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Introduction

When Arnold Schwarzenegger arrived in Hollywood in the late 1970s, he broke all the rules. In those days, actors needed a name that was easy to remember, a great speaking voice, and the ability to act. But his name could barely be pronounced let alone remembered. His accent was so thick he was hard to understand, and in those days he couldn’t act. But that didn’t matter, because he had a body that looked like an inverted doorknob. He had the goods.

Any good book should begin with a “hook”—an attention-getting opening. But the New Testament breaks the rules. It begins with a long list of genealogies—names that are hard to pronounce and remember—yet it can do that because it has the goods. It tells us how we can find everlasting life, and those who know that they will die don’t need any other hook.

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are eyewitness accounts of Jesus of Nazareth, detailing His birth, life, ministry, death, and resurrection. As you study these four detailed accounts, you will find that (like most eyewitness accounts) they sometimes differ, depending on the perspective of the witness and the audience being addressed. For example, one Gospel says that two blind men called out to Jesus as He was leaving the city of Jericho (see Matthew 20:29,30), while another Gospel mentions only one, actually naming him (see Mark 10:46,47). This isn’t a mistake in Scripture, but simply the Gospel of Mark highlighting one of the two men.

There are also differences in the four narratives because each of the Gospels was tailored to a different audience. Matthew was written to the Jews, Mark to the Romans, and Luke to the Greeks, while the Gospel of John was universal. His Gospel includes
the Bible’s most well-known verse telling of God’s love for the whole world (John 3:16).

As you read about Jesus, make sure you take the time to consider the uniqueness of His words. Among many other amazing things, He said not to marvel that every person who has died is going to be raised from the dead by His voice (see John 5:28,29). He said that He was the only way to God (see John 14:6), and that He had power over death (John 11:1–44).

It is impossible for any honest soul not to be deeply impressed by the statements Jesus made, the questions He asked, and the answers He gave. Great philosophers are merely lost sinners—those who are formulating their own thoughts about the mysteries of life. But nothing was a mystery to Jesus. He spoke with great authority because His words were explanatory truth. The greatest men in history who studied the New Testament in any depth couldn’t help but be impressed by His person:

“I am a Jew, but I am enthralled by the luminous figure of the Nazarene... No man can read the Gospels without feeling the actual presence of Jesus. His personality pulsates in every word. No myth is filled with such life.”
—Albert Einstein

“I know men and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between Him and every other person in the world there is no possible term of comparison. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I have founded empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded His empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for Him.”
—Napoleon Bonaparte
“For thirty-five years of my life I was, in the proper acceptation of the word, a nihilist—a man who believed in nothing. Five years ago my faith came to me. I believed in the doctrine of Jesus, and my whole life underwent a sudden transformation... Life and death ceased to be evil; instead of despair, I tasted joy and happiness that death could not take away.” —Leo Tolstoy

Our BC/AD calendar marks Jesus’ birth as the dividing point of history. No other historical figure so impacted humanity that they split time in two. It would do each of us well to keep these thoughts in mind as we read—and seriously consider—the Bible’s amazing four Gospels. May God bless you as you read these wonderful accounts of unarguably the greatest human being who ever lived.

**What This Bible Contains**

To understand why Christianity is unique among religions in a world of diversity, please be sure to read the following section called “Why Christianity?” It will explain why the gospel is indeed “good news.”

Throughout the pages of this book you will find helpful answers to common questions about Christianity.

At the end of this publication you will also find a section called “Save Yourself Some Pain.” If you have placed your trust in Jesus, these very important principles for Christian growth may save you a lot of pain in life.

Scripture says, “How beautiful...are the feet of him who brings good news” (Isaiah 52:7). The closing pages explain the biblical method of evangelism, to help Christians follow in the footsteps of the Master and share the gospel the way Jesus did.
Thank you for opening this publication. It is my earnest prayer that you will come to know the Author.

Sincerely,

Ray Comfort

P.S. I suggest that you begin with the Gospel of John (the fourth Gospel), then read Matthew, Mark, and Luke. I would also encourage you to read the entire New Testament—from Acts to Revelation—all of which exalts Jesus as Lord, the ultimate Judge of the living and the dead.
Why Christianity?

_Solving life’s most important question_

Imagine the excitement you would have if I offered you a choice of these four interesting gifts:

- The original Mona Lisa
- The keys to a brand new Lamborghini
- A million dollars in cash
- A parachute

You can pick only one. Which gift would you choose? Before you decide, here’s some information that will help you to make the wisest choice: You _have to jump 10,000 feet out of an airplane_.

Does that help you to connect the dots? It should, because you need the parachute. It’s the only one of the four gifts that will help with your dilemma. The others may have some value, but they are useless when it comes to facing the law of gravity in a 10,000-foot fall. The knowledge that you will have to jump should produce a healthy fear in you—and that kind of fear is good because it can save your life. Remember that.

Now think of the four major religions:

- Hinduism
- Buddhism
- Islam
- Christianity

Which one should you choose? Before you decide, here’s some information that will help you determine which one is the _wisest choice_: All of humanity stands on the edge of eternity. We are _all_ going to die. We will all have to pass through the door of death. It could happen to us in twenty years, or in six
months, . . . or today. For most of humanity, death is a huge and terrifying plummet into the unknown. So what should we do?

Do you remember how it was your knowledge of the jump that produced that healthy fear, and that fear helped you to make the right choice? You know what the law of gravity can do to you. In the same way, we are going to look at another law, and hopefully your knowledge of what it can do to you will help you to make the right choice, about life's greatest issue. So, stay with me—and remember to let fear work for you.

The Leap

After we die we have to face what is called “the law of sin and of death.”¹ That Law is known as “The Ten Commandments.”

So let's look at that Law and see how you will do when you face it on Judgment Day. Have you loved God above all else? Is He first in your life? He should be. He's given you your life and everything that is dear to you. Do you love Him with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength? That's the requirement of the First Commandment. Or have you broken the Second Commandment by making a god in your mind that you're comfortable with—where you say, “My god is a loving and merciful god who would never send anyone to Hell”? That god does not exist; he's a figment of the imagination. To create a god in your mind (your own image of God) is something the Bible calls “idolatry.” Idolaters will not enter Heaven.

Have you ever used God's name in vain, as a cuss word to express disgust? That's called “blasphemy,” and it's very serious in God's sight. This is breaking the Third Commandment, and the Bible says God will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

¹. See Romans 8:2.
Have you always honored your parents implicitly, and kept the Sabbath holy? If not, you have broken the Fourth and Fifth Commandments. Have you ever hated someone? The Bible says, “Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer.”

The Seventh is “Do not commit adultery,” but Jesus said, “Everyone who looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (the Seventh Commandment includes sex before marriage). Have you ever looked with lust or had sex outside of marriage? If you have, you’ve violated that Commandment.

Have you ever lied? Ever stolen anything, regardless of value? If so, then you’re a lying thief. The Bible tells us, “Lying lips are detestable to the LORD,” because He is a God of truth and holiness. Have you coveted (jealously desired) other people’s things? This is a violation of the Tenth Commandment.

**Little Jessica**

That is God’s moral Law that we each will face. We will be without excuse when we stand before God because He gave us our conscience to know right from wrong. Each time we lie, steal, commit adultery, murder, etc., we know that it’s wrong. So here is the crucial question. On Judgment Day, when God judges you, will you be found innocent or guilty of breaking this Law? *Think before you answer.* Will you go to Heaven or Hell? The Bible warns that all murderers, idolaters, liars, thieves, fornicators, and adulterers will end up in Hell. So where does that leave you?

Perhaps the thought of going to Hell doesn’t scare you, because you don’t believe in it. That’s like standing in the open door of a plane 10,000 feet off the ground and saying, “I don’t believe there will be

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2. 1 John 3:15.
5. See Revelation 21:8; 1 Corinthians 6:9,10.
any consequences if I jump without a parachute."

To say that there will be no consequences for breaking God's Law is to say that God is unjust, that He is evil. This is why.

On February 24, 2005, a nine-year-old girl was reported missing from her home in Homosassa, Florida. Three weeks later, police discovered that she had been kidnapped, brutally raped, and then buried alive. Little Jessica Lunsford was found tied up, in a kneeling position, clutching a stuffed toy.

How Do You React?

How do you feel toward the man who murdered that helpless little girl in such an unspeakably cruel way? Are you angered? I hope so. I hope you are outraged. If you were completely indifferent to her fate, it would reveal something horrible about your character.

Do you think that God is indifferent to such acts of evil? You can bet your precious soul He is not. He is outraged by them.

The fury of Almighty God against evil is evidence of His goodness. If He wasn’t angered, He wouldn’t be good. We cannot separate God’s goodness from His anger. Again, if God is good by nature, He must be unspeakably angry at wickedness.

But His goodness is so great that His anger isn’t confined to the evils of rape and murder. Nothing is hidden from His pure and holy eyes. He is outraged by torture, terrorism, abortion, theft, lying, adultery, fornication, pedophilia, homosexuality, and blasphemy. He also sees our thought life, and He will judge us for the hidden sins of the heart: for lust, hatred, rebellion, greed, unclean imaginations, ingratitude, selfishness, jealousy, pride, envy, deceit, etc. Jesus warned, “I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.”

The Bible says that God’s wrath remains on each

of us, and that every time we sin, we’re “storing up wrath” that will be revealed on Judgment Day. We are even told that we are “by nature children of wrath.” Sinning against God comes naturally to us—and we naturally earn His anger by our sins.

Instant Death

Many people believe that because God is good, He will forgive everyone, and let all sinners into Heaven. But they misunderstand His goodness. When Moses once asked to see God’s glory, God told him that he couldn’t see Him and live. Moses would instantly die if he looked upon God. Consider this:

[God] said, “I will make all My goodness pass before you, and... while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by.”

Notice that all of God’s glory was displayed in His “goodness.” The goodness of God would have killed Moses instantly because of his personal sinfulness. The fire of God’s goodness would have consumed him, like a cup of water dropped onto the surface of the sun. The only way any of us can stand in the presence of God is to be pure in heart. Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” But as we’ve seen by looking at the Law, not a single one of us is “pure in heart.”

These are extremely fearful thoughts, because the God we are speaking about is nothing like the commonly accepted image. He is not a benevolent Father-figure, who is happily smiling upon sinful humanity.

In the midst of these frightening thoughts, remember to let fear work for you. The fear of God is
the healthiest fear you can have. The Bible calls it “the beginning of wisdom.”

Again, your knowledge of God’s Law should help you to see that you have a life-threatening dilemma: a huge problem of God’s wrath (His justifiable anger) against your personal sins. The just penalty for sin—breaking even one Law—is death, and eternity in Hell. But you haven’t broken just one Law. Like the rest of us, you’ve no doubt broken all these laws, countless times each. What kind of anger do you think a judge is justified in having toward a criminal guilty of breaking the law thousands of times?

Let’s See

Let’s now look at those four major religions to see if they can help you with your predicament.

Hinduism. The religion of Hinduism says that if you have been bad, you may come back as a rat or other animal. If you’ve been good, you might come back as a prince. But that’s like someone saying, “When you jump out of the plane, you’ll get sucked back in as another passenger. If you’ve been bad, you go down to the Economy Class; if you’ve been good, you go up to First Class.” It’s an interesting concept, but it doesn’t deal with your real problem of having sinned against God and the reality of Hell.

Buddhism. Amazingly, the religion of Buddhism denies that God even exists. It teaches that life and death are sort of an illusion. That’s like standing at

13. “Is it possible for a man to be reborn as a lower animal?” Maharshi: “Yes. It is possible, as illustrated by Jada Bharata—the scriptural anecdote of a royal sage having been reborn as a deer.” <www.hinduism.co.za/reincarn.htm>.
14. “When you transcend your thinking mind in the realization of your own pure, timeless, ever-present awareness, then the illusion of time completely collapses, and you become utterly free of the samsaric cycle of time, change, impermanence, and suffering.” <www.buddhistinformation.com>.
the door of the plane and saying, “I’m not really here, and there’s no such thing as the law of gravity, and no ground that I’m going to hit.” That may temporarily help you deal with your fears, but it doesn’t square with reality. And it doesn’t deal with your real problem of having sinned against God and the reality of Hell.

**Islam.** Interestingly, Islam acknowledges the reality of sin and Hell, and the justice of God, but the hope it offers is that sinners can escape God’s justice if they do religious works. Muslims believe that God will see their works and because of them will hopefully show them mercy—but they won’t know for sure. Each person’s works will be weighed on the Day of Judgment and it will then be decided who is saved and who is not—depending on whether they followed Islam, were sincere in repentance, and performed enough righteous deeds to outweigh their bad ones.

So Islam teaches that you can earn God’s mercy by your own efforts. That’s like jumping out of the plane, and believing that flapping your arms is going to counter the law of gravity and save you from a 10,000-foot drop.

And there’s something else to consider. The Law of God shows us that the best of us is nothing but a wicked criminal, standing guilty and condemned before the throne of a perfect and holy Judge. When that is understood, then our “righteous deeds” are actually seen as an attempt to bribe the Judge of the Universe. The Bible says that because of our guilt, anything we offer God for our justification (our acquittal from His courtroom) is detestable to Him, and only adds to our crimes.

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15. “Then those whose balance (of good deeds) is heavy, they will be successful. But those whose balance is light, will be those who have lost their souls; in hell will they abide” (Surah 23:102,103).

Islam, like the other religions, doesn’t solve your problem of having sinned against God and the reality of Hell.

**Christianity.** So why is Christianity different? Aren’t all religions the same? Let’s see. In Christianity, God Himself provided a “parachute” for us, and His Word says regarding the Savior, “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.” Just as a parachute solved your dilemma with the law of gravity and its consequences, so the Savior perfectly solves your dilemma with the Law of God and its consequences! It is the missing puzzle-piece that you need.

How did God solve our dilemma? He satisfied His wrath by becoming a human being and taking our punishment upon Himself. The Bible tells us that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself. Christianity provides the only parachute to save us from the consequences of the Law we have transgressed.

**Back to the Plane**

To illustrate this more clearly, let’s go back to that plane for a moment. You are standing on the edge of a 10,000-foot drop. You have to jump. Your heart is thumping in your chest. Why? Because of fear. You know the law of gravity will kill you when you jump.

Someone offers you the original Mona Lisa. You push it aside.

Another person passes you the keys to a brand new Lamborghini. You let them drop to the floor.

Someone else tries to put a million dollars into your hands. You push the person’s hand away, and stand there in horror at your impending fate.

Suddenly, you hear a voice say, “Here’s a parachute!”

Which one of those four people is going to hold the most credibility in your eyes? The one who held up the parachute! Again, it is your fear of the jump that
turns you toward the good news of the parachute.

In the same way, knowledge of what God's Law will do to you produces a fear that makes the news of a Savior unspeakably good news! It solves your predicament of God's wrath. God loves you so much that He became a sinless human being in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The Savior died an excruciating death on the cross, taking your punishment (the death penalty) upon Himself. The demands of eternal justice were satisfied the moment He cried, "It is finished!"

The lightning of God's wrath was stopped and the thunder of His indignation was silenced at Calvary's bloodied cross: "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us." We broke the Law, but He became a man to pay our penalty in His life's blood.

Then He rose from the dead, defeating death. That means that God can now forgive every sin you have ever committed and commute your death sentence. If you repent and place your trust in Jesus, then you will experience this wonderful promise:

The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

You no longer need to be tormented by a fear of death, and you don’t need to look any further for ways to deal with the dilemma of sin and God's wrath.

The Savior is God's gift to you. The gospel is unspeakably good news for the entire, sinful human race!

God Himself can "justify" you. He can cleanse you, and give you the "righteousness" of Christ. He can make you pure in heart by washing away your sins. He can shelter you from His fierce wrath, in the Rock of Ages that He has cleft for you.

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19. Romans 8:2.
20. Beware of cults such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons. They masquerade as "Christian," but they are rooted in self-righteousness (trying to do good works to earn salvation).
Why Christianity?

Only Jesus can save you from death and Hell, something that you could never earn or deserve.22

Do It Today

To receive the gift of eternal life, you must repent of your sins (turn from them), and put on the Lord Jesus Christ as you would put on a parachute—trusting in Him alone for your salvation. That means you forsake your own good works as a means of trying to please God (trying to bribe Him), and trust only in what Jesus has done for you. Simply throw yourself on the mercy of the Judge. The Bible says that He's rich in mercy to all who call upon Him,23 so call upon Him right now. He will hear you if you approach Him with a humble and sorrowful heart.

Do it right now because you don’t know when you will take that leap through the door of death. Confess your sins to God, put your trust in Jesus to save you, and you will pass from death to life. You have God’s promise on it.24

Pray something like this:

“Dear God, today I turn away from all of my sins [name them] and I put my trust in Jesus Christ alone as my Lord and Savior. Please forgive me, change my heart, and grant me Your gift of everlasting life. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.”

Now have faith in God. He is absolutely trustworthy. Never doubt His promises. He is not a man that He should lie.

The sincerity of your prayer will be evidenced by your obedience to God’s will, so read His Word (the Bible) daily and obey what you read.

I encourage you to turn to the back of this publication and read “Save Yourself Some Pain.” There you will find principles to help you grow in your faith.

22. See Ephesians 2:8,9.
23. See Romans 10:12,13.
THE GOSPELS
The Genealogy of Jesus Christ

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:

1 Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. 2 Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. 3 Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. 4 Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king.

David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah. 5 Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. 6 Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. 7 Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. 8 Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah. 9 Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon.

And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. 10 Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. 11 Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. 12 Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. 13 And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was...
born Jesus who is called Christ.

So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations.

Christ Born of Mary

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.”

Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.
Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.”

When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

So they said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:

“But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.”

Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also.”

When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy.

And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother,
How do you know God exists?

One evidence for the reality of God is the fact that a belief in Him seems to be universal. According to anthropologists, belief in God is found in virtually every culture on earth. Of 6.5 billion people worldwide, less than 3 percent are atheists. That’s not surprising. Since God created us to be in relationship with Him, He would naturally have designed us so that we could believe in Him. We have internal evidence of Him through our innate sense that He exists.

He also gives us external evidence through the order and design of our marvelous creation—so much evidence, in fact, that the Bible says we are without excuse (Romans 1:20). When you look at a Coke can, you would never in a million years believe that its components came from out of nowhere and simply evolved over millions of years. You know that if the soda can has been made, there must be a maker. If it was designed, there must be a designer. To believe it happened by sheer chance—created out of nothing—is to move into an intellectual-free zone.

Yet this is exactly what atheists claim: something can bring itself into being from nothing, and with enough time, complex systems can be assembled by chance through random, unguided processes. We intuitively know when something is designed, and we know that things don’t design and create themselves. For some reason, we understand this logic for every subject except our incredible creation—with its amazing design, complexity, beauty, and order. That just doesn’t make sense.

If man, with all his genius, can’t create a grain of sand from nothing, obviously something infinitely more intelligent than man created this incredible creation. To believe it happened by sheer random chance is lunacy. That’s why the Bible says, “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God’” (Psalm 14:1).
Who made God?

Many people refuse to believe in God because they can’t fathom how something could be eternal. Yet when scientists thought the universe itself was eternal—it just always was—atheists believed that. So if you believe it is possible for something to be eternal (such as the universe), to be logically consistent you would also have to admit it’s possible that there is an infinite, omnipotent Being who is eternal.

Scientists now know the universe had a beginning, so when Christians claim it was begun by God, atheists naturally ask, “Then who made God?” It’s a logical question. According to the Law of Cause and Effect, every effect must have a cause; everything that came into being has something that caused it.

The question of who made God can be answered by simply asking, “Does space have an end?” Obviously, it doesn’t. If there is a brick wall with “The End” written on it, the question arises, “What is behind the brick wall?” Strain the mind though it may, we have to believe (have faith) that space has no beginning and no end.

The same applies with God. He has no beginning and no end. He is eternal, and has always existed. The Bible also informs us that time is a dimension that God created, into which man was subjected. It even tells us that one day time will no longer exist. That will be “eternity.” God Himself dwells outside of the dimension He created (Titus 1:2; Isaiah 57:15).

God moves through time as a man flips through a history book. Because we live in the dimension of time, logic and reason demand that everything must have a beginning and an end. But we can understand the concept of God’s eternal nature the same way we understand the concept of space having no beginning and end—by faith. We simply have to believe they are so, even though such thoughts strain our distinctly insufficient cerebrum.