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## BIBLE JOTTINGS

### The True Thanksgiving Spirit

My Bible has a caption over **Psalm 100**, "A Psalm for Thanksgiving." Verses four and five are familiar to many of us:

*Enter His gates with thanksgiving,  
And His courts with praise.*

*Give thanks to Him; bless His name.*

*For the Lord is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting,*

*And His faithfulness to all generations.*

**Thanksgiving** is an offering of gratefulness. **Praise** is being boastful about God in song or instrument. Literally, to **give thanks** in Hebrew is to extend the hand heavenward in worship. And **bless** is to kneel down in respect and honor, and congratulate with the clapping of hands.

God's **lovingkindness** in the Old Testament consists of love plus goodness, the equivalent of "grace" in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, **faithfulness** is a combination of "faith" and "truth." When Jesus is introduced by John in his Gospel, He is identified as "*full of grace and truth*" (1:14); and "*grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ*" (1:17). **He is a continuation of God's lovingkindness (grace) and faithfulness (truth) which is everlasting!**

That is the **true Thanksgiving spirit**. We extend our hands heavenward in worship. We kneel in honor with the clapping of hands. Thanksgiving is all about HIM! 



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## A 3:15 Response: Fulfilling Jesus' Heart Part Three: "My REASONS"

By Dr. Don Bierle, FaithSearch President

"Why do you believe in God?" the atheist may ask. Skeptics often challenge Christian believers with the questions, "Why do you trust the Bible?" and "Why do you believe that Jesus is God." Even family members may ask, "How can I know there is life after death?" Your answers (or lack thereof!) to these why questions is "**My Reasons.**" It is part three of a series I call "A 3:15 Response," which has appeared in recent issues of this publication.

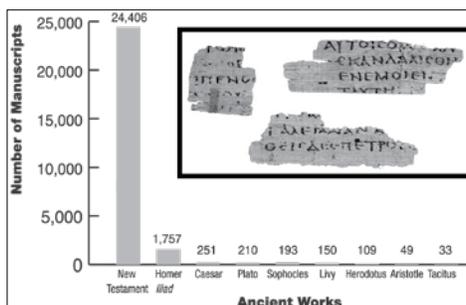
"Be prepared" is the biblical instruction in 1 Peter 3:15. Our obedience to this at FaithSearch has been to share the "**Gospel with evidence.**" It has resulted in tens of thousands who have professed faith in Jesus. You can do this too. It fulfills Jesus' heart!

**My REASONS:** "This is the biblical and external evidence supporting my worldview."

You don't need to be a genius to learn "My REASONS." More important is a desire to instill a lasting faith in your own sons, daughters and grandchildren, and a deep compassion for the lost. In my experience, unbelievers are not well prepared to defend their views. They mostly challenge yours. So, be prepared. Learn one good reason for each of the four ingredients below of your Christian worldview. It will likely be one more than they have!

**GOD** – First, the **fingerprints of God** are revealed in the created world (Romans 1:18-20). Second, the **reality of God** is testified in history with the advent of Jesus (John 1:1, 14). Check out details of these reasons in a previous three-part series.\*

**BIBLE** – First, **manuscript evidence** demonstrates that the New Testament records were written in the first century by eyewitness apostles (2 Peter 1:16). The integrity of the text is assured by the immense **number of manuscripts** found (over 24,000); the **early dates** of the manuscripts (2<sup>nd</sup> century); and the **accuracy of the copying** process (99.8% is not in question).



The Number of New Testament Manuscripts Compared to Other Ancient Works. (From *Surprised by Faith*.) Inset: The Magdalen Manuscript, a portion of the Gospel of Matthew, dated by papyrologist Dr. Carsten Peter Thiede at about A.D. 60.

Second, **archaeology has confirmed** that the people, the places, and the events recorded are historically true. I have detailed these reasons in the second chapter of my book, *Surprised by Faith*. (Order online at our Web site, Resources tab; or call 952-401-4501, T-Th for a copy; \$10.)

**JESUS CHRIST** – First, Jesus often **claimed to be God** (e.g. Matthew 28:18; John 8:53-59; 10:30-33). He proved it in His ministry by doing what only God could do (cf. Luke 4:33-36; 7:11-16; 8:22-25). Second, He was **resurrected from the dead** as witnessed by the empty tomb,

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\* Available on our Web site: [www.faithsearch.org/paraclete](http://www.faithsearch.org/paraclete), in the righthand sidebar, look for "Download PDFs." See Issues from Nov. 2018, Jan. 2019, and Mar. 2019.

FOR REFLECTION

*A Child-Sized Christmas Miracle*

How awesome and ironic to think that the creator of the universe became a small, helpless baby. In his book, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Alfred Edersheim (a nineteenth century Jewish convert to Christianity and biblical scholar) aptly put it this way:

*That on such a slender thread,  
as the feeble throb of an Infant-life,  
the salvation of the world should hang  
and no special care watch over its safety,  
no better shelter be provided it than  
a stable,  
no other cradle than  
a manger!*



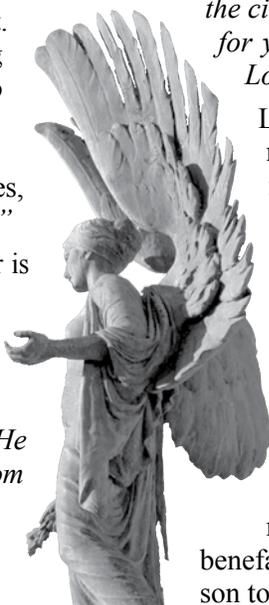
*What Excites Angels?*

There is no pretense in the Bible that the events surrounding Jesus' birth were natural, everyday occurrences. Instead they reveal **God's intervention into history throughout**. No less than twenty-four supernatural events are recorded covering a period of less than two years.

Several of these were the appearances of angels. The heavenly hosts were in a tizzy with excitement. Angels, including high-ranking Gabriel, delivered messages to Zacharias, Mary, the shepherds, and three times to Joseph. Multitudes were singing praises, "Glory to God in the highest..."

What excites angels? The answer is found in what they said to Joseph and the shepherds:

- "And she [Mary] will bear a Son; and you shall call his name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins" Matthew 1:21.
- "...I bring you good news of a great joy which shall

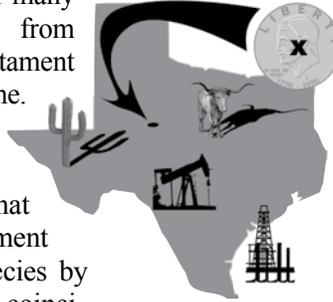


**Did You Know?**

*1 chance in  
100,000,000,000,000,000*

There are at least **456 Old Testament prophecies** pertaining to a future person which were all **fulfilled in the life of Jesus**. Evidence for the truth of this is that Jesus was demonstrated by Jews to be the Messiah and the Son of God to the satisfaction of many other Jews from their Old Testament Scriptures alone.

The most common objection is that the fulfillment of the prophecies by Jesus was coincidental or by chance. Science and mathematics professor Peter Stoner put a reasonable probability to **just eight of these 456 prophecies**. He estimated the odds at 1 chance in  $10^{17}$  (the number in the heading). He illustrated these odds as follows:



Imagine the state of Texas covered in silver dollars, two feet deep, and you have to find the one with an "X."

*Suppose that we take  $10^{17}$  silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he*

*be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" Luke 2:10-11.*

Luke also records Jesus' statement that the angels in heaven rejoice over one sinner who repents (15:10). It is understandable, then, that they should be ecstatic over the One who was coming who made redemption of all sinners possible.

Angels were excited about being witnesses of Jesus, the Christ, who would make salvation for us a reality. How much more do we, as eternal benefactors of His coming, have reason to proclaim Him.

*wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time, providing they wrote using their own wisdom.*

Source: Peter W. Stoner, *Science Speaks*. Moody Press, p. 107.

*A 3:15 Response  
continued from page 1*

His physical post-resurrection appearances to many eyewitnesses, and the transformation of His disciples from despair to bold witnesses. Resource the third chapter of my book above for greater detail.

**CREATION** – The Bible states that the **order and design seen in nature** render unbelievers "without excuse" (Romans 1:20) for their lack of faith in God. Can mere chance create complex software, Mt. Rushmore faces from a granite cliff, the universe from nothing, or even life itself? No, Intelligent Design is the only way. Another of my books (*Making Sense of Creation and Evolution*) chapter 4, discusses in detail the reasons to believe in creation by intelligent design. It, too, can be purchased as above (\$6). (My presentation of "Why I Believe... in Creation" is also available to view on our YouTube® channel.)

I have posted a worksheet on our Web site which provides a further outline of biblical and external reasons for the ingredients identified briefly above. The worksheet is a starting point for you to organize your own thoughts about "My REASONS." (See [www.faithsearch.org/myreasons](http://www.faithsearch.org/myreasons).)

In the next *Paraclete* issue I will complete this series with the fourth component of "A3:15 Response": **My INVITE**. This will help you apply what you have learned in order to bear spiritual fruit in the lives of people you love.

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