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THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

John 20:24-31
Lesson #71
Signs and Believing
04/30/2017

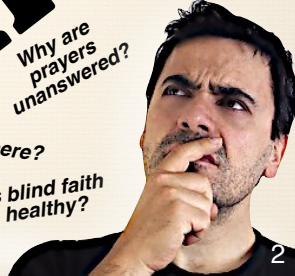
"Faith is believing something you know isn't true."

Is doubting unhealthy or even sinful?

Is Christian faith a blind leap - an escape from reason?



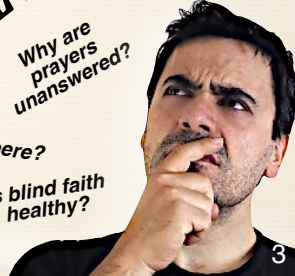
Doubts



Why is there so much evil?
 Can I trust the Bible?
 Does science disprove the Bible?
 Was Jesus real?
 Can't you read into the Bible anything you want?
 How can I be sure?
 What about other faiths?
 Is faith a feeling?
 Does God care?
 Why are prayers unanswered?
 Is God there?
 Did Jesus raise from the dead?
 Is blind faith healthy?
 Is God fair?

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Inconclusive and Conflicting Evidence



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Shannon L. Alder
(author)

"The most confused you will ever get is when you try to convince your heart and spirit of something your mind knows is a lie."

Sam Harris
(neuroscientist)

"Faith is generally nothing more than the permission religious people give one another to believe things strongly without evidence."

Billy Packer

"I may be wrong but am never in doubt!"

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Confusion and doubts are normal and can be healthy.

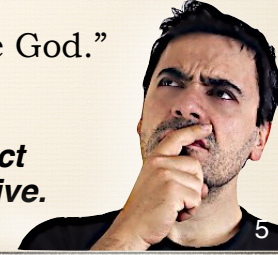
- Some believe that EVERY Christian conviction should be punctuated with an **exclamation point** (never a question mark, comma, or period).

Hebrews 11:6

"Without faith it is impossible to please God."

NOT IF

it is in the wrong object or for the wrong objective.



5

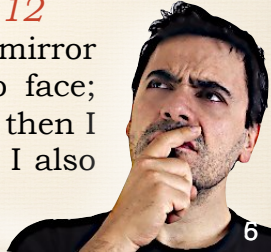
Confusion and doubts are normal and can be healthy.

- Some believe that EVERY Christian conviction should be punctuated with an **exclamation point** (never a question mark, comma, or period).

✓ They fail to recognize that we all “see dimly”.

1 Corinthians 13:12

“For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known.”



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Confusion and doubts are normal and can be healthy.

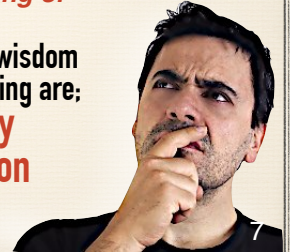
- Some believe that EVERY Christian conviction should be punctuated with an **exclamation point** (never a question mark, comma, or period).

✓ They fail to recognize that we all “see dimly”.

✓ They are not open to **learning or growing**.

Three doors to wisdom and understanding are:

**Curiosity
Confusion
Conflict**



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Confusion and doubts are normal and can be healthy.

- Some believe that EVERY Christian conviction should be punctuated with an **exclamation point** (never a question mark, comma, or period).

✓ They fail to recognize that we all “see dimly”.

✓ They are not open to **learning or growing**.

✓ They also may be quite **dangerous**.

Like Psychological Psychotics
Religious Bigots both have faith

that is misplaced.



8

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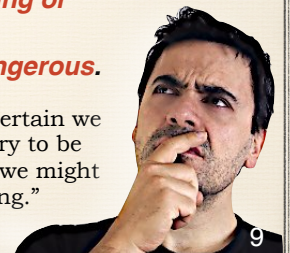
✓ They are not open to **learning or growing**.

✓ They also may be quite **dangerous**.



G.K. Chesterton

“It is not bigotry to be certain we are right; but it is bigotry to be unable to imagine how we might possibly have gone wrong.”

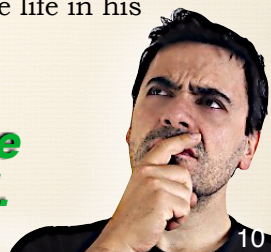


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John 20

“²⁹ Jesus said to him, “Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.” ³⁰ Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in his name.”

**Christian faith is
based on evidence
& is not irrational.**



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The uniqueness of Christianity

Christianity cannot be reduced to a blind leap of faith and subjective experience, on the front end as it cannot be reduced to ethics, and social reform, on the back end.

Blind leap of faith
subjective experience



Ethical system
Social reform movement

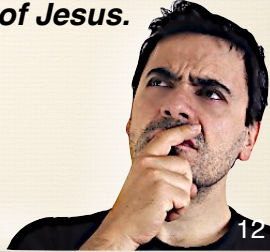


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The uniqueness of Christianity

Christianity cannot be reduced to a **blind leap of faith** and **subjective experience**, on the front end as it cannot be reduced to ethics, and social reform, on the back end.

Christianity is grounded in a **vision of and faith in reality** witnessed by the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus.



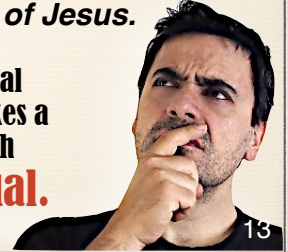
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Both the material and immaterial worlds provide evidence that makes a Christian faith commitment both **reasonable and spiritual**.

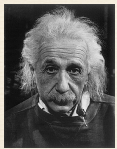


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The uniqueness of Christianity

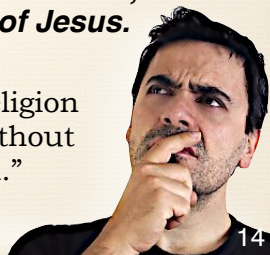
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"Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind."

Albert Einstein



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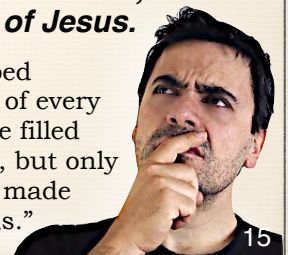
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Blaise Pascal

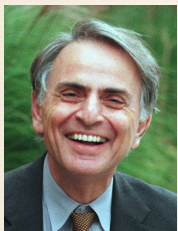
"There is a God shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator, made known through Jesus."



15

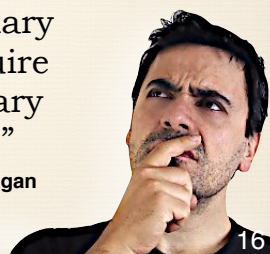
Evidence for the Christian faith

- The **empty tomb** of Jesus.
- The integrity of the **Biblical record**.
- The nature of the **Gospel of Grace**.
- The testimony of **Christian experience**.



"Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence."

Carl Sagan



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Evidence for the Christian faith

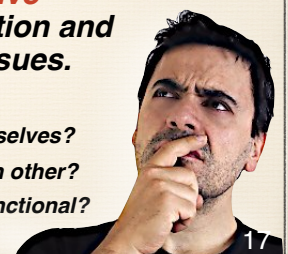
- The **empty tomb** of Jesus.
- The integrity of the **Biblical record**.
- The nature of the **Gospel of Grace**.
- The testimony of **Christian experience**.
- The **inadequacy of alternative narratives** to offer explanation and hope in addressing four issues.

Mortality - Why do we die?

Meaning - Why do we not kill ourselves?

Morality - Why do we not kill each other?

Management - Why are we dysfunctional?



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The nature of faith

- **Universal** - All people have faith in something.
- **Perception** - Our view of ultimate reality shapes our faith commitments.

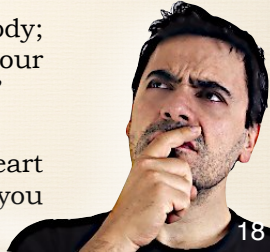
Seeing is the 1st step to believing.

Matthew 6:22

"The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light."

Ephesians 1:18

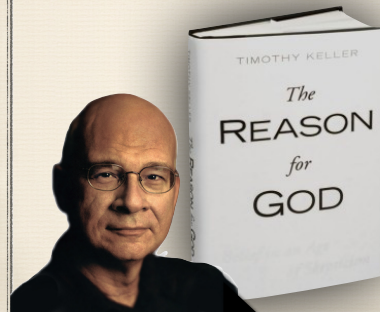
"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know..."



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The nature of faith

- **Universal** - All people have faith in something.
- **Perception** - Our view of ultimate reality shapes our faith commitments.



We have
**Clues &
Evidence**
(not Proofs)

Proofs come with
Commitment.

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The nature of faith

- **Universal** - All people have faith in something.
- **Perception** - Our view of ultimate reality shapes our faith commitments.
- **Repentance** - Faith is a "life direction change" a new commitment of head and heart.

Repentance is the 2nd step to believing.



from self



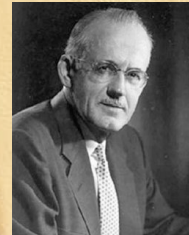
to Christ



Marriage as
an analogy

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A.W. Tozer



"The disciple of Jesus needs more than light. He also needs sight. The blind man is not aided by light without sight."

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God's gifts to us are
**Light
and Sight.**

"Come let us reason together."

Our responses to God are
**Repentance
and Faith.**

Isaiah 1:18

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John 6:68

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life."

Matthew 5:8

"Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."

Matthew 7:7

"seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."

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