

FAITH STANDING ON EVIDENCES

A Biblical definition for faith is “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). Invisibility to man’s physical senses does not prove an unseen matter to be non-existent or unreal. Prior to improved modern technology many discoveries in our universe were previously unknown because men were unable physically to observe them. Matters of faith are not unreasonable solely on the basis that they cannot be presently proven by physical observation. Believers in God “walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7), but they are not ignorant, irrational and unreasonable men just because they have not seen God with their eyes.

The mystery of a murder without eye-witnesses may be solved through collected evidence. First, there is the evidence that answers the question regarding the death itself: natural causes or murder. Approximate time of death may be determined by the rate of decomposition. Then there is the evidence left behind by the killer that is pieced together and leads investigators down trails of possibilities. With the examination of the facts and the continued search for additional data, a strong, reasonable case may be established to determine and convict the guilty.

The design and order of our universe, our solar system and Earth point to the reasonable conclusion that there is an omniscient architect and an omnipotent creator. We have not seen God, nor can we see Him, but we see the stroke of His divine brush across the sky, the imprint of the Potter’s hands in the landscape of which we are the beneficiaries. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.” (Psalm 19:1) “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that [men](dfb) are without excuse” (Romans 1:20).

God is the Creator, the Giver of life (cf. Genesis 1:1). He made all living things. God asked Job, “Who provides for the raven when its young ones cry to God, and wander about for lack of food?” (Job 38:41) “Have you given the hawk fly by your wisdom, and spread its wings toward the south?” (39:30) Evidence of God’s creative work lies all around us from the busy ant to the skillful spider, from the mighty lion to the greyhound (Proverbs 6:6; 30:28, 30-31).

Not only does evidence lead rational minds to conclude reasonably that God is, evidence exists concerning the Jesus of the Bible. No one today has seen Jesus of Nazareth, nor does anyone know what his physical appearance was. But by faith men can know He was and is the Son of God. He lived, died and was raised from the dead. A crime was committed against Jesus at the hands of Jews and Romans. They unjustly sentenced him to death by crucifixion. This horrific deed was done in public view (cf. Acts 2:22-24). The man Jesus is real.

Eye-witness testimony has been recorded and preserved. The apostle John wrote, “That which we have seen and heard we declare to you” (1 John 1:3). John and others saw Jesus with their own eyes and touched Jesus with their own hands (v. 1). We have not seen Jesus, but we can be convinced because others did. “Truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” (John 20:30-31) Peter boldly proclaimed, “Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know” (Acts 2:22). This testimony is evidence.

This Jesus is “declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead” (Romans 1:4). What data can we examine to produce faith that the crucified Jesus arose from the dead? The tomb of Jesus, which was sealed with guards, was found empty with his grave cloths left behind (John 20:6-7). On one occasion Jesus was seen alive again by over five hundred brethren (1

Corinthians 15:6). The apostle Thomas, who at first did not believe his fellow apostles' report, was convinced when he saw the resurrected Lord (20:27-28). Jesus' response to Thomas was, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (v. 29) God expects men to examine the evidence, and then stand firmly by faith.