecies. Evidentialists are aware of the common

criticism that the Gospel writers take the Old Testament texts out of context, but they reply that this criticism is without merit. Newman points out various paradoxical features of Old Testament messianic prophecies that find their natural and obvious fulfillment in Jesus. The Messiah was to be a Jew who brought light to the Gentiles (Isaiah 42:6-7; 49:5-6). He was to be born a human son, yet he preexisted as God (Micah 5:2; Isaiah 9:6-7). He will be humble yet exalted (Daniel 7:13-14; Zechariah 9:9). He will suffer ignominiously yet be vindicated and exalted as universal ruler (Psalm 22; Isaiah 52:13–53:12). He will be both king and priest, offices kept separate in Judaism (Psalm 110).<sup>14</sup> Newman also cites prophecies indicating that the Messiah would come toward the end of the Second Temple period (ca. 515 B.C.–A.D. 70), making it impossible that any individual living after that time could be the Messiah (Haggai 2:3-9; Daniel 9:24-27).<sup>15</sup>

These three types of fulfilled prophecies in the Bible add up to an impressive array of evidences that evidentialists believe are unparalleled and should be quite convincing. The skeptic whose worldview excludes divine fulfillment of prophecy is advised that the evidence is sufficient to call such a worldview into question. So Newman concludes, “one would be a fool to keep appealing to accident when the evidence suggests one’s worldview is faulty.”<sup>16</sup> Fulfilled prophecy, then, not only provides evidence for the inspiration of the Bible, but for evidentialists it also contributes to the case for the theistic worldview.

Evidentialists are not alone in using fulfilled prophecy as part of their apologetic. However, while evidentialists use it to prove the existence of God, classical apologists generally do not. Norman Geisler, for example, states plainly: “Fulfilled prophecy does not prove the existence of God, but it does show that unusual events predicted in his Name that come to pass are evidence of his special activity.”<sup>17</sup>

## The Uniqueness of Christianity

The apologist today is confronted with myriad religious options in almost every part of the world and a rising tide of religious pluralism. Faced with these realities, the evangelical apologist must be prepared to give a reason for claiming that Jesus Christ is the only Savior and that true knowledge of God can be found only in the Christian faith.

As we saw in Part Two, classical apologists generally approach this question by analyzing the worldviews of the major non-Christian religions. They contend that only theism, the belief that the world was created and is utterly dependent on an infinite yet personal Creator, is a philosophically viable worldview. From there they argue that of the major theistic religions (Judaism, Islam, and Christianity), Christianity is the true one (because it, not Judaism or Islam, is the fulfillment of the revelations given to Abraham and his people in the Old Testament). While evidentialists might find such an argument useful as a supplementary line of reasoning, their primary approach to this question is characteristically different.

Evidentialists confront the problem of religious pluralism on two levels. First, they argue that the belief that all religions are basically the same does not take seriously the facts about the different religions. For example, Montgomery criticizes Altizer's claim that the modern discipline of comparative religions has demonstrated "an underlying unity of thought between Eastern mystical religion and the Christian faith"<sup>18</sup> by noting that the famed comparative religions scholar Mircea Eliade, whom Altizer professes to follow, rejects this idea. Montgomery tells of a conversation he had with Eliade in which the renowned scholar agreed that "Christianity's unique, historical focus on a 'once-for-all' incarnation of God in Christ" sharply distinguishes it from mythical and mystical religions. Altizer's mistake "stems from his general

disrespect for historical facts: he will not allow a given religion to speak for itself. . . . If Professor Altizer would let the facts speak for themselves, he would have to give up any hope of blending Eastern and Western religion.”<sup>19</sup>

Other evidentialists make the same point in different ways. For example, Francis Beckwith objects to the Baha’i teaching that all the world’s major religions were inspired by God. He compares the doctrines about God taught by Moses, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus, Muhammad, and other religious founders and finds them hopelessly contradictory. “God cannot be impersonal, personal, transcendent, polytheistic, pantheistic, monotheistic, able to beget, not able to beget, relevant, and irrelevant all at the same time. . . . Irreconcilable data gives us no knowledge of God whatsoever.”<sup>20</sup>

Second, evidentialists maintain that Christianity has a solid claim to be the only true religion because it alone can produce testable evidence of God’s activity in establishing Christianity in the first place. According to Montgomery, “What modern man insists on above all is a verifiable base for his faith, so that he can bring some order out of the conflicting welter of religious claims.”<sup>21</sup> Christianity has miracles, fulfilled prophecies, and other evidences that the God of the Bible is the true God; other religions do not have these phenomena. For example, evidentialists emphasize that non-Christian religions do not even claim that their religious leaders were raised from the dead.<sup>22</sup> Beckwith observes, “a religion that is true would be one that defeats death, man’s most detestable foe. Of all the religious leaders previously discussed, only one, Jesus of Nazareth, has conquered the Grim Reaper.”<sup>23</sup>

## **The Case for God**

Evidentialists, like classical apologists, seek to offer arguments for the existence of God on grounds that are in principle understandable and acceptable to non-Christians. However, they go about this task in a somewhat different way.

First, they generally subordinate the classical philosophical proofs for God's existence to a different place in their apologetic, and a few evidentialists even reject the philosophical proofs as invalid and unhelpful. Arnold Weigel is an extreme example of the latter: "In opposing the traditional rational proofs of God's existence, [Bertrand] Russell is destroying a straw man, not the Christian position. . . . A rational proof of God's existence is, moreover, actually inconsistent with the Christian faith."<sup>24</sup>

Much more commonly, though, evidentialists retain the philosophical proofs but do not treat them as sufficient to establish theism. Instead they rework the philosophical arguments into a cumulative case for theism that is predominantly inductive in character. Richard Swinburne, who exemplifies this approach, argues that the existence of God is a probable hypothesis because it is relatively simple and has significant explanatory power. Specifically, the theory that God exists helps explain the existence of the world (the cosmological argument), its order and basic beauty (the teleological argument), as well as human consciousness (the argument from mind) and morality (the moral argument).<sup>25</sup>

Likewise, William Lane Craig has developed the cosmological and teleological proofs into complex arguments combining philosophical reasoning with scientific evidence. Craig is perhaps best known for his articulation of the *kalâm* cosmological argument, a philosophical proof for God's existence based on the premise that the universe cannot exist without a beginning.<sup>26</sup> But he does not leave the argument there. Recognizing that the logical case against a beginningless universe is abstract and not intuitively obvious to all, he offers confirmation of

the premise from the evidence for the big bang,<sup>27</sup> a lead other evidentialist philosophers and apologists have followed.<sup>28</sup> Big bang cosmology is a crucial aspect of the evidentialist apologetic of Hugh Ross, whose professional training was in astronomy.<sup>29</sup>

The argument may be briefly summarized here.<sup>30</sup> Scientists have observed that galaxies are moving away from us in all directions, and that the farther away they are the faster they are receding. This evidence shows that the universe is expanding. Scientists have also discovered a faint background radiation in the cosmos such as was predicted to exist if the universe had exploded into existence from an original single point. These and other observations have led the vast majority of scientists working in the field to embrace some form of big bang cosmology, according to which the universe had a beginning. This conclusion was not reached easily. An absolute beginning for all physical reality implies that the universe was caused to come into existence by something beyond the investigative competency of the natural sciences. This limitation provoked many scientists at first to resist the conclusion that the universe had a beginning. Scientists often operate by the ideal that everything can and should eventually be explained scientifically, and the big bang presents an apparent dead end to this ideal. Yet the vast majority of scientists have been won over to the big bang by the evidence.

Although most scientists admit that the universe had a beginning, many try to remain agnostic as to its cause. Scientists should not shy away from concluding that God created the universe if that is where the evidence leads, as Douglas Geivett, an evidentialist philosopher, has argued. “Even if the cause of the origin of the physical universe is not directly and empirically accessible, theoreticians fail in their capacity as scientists if they resist the conclusion to which the evidence leads, for the ideal objective of science is to explain all phenomena.”<sup>31</sup>

The teleological argument has also been reworked into an evidentialist argument, and in fact has enjoyed something of a renewed respect in the past fifteen years or so. The argument is now commonly based on the so-called anthropic cosmological principle, or more simply the **anthropic principle**.<sup>32</sup> This term refers to the observation that numerous factors inherent in the universe appear to be just right for sustaining a universe in which life, including humanity, has even the possibility of existing. In other words, these are factors that must be just right—often within a very small range—for us to be here noticing them in the first place. This phenomenon is often called the “fine-tuning” of the universe. Again, Hugh Ross is a scientist-apologist who has given this argument a great deal of prominence,<sup>33</sup> though it is now widely used in evidentialist apologetics.<sup>34</sup> The following table summarizes just ten of the more than fifty factors that have been identified in the anthropic principle.<sup>35</sup>

### Cosmic and Geological Evidence of Design

Factor	If Greater	If Fewer
Strong nuclear force constant	No hydrogen	Nothing but hydrogen
Gravitational force constant	Stars burn out quickly	Stars don't produce heavy elements
Expansion rate of the universe	No galaxies form	Universe contracts before stars can form
Average distance between stars	Heavy elements spread too thin for rocky planets to form	Planetary orbits would be destabilized by nearby stars
Earth's surface gravity	Too much ammonia and methane in atmosphere	Not enough water in atmosphere
Earth's distance from sun	Too cold	Too hot
Earth's rotation period	Fierce winds	Temperature extremes from day to night
Thickness of earth's crust	Not enough oxygen in atmosphere	Volcanoes and earthquakes in much greater measure
Carbon dioxide level	Runaway greenhouse effect	Plants die
Ozone level	Too cold	Too hot

In addition to scientific, empirical reworkings of the classical theistic arguments, most evidentialists emphasize the evidence for God’s existence from his acts in history. Here we are again talking about fulfilled prophecy, miracles in general, and above all the resurrection of Jesus. For evidentialists, the main reason we know God exists is because he revealed himself in verifiable ways in history—ultimately and most definitively in Jesus. Montgomery makes this point in connection with an illustration used by the philosopher Antony Flew (who at the time was an atheist<sup>36</sup>). Flew asked us to imagine a situation in which we are told that an invisible gardener visits a garden every day and tends it. Should we believe the gardener exists despite the fact that every attempt to observe his movements fails? Montgomery comments: “The New Testament affirmation of the existence of God (the Divine Gardener in Flew’s parable) is not a claim standing outside the realm of empirical testability. Quite the contrary: the Gardener *entered* his garden (the world) in the person of Jesus Christ, showing himself to be such ‘by many infallible proofs’ (Acts 1:3).”<sup>37</sup>

## **The Inductive Problem of Evil**

As we saw in Part Two, classical apologists have responded at great length to “the problem of evil.” As traditionally defined, this is a logical, or deductive, problem that presents a seeming contradiction in the theistic worldview. Specifically, the (deductive) problem of evil asks whether it is logically possible for an all-good, all-powerful God to exist simultaneously with a world he created and yet has evil in it.

While many modern skeptics continue to cite it in this deductive form, some nontheistic philosophers acknowledge that the problem of evil fails to prove a logical consistency in the

theistic worldview. As classical apologists and philosophers have pointed out, an all-good and all-powerful God might choose to create a world in which evil would arise if God had some good reason for doing so. For example, it is at least logically possible that creating such a world was unavoidable if God was to create people with a moral capacity for making choices. But nontheistic philosophers have not been entirely satisfied with this defense. They argue that a much more difficult version of the problem still remains to be addressed. Granted (at least for the sake of argument) that it is possible that God created a world where evil exists, how likely is this to be in fact the case? This is the inductive or evidential problem of evil. Douglas Geivett explains the difference between these two versions of the argument.

The logical problem of evil asks, Is it logically *possible* that God and evil coexist? Any answer to this problem must show that the existence of God is compatible with the fact of evil in the world. . . . The evidential problem of evil asks, Is it evidentially *plausible* that God and evil coexist? This objection has the following form: God must have a morally sufficient reason for allowing any evil that he allows; but there is much evil in the world for which we can imagine no morally sufficient reason, such that it is highly unlikely that God exists (61).<sup>38</sup>

Geivett's own response to the evidential problem of evil is based on the positive evidence for God's existence. If significant evidence can be presented to show that it is highly likely that God exists, then the burden of proof is on the person who would argue that God's existence is unlikely. Moreover, if on the basis of the evidence we conclude that God probably does exist, then, given that God is good and all-powerful, we may conclude that God is justified in permitting evil even if we do not know what his reason or reasons may be (61). "There is room for speculation about the mystery surrounding God's actual reasons for permitting evil. But

failure to identify the actual reasons God has for permitting evil will touch the natural theologian's conclusion—God exists—*not at all*" (62). Once the theist concludes that God does exist and therefore must have a good reason for permitting evil, a problem of evil remains. This new problem is not whether God and evil both exist, but "*how* both can exist" (64). "The theist will have deflected the specific objection to the existence of God on the basis of evil *without even the most cursory analysis of evil* if the theist has produced a compelling argument for the existence of God on independent grounds" (64-65).

Another evidentialist who analyzes the problem of evil along inductive lines is John Hare. He notes that while any form of the problem is insufficient as a deductive proof of God's nonexistence, a more defensible version of the argument reasons "that the amount of evil we experience makes the existence of an omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent God *unlikely*" (238).<sup>39</sup> Hare goes on to note that the likelihood of God's existence will depend largely on whether, apart from the reality of evil, one sees good evidence for God's existence:

We are interested in how probable it is that God exists, given that there is a certain amount of evil. This depends, first, on how probable it is that God exists anyway. This is the so-called *prior probability* of the hypothesis. It also depends on whether this much evil is more likely to exist if God exists or if He does not. This is very roughly the *explanatory power* of the hypothesis. . . . Theists, in my experience, usually agree with atheists that the amount of evil in the world makes it harder to believe in a good God. But they have to be careful. For if theists agree that it is *much* harder, and they do not think that God's existence is, independent of evil, *much* more likely, they may be in an untenable position. (239-240)

After surveying recent attempts to deal with the evidential problem of evil and deeming them all inadequate, Hare suggests that the only viable solution may be what he calls a “*disjunctive explanation*” (245). That is, the explanation will have the following form:  $x$  (evil) is to be explained by either  $a$ ,  $b$ ,  $c$ , or some other factor. In other words, there is no one explanation for each instance of evil. Bad things happen for a variety of reasons: to develop and refine a person’s faith and character, to bring about a revelation of God’s glory, to experience suffering vicariously in someone else’s place, to punish people for their own acts of evil, to alert people to physical dangers (biologically useful pain), to learn the consequences of evil, or to alert people to their need for salvation (248-250).

In an essay on the evidence from the fine-tuning of the universe for God’s existence, Robin Collins argues that this positive argument for belief in God is much stronger than the inductive argument from evil against belief in God. In the case of the fine-tuning argument, we actually have good, objective data from which to derive a reasonable estimate of the probability of the universe just happening to be the kind capable of having and sustaining intelligent living beings. This is because the scientific data includes information about the universe as a whole (e.g., the universe’s expansion rate, the universal forces of matter, gravity, and electromagnetism). In the case of the evidential argument from evil, we have no way to quantify the relative amounts of good and evil that have been and will be produced in the universe, and indeed have good reason to admit that we know about only a small fraction of the good and evil that have occurred and will occur in the universe. Collins concludes that “the relevant probability estimates in the case of the fine-tuning argument are much more secure than those estimates in the probabilistic version of the atheist’s argument from evil.”<sup>40</sup>

## Miracles as Evidence for God

Evidentialists believe that miracles, like fulfilled prophecy, can be used in the verification of the supernatural. Whereas classical apologists tend to argue that one must first establish the existence of God in order to render miracles credible, evidentialists argue that miracles can actually serve as evidence for the existence of God. An excellent example of an evidentialist treatment of miracles may be found in the work of Francis Beckwith, particularly his monograph critiquing David Hume's argument against miracles.<sup>41</sup>

Beckwith defines the term miracle inductively or empirically rather than deductively: "A miracle is a divine intervention which occurs contrary to the regular course of nature within a significant historical-religious context" (7). That is, a miracle is (a) scientifically inexplicable, (b) religiously significant, and (c) supernaturally (or, divinely) caused.

Regarding the first-mentioned requirement, Beckwith denies that a miracle must be defined as an event that can be known to be *permanently* inexplicable scientifically. He contends that a miracle "is inexplicable in terms of *what we know about currently well-established scientific laws*" (9). This means that it is always possible, however slender the possibility, that an apparent miracle will turn out to be scientifically explicable. But Beckwith does not see this as a liability.

Hence, the fact that one cannot find deductive validity for any scientific law only means that our judgments about events purporting to violate these laws cannot reach the point of apodictic certainty. Since no discipline dealing with empirical judgments can render such certainty (e.g., law, history, psychology, anthropology, archaeology, etc.), it should not bother the believer in miracles one bit that miracles cannot be demonstrated to be

permanently inexplicable; scientific inexplicability in terms of currently well-established laws will do just fine. (9)

Beckwith also points out “that science’s problem-solving capacity has been completely impotent in making any of the primary law-violating miracles of the Christian tradition scientifically explicable, e.g., resurrections, changing water into wine, walking through walls, levitating, multiplying fishes and loaves, instantaneously healing lepers, and walking on water” (10).<sup>42</sup>

Beckwith’s second condition for an event to be regarded as a miracle is that it have an historical-religious significance. “Miracles are not just purposeless and bizarre scientific oddities, but occur in such a way that purpose is attached to them by virtue of when and why they occur.” Beckwith illustrates his point with the case of a person who had apparently returned to physical life after having died. Suppose this person had claimed that he would do this and had offered a theological explanation for it, and suppose further that he claimed to be the culmination of his culture’s theological expectations and prophetic predictions. “Within this religious context the physiological anomaly of a resurrection takes on a significance which would not have been present if this individual had ‘just happened’ to rise from the dead for no apparent reason” (11).

If an event is scientifically inexplicable and has historical-religious significance, Beckwith concludes that we are justified in concluding that the event was supernaturally caused. This assumes, of course, that we have already concluded that the event occurred at all. Ever since David Hume’s critique of belief in miracles, answering skepticism about the rationality of believing any such events occur has been of crucial importance in Christian apologetics, and this problem is the focus of Beckwith’s book.

Hume himself had enunciated the evidentialist principle that “a wise man . . . proportions his belief to the evidence” (32).<sup>43</sup> But Beckwith concludes that Hume did not live by this principle because he confused evidence with probability. He “failed to realize that the wise and intelligent person bases his or her convictions on evidence, not on Humean ‘probability.’ That is, an event’s occurrence may be very improbable in terms of past experience and observation, but current observation and testimony may lead one to believe that the evidence for the event is good” (38). He gives several examples (discussed in chapter 9) to illustrate the point that the unusual or unlikely may be quite believable if the evidence is good enough.

Beckwith admits that one or several pieces of testimonial evidence would usually be insufficient evidence to conclude that a miracle had occurred.

However, if the testimonial evidence is multiplied and reinforced by circumstantial considerations . . . and the explanation of the event as a violation connects the data in a simple and coherent fashion (just as we expect a natural law to do), and a denial of the event’s occurrence becomes an ad hoc naturalism-of-the-gaps, I do not see why it would not be entirely reasonable to believe that this event has occurred (based on a convergence of independent probabilities). I believe that this approach retains a healthy Humean skepticism by taking into consideration the improbability of a miraculous event, but I also believe that it resists a dogmatic skepticism by taking seriously the possibility that one may have evidence for a miracle. (37)<sup>44</sup>

To Hume’s argument that the miracle stories of differing religions cancel one another out, Beckwith replies that some miracle stories are of more profound significance than others, and that the most impressive and significant kind of miracle is resurrection from the dead.

This type of miracle touches man at his deepest existential and personal level, and can be a source of hope, assurance, and peace of mind if the person who conquered death promises eternal life to those who follow his teachings. . . . And, of course, if the miracles of religion A and religion B are evidentially equal, and religion A claims to be ordained by the true God because the leader has the ability to instantaneously heal patterned baldness, while religion B appeals to the resurrection of its founder, then religion B has a qualitatively better miracle. (56, 57)

Beckwith also criticizes the argument that, even granting the occurrence of a miracle, one could not fairly infer the religious significance attributed to it, and answers this argument with a thinly veiled, abstract reference to the Resurrection:

Suppose that a purported miracle-worker, C, says that he is God's chosen and that he will perform a miracle, R, a resurrection, at time *t* in order to confirm God's approval of his mission. . . . Given its human impossibility, its uniqueness (i.e., nobody who has made similar claims, except C, has ever performed R), C's claim that God is responsible for R, its existential and teleological significance (i.e., C performed R at a particular time *t*, not at any other time), and the religious context of the event (i.e., C performed R when his claims about himself hinged on the actuality of R occurring at time *t*), it becomes apparent that a particular message is being communicated through this event, namely, *C is God's chosen one*. . . . Furthermore, in light of the *converging* nature of the facts in this case, and the inference to a rational cause made eminently plausible by them, any appeals to *coincidence* or *freak accident* become entirely *ad hoc*, a sort of naturalism-of-the-gaps. (62-63)

Only at this point does Beckwith discuss God's existence. He believes a miracle can be identified as such without first establishing God's existence. Still, he recognizes that providing "good reason" to believe in a God capable of doing miracles "makes it more plausible to believe" that a particular event is a miracle (71). We see here a telling, even defining, difference between the evidentialist and the classical apologist. The evidentialist is not closed to using theistic arguments to make belief in God more plausible or acceptable. Unlike the classical apologist, though, he does not think such arguments are *necessary*. According to evidentialism, the historical evidence for God's intervention in space and time is sufficient of itself to establish God's existence.

After utilizing Craig's version of the *kalâm* cosmological argument in support of theism (73-84), Beckwith returns to Hume's argument against miracles, focusing now on modern reformulations and defenses of Hume's argument. In response to the skepticism of Antony Flew, Beckwith agrees with Montgomery that the Christian is prepared to exercise a modest skepticism as well, but not to the extent of being closed to the possibility of a miracle. Thus Beckwith quotes with approval Montgomery's statement that "we accept no miracles unless the primary evidence compels us to it" (100).<sup>45</sup> He notes that "most of the objections to the miraculous are pre-evidential. That is, they do not examine the evidence for particular miracles per se, but dispense with miracles in general prior to the examination of the evidence" (121). Again following Montgomery, Beckwith favors "the legal model of evaluating evidence" as the best method for determining whether to believe a particular miracle claim (122).

## **Jesus: The Evidence**

Although some evidentialists focus their apologetic on the scientific evidence for creation, by far the majority concentrate on defending the claims of Jesus Christ, and the overwhelming focus of these defenses pertains to belief in his resurrection from the dead.

The two leading apologists writing on the Resurrection in the past twenty years or so have been Gary Habermas<sup>46</sup> and William Lane Craig.<sup>47</sup> Although Craig is a classical apologist, his position is in many ways compatible with evidentialism. And in fact, Habermas and Craig use very similar strategies in arguing for the reasonableness of believing that God raised Jesus from the dead.

First, Habermas and Craig develop a set of “core” facts that are rarely denied by modern biblical scholars or historians writing on the subject and for which good evidence exists. Their enumerations differ from one presentation to another, but the following facts appear again and again on the lists.<sup>48</sup>

1. Jesus was publicly executed and died on a Roman cross.
2. Jesus was buried in a tomb.
3. Jesus’ tomb was discovered empty the Sunday after his burial.
4. Jesus’ followers had no basis for hoping that he would be raised from the dead.
5. Women friends of Jesus had experiences of seeing Jesus alive from the dead.
6. Jesus’ apostles had experiences of seeing Jesus alive from the dead.
7. The first Christians proclaimed in Jerusalem just weeks after Jesus’ death that he had literally risen from the dead.
8. Paul, a persecutor of the Christians, converted to faith in Christ after an experience of seeing Jesus alive from the dead.

One may wonder why, if the vast majority of biblical scholars acknowledge these facts, so many of them question the Resurrection. Craig comments, “It may seem stupefying that while most New Testament critics who have written on these subjects accept the facts which, at least in my opinion, furnish inductive grounds for inferring the resurrection of Jesus, they do not themselves make that inference; but this is, in fact, the situation.”<sup>49</sup> Craig himself bases his argument on facts admitted by this majority, “not because truth is determined by numbers, for it certainly is not; rather, it is precisely because . . . I am interested in convincing outsiders that I appeal only to facts which would be accepted by the broad spectrum of scholarship, not just by conservatives.”<sup>50</sup>

Second, Habermas and Craig refute objections to each of these generally recognized facts and offer additional support for each of these planks of the argument. In practice the two facts most often disputed are the empty tomb and the first appearances of Jesus. The credibility of the empty tomb is defended by several considerations.<sup>51</sup> Paul’s reference to Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection as part of the received tradition of the church (1 Corinthians 15:3-5) and the burial account in Mark (which itself is likely pre-Markan) show that the empty tomb was a part of the earliest church’s understanding. The report of all four Gospels that women disciples of Jesus were the first to discover the empty tomb must be historical, since the chauvinistic men of that time were not likely to have invented such a detail. The fact that Jesus’ tomb was not venerated as a shrine shows, again, that the earliest Christians believed the tomb to be empty. The report in Matthew 28:11-15 that the earliest Jewish explanation for the Resurrection story was that the disciples had stolen the body proves that Jesus had in fact been buried and the tomb was in fact empty. This is so, even if one is skeptical about Matthew’s claim that the tomb had been guarded

to prevent the body from being stolen—since no one would make up such a story if the tomb had not become empty.

The Resurrection appearances are shown to be authentic history for similar reasons.<sup>52</sup> Again, the accounts of the appearances, especially in 1 Corinthians 15:6-8, are too early to have arisen as myths or legends. We have Paul's firsthand testimony that he saw Jesus alive. The Gospel testimony that the first persons to see Jesus alive were women is self-evidently reliable. All these considerations are brought together by evidentialists to constitute a cumulative case showing that the Resurrection is the most probable, reasonable explanation of the facts.

Third, alternative, naturalistic explanations are examined and shown to be less plausible or factually based than the Resurrection. These explanations typically function as alternatives to one or more of the generally accepted facts adduced by Craig and Habermas. For example, the swoon theory, which holds that Jesus merely passed out on the cross and was revived after being left for dead in the tomb, attempts to overturn the fact of Jesus' death. John Dominic Crossan's theory that Jesus' dead body was left in a ditch or shallow grave and eaten by dogs is meant to circumvent the claim that Jesus was buried in a tomb. Evidentialists argue that such theories are either purely speculative or are based on misreadings of the New Testament writings, and that all fail to come to terms with significant factual evidence.

Fourth, the positive argument from these facts to the conclusion of the resurrection of Jesus is presented. It is argued that the *best explanation* of the facts is that Jesus did actually rise from the dead. Habermas writes: "In particular, when the early and eyewitness experiences of the disciples, James, and Paul are considered, along with their corresponding transformations and their central message, the historical Resurrection becomes the best explanation for the facts,

especially because the alternative theories have failed. Therefore, it may be concluded that the Resurrection is a probable historical event.”<sup>53</sup>

Craig makes the same point in somewhat more developed fashion:

. . . I am employing inductive reasoning understood according to the model of inference to the best explanation. This model holds that there may be a number of reasonable explanations for a body of evidence, and that one is to choose from this pool of live options that explanation which is the best, that is, which most successfully meets such criteria as having explanatory power, explanatory scope, and not being ad hoc. My claim is that the hypothesis “God raised Jesus from the dead” is the best explanation of the evidence discussed.<sup>54</sup>

Lastly, Craig and Habermas argue that the resurrection of Jesus in the context of his life and teachings verifies his claim to deity. Jesus’ claim to be God would lack all credibility had he remained dead. The fact that he rose from the dead provides strong warrant for accepting his divine claims. On the other hand, the Resurrection would lack all significance if it had appeared in history merely as an anomalous or inexplicable event. As Habermas and Licona observe, Jesus’ life “created a context in which his resurrection from the dead would not be a surprise. He claimed that he was divine. He performed deeds that were interpreted as miracles. And he predicted his resurrection.”<sup>55</sup> Instead, the Resurrection comes with an interpretive context of the supernatural acts and revelations of the God of Israel in the Old Testament and the supernatural works and claims of Jesus in his earthly ministry.<sup>56</sup> Here these and other apologists adduce evidence from the Gospels that Jesus did in fact claim to be deity. Jesus forgave sins that had not been committed against him; he made statements that the Jewish authorities understandably

interpreted as blasphemous claims to deity; he spoke on the Law of God as if it was his to define and apply.

From the historical evidence for the Resurrection, then, evidentialists infer that God really did raise Jesus from the dead, and from this one point the whole of the Christian faith may potentially be defended. For if Jesus was raised from the dead, given the religious context of the event, then God evidently does exist. If God raised Jesus from the dead, then the true God is the God of Jesus Christ. He is the God of the Jewish people who inspired the Old Testament, who sent Jesus his Son into the world for our salvation, and who commissioned the apostles and their associates to establish the Christian church and to produce the New Testament.

## **For Further Study**

Collins, Steven. *Championing the Faith: A Layman's Guide to Proving Christianity's Claims*.

Tulsa: Virgil W. Hensley, 1991. A manual teaching evidentialist apologetics.

Geivett, R. Douglas. *Evil and the Evidence for God: The Challenge of John Hick's Theodicy*.

Afterword by John Hick. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993. Thoroughly evidentialist approach to the problem of evil, arguing that the positive evidence for God's existence from natural theology is essential to answering the problem.

Geivett, R. Douglas, and Gary R. Habermas, eds. *In Defense of Miracles: A Comprehensive*

*Case for God's Action in History*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1997. Essays by leading evangelical apologists, many of whom are evidentialist or semi-evidentialist in their method (notably Beckwith, Craig, Geivett, Moreland, and Newman).

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<sup>1</sup>Montgomery, “Death of the ‘Death of God,’” in *Suicide of Christian Theology*, 106.

<sup>2</sup>All parenthetical citations in this section are from Montgomery, *History and Christianity*. The same material is found in Montgomery, *Where Is History Going*, 37-52.

<sup>3</sup>C. Sanders, *Introduction to Research in English Literary History* (New York: Macmillan, 1952).

<sup>4</sup>See, for example, Montgomery, “The Jury Returns,” in *Evidence for Faith*, edited by Montgomery, 322-23; Moreland, *Scaling the Secular City: A Defense of Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 134; Beckwith, *Baha’i*, 43-50; Steven Collins, *Championing the Faith: A Layman’s Guide to Proving Christianity’s Claims* (Tulsa: Virgil W. Hensley, 1991), 78; Dan Story, *Defending Your Faith: How to Answer the Tough Questions* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1992), 38-47. Apologists of a more classical orientation have also used this threefold test, including one of the present authors; see Ken Boa and Larry Moody, *I’m Glad You Asked*, 2d ed. (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor, 1994), 90-99.

<sup>5</sup>On fulfilled prophecy in apologetics, see Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, 609-617.

<sup>6</sup>Alexander Keith, *Evidence of the Truth of the Christian Religion Derived from the Literal Fulfillment of Prophecy*, 6th ed. (New York: Harper, 1841).

<sup>7</sup>Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Christian Evidences* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1953), 85.

<sup>8</sup>John A. Bloom, “Truth Via Prophecy,” in *Evidence for Faith*, edited by Montgomery, 175-76.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 176-77.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 179-86; Robert W. Manweiler, “The Destruction of Tyre,” and Elaine A. Phillips, “The Fall of Nineveh,” in *The Evidence of Prophecy*, ed. Robert C. Newman (Hatfield, Pa.: Biblical Research Institute, 1994), 21-30 and 41-51 respectively; Robert C. Newman, “Fulfilled Prophecy as Miracle,” in *In Defense of Miracles*, ed. Geivett and Habermas, 217-21.

<sup>11</sup>Robert C. Newman, “Israel’s History Written in Advance: A Neglected Evidence for the God of the Bible,” in *Evidence for Faith*, ed. Montgomery, 193-201.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>13</sup>See further *The Evidence of Prophecy*, ed. Newman, which contains three essays on Israel’s history as fulfilling biblical prophecy.

<sup>14</sup>Newman, “The Testimony of Messianic Prophecy,” in *Evidence for Faith*, ed. Montgomery, 204-208.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 209-212. On Daniel 9:24-27, see especially Harold W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), which argues for an amazingly precise fulfillment of that prophecy in light of the date of Christ’s death. See also Robert C. Newman, “The Time of the Messiah,” in *The Evidence of Prophecy*, ed. Newman, 111-18. We discuss this prophecy in more detail in *20 Compelling Evidences that God Exists*, 160-69.

<sup>16</sup>Newman, “Testimony of Messianic Prophecy,” 212.

<sup>17</sup>Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, 609.

<sup>18</sup>Montgomery, “Death of the ‘Death of God,’” in *Suicide of Christian Theology*, 125.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>20</sup>Beckwith, *Baha'i*, 18.

<sup>21</sup>Montgomery, “Death of the ‘Death of God,’” in *Suicide of Christian Theology*, 141.

<sup>22</sup>Gary R. Habermas, “Resurrection Claims in Other Religions,” *Religious Studies* 25 (1989): 167-177; see also David K. Clark, “Miracles in the World Religions,” in *In Defense of Miracles*, ed. Geivett and Habermas, 199-213.

<sup>23</sup>Beckwith, *Baha'i*, 41.

<sup>24</sup>Arnold D. Weigel, “A Critique of Bertrand Russell’s Religious Position,” in *Christianity for the Tough-minded*, ed. Montgomery, 43.

<sup>25</sup>Swinburne, *Existence of God*, 227, 235, 242-243.

<sup>26</sup>See chapter 6.

<sup>27</sup>William Lane Craig, *The Existence of God and the Beginning of the Universe* (San Bernardino, Calif.: Here’s Life, 1979), 55-80; *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1994), 100-116; and his debate book on the subject with Quentin Smith, *Theism, Atheism, and Big Bang Cosmology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993).

<sup>28</sup>Notably Moreland, 33-35; Francis Beckwith, *David Hume’s Argument against Miracles: A Critical Analysis* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1989), 73-84.

<sup>29</sup>See the works by Hugh Ross cited in chapter 9, n. 56; see also Newman, “The Evidence of Cosmology,” in *Evidence for Faith*, ed. Montgomery, 71-91; Fred Hereen, *Show Me God: What the Message from Space Is Telling Us about God*, Wonders That Witness, vol. 1 (Wheeling, Ill.: Searchlight Publications, 1995).

<sup>30</sup>In addition to the sources already cited, see Boa and Bowman, *20 Compelling Evidences that God Exists*, 51-60, for an overview of the argument; more detailed treatments can be found in

Robert Jastrow, *God and the Astronomers* (New York: Norton, 1978); Stanley L. Jaki, *God and the Cosmologists* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1989).

<sup>31</sup>Geivett, *Evil and the Evidence for God*, 102-103.

<sup>32</sup>Full-length treatments of this subject include John D. Barrow and Frank J. Tipler, *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); M. A. Corey, *God and the New Cosmology: The Anthropic Design Argument* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1993). Barrow and Tipler report the major findings but reject the idea of divine design; Corey finds the evidence supportive of a divine Designer and Creator.

<sup>33</sup>Hugh Ross, “Astronomical Evidences for a Personal, Transcendent God,” in *The Creation Hypothesis: Scientific Evidence for an Intelligent Designer*, ed. J. P. Moreland (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1994), 141-72; and in several of his books.

<sup>34</sup>Notable discussions include Moreland, *Scaling the Secular City*, 52-55; Richard Swinburne, “Argument from the Fine-Tuning of the Universe,” in *Physical Cosmology and Philosophy*, ed. John Leslie (New York: Macmillan, 1990), 154-73; William Lane Craig, “The Teleological Argument and the Anthropic Principle,” in *The Logic of Rational Theism: Exploratory Essays*, ed. William Lane Craig and Mark S. McLeod, *Problems in Contemporary Philosophy*, vol. 24 (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), 127-53; Robin Collins, “A Scientific Argument for the Existence of God: The Fine-Tuning Design Argument,” in *Reason for the Hope Within*, ed. Michael J. Murray (Grand Rapids and Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans, 1999), 47-75. We give a popular presentation of the argument aimed at nonbelievers in *20 Compelling Evidences that God Exists*, 61-81.

<sup>35</sup>The table is loosely based on tables by Hugh Ross, e.g., tables 14.1 and 16.1 in *Creator and the Cosmos*, 154, 188.

<sup>36</sup>In 2004, Antony Flew acknowledged that recent scientific discoveries had convinced him that some kind of God along the lines of Aristotle’s “God” (a powerful, intelligent being that is the uncaused cause of the universe) probably exists. However, Flew still denied that God had revealed himself in Christianity or any other religion. See “My Pilgrimage from Atheism to Theism: A Discussion between Antony Flew and Gary Habermas,” *Philosophia Christi* 6 (2004): 197-211. Flew’s extensive discussions and debates with Habermas and other evangelical apologists directly contributed to his rethinking his longstanding position of atheism. However, subsequent publications, including the short introduction to a new edition of Flew’s classic atheist book *God and Philosophy* (Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 2005), suggest that Flew’s belief in a God was not yet a settled conviction.

<sup>37</sup>Montgomery, “Death of the ‘Death of God,’” in *Suicide of Christian Theology*, 101.

<sup>38</sup>All parenthetical citations here and in the following paragraph are from Geivett, *Evil and the Evidence for God*.

<sup>39</sup>Quotations in this paragraph are taken from John E. Hare, “The Problem of Evil,” in *Evidence for Faith*, edited by Montgomery, 231-52.

<sup>40</sup>Collins, “A Scientific Argument for the Existence of God,” 66.

<sup>41</sup>Beckwith, *David Hume’s Argument against Miracles*; see also his “History and Miracles,” in *In Defense of Miracles*, edited by Geivett and Habermas, 86-98. Parenthetical references in this section are to the former work by Beckwith; emphasis is in the original.

<sup>42</sup>The inclusion of levitation is odd, but Beckwith likely had the Ascension in mind.

<sup>43</sup>Citing David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, 3rd ed., rev. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975; original, 1777), 110. Note the similarity to Clifford's evidentialist maxim, discussed at the beginning of chapter 9.

<sup>44</sup>The expression "convergence of independent probabilities" comes from Montgomery, who in turn attributes it to Cardinal John Henry Newman; see Beckwith, "History and Miracles," in *In Defense of Miracles*, ed. Geivett and Habermas, 98; cf. Montgomery, *Faith Founded on Fact*, 55.

<sup>45</sup>Montgomery, *Faith Founded on Fact*, 57.

<sup>46</sup>Gary R. Habermas, *The Resurrection of Jesus: An Apologetic* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980); "The Resurrection Appearances of Jesus," in *In Defense of Miracles*, edited by Geivett and Habermas, 262-275; Habermas and Antony G. N. Flew, *Did Jesus Rise from the Dead? The Resurrection Debate*, ed. Terry L. Miethe (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987); and more recently, Gary R. Habermas and Michael R. Licona, *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2004).

<sup>47</sup>Craig, *The Historical Argument for the Resurrection of Jesus During the Deist Controversy* (1985); *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus*, *Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity*, vol. 16 (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1989); *Knowing the Truth about the Resurrection* (Ann Arbor: Servant, 1991); *Reasonable Faith* (1994), 255-98; "Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?" in *Jesus Under Fire*, ed. Michael J. Wilkins and J. P. Moreland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 141-176; "The Empty Tomb of Jesus," in *In Defense of Miracles*, edited by Geivett and Habermas (1997), 247-261; and Craig and John Dominic Crossan, *Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?* (1998).

<sup>48</sup>For example, Habermas and Flew, *Did Jesus Rise from the Dead*, 19-20; Craig and Crossan, *Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up*, 26-28; and especially Habermas and Licona, *Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*, 43-77. See also Boa and Moody, *I'm Glad You Asked*, 64-66.

<sup>49</sup>Craig and Crossan, *Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up*, 161-162.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>51</sup>See especially Craig, "Empty Tomb of Jesus," in *In Defense of Miracles*, edited by Geivett and Habermas, 247-261.

<sup>52</sup>See especially Habermas, "Resurrection Appearances of Jesus," in *In Defense of Miracles*, edited by Geivett and Habermas, 262-275.

<sup>53</sup>Habermas and Flew, *Did Jesus Rise from the Dead*, 22-23.

<sup>54</sup>Craig and Crossan, *Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up*, 160.

<sup>55</sup> Habermas and Licona, *Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*, 171. Perhaps we should note that this argument works better if one qualifies it to say that Jesus' resurrection would not be a *total* surprise *in retrospect*. The Gospels themselves report that the disciples were quite surprised, no doubt because no amount of preparation could overcome the shock of Jesus' horrific death and the seeming end it put to all their hopes (cf. Luke 24:21).

<sup>56</sup>Craig, *Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up*, 159.