

## Why Alpha?

Let's admit it, It's not always easy being a person of faith in the materialistic culture of the UK in 2017. But let me ask, is it really that easy being an atheist? When the evidence is all stacked up it would seem that the jury is far from decided. The Bible contains truths that are difficult to explain away.

For instance, did you know that?

- Around 600 BC ( a millennia before Sir Isaac Newton defined gravity ) the Bible declared that God, "Hangs the Earth upon nothing." (**Job 26:7**)



- 200 years ago top astronomers estimated the number of stars at just over a thousand. The Bible told us in 600 BC that they could not be numbered (**Jer 32:22**)
- The water cycle was clearly described in the old Testament **Ecclesiastes 1:7** 2000 years before Pierre Perrault was postulating his amazing theories.
- The laws of hygiene are clearly laid out in the book of **Leviticus** 3000 years before Louis Pasteur discovered why handwashing worked.

Perhaps even more than these scientific truths, buried in the old Testament are the prophetic truths. There are 332 prophecies about Jesus, for instance that he would be **born in Bethlehem**, he would be **descended from King David**, a **messenger** would be sent ahead to herald his appearing, he would appear **riding on a donkey**, he would be betrayed for **30 pieces of silver**, he would be **crucified**, and people would **cast lots for his clothing**. Mathematicians have calculated that the odds of one person fulfilling just these eight prophecies are astronomical small, one in ten to the 21st power ( $10^{21}$ ).

Cynics would no doubt find wonderful ways of explaining all this away – and that I believe, is exactly how God would have it to be.

The writer of the proverbs King Solomon rather intriguingly wrote: **“It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings.”**  
**(Proverbs 25:2)**

But why? If God is God then why doesn't he make it crystal clear, why doesn't he reveal Himself in a way that would dismiss any possible doubt or argument?

Well let's think about this for a moment.

**Dietrich Bonhoeffer**, the German Pastor and theologian, said, **“A God who let us prove his existence would be an idol.”**



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— *Dietrich Bonhoeffer* —

You see, God is love, and at the heart of love is **free will**... As Christians we believe that God has given us a choice to, accept Him and embrace Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, or equally we can reject Him :Our choice. If He had wanted automatic obedience He would have created Robots. What He actually created was people 'In His own image' made 'In His likeness' who have free will to reject and rebuff Him.

Christianity is not a set of sensible guidelines, it is a Faith! The very nature of a faith relationship, just like any relationship, is that it goes a step beyond 'logic' and into the realm of love.

Anyone who loves knows that love is not based on logic! There are times when it feels illogical and times when it is sacrificial and far from convenient.

For instance, what is logical about this? **“If you believe?”** said Jesus, **“you will receive whatever you ask in prayer!”**

This is diametrically opposite to logic which would dictate **“If you receive then will you believe?”**

God is the invisible factor in the equation that makes faith stack up.

God, we are told, loves all of humanity (**John 3:16**) . Indeed, God so loved the world that He gave us His Only Son Jesus. He loves all but, He is only pleased with Faith

**(Hebrews 11:6)** . Why? Because any self-centered tyrant can have logic. Only lover's of God would have faith.

That doesn't mean that you need to be brain-dead or deluded to become a Christian. In fact, I would say that if you take the time to look into it the evidence for Christianity is overwhelming. SO much evidence that many would say it takes more faith to be an atheist than a Christian.

An example of one such person would be Lee Strobel, an atheist and a journalist with the Wall Street Journal, who wrote:

**'It was the worst news I could get as an atheist: my agnostic wife had decided to become a Christian. Two words shot through my mind. The first was an expletive; the second was "divorce."** He quickly realised that the best way that he could help his wife out of this delusion was to disprove the Resurrection, the cornerstone of the Christian faith. However his cleverly research arguments led him somewhere else instead.

**'One by one my objections evaporated. I read books by sceptics but their counter arguments crumbled against the weight of historical data. In the end after I had thoroughly investigated the matter, I reached an unexpected conclusion: it would take more faith to maintain my atheism than to become a follower of Jesus, which is why I am a Christian now. Not because of the fear of death or the need for a psychological crutch, But because of the facts.'**



**C S Lewis**, Fellow at Oxford University and Professor of Literature at Cambridge and author of the Narnia books, wrote this about his Conversion to Christianity.

**'I had always wanted, above all things, not to be "interfered with." I had wanted "to call my soul my own.'**

Refusing to accept the existence of anything 'supernatural', he looked for a way of accepting Jesus' teachings, which he could see were impregnated with truth and wisdom, whilst rejecting Him as God. Finally, he came to a shocking realization; It was impossible to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher but not accept His claims to be God. He wrote:

**'A man who said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us.'**

And so it was at the age of 30 he gave his life to Christ. In his own words:

**'I gave in, and admitted that God was God, and knelt and prayed: perhaps, that night, the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England.'**

If you are reading this blog and are not a Christian could I urge you to consider the evidence for Christianity? Yes Messrs. Dawkins and others may mock, but over two billion people on the planet have so far decided that it is true.

Why not do the Alpha course starting on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2018 and running until Easter? If you are 40 years old you have approximately 365 000 hours left to live. Why not invest just 24 of them on Alpha, looking into the evidence so that you can decide for yourself rather than just following the crowd?

Truth or delusion? You will get the chance to decide for yourself.

If we two billion are right, then your eternal destiny may ride on it, and eternity is a long time! In the words of C.S Lewis **'Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important.'**

