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Table of Contents

Foreword.....	3
Introduction.....	9
Chapter 1 The Beginnings of Scripture	31
Chapter 2 The beginnings of Everything.....	53
Chapter 3 The Beginnings of Life.....	67
Chapter 4 The Beginnings of Humanity.....	89
Chapter 5 The Beginnings of Sin.....	99
Chapter 6 The Beginnings of Faith.....	127
Chapter 7 The Beginnings of Salvation.....	135
Chapter 8 The Beginnings of Hope.....	147

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

Foreword

A person of faith is a person on a journey.

For the person of faith, walking by faith produces the evidence to reinforces that faith. Evidence deepens faith. What other people call 'long-shots' chances become evidence because these 'coincidences' occur far too frequently to be random but always seem to be in answer to prayer.

The more faith grows, the clearer our spiritual insight becomes. The clearer our spiritual vision, the more spiritual attributes like: hope, love, joy, peace, assurance and patience become part of our character. These are what the Bible calls fruits of the spirit, and they are all fertilized by faith.

However, this process cannot be separated from the mental processes of questioning, debating and arguing. Questions and arguments do not counter the reality of faith nor do they suggest doubt, instead they formulate doctrines. Peter advocated this process saying, *'everyone should be able to give account of the faith within'*¹.

Doctrines are not the essence of a believer's relationship with God, spiritual experience is. Doctrines are flexible

1 1 Peter 3:15

Foreword

hypotheses expressed from the experience of faith; they are formulated from growth in faith. If doctrines dictate a person's belief then the relationship with God is second hand. If relationship dictates the doctrine then the doctrine will become flexible. One thing relationship with God teaches us is that God will not be put into a mould. God does not act just because our doctrine dictates. If experience and established doctrine conflict it is doctrine that must give way. Like the scientific hypothesis, a doctrine is a prediction laid out at the end of the questions. From there on a person is on a journey of faith to discover if the hypothesis is true or false. Without this journey of proof, hypothesis is at best wishful thinking or at worst superstition. After the journey of proof, a hypothesis is usually modified and corrected, becoming the stepping stone for further discovery.

The danger comes when the person of faith transfers his or her trust from the still small voice to doctrinal consensus. When the doctrine carries more weight than the relationship, it stunts the relationship. When doctrine is subject to the relationship, doctrine gets modified, insight becomes clearer and the spirit grows.

To a scientist, relationship itself has to be proven. A scientist might match two sets of genes to prove mother and child relationship, but a genetic mother may not be in a motherly relationship with her natural offspring. Whereas, a non-genetically related adult may well relate

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

as mother to a child. The scientist experiments on the basis of immovable material laws, the concept of the spiritual is not bound by material laws and has to be observed in relationships. There can be no material law that proves the relationship of a mother and child if their relationship is not genetic. A lawyer might prove relationship by legal ruling or producing a piece of paper to show a child has been adopted for example, but legal evidence is relevant to disciplines of law not evidence to satisfy science. Each field of expertise will have its own set of rules to determine proof but the discipline of that must satisfy those rules have been met to claim 'proof'. Consensus in understanding relies on the integrity of the different disciplines to agree base rules. So, the statement in paragraph one of this book is as given. A person of faith is a person on Journey

I-think-i'd-better-think-it-out-again is a revisiting of my arrogant and dogmatic youth in the light of mellowing ageing. It is *'a turning out of clutter in my mental shed'*, it is a review of all the things I stored away to become obsolete with the advancement of technology and experience. It is based on a relationship with a creator God which began in my young days and has continued through the mellowing years of insight. Coming from a lifelong engineering bias, it is what I call an engineering review of the situation.

I told one or two people I would write a theological book

Foreword

from an engineering point of view and I could see them scratch their heads as to what I meant. An engineer is someone who thinks from outside the box based on a knowledge of what goes inside it. I realised I was biased toward engineering when, as a child, my parents asked why I had to take everything apart. I could not look at a clock accepting it told the time, I needed to know *how* it knew and *how* it expressed its understanding of time. Taking it apart did not alter the nature of time, nor did it take away the knowledge that time exists. It simply examined the way a clock delivers its expression of time.

An engineer starts from a different point to a scientist. The engineer presumes there is a design behind everything. When an engineer looks at a machine he will take account of material laws such as laws of leverage or stress or strain. He will never assume that the machine adapted itself to accommodate these laws. No! The natural assumption is that a designer took these into account long before he looked at which material he or she would use to build the machine. Even in a day of Artificial Intelligence the Engineer recognises the foundation and limits are set by a designer; Natural assumption presumes that there is a purpose behind the machine. Also assumed is the machine was built to fulfil a function. Also assumed is that the machine did not decide the function for itself, a designer stroke inventor set its purpose.

One famous philosopher put it like this, '*There is only one*

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

chair – that is the original concept - all the others are copies'.² An engineer assumes a creation has started from an original thought or need, turned into a concept, proposed in a statement of mind and tested by feasibility studies through thought and logic. From this concept, it then travels through the desire to build, through the thought process and on to the planning stage. Next it is modified through choice of materials and limitation of purpose. Only then is it communicated through words and drawings. All this comes before it appears in the concrete world as an article.

Even after this, as new materials are found and new principles are laid, an engineer, while happy to romance in yesterday's steam train, moves on in practice for the sake of efficiency modifications, say with diesel or electricity in the case of a train. Such re-examination of design makes far better everyday sense. The train concept still exist to pull freight or passenger, but the driving power is different due to latter day technology, material development, and advancing ideas.

So it is in this book – read on if you will!

² Plato I Think?

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

Introduction

If I were to ask you to define the term god, I suspect any number of people might put this book straight back on the shelf.

The clever Darwinian might answer, '*There is no such thing as a god and therefore it cannot be defined*'. The equally clever philosopher might readily explain, '*If we could understand god enough to define him we would be better than him and he would cease to be god*'. The theologian, presupposing the existence of a god might argue, '*We can observe some characteristics but never completely define Him*'. Mankind has debated god from its earliest reasoning. Cave drawings allude to such, one, found in the cavern known as '*The Sanctuary*', was drawn around 13,000 BC. Looking more like a devil than a god, it is an early evidence of mankind recognising 'a higher power'. Certainly, by the Babylonian era, the idea of higher powers was well documented.

The Biblical account opens with the first man and woman of human-species living in the presence of their creator, whom they named God³. The great Arian debate⁴ of the third-century CE, inadvertently debated the question,

3 'God' is the poor English word equivalent – an interpretation of several original words they used to define their relationship with this third being in the story of Adam and Eve.

4 Arianism is the theological teaching attributed to Arius (ca. AD 250–336), a Christian presbyter in Alexandria,

Introduction

'How can we discover God'? Arian argued we look from the bottom up, that is, we look at nature and deduce the character of the Creator from what he created. The result of this approach, is we cannot prove if there is a god at all. Science today works from this 'bottom-up' principle. It does not prove or disprove a god. Religious-scientists, (those who start with a predisposition that there is a god), offer a diversity of gods, (from Animism to Unitarianism), leaving the world is totally confused. Atheist-scientist, (those with a belief there is no god), conclude we are here by chance or some other unknown phenomenon. Without giving proper thought, such people are logically stating that chance or some other unknown phenomenon constitutes the higher power.

Athanasius,⁵ opposing Arius in the great Arian debate, argued in essence, God is a life form outside of material. God is spirit and not subject to human logic or law⁶, therefore he must reveal himself to mankind by any means he can communicate. Athanasius' says God did this by becoming the person Jesus. In so arguing, the great Arian debate split the church between Trinitarian and Unitarian - one god or three. The non believer in a scientific world, still asks today 'How can a god be both spirit and

5 Athanasius of Alexandria, also referred to as St. Athanasius the Great, St. Athanasius I of Alexandria, St Athanasius the Confessor and St Athanasius the Apostolic, was the 20th bishop of Alexandria.

6 A Poor illustration of this might be found in virtual reality or a novel where scientific and material laws can freely be ignored.

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

material'? How can your god be three things yet one thing? With the same logic science will happily argue the intrinsic nature of light is both particle and wave. Sometimes acting as a wave, sometimes as particle, it is still light. It is how we observe light's behaviour rather than the essential nature of light that causes the confusion. Light has no problem being either wave or particle just as God has no problem being God. In fact he is reported as answering Moses' question '*Who are you?*' by saying '*I Am who I am!*'

Such discussions only demonstrate the need for my opening question which was not about defining God but defining the term god. What do you understand by God? Talk to any two people of different religion and it will become clear that they cannot agree on the term *God*. Talk to any two people of the same religion and each will differ in a concept of God. To one, God is all love, to another he is Justice. Indeed, to one He is She; while to another She is it. How did we get to such diversity? Did we get here by trying to discover the nature of God from the bottom up, (Arius). Or by limiting the revelation of God to personal understanding, communication or experience, (Athanasius)?

To be fair to Athanasius, his principle is that God's nature is found in the history of all creation, not just in individual

Introduction

experience or interpretation, God is revealed in the character and design of creation. This makes the definition much more difficult because God might display justice on one occasion and mercy on another. Science also has a similar dilemma when, as we have discussed, it must define the nature of light as either wave or particle. Light is light but it manifests in different forms. God is God and '*manifests in mysterious ways*'.

According to anthropologists, we formed our definition of the term god by tracing back to the dawn of Homo-Sapien. As mankind emerged from his cave in early morning of history, he recognised he was subject to certain laws and conditions, laws and circumstances, which he could not control. Mankind is subject to weather, seasons, tides, life and death. In his primitive form mankind tried to appease these conditions, thus superstition began.

Take a short trip down the time-line and we come to mankind who has become civilised and organised into cities, leaders, and educators. Among the earliest education centres is Babylon university. Situated in the city of Ur in the land of the Chaldeans, Master Scientists of the day taught maths and astronomy⁷. These were no quacks, many principles taught then, remain as fundamentals of science today. Trigonometry began here as did Newton's third law of equal and opposing forces. Zoroastrians expressed this science in terms of opposing

⁷ Basic principles of trigonometry and calculus were formed here an at this time.

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

gods such as good and evil or light and darkness, these were in contest via nature. Babylonian scientist observed invisible powers like the moon's gravitational pull on sea and the sun's relationship with seasons. Ur university observed that star patterns were different during different seasons, therefore, they argued something must move. Recognising man could not manipulate these powers they coined the term god⁸ to describe them. An early Babylonian understanding of the term god was a magistrate or ruler with autocratic powers he had dictatorial and final powers over his subjects. It was not intended to describe the nature of the powers, only to describe its absolute right to exercise its power because it is the higher power. In the same way no one questioned the right of an autocratic ruler to do what he chose, so no one had the right or ability to interfere or question the right of the behaviour of these god laws.

Having established this as a basic principle, they were able to formulate laws - to divide the year into 365 days, the day into 24 hours, and the hour into 60 minutes for example. All this was based on a belief that the gods of heaven although autocratic, were consistent. The gods or powers behaved predictably. Science grew out of observation and belief. By recording observations, science could demonstrate consistency as evidence. By applying logic to consistency, there came forth prediction. By

8 Of course they spoke in a different language, god is the English equivalent.

Introduction

naming the gods they were limiting the domain of each god to make them easier to understand in their field of expertise.

The main gods of Babylon were:

Ilou or Assur, (probably Ahura-Mazda - sun god to the Assyrians). He was the god of life and light representing the powers of creation and sustained life.

Assur produced Anou, the “*lord of darkness,*” (seen as a figure of a man with the head of a fish and the tail of an eagle). He was the god of creation. Later he represented the force that opposed light which became associated with evil.⁹

Bel, the “*sovereign of spirits,*” (Illustrated as a king on the throne). He was the god of authority and Justice who looked after order and hierarchy.

If a first and basic definition of god was 'a higher power to which mankind gives deference' it would not be long before dignitaries appropriated it for themselves.

Nouah, “*master of the visible world,*” distinguished material from spiritual; The seen from the unseen forces.

Babylonians recognised that the physical was subject to spiritual laws and powers. Far from superstition, the Babylonians were scientists doing no more or less than

⁹ Some have pointed out a similarity with Lucifer who rebelled against God after helping with creation.

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

scientists do today, observing, ordering and hypothesising the habits of the universe, they built on the knowledge level of science in their day. Knowledge has increased to the level of today only by building on their platform of understanding.

Having observed *what* the planets did, Philosophy, speculation and superstition grew up around the question of *why* these heavenly gods behaved as they did. These are questions of motive and cannot be answered by science. Try as it may, while science can state the sequence of an occurrence, it cannot say why it is desirable that it should occur that way. The term god to early science, simply recognised the right of the universe to behave as it does.

When leading wise and learned masters propagated formulae for appeasing the gods' behaviour, they ceased to be scientific and moved into the world of speculation. Thus, astronomy gave birth to another Babylonian study discipline, Astrology. The further speculation moved from a scientific base, the deeper it went into superstition. Later in the history of science, the term god became associated with superstition rather than the Higher power.

If a first and basic definition of god was '*a higher power to which mankind gives deference*', it would not be long before leading dignitary's around the world appropriated it. Pharaohs of Egypt, seeking

Introduction

unquestionable obedience, asserted they were gods. What started as a practice, continued down the time-line, through Roman emperors claiming to be gods, Even to today where the Japanese Shinto religion believe their Emperor is a god. Today you can choose any god you like from the supermarket, from Allah to Rajah or Zeus. You can further choose the brand of god, from Islam's Sunni or Shea to Christian Conservative, Liberal or Charismatic. You can even get one from the delicatessen counter if you wish, mixing and matching to taste any ingredients from good works to faith, 'big society' or separation sects. We cannot separate early Jewish or Christian understanding of God from these progressions or digressions.

Early cave drawings portray gods but we do not know what was going on in the mind of the artist. We interpret, speculate and assume, from a distance of many thousands of years; We speculate but we cannot know. Similarly, Christians pick up a copy of the Bible and read a modern English interpretation of an ancient Hebrew script. Interpreters have diligently translated words, pondering long and hard as to which modern word best expresses the original context but how is the interpreter to know what was going on in the head of the original writer? Small wonder we argue among ourselves about the literal, poetical, scientific and spiritual value of each verse or word. Small wonder we find it difficult to discuss with a

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

modern scientific mind. Large numbers of people have long since dismissed scripture as irrelevant in the light of a modern mindset.

...The most popular god by far today is Mammon.

B*ritain may no longer be a Christian country, but is it irreligious?
By far the majority in Britain follow Mammon. Mammon's bishops
are called bankers,*

*her synod is assembled economists,
her evangelists marketing,
her prophets the press
her worship leaders government,
her priests money lenders,
her missionaries the supermarkets,
her apologists universities,
her theologians judges,
her congregations consumers,
her buildings of worship found in out-of-town shopping centres.*

*Her creed is, 'I believe you are wrong and I am right because of
my might', and the defender of this faith is one named Meme Mine.*

A well established church in Britain – methinks?

B.L.Oggins

Stubbornness of controlling authorities has also hindered the search for truth down the ages. The Roman church survived the middle ages by its ability to keep the scriptures hidden from the common man. When Galileo was brought before Pope and Bishops on trial for heresy, he was judged from the immovable standpoint of

Introduction

unscientific biblical scholars whose corrupt nature was concerned with church's controlling power. Galileo eventually proved Church theology wrong- the earth is not the centre of the universe. Nothing in scripture says it is so, however, theological scholars, (who by then preferred philosophy and politics to scripture), determined that it must be so because the church had decided it. Had the church learned nothing? Had the church itself not been born out of a new revelation? Had not the Pharisees misread the scriptures by interpreting them in such a way that John could remark, *'He came to his own and his own did not recognise Him'*. Was it not the very purpose of Jesus to reveal the real character of God from the corrupted teaching of the authorities?

Indeed, many did not recognise or accept Jesus when he came because theology had painted an inaccurate picture of the Messiah. Belief in God had been modified by theology, hijacked by politics and manipulated to the financial advantage of the intellectual elite. By the time the scribes had finished, the people expected a powerful ruler messiah who would destroy Israel's enemy, Rome. The Pharisees themselves would rather Messiah delayed his visit because they were doing very nicely, thank you.

At the end of Jesus' ministry on earth, he travelled the Emmaus road with two disciples, opening up the scriptures freeing it of established theology. In so doing their hearts burned within them because they could see

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

messiah in a new light. The tragedy of modern religion lies, not in the fact that the church is wrong on many of the scientific arguments but in its intransigence. By the eighteen-hundreds, Church had strayed so far from its founding belief that it opposed any new science that did not fit its assumptions. Once the church had been proved wrong, the world quickly assumed every declaration made by the church, to be invalid. Because the middle aged church insisted that the world was flat, the people no longer trusted the Church on its basic doctrines such as '*Jesus came to seek and to save the lost*'. Its hardly surprising people lost trust in the gospel, it had been contaminated with doctrines that had little to do with its mission.

The wise men of nativity fame only found Jesus because of their open mind and willingness to see prophesy in the light of their unfolding journey. They expected to see Jesus in a palace; They expected to see Him in Jerusalem. However, they were open minded enough to re-visit their trigonometric measurements and find the star was actually over Bethlehem. They were willing to lower their preconceived ideas of a king born in a palace, enough to find him in a

They expected to see Him in Jerusalem. But they were open enough to re-visit their trigonometric measurements to find the star was actually over Bethlehem.

Introduction

humble house in an out-of-the-way village. Faith rarely declares the detail, it is the journey that reveals that. Journeying in faith requires that we revisit our measurements regularly. When physicist Peter Higgs revisited his picture of matter, he discovered a missing piece of the jigsaw. He propagated his theory to others who confirmed it. Together they stepped out in faith¹⁰, investing millions of pound in a Hadron Collider, in pursuit of finding what we now call *Higgs' Boson*. In this journey they will not only confirm or deny a theory but also find other exciting leads to follow.

So it is then with the Christian's search for God. The writer to Hebrews states a scientific fact: the practical works of belief is faith:

*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that comes to God must first believe that he is,*¹¹

Truth is, faith is fundamental to any discovery. Atheist may say *'I do not believe'* but Atheist does! Atheist believes God does not exist. Atheist sets out on a journey of faith to discount God based on a premise that he does not exist; Believers travel life's journey on a premise that He does. Both will find what they are looking for because each will interpret life through faith in a premise. One will

¹⁰ Scientist don't always like the term 'faith', but that is what it is.

¹¹ Hebrews 11:6

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

not convince the other while each has a different starting place.

Science itself stands in the middle. Steven Jay Gould, professor of Biology and Zoology, Harvard university said:

'40-50 % of my Scientist friends are believers. Either half of my colleges are enormously stupid or else the science of Darwinism is fully compatible with religious beliefs and equally compatible with atheism'.¹²

A premise may begin with a life experience, early propaganda, emotional or intellectual disposition, or any of the other factor that shapes our personality. Premise will grow by assimilating information until it becomes either internalised or rejected. It may be that information is overwhelmingly imposed from biased sources. In by-gone-days, church had free rein leaving people in ignorance of science. Today that role is reversed. In the days of Galileo and Newton, people would dismiss science on Church authoritative say-so, today people dismiss God on an Atheistic-scientist's say-so.

So how does a person start the journey of discovering God? Today, A person may start with the Bible, believing

¹² See [Wikipedia.org/wiki/God Is Not Great](http://Wikipedia.org/wiki/God_Is_Not_Great) ; ALSO *God's Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?* : John C. Lennox ; ALSO *The Liberal Delusion; The Roots of Our Current Moral Crisis* by John Marsh.

Introduction

it to be at least a reliable story of a nation discovering God. But Adam did not start there, nor did Abraham.

It was Moses who started assembling the Pentateuch¹³ in part so the children of Israel had a common constitution. Moses was neither a good organiser nor delegator¹⁴. But, as leader of the Hebrew Exodus, he acquired the role of Prime Minister, high priest, chief judge, head of the national health service and lord high executioner. Some of his decisions were social, some ceremonial, some legal, some essential for the moral standing. Some laws were essential to the health of the nation and some, (like the law on divorce), were born out of the hardness of heart in the people¹⁵. After all, if people live in harmony without strife or judgement there is no need for law.

The people Moses had been set over were slaves that had been set free. His writings were for a nation in transition, a nation in tents, living in tight proximity. His writings were for a people who had moved from a place of vast resources to a place with none. His writings were from a person who had learned leadership techniques from the ruler of a vast domain. He did not simply forget what he had been taught when he was challenged to his new role.

13 The first five books of the Hebrew Scriptures

14 Exodus 18: 10 - 27

15 Jesus said that this law was introduced because of the stubbornness of heart in the people. *Mar 10:4-5 they said.....Moses gave permission for a man to write a divorce notice and send his wife away." Jesus said to them, "Moses wrote this law for you because of your hard hearts.*

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

His writings display a person who by nature was independent and autocratic in nature. These factors were not automatically discarded when God commissioned Moses at the burning bush. These were qualities essential to the purpose of God in moulding a new nation at that time. The problem does not lie in the arrangements for the wilderness but in the insistence that those arrangements should stay the same continuing into the promised land.

Without change there is no maturity. My Grandson's insistence "*Mummy told me to wear my Wellington boots*" became childhood misunderstanding when he marched from the garden into the sitting room with them on. Maturity and experience enable us to decide not only the difference between the letter and the spirit of the law but also the relevance to time and place.

My Grandson's insistence "mummy told me to wear my Wellington boots" became childhood misunderstanding when he marched from the garden into the sitting room with them on.

When Moses proclaimed there was to be one place in the camp to which animals were to be taken for slaughter, preparation and cooking, the tabernacle served both a spiritual and social purpose. At social level it acted as abattoir, butchery, kitchen, fire, health and safety authority. We have lost the spiritual application of so much in the Pentateuch simply because we have lost sight of the full social practices of this

Introduction

fledgling nation.

Come with me, down from the hill called twenty-first-century into the desert camp of this Israelite people. The people had come from Egypt, a wealthy, no, very wealthy nation. A nation that had become lax in discipline and morals, a nation motivated primarily by a whim of the moment. It would slaughter animals and eat a feast almost every week to one or other of its gods. Egypt's philosophy was eat, drink and be merry for we are top nation.

As slaves to Egypt, Israelites had learned the habits of the nation without understanding the restraints of its economics. Some two-hundred years before, Joseph had taught times of plenty must build reserves for times of hardship. Now that was forgotten. This regime were living in boom times without any thought for bust.

In euphoria, Israelites walked out on the greatest country in the world into a desert with Moses in charge. Now it was moderation by rationing, discipline not impulse, rational not emotion. The animals they came out with would be their food for however long they were in the wilderness. An ecosystem had to be devised to breed more animals than they ate. The less populated animals were not to be eaten the more populated ones were to be inspected before eating. To make this law simple to understand Moses introduced the cloven hoof rule.¹⁶

16 Duet 14: 7ff

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

No longer were they housed in brick houses with big gardens but tents, tightly packed into family tribes for protection and organization. Burning camp fires were not only a fire risk but also a health hazard. Badly slaughtered animals, rotting meat, fat, flies, insufficiently cooked meats, upset stomachs – I leave you conclude the chain of events¹⁷.

Soon after the lesson of the quails, when the people became greedy and the meat went mouldy and the whole camp got dysentery, Moses introduced further camp laws.

1. No camp fires outside the tabernacle!
2. No unqualified slaughter-men.
3. Properly supervised cooked food.
4. Properly disposed of offal and fat.

From then on the centre of the camp, which housed the meeting place, also became the slaughterhouse, the camp kitchens and the camp hospital – all under the authority of the tribe of Levi.

After initial protest, Israel settled down to a routine. Animals were taken to the centre of camp to be checked as healthy by priests. They were blessed, slaughtered,

¹⁷ Exodus 16:20 Some of them disobeyed, but the next morning what they kept was stinking and full of worms, and Moses was angry.

Introduction

separated into fat, blood, offal and good meat, then offered to God as a reminder of his provision for their life. Fat and offal were used to fuel the fire, cooking pots were used to boil the meat. The cooked sacrifice was handing back to the head of the house who provided a meal for all his clan. This process served at society level as well as the spiritual level; it proclaimed the need of sacrifice of one animal for the life of the people. This was not the slaying of an animal for its own sake, it was the spiritual awareness of the need for a perfect sacrifice, a repentant and grateful heart¹⁸, a just attitude, and an awareness that God himself would do the Judging¹⁹. Paul rightly argued that under the mercy of God, living not killing was the intention.²⁰ Paul was only reiterating what Isaiah had said many years before:

Your sacrifices mean nothing to me. I am sick of your offerings of rams and choice cattle; I don't like the blood of bulls or lambs or goats.

“Who asked you to bring all this when you come to worship me”? Stay out of my temple!

Your sacrifices are worthless, and incense is disgusting. I can't stand the evil you do on your New Moon Festivals or on your Sabbaths and other times of worship.

I hate your New Moon Festivals and all others as well.

18 Proverbs 21:3 (the animal could not give salvation),

19 Job 13:8 , 19:25

20 Romans 12:1 Dear friends, God is good. So I beg you to offer your bodies to him as a living sacrifice, pure and pleasing. That's the most sensible way to serve God.

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

*They are a heavy burden I am tired of carrying.
“No matter how much you pray, I won't listen. You are too violent. Wash yourselves clean! I am disgusted with your filthy deeds. Stop doing wrong and learn to live right. See that justice is done. Defend widows and orphans and help those in need.”*

I, the LORD, invite you to come and talk it over. Your sins are scarlet red, but they will be whiter than snow or wool.²¹

Once the children of Israel entered the promised land and spread out over 7,951 square miles²², the temple lost its central function; It retained only a ritual function. Keeping the ritual without the context changed the nation's understanding of God. God now became one who demanded the people sacrifice for their sins rather than a picture of God's provision for every part of life. Such a fundamental shift, changed the nation from a caring, sharing people into a legalistic, controlling society. The very thing from which Moses rescued them.

In the desert Levi also had flocks and herds of animals, Once the people spread out over the promised land, priests gave up farming rights to become executives, receiving taxes or tithes. These were paid in kind by taking a portion of the meat sacrifice as payment²³ until, that is, the

21 Isaiah 1:11

22 20,600 square kilometres

23 Levi was given no land allocation in the promised land They were to be spread

Introduction

medium of money became the norm. Levites, were charged by Moses, (who was himself a Levite), with the care of the tabernacle and the law. Thus, under the new order they were set up in the cities discharging the duties of both expounding the law and judging it. Relationship between God and his people became increasingly separated by intermediaries who were being corrupted by power.

When Israelites were taken captive for seventy-years, they lost the skill of reading Hebrew. This handed unprecedented powers to the Levite scribes and Pharisees who were the custodians of the writings. They could interpret scripture as they wished holding the common folk as slaves in their power.

Throughout history the story is the same. Just as Israelites began to view God as one who could only be reached through the intermediary priests, so Rome in the middle ages held power over the people by fear. This of course suited those in power who developed their own laws to control the behaviour of the unlearned masses. This occurred as people lost the art of reading Latin while the church refused to allow the scriptures to be in any other language.

Jesus came into the world with a message. Even if you could not read the scriptures, God's requirements were

among the people as priests, judges and doctors.

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

now in visual form, they could be seen in his life. 'Do as you see me do because I do what I see my father do!' Was his message. His example demonstrates the spirit of the law not the letter. Pictures have been understood in any language and any time, from the cave drawings to today. In today's world market, self assembly furniture packs come with picture instructions not words. The promise of the Holy Spirit relates to the demonstration of Christian living, not just the hearing of a book of law.²⁴

So then, it remains to point out how a few words are used throughout this book. Science is a discipline that is not owned by Atheist or Christian. Atheist is one who believes there is no God. Religion refers to those that believe there is a god and Christian describes the vast family of beliefs that stem from the person of Jesus Christ, his life, his death, his resurrection and his teachings. Now we must move on.

²⁴ *As the prophets foretold 'He has shown you O man what he doth require; to do justice and walk humbly before your god.'* Micah 6:8

Introduction

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

Chapter 1 The Beginnings of Scripture

Why start here?

First, because we will be quoting scripture throughout this book. We will be building argument on it and we need to know we can trust it.

Second, we need to know how to interpret it. To do this we need to understand the culture of the day in which it was written in order to extract its relevance in today's world cultures. Paul struggled with culture as he moved from a Jewish culture to open up the gospel into many gentile cultures. The covenant of circumcision was between God and Abraham's descendants, not for gentiles, the Nazarite vow was not for all of Abraham's descendants but for or individuals like Samson and John the Baptist. Wrong interpretation of scripture passages leads at worst to sects and cults and at best, back to the legalism from which we were set free.

Third, we need to convert scriptural principles into practice. If God speaks through scripture, how can we distinguish God's permanent directives from third party propaganda. Church leaders can be as bad as politicians when it comes to slanting scripture to suit a cause. Scripture itself gives many examples of kings and even

Chapter 1 The Beginnings of Scripture

prophets misusing scripture to persuade the people to behave in accordance with whims or customs of the day. Paul argues passionately on some doctrines while giving suggestion or opinion on things that do not matter. Even here it is hard to distinguish where Paul is talking about cultural behaviour of the day or eternal principles of heaven. In short, it is not an easy thing for the Christian of today to determine eternal principles from cultural demands.

Human Beings have struggled with interpretation since writing began. When our early ancestors drew pictures on caves with animal blood and blackberry juice, thirteen-thousand years ago, a new world of communication began. From a picture positioning an ox with the sun, a whole tribe would determine the best hunting ground. The communication was simple because the context was simple.

Humans need food and cloths. As these basic needs are met, man steps up on the second rung of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, by building cities. Cave paintings became hieroglyphics to suit more complex and permanent communication. At the dawn of this more complex age we find the patriarchs of scripture. Job probably lived contemporary to Abraham.²⁵ From his

25 Scholars are divided on the date and place of Job. For myself I go with the early dates of Job and place him somewhere around Syria and perhaps slightly earlier than Abraham. My evidence includes: 1- the method of writing. 2- the clear evidence of a theological agreement among the comforters who appear to have worked the

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

reference to a lead pad and iron pen suggests he wishes to communicate to a more permanent audience than just his friends. He may well have been influenced by the early Assyrian preference of writing in lead with an iron pen:

*That my words were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!*²⁶

Moses used two methods of writing. The ten commandments were cuneiform in limestone because these were the essential and permanent principles of the law. These would probably be put on display in the camp centre for all to read at first. This form of writing later became known as the law of Medes and Persians – Written in stone they cannot be altered. That method was common in Egypt for permanent decrees but Egyptian also wrote script on a Papyrus. This would have been common for the day to day records of this new nation, supplementing and expanding the principle statements written in stone.

Imagine starting a nation from scratch. It is fine to lay out a principle but principles need detail to follow. It is one thing to inscribe a principled decree in stone stating '*every citizen must drive safely*'. Caveman Barney Rubble

arguments through at a common school before coming together. 3- the depth of learning, style of argument and common agreement in the group suggests an early common education perhaps even a Syrian university education .

26 Job 19:24

Chapter 1 The Beginnings of Scripture

might drive safely on the left while neighbour, Fred Flintstone might choose to drive safely on the right. Principles need to be quickly followed by a code of conduct for uniformity in behaviour. Thus, today, we have a highway code enshrined in law. Cuneiform was unsuitable for detail. An average Egyptian driver would not wish to carry tablets of stone containing the highway code in the glove compartment of his chariot, so Egyptian script on papyrus developed.

Papyrus had disadvantages. The Egyptian kept Papyrus in hard wooden boxes lined with pitch to keep important papers away from termites, sunlight, wind, dust and other destructive forces. Moses had one or two of these 'arks' associated with his life, the first built of reeds ensured his survival as a baby. The second, built of gopher wood to precise size and shape, became known as the ark of the covenant. In Egyptian courts, the papyri of laws were kept in an ark of gopher wood on which the judge sat. This seat of Law was his authority to judge. Similarly, the seat of learning was an ark full of papyri at a university. The seat of mercy was on the Ark of the Covenant; inside were the tablets and papyrus writings of Moses²⁷. The

²⁷ Exodus 25:21 And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And Deuteronomy 33:26 Take this book of the law, and put it in side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee. : the fact that it was called the seat of mercy is evidence that the law was intended to merciful and not Draconian

Incidentally, this seat on top of the covenant law defines the intention of the law

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

Levi clan was charged with its care and a procedure was drawn up for its transportation when Israelites moved camp. In later times, Samuel would travel Palestine villages with his case law in an ark on which he would sit in the market place as Judge of all Israel.

Whether Moses wrote originally in Egyptian or Hebrew is unknown. Writing developed independently in at least three places between 3500 BC and 3100 BC, Egypt, Mesopotamia and Harappa. Hebrew is said to have developed from the language of Shem.²⁸ Any early documents being handed down would need updating because language had undergone change just as the 'authorised version' of king James needs a language update today.

From about 2000 BC (400 years before Moses) there were three major learning centres that had an influence on early religion. Babylon University majored in Science maths and astronomy. If you ever use trigonometry, calculus or a sky map,- you are indebted to this university. Much in the same way Cambridge had a big influence over church Reformers in 1530, Abraham, Melchizedek, Job and a few other biblical characters show signs of having learning at Babylon's university. Indeed, it may well have been Abraham's rejection of astrology and his refinement of Zoroastrianism that made him leave Ur and travel to

inside it. The law was never meant to condemn but to show mercy.

²⁸ Semitic Language

Chapter 1 The Beginnings of Scripture

Haran²⁹.

A second University, founded in Egypt, majored in arts, social sciences, politics and religion. It is hard to dismiss that this university influenced Moses. Brought up in Pharaoh's palace, well educated and equipped to lead a nation, God clearly ordained the circumstances of Moses' life to start a new nation.

The third large library in Ebia (Syria), probably associated with a third university, was where archaeologists discovered eighteen-hundred complete clay tablets on wooden shelves and another four-thousand-seven-hundred fragments on the floor where the wooden shelves had collapsed. These tablets which retained many of their contemporary clay tagged headings to help reference them. Many of these, (written on Soft clay then baked for permanency), describe Hebrew rituals mentioned in Deuteronomy. The students here appear to have used iron pens and lead sheet which gives us a hint of Job's background.

The original five books of Moses were compiled during the 40 years of the wilderness. We do not have the originals of course, but Moses saw to it that the originals

²⁹ Astrology developed from the science of astronomy as a way of expressing the unseen influences of the planets on earth's seasons and tides. Zoroastrianism also developed as an explanation of these scientific discoveries and the conflicts Within nature's forces. Zoroastrianism, came very much closer to Abraham's belief in one God. It believed in 2 gods – one good and one evil.

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

were to be looked after and updated by the tribe of Levi. (Levi had writing skills).

In keeping with the Egyptian side of his character he built everything for eternity. He foresaw the time Abraham had predicted, a time when the Israelites would enter and spread out in the promised land. He was walking in the promise Abraham's prophesy had predicted perhaps three-hundred-and-fifty years before. He had imagined a time when Israel would set up a king in its own land like the surrounding tribes. In keeping with the Egyptian tradition, Moses commanded all future kings to keep a diary:³⁰

“When a king begins to rule, he must first write a copy of the law for himself in a book”. He must make that copy from the books that the priests from the tribe of Levi keep. He must keep that book with him and read from it all his life, ...³¹

Our copies of these books have come down through these copies, this is evident because events are recorded that occurred after the death of Moses.

Moses had plenty of historic material to draw on in his original documents, and he used it. Genesis chapter-five begins, *'This is the scroll of the generations of Adam'* Some have taken this to mean that Moses inserted pre-written material into his writings to back up the statements

30 This explains simply how Moses' death and after are recorded in these books

31 Deuteronomy 17:18

Chapter 1 The Beginnings of Scripture

he had made earlier. I see no reason why he might not do that. It was the way university students were taught to justify their argument. Moses, educated in the Egyptian university³², spent a further forty years with his father-in-law Hobab and Hobab's father Reuel³³. It was the tradition of the head of a tribe to keep the treasures of the tribe and as the learned '*friend of God*' of this time this fell to Reuel. This, being in the fertile crescent, it would almost certainly include writings of Hammurabi, ruler of the fertile crescent. He had copies of his code made on a papyrus and distributed to all appointed governors, administrators, mayors and council elders.³⁴

Besides the similarity of Deuteronomy and the Ebla tablets previously referred to, and the writings of Hammurabi, there is evidence that the patriarchs themselves left writings.³⁵ For example the early church, and later the Coptic church,³⁶ reference a 'book of Noah' and a 'book of Enoch'. Moses appears to quote Enoch 1:9 in Deuteronomy 33:2 :

The LORD came from Mount Sinai; he rose like the sun

32 Acts 7:22

33 Judges 4:11 clearly says his proper name is Hobab. His father is also addressed as '*His excellence*' in Exodus 3:11, (Jethro means '*His excellence*'). Also, as a priest of God, and son of Reuel, (Exodus 2:18, Reuel means '*Friend of God*' – the same title given to Abraham). Reuel is clearly a well educated man with reading and writing skills, and as chief of the clan, keeper of the ancestral writings.

34 The International History Project 2004

35 A list is provided at back of notes

36 (Eastern Orthodox churches)

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

over Edom and shone on his people from Mount Paran. Ten thousand angels were with him, a flaming fire at his right hand.

Jude later quotes the same passage attributing it to Enoch :

“ And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand his angels at his right hand”³⁷

The 'Code of Hammurabi' (Hammurabi), is much earlier than Moses.³⁸ Moses carries many similar passages, especially throughout Deuteronomy. Any board examiner would fail a student for plagiarising on much less evidence.

While the library in Ebia was familiar with headings and genre, Moses was not so clever when it came to separating content. The Pentateuch is a mixture of God given law, social law, judicial law and cultural guidance. All these are muddled together, so much so, that even today Christians divide and argue over boundaries and statements. Which are laws of God, which are laws of state. Which are laws for social cohesion, which are God's laws for all time. Which laws directly apply to the covenant between God

³⁷ Jude 1:14

³⁸ Babylonia (Babylonian Bâbili, "gate of God"; Old Persian Babirush), Was the ancient country of Mesopotamia, known originally as Sumer and later as Sumer and Akkad, lying between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, south of modern Baghdad, Iraq. Hammurabi probably did not invent the code but adapted it from even earlier Sumerian writings. The Sumerian people are Shem's descendants.

Chapter 1 The Beginnings of Scripture

and Israel, which will the disciples of the new testament disregard when the gospel goes to the gentiles³⁹.

Genre is important. For example, Song of Songs is poetical and if you try to read it as literal fact you will end up with Solomon's beautiful lover looking like figure 1:

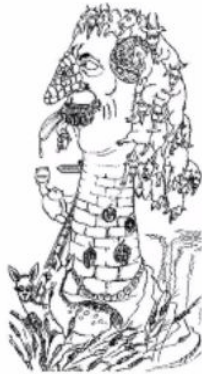
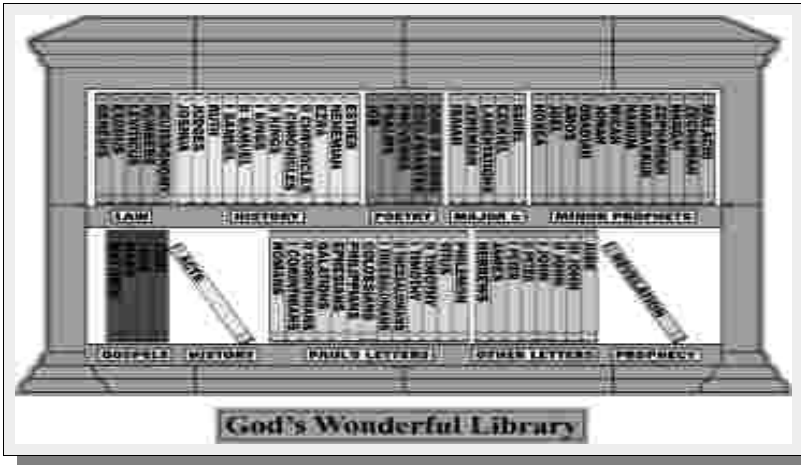


Figure 1: Did Solomon's great love really look like this?

Anyone starting out on a bible survey will have come across the books of the bible as a library, (*see Page 42*). Laying out the books of the bible in useful genre is fine to begin, however, when you get down to more serious study you will quickly find this is not too helpful.

³⁹ For example: circumcision

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!



A Closer look at bible books show genre changes within the book and even with the verse. What can we say about genre? The Pentateuch is not science, as we will see in the next chapter and it is unfair to treat it as such. It is not poetry, although it contains poetry. It is not Law, although it has much to say about how people should behave. Only about one fifth of its content is law. It is not all History, although it summarises many historical events. Better perhaps, put it under '*Journals, Minutes and Diaries*'. Most of these writings are a real time record of how God formed the nation of Israel in preparation for the Messiah. It contains all sorts of thought, actions, laws, agreements and incidents that formed the nation called Israel. It contains extracts from historical book and legal books of the day. It is a progression of understandings, principles and application.

Chapter 1 The Beginnings of Scripture

To the Egyptian mind, much like Sharia-law today, there is no separation of natural law, social law or religious understanding. So it is in these books we find a cake mix of genres.

Possibly, the earliest written Bible book is Job⁴⁰. Debating the nature of God, Job and his friends appear as educated people, well versed in an established theology. Their debate centres around how established theology applied to their time, life and culture. Job's view differs from an established theology of

Agreeing to a group theology in order to belong, leads to half hearted faith. Theology is not revelation.

his day which held that unfortunate times are punishment for a sinful act. Many centuries later, the disciples discussed the very same question. 'Who sinned this man or his relations'? Jesus reaffirms Job's position against the established theology of Job's day. 'Neither!' Said Jesus.⁴¹

Theology, by nature, has a way of becoming dogmatic and stubborn even when the facts don't fit. Job's colleagues tried to make his circumstances fit the doctrine but they could not. Pharisees became irate with Jesus because his actions and arguments undermined their doctrines. Of course they would because Pharisees were the guardians of both scripture and Hebrew language. Under Roman

⁴⁰ I am of the belief that this book was translated by Moses for Hebrew understanding rather as the bible is translated into today's lingo.

⁴¹ John 9:2 Jesus' disciples asked, "Teacher, why was this man born blind? Was it because he or his parents sinned?"

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

occupation, few common folk could read Hebrew. Pharisees were the Etonians of the day and presented themselves as the authority and guardian of all doctrine. In the Middle ages under the Pope, Rome held similar sway over the peoples of the world who could not read Latin. Doctrine always becomes corrupt when left too a privileged few, it needs testing by everyday living. A living faith built on doctrine soon fails, A doctrine built on faith should be an expression of a relationship with God. Such is the scriptures. Scripture is a record of different personalities relating to God their creator. Where the experience differed from the doctrine, the relationship took priority. If it had not, there would be no gentile church. Then where would you and I be?

Scholars of today, those who study psychology, suggest three categories of belief, Time-specific⁴², Group-specific⁴³ and Person-specific⁴⁴. A simple belief in God, leads to faith in God. A simple faith in God should lead, by natural progression, to a trust in God, (person-specific). It often leads to simply acceptance of what others lead us to believe about God (third party belief). By joining a

42 Beliefs common, universal and at the core of our knowledge systems. These are shaped by knowledge and change over time.

43 These are common to a particular religious, political, social, academic or other homogeneous group or culture. These are generally slower to change over time.

44 Personal beliefs formed by the sum of the individual's life circumstances and experiences. Modified by changes in experience and understanding.

Chapter 1 The Beginnings of Scripture

local church, (Time-specific and Group-specific belief), the person-specific belief encounters doctrine. Thus, belief in God is modified to accommodate persuasion by a local assembly. A person who believes and continues in faith will soon encounter the practice of baptism for example. If he or she is in a group of Anglicans, then child baptism is a norm, if he or she is in a group of Baptist persuasion, then total immersion as an adult is the norm. Both accept that baptism is a symbol - or declaration of beginning a new way of life, a death to the old way and rising in the new. However, both have been modified by the theology of the group. Watchman Nee was 'convicted' about baptism while in a desert. Desperate to declare his new direction in life he buried himself in sand and jumped out again. A real case of thinking outside the box. He recognised water baptism is not an essential of salvation but a demonstration of a commitment to follow Jesus' example. The demonstration is the example, not the ritual of baptism.

Belief, therefore, leads to an attempt to discover truth via faith. This is true be we Christian or the atheist. The modification of individual's belief by the group, might well be the cause of discomfort in a person's belief. Agreeing to a group theology in order to belong, can lead to half hearted faith. Theology is not revelation. Theology is an attempt to make sense of God within the limits of human understanding of the day. Most of the biblical

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

'greats' moved out of a group and time belief to follow their person-belief in a new direction. This we see as stepping out in faith. Their faith led them into new pathways. Abraham grew up in a university town called Ur. Ur university specialised in science and mathematics, both of which were in their infancy. It was not surprising then, that faith in that day came out of the conclusions of that day. It led to an understanding based on planetary influences over earth making sense at that time. It resulted in a theology known as Zoroastrianism⁴⁵. Many Zoroastrian idea are recorded in scripture. One in particular troubled Abraham. Zoroastrians believed planetary gods acted randomly and independently of each other. Something inside Abraham concluded there was one supreme creator God who held all the universe in harmony. Abraham's belief turned to faith in a search for truth, so he questioned the status-quo and followed belief in one supreme God creator of heaven and earth- by faith.

Abraham was not alone, believing in one creator God, besides Job, Melchizedek was a priest of '*the most high God*' who recognised Abraham's blessing from the same creator God. Although scripture narrative narrows to the line of Abraham because of his quality of faith, it gives

⁴⁵Zoroastrianism formed many of the ideas behind the signs of Zodiac known as Astrology. But it also became the chief propagator for protecting and spreading the moral laws of Hammurabi and the civil laws of Eshnunna. which law resemble very closely the laws of Moses and from which Moses may have drawn some of his material.

Chapter 1 The Beginnings of Scripture

plenty of examples of God blessing many other kings and nations whose theology was suspect by Abraham's standard. Heaven will not exclude people born between Abraham and Christ on the grounds of wrong genetics, nor on the grounds of theological inaccuracy. He will include any on the basis of an active seeking faith in the 'Most High' creator God. Job's theology knew about a righteous God, Sin, a need for help in salvation and that God himself would see to it that man could be saved. All this is evident when you read the story of Job, one verse stands as the basis to his faith:

For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.⁴⁶

Some of the most bizarre characters of the Old Testament are used of the 'Most High God' to further His cause. Jephtha, for example, was most unorthodox in his doctrine to the extent of being willing to offer God a human sacrifice. Abraham of course offered to do the same with his son Isaac⁴⁷. Both are examples of person-specific belief testing group and time beliefs. Many examples of bible characters reveal doctrines we would vehemently disown today. God did not disown the person for errors in doctrine where society norms were contrary. God views the life of a new believer as a journey into truth. A process

46 Job 19:25

47 Abraham's generation were very much influenced by Molech – the god who demanded the sacrifice of the first-born.

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

of growing into Kingdom values.

The relationship between doctrine and revelation is like that of a map and a journey. Doctrine lays out a map of the land as others have found it to be. The journey reveals old roads closed and new motorways open. The journey creates the revelation. The journey also modifies the map. Revelation belongs to faith on the move.

No you are wrong' said I pompously shouted at the artificial voice on my Sat-Nav, as it told me to take the next exit off the motorway. If only I had trusted it! It knew what I did not. The road ahead had been closed and eight hours of queued traffic waited ahead. It had additional relevant information for my journey the map in my head did not.

Our journey to the kingdom is just that - a journey. Faith tells us the destination is well worth the journey and warms our heart in anticipation. Scripture is a travel guide of those that have travelled the route before us, some good examples, some bad. The church, our Group-specific travelling companions, may only seek to correct us if they are on the same journey, but church has no authority to sit at home quoting a map without travelling the route itself. The journey is an individual one, we are each responsible for our own journey. As we saw earlier in the chapter when we mentioned the middle-ages, the church cannot be relied upon alone for a safe journey. Both the church and the scriptures must be weighed in the light of a relationship that we established at the cross.

Chapter 1 The Beginnings of Scripture

Paul, had been the victim of group and time belief before discovered the truth. When he was challenged by the person of Jesus on the Damascus road he stepped out of his old group-specific influence and into one that made more sense to his new found mission. Now in a position of not knowing who to trust, he spent three-years working out his own calling. All this was necessary because the gospel was about to go multi-cultural. The scriptures were the firm foundation. Now they must be re-examined to establish the bare necessities for the gentile church journey. This is why the man later advises others:

Church has no authority to sit at home quoting a map without having travelled the route

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, ... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.⁴⁸

This is the man that was not afraid to question the established leaders of Jerusalem church. He did not expect Jewish culture to change, he expected the teachings of scripture to be relevant to a gentile culture. This is the man who, first saw the need which led to a new belief, then moved in faith to discover how the scriptures were relevant to gentile nations. This was no well worn path. Paul's examination of scripture shows, although Jesus is the saviour of the whole world, his actual ministry, (as one

48 Philippians 2:12

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

human being and thirty-three years life), was mainly confined to the *'lost house of Israel'* and a few Samaritans who demonstrated a glimmer of faith.⁴⁹

Make no mistake as to the burden set on Paul. He did not release the gentiles from scripture simply because their culture had not been moulded by it. He wrote to Timothy :

*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*⁵⁰

The scriptures are essential because they point to Jesus and show the authority of his teaching:

*Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.*⁵¹

*I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not: but the scriptures must be fulfilled.*⁵²

How was it possible for such a man as Paul to divide scripture from the Jewish group/time belief and place it into the context of a gentile culture? What criteria did he use in making his decisions?

First, he elevated the interpretation given by Jesus over the

49 Matt. 10: 4-5 ; Matt. 15: 21-28 ; (perhaps a Roman or two as well)

50 2 Timothy 1:16

51 John 5:39

52 Mar 14:49

Chapter 1 The Beginnings of Scripture

teachings of the Rabbis. Paul had learned the scriptures in accordance with Group / time-belief under Gamaliel. Faced with the person of Jesus, he accepted him to be the Messiah. From that decision he was able to accept the right of Jesus to interpret scripture correctly.

For Christians, Jesus Christ's interpretation of biblical principles by teaching and example are supreme because of who he is. Other religions say Jesus was a prophet among prophets. In so doing they bring scripture back into confusion. Paul's encounter on the Damascus road settled once and for all for him the question of how to interpret scripture:

I heard a voice speaking unto me, ... it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.⁵³

The final authority for a Christian is not written scripture which can be used to argue any self preference, it is the demonstration of scripture given by the life of Jesus⁵⁴. Quite how Paul determined the right doctrines to lay down as essential to all believers is hidden in the three years of silence after his Damascus road experience. From his writing to the Corinthian church, it seems probable that those three-years were spent checking what the disciples claimed Jesus taught about the scriptures.

53 (Acts 26:14)

54 The demonstration of Jesus is not to be confused with the teachings of Jesus as these are often argued over by fellow Christians.

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.⁵⁵

Paul, Like Moses and the Prophets, was asked to adjudicate on the behaviour of churches or people. He gave his advice in the light and understanding of culture in the light of his observation of the Holy Spirit at work. Unfortunately we do not have any of Paul's expository sermons or any extracts of his debates held at the Ephesus Library. These would have helped us understand the essential doctrines underlying his life and in his day. Instead, we have letters. These letters were more concerned with behaviour than teaching doctrine. The best we can do is work back from his letters to determine his underlying principles of his reasoning, in fact, when we do this we find there are remarkably few basic doctrines:

One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.⁵⁶

We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ...⁵⁷

... Just as we will die because of Adam, we will be raised to life because of Christ. Adam brought death to all of us, and Christ will bring life to all of us.⁵⁸

55 1 Corinthians 11:3

56 Ephesians 4:6

57 Colossians 1:3

58 1 Corinthians 15:21-22

Chapter 1 The Beginnings of Scripture

For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.⁵⁹

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.⁶⁰

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.⁶¹

That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁶²

But what about people who turn away after they have already seen the light and have received the gift from heaven and have shared in the Holy Spirit? What about those who turn away after they have received the good message of God and the powers of the future world? There is no way to bring them back. What they are doing is the same as nailing the Son of God to a cross and insulting him in public!⁶³

So it is then, that we move on to consider these, principles starting with creation.

59 1 Co 2:2

60 1 Timothy 1:15

61 (Romans 5:1 (NIV))

62 Romans 15:6

63 Hebrews 6:44

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

Chapter 2 The beginnings of Everything

Moses opens his books with a clear statement of belief :

In the beginning God created....

So then, every human-being believes because it is intrinsic in a human-being to believe. God believes and his creation captured that capacity because he made humans in his character likeness. Belief exists and when it is acted upon it becomes faith. Belief in action is faith. According to Alfred Adler⁶⁴ :

All behaviour is goal oriented. Nothing is random, all actions have purpose. Individuals believe a behaviour will achieve a goal.

When Atheist says, 'I don't believe!' he or she is only using the negative of the form 'I believe there is no god'.

Scientist might say, 'Your belief in god is not scientific!' Not so! Science starts with belief in exactly the same way as any other discipline. Science has drawn its rules out of observation of an ordered universe. It has concluded that, to be scientific a theory must be tested. If the same

64 Alfred W. Adler - 1870 – 1937 - was an Austrian medical doctor and psychotherapist,

Chapter 2 The beginnings of Everything

conditions produce the same results each time, the results can be said to be scientific. Pavlov's dog might be conditioned to produce Saliva when a bell rings by teaching it association. This is a scientific fact because it works every time certain conditions are met. But what of the dog with a free spirit? Before a dog is conditioned it will not respond scientifically. Pavlov's dog might equally boast to its kennel mates, '*see, I have conditioned Pavlov! Every time I drool he smiles and writes in his notebook!*'

How arrogant to believe that we can condition God to respond to our scientific rules. A free dog does not produce saliva at the sound of a bell. God is a free spirit. For millennia mankind has tried to condition God to respond to his call. God has refused to comply. That does not make God unscientific, it makes science limited because it cannot condition God.

Belief is, however, basic to science. Science weighs evidence and reaches a conclusion on the belief of a certain outcome. This turns to faith when scientist seeks to prove that belief by experiment. Faith in what we believe motivates the direction of our actions. James makes this point when he says :

You can now see that we please God by what we do and not only by what we believe....Anyone who doesn't breathe is dead, and faith that doesn't do anything is

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

*just as dead!*⁶⁵

By way of illustration, in the context, James points out that a person might believe God can heal if that belief is not acted upon in prayer of faith it remains a dead belief:

*If you have faith when you pray for sick people, they get well. The Lord will heal them, and if they have sinned, he will forgive them.*⁶⁶

The bible is scientific in its approach to God, not by trying to condition God but by observing Him. The writer to the Hebrew church says :

*But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that comes to God must first believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*⁶⁷

And again :

*Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*⁶⁸

We might translate this as:

The unseen [φαίνω] was turned into material visibility

65 James 2:24 -26

66 James 5:15 CEV.

67 Hebrews 11:6

68 Hebrews 11:3

Chapter 2 The beginnings of Everything

[βλέπω] because God spoke out [ρῆμα- breath] in faith [πίστις].

The writer logically concludes that God first had belief that he could create and the action of that belief (speaking out), was the demonstration of his faith. Likewise, our faith in God accepts the premise that he exists.

Faith directs a person in a journey to discover God. Belief that there is a 'Higgs Boson' particle only occupied scientist's intellect until he mustered faith. Faith caused scientists to spend time money and effort in building the Hadron Collider to find it. Scientist would not have done so if they had not believed it to be. Belief says I can accept the premise; Faith translates belief into action in so acting we find both proof and reinforcement of belief:

Do you believe that there is only one God? Good! The demons also believe---and tremble with fear. You fool! Do you want to be shown that faith without actions is useless?⁶⁹

Belief is based on what cannot be seen but can be understood. Faith carries us further saying *on the basis of this evidence I can trust for what I believe*. On the basis of a theory that makes sense (belief) I can invest time, money and energy to demonstrate that this is so (faith). On the

69 James 2:19

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

basis that I believe that a higher power named God designed the material universe I look for evidence in the way I live. Moses then, in his statement *“In the beginning God....”* sets out his basic Belief that God created. On that he builds his faith in the power and wisdom of God.

Moses lived in a time and culture asking itself how matter came to be just as we ask today. Moses' culture concluded the same three basic choices that we have today. Don't ever think these were primitive people who only believed in superstition. Job, who live before Moses, was highly educated, possibly at the university of Babylon itself. He had struggled with scientific questions of Genesis. One burning question of the day was:

“By what means did God divide light from darkness”⁷⁰

The more we discover about Babylon, the more we recognise that they considered the same basic alternative theories of the origin of everything that we have today. Job, Abraham and Moses would examine those theories within the limits of the science of their day, but their basic choice was the same. When people tried to answer the question of how we got here, some presupposed there to be no God while others presupposed there is.

Zoroastrianism, far from being a superstition, started from the premise that there must be forces at work to make a

70 Job 38:24.

Chapter 2 The beginnings of Everything

material world out of nothing. Some of these forces are creative, some destructive and they war with each other for supremacy. Do we believe so much differently today? I think not. We have travelled a long Journey to Higgs' Boson but we still look for that initial power that turned nothing into matter. From the beginning of history to today there are only two root alternatives. Either there is a god who created everything or everything just came into existence by chance⁷¹.

Bearing in mind the understanding of the term 'god' as it developed through the ages⁷², it may be concluded a power bigger than human beings produced the building blocks for this material world. This power was given the term god but the understanding of the term has developed to suit the understanding of the age. Only a very small number of humanist scientist would have a problem with a higher power concept - even if they call that higher power chance. Matching that concept, with a modern concept of a God is where conflict begins. It is when religion's concept of god makes demands on people's lives that objections begin. Steven Hawkins, who questions the notions of established God

When you look from the perspective of a scientist at the universe, it looks as if it knew we were coming.

71 This, by definition requires that *Chance* is god.

72 We discussed this in the introduction.

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

views, says in his book *'a brief history of Time'*:

“You could persuade me that a creator designer made everything, but this is incompatible with a god who cares about your sin and what you do with your genitals and what you think about.”

Modern science only rebelled against religion when religion tried to shackle science. When science started producing evidence of an older universe, or a universe that revolves around a sun for example, it did not confront God or the church, it confronted the political establishment controlling the church. Reformers became brave on the back of this to finally free the church from the dogma of the Pharisaic dictatorship and allow church to revisit its doctrines

Science then, having prised itself away from religion, wrote on top of its blank paper *lucky chance*. Evolution in its rawest form believed everything just came into being. Tracing backwards, science observed the universe expanding from an initial central point. At its beginning energy caused matter in what became known as the big bang and time began. Some basic elements of matter met ideal conditions to form stars and planets from their dust others did not. *(I summarise crudely for the sake of space and time)*. Very many years of extremely clever people formulated this theory based on the theory of a chance happening. As scientific knowledge increased it had to

Chapter 2 The beginnings of Everything

question its chance theory. When science tried to fit the *law of constants*⁷³ onto its paper, it could not. If there is no constant pie (π), there cannot be a mathematical calculation of a circle, diameter or a radius.

Mathematicians demonstrated that for our planet to exist, there needs to be fifteen different independent constants, each with a million-to-one chance of falling right. I'm not here talking about the wonder of the eyeball or the brain but just the chances of basic planetary elements developing by chance.

Physicist Francis Collins⁷⁴ –a much cleverer man than I – said:

When you look from the perspective of a scientist at the universe, it looks as if it knew we were coming. There are 15 constants that have precise values. If any one of those constants was off by even one part in a million, or in some cases, by a million million, the universe could not have actually come to the place where we even see it. Matter

What reasonable person, I ask, will consider that the first second and third day, in which there is said to be both morning and evening, existed without sun and moon and stars, while the first day was even without a heaven?"

Origen AD 200

73 (A constant is a mathematical number like Pie (3.147))

74 Francis Sellers Collins (born April 14, 1950) is an American physician-geneticist noted for his discoveries of disease genes and his leadership of the Human Genome Project .

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

would not have been able to coalesce there would have been no galaxies stars planets or people.

Anyone bet? Imagine fifteen roulette wheels, each wheel having not fifty but one-million numbers on it. Imagine you put your accumulative bet on. Imagine every one of the fifteen wheels must land exactly right to get your pay out. Even if that did happen Casino Royal would not pay you out because it would be convinced there was a fiddle.

Steven Hawkins again, this time in his book, '*a brief history of time*':

The odds against something like the universe emerging out of the big bang are enormous I think there are clearly religious implications

Later on in the same book he writes:

It would be very difficult to explain why the universe started in just this way except as the act of a god who intended to create beings like us

Faced with this problem, William James came up with his multi-universe theory⁷⁵. His hypotheses being we are here

⁷⁵ The multi-universe or parallel universes hypothesis is the possibility there are infinite universes of which we are one. Together these comprise everything that exists and can exist: the entirety of space, time, matter, and energy as well as the physical laws and constants that describe them. The term was coined in 1895 by the

Chapter 2 The beginnings of Everything

by chance, the chances can be considerably weighted by having an infinite number of universes, our universe being one that developed as we know it. This is much more feasible, after all in my type of gardening, I put in packet of carrot seeds to get one to grow. You can't disprove or prove this theory. Science is still probing for evidence of other universes outside our solar-system. But if there are a billion dead universes out there, the chances of our universe being the one with a live planet becomes a much more probable outcome.

There are about eight-billion people on earth and at least seven-billion believe in a god. Not my idea of a god or yours, but nonetheless a god. Some people have wooden poles as gods, some worship the sun, some are visible others are not. But in all, the basic observation of the order and complexity gives rise to a belief in a designer. Moses lays his cards on the table, he is a creationist. Every Christian is a creationist. Christians most certainly will not agree on *how* God created, but they believe God is behind the design and creation of everything. Let's face it none of us was there when the earth was formed and we cannot be dogmatic as to how it was done, we just believe, somehow, God did it. The assertion that the scriptures are correct may be admissible, but the dogmatic assumption that scriptures are scientifically without error is a modern claim. The early church never regarded scripture as

American philosopher and psychologist William James.

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

scientific. Origen⁷⁶, an early church leader, argued in 200 AD :

What reasonable person, I ask, will consider that the first second and third day, in which there is said to be both morning and evening, existed without sun and moon and stars, while the first day was even without a heaven?

... I do not think that anyone will doubt that these are figurative expressions which indicate certain mysteries throughout a semblance of history”

This view is enforced in the structure of the Hebrew writings. Genesis chapter-one is structured like a song with refrains. This was a style used by the Babylonians and adds evidence that Moses is using other material.

Another clue is in the language this passage uses the Plural term Elohyim for God (gods) at the start of Genesis. Elohyim develops into the term Yahweh by chapter four. Moses is much more at home with the term Yahweh. He traced the term Elohyim through history⁷⁷ and writes it into his book of beginnings. In Chapter-four of Genesis, He

76 Origen (184 – 254), was a scholar and early Christian theologian Born in Alexandria, a prolific writer in theology, textual criticism, biblical exegesis, hermeneutics, philosophical theology, preaching, and spirituality.

77 While researching for my ancestral book, I quickly found that names were not consistent. Lymner, Lomer Limor, (but not Limer), are all forms of my ancestral name. Each form had a slightly different meaning. Tradesmen adopted one form while aspiring elite preferred another. All were genetically 'Limmer' by a different name-form.

Chapter 2 The beginnings of Everything

points out how this term changes from Elohyim to Yahweh under the leadership of Seth:

*Seth had a son whom he named Enosh. It was at that time people began using the Lord's holy name Jehovah in worship.*⁷⁸

Recording events in this fashion Moses has documented a shift in early understandings of God. Babylonian theology had moved from an idea of each planet being the source of its own power, and therefore worthy of the term god. Now, enlightened by new scientific understanding, Moses understood planets themselves responding to laws dictated by a greater force. Both Abraham and Job had reached this conclusion many years before. Moses has the task of persuading the children of Israel, who have been living in multi-god Egypt, that there is one God, not many! He makes this declaration:

*Listen, Israel! Jehovah-Elohyim⁷⁹ is the only true God!
So love Jehovah your God with all your heart, soul, and strength....
Memorize his laws and tell them to your children over and over again.*⁸⁰

In his sermon, Moses has carried the argument one stage

78 Gen. 4:26

79 lit: The Lord of your Gods

80 Deuteronomy 6:4 :

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

further. He is pointing out that Abraham, their father, believed in one single God who ordained natural powers and laws into matter at creation. Further, Moses also relates creation to God's personality. As previously discussed, this is the point at which Christian and atheist part company. Atheist might accept a single cause triggered material creation with resultant laws that hold material to account, but to suggest that humans can be loved or return love to this power is a bridge too far. To suggest that this power cares about the consequences of its actions is to attribute a personality to a power. The survival of the fittest theory is based on the assumption that a powerful event resulted in life and life itself seeks to survive. The nub of the disagreement therefore is this: did intelligence come before matter or is intelligence a result of matter?

The nub of the disagreement therefore is this: did intelligence come before matter or is intelligence a result of matter?

For a Christian it remains; Spiritual attributes like belief, faith, creativity or love, being part of a spiritual God's character before creation, were impregnated into material at creation, (just as material laws were).

Christian may disagree with Christian as to *how* God created but all will agree that God created, and indeed has the right to require the cooperation of creation. On the other hand, Atheist and Christian might agree the process

Chapter 2 The beginnings of Everything

by which creation came into being, but atheist can't accept a god with intelligence caused it. Nor can he acknowledge any claims of a power that made it possible for his existence. Inadvertently chance has become the atheist's creator god and chance can only expect a response in return by chance.

Scientists of the middle persuasion might agree with Christian while God is only a '*Higher power*'. It is outside the scope of science to accept that higher power's claim on life. That must remain a matter of choice or chance. That is the domain of the scientist not the science. Matter of itself does not have the faculty to reason, it can only respond to the laws by which it exists. Life is more than matter, it has another dimension incorporated into it.

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

Chapter 3 The Beginnings of Life

This chapter signposts a fork in the road. The subject of the beginnings of life can easily become a slanging match between atheism and religion. Both will use science for its claims, but science itself has no agreed definition of life.⁸¹ Each will attack the weakness of evidence in the other; each will cite isolated pieces of evidence to enhance its own argument. But that is all it is- prejudicial argument. Argument is part of the process of faith. Belief is tested by argument and experience. Its conclusions form the platform for the next discovery. Prejudicial argument, on the other hand, only destroys the step you stand on. It takes kings horses and kings men to put belief back together again once prejudice has thrown her brick.

Belief is tested among Christians who argue out scriptural interpretation, for example, the creation account as in Genesis. Literalist will argue it happened literally as accounted 'word for word'. Others will question -literally? Literally as read? As read now? As read when written? Immediately an issue over the Hebrew language will ensue. The word Yom, translated 'day' in modern English,

⁸¹ I don't think that defining "life" is a very useful activity for scientists to pursue since it is not going to tell us what we really want to know, which is "what is life." A scientific theory of life (which is not the same as a definition of life) would be able to answer these questions to satisfaction. Carol Cleveland : *University of Colorado*

Chapter 3 The Beginnings of Life

encourages us to think in terms of twenty-four hours. Early Hebrew did not view it so. To early Hebrews, Yom was used to express: day, time, weather, daily, 'remaining effort to completion', or 'when it is completed'. In its plural form the word is translated as; age, life, season, era and years. Translators of the bible in the fifteen-hundreds simply chose day to cover a Hebrew word with host of meanings for the benefit of the English translation.

Early Hebrew did not think of Yom [יִוֵם] as uniform in time. Rather, like Microsoft time, Yom (or yome) was a countdown measure of a job in progress. It estimated how long to completion. If things were going well yom went faster, if the process stopped, so did the clock, but surprise-surprise, it will always display zero at the precise moment the process is completed. That, of course, does not prove or disprove God took six literal days to create the listed items but it questions what the original writer intended us believe? What if the earth rotated round the sun faster in those days? Science does argues that the universe is slowing down. So, one day of twenty-four hours period in today's time might be twenty-one hours at the formation of the universe. I am being pedantic of course, but it serves to show the futility of getting hot under the collar over issues we cannot know for certain. Equally, it serves to show that, hijacked by legalistic detail, we only put pressure on young faith in a creator God. Religion is not subject to the dictates of science nor

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

science the dictates of religion. Both disciplines are subject to reasoned argument under the established rules by its own discipline. Table 1 shows divided opinion in the Church on the issue of a literal Genesis account, Since the time of Jesus.

Science meets religion on common ground at creation of matter. Both agree that the universe began. Both agree that material came out of nothing. Both agree that time began at the moment matter came into being. Both agree that the universe is interconnected and balanced finely. Both agree life, (as we know it), is possible because the laws governing material and circumstance in the universe are consistent.

To be scientific, proof requires that a given result will be found each time the same conditions are repeated. Here we have a problem. Creation is an original and it is impossible to go back to a state where nothing ever existed in order to observe the formation of matter. Science must rely on evidence of hindsight⁸². Science at root therefore, must base its belief on an intelligent understanding of history. It cannot return to the conditions of the formation of the universe to conduct an experiment because we would not be there to observe it.

82 C.S.Lewis in his book '*Miracles*' addresses this issue much better and deeper than I can.

Chapter 3 The Beginnings of Life

<i>Among those in favour include of a literal day include :</i>		
<i>Theophilus of Antioch</i>	<i>C 180 AD</i>	<i>Autolyucus 2.11-12</i>
<i>Methodius</i>	<i>Died 311 AD</i>	<i>Chastity 5.7</i>
<i>Lactantius</i>	<i>240-320 AD</i>	<i>Institutes 7.14</i>
<i>Ephrem the Syrian</i>	<i>306-373 AD</i>	<i>Commentary</i>
<i>Moses</i>	<i>C 1500 BC</i>	<i>Exodus 20:11</i>
<i>Those against include:</i>		
<i>Philo</i>	<i>0 BC- 50 AD</i>	<i>Creation 13</i>
<i>Clement of Alexandria</i>	<i>C 150 – 215</i>	<i>Stromateis 6.16</i>
<i>Origen</i>	<i>185-253 AD</i>	<i>Celsus, 6.50, 60</i>
<i>Augustine of Hippo</i>	<i>354-430 AD</i>	<i>Literal, 4.22.39</i>
<i>The Psalmist</i>	<i>C 1000 BC</i>	<i>Psalms 90:4</i>
<i>Those not expressing a preference include:</i>		
<i>Irenaeus of Lyons</i>	<i>C 115-202</i>	
<i>Justin Martyr</i>	<i>C 100 - c.165</i>	
<i>Job</i>	<i>C 2000 BC</i>	<i>Job 9:1-12</i>
<i>Jesus</i>	<i>C 33 AD</i>	

Table 1

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

Religion cannot prove its case either. At its root religion states that material could not cause itself to exist; Religion bases its belief that material is caused and directed from a higher power. According to Christianity, that 'higher power' (God) is from a different dimension called the spiritual dimension. Spiritual facets include insight (-or mental light), kindness, mercy, honesty, fairness, goodness and so on⁸³. God is Spirit where Spirituality is the religious term given to forces and principalities that are not material. Honesty, goodness and fairness are not part of a person's material make-up but they are characteristics for which most of the human race aims. Intelligence is not subject to the confines of the body but is grasped by the mind and translated into action through a body. Everyone can now grab fact from the internet and process it through mind and imagination. Data and evidence exist outside of life. Live matter has the capacity to absorb it and process it via intelligence.

Intelligence is not a natural product of survival of the fittest, but - belief, faith, love, hope, motivation, truth and so on are part of the spiritual dimension that drives it. The survival of the fittest theory also owes its allegiance to the spiritual dimension. Fittest for what? Fittest in what? Is the malaria bug fitter than its victim? Is fittest a euphemism for strongest? Richest? Most powerful? It is opinion not science that says animals learned to co-operate

⁸³ In order (John 1:5), (2 Chronicles 30:9), (Psalm 111:7), (Matthew 19:17), (John 4:24)

Chapter 3 The Beginnings of Life

with each other for the common goal of survival. This theory presumes reason and insight which are Spiritual facets.

If 'all behaviour is goal orientated', (a term coined by Dr. Alfred Adler a hundred years ago), then the direction of life is subject to 'spiritual' facets such as reason, prediction, insight, agreement, co-operation, and community. On meeting this problem, science, unwilling to adopt the term spirituality from religion, established a branch of science called Psychology. At first, Psychology covered aspects of reason, emotion and will. But soon it found itself travelling parallel paths to religion, albeit with different answers. Abrahamic faiths dealt with spirituality in humanity many centuries ago. The Genesis account separates man from animals by spirituality. Mankind is animal by material but has the added capability of spirituality. Genesis deals with issue of spirituality when it introduced sin into the equation⁸⁴.

Animals could not be expected to refrain from eating from a tree simply on someone's say so because animals could not understand the 'say so.'

Animals were not condemned for disobedience because they had no capacity to deal with their behaviour. Tearing another animal apart to survive came from a natural instinct for survival in an animal. Animals did this long

⁸⁴ We will deal with this in a later chapter.

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

before Adam sinned. We cannot say it was only after Adam disobeyed God that animals ravaged each other when they were hungry. What we can say is that God's dealings with Adam were the outcome of a higher expectation, that being -Adam was capable of responding at a spiritual level. Animals could not be expected to refrain from eating from a tree simply on someone's say-so because animals could not understand that say-so. Man was held accountable for his response to God at a spiritual level on the basis of intelligent obedience. God, being spirit, expects man to co-operate in spiritual matters. Having that capacity mankind is given stewardship of the earth and dominion over nature. The expectation is that mankind will co-operate with God the designer in this task. But when mankind wants to dominate on his own terms, this is called sin.

Responsible Atheist can go along with this sentiment to the point of appropriating sin. Atheist will say mankind must decide what is the best for the future of the planet. Mankind must decide, if it has any inclination to responsibility, care for the future of this orb. But how do we know what is best for the future of this planet if it came about by chance and has no future of itself? Surely it requires someone with a bigger picture of earth's purpose and future to be sure of a good outcome.

Chapter 3 The Beginnings of Life

The three Abrahamic faiths rely on revelation claiming documents for this purpose. Again, as we have discussed already, documentation, even if accurate in detail and given by God himself at the time, will differ in understanding today. The medium of communication changes with time. Even if it was written down by man under perfect revelation dictate, it was expressed in language relevant to a time, culture, norm and place.

I read the other day of a scientist who claimed to disprove the bible because his scientific research showed that *'camels were not domesticated at the time of Abraham'*. Thus, said argued, the bible must have been written much later than is claimed. For a scientist, he had not researched his material well. The Hebrew text uses a word for a beast-of-burden. It may well mean donkey or even slave but it was only translated as camel by English translators in the sixteenth-century because it made it easier to read. I rather think this statement was more of an attempt to appease a prejudice within the writer than evidence against the reliability of scripture.

Taken on its own we cannot guarantee to know scripture's precise interpretation today. Christian belief and faith, at root, are based on a common thread and consistency woven through sixty-six books with forty-plus authors over a period of one-thousand-five-hundred years. We cannot get behind the mind of each of these writers, nor can we fully understand their times. Scripture's common

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

thread over such a long period shows direction through a consistent theme. It demonstrates a causal power's influence. In religious words this is expressed by 2 Timothy 3:16 as:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

So then, despite the different starting point there is remarkable agreement between mainstream science and mainstream⁸⁵ religion. Both can agree with the order of creation laid out in Genesis chapter one⁸⁶. First there was a beginning and from that moment time starts, and matter forms the universe out of nothing. Genesis verse 1:

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”. ””

The Hebrews had no word for 'universe'. They had a phrase for universe, that phrase translates as, '*the heavens and the earth*', it simply means the universe. In the beginning God created, '*bara, ex nihilo*', out of nothing, no existing matter or energy⁸⁷.

85 There is of course a left and right wing in both disciplines. Most hostility is sparked by one or other of these zealots.

86 Providing the word God is substituted. And bearing in mind the understanding of time in the minds of early writers

87 Whereas science still has to answer the question, '*how can nothing become something of its own accord*', Christians believe God pre-existed matter in a different

Chapter 3 The Beginnings of Life

Early Hebrew understanding recognised three definitions of heaven. The first is equivalent to our earth's atmosphere⁸⁸. The second equivalent to our universe⁸⁹. The third, beyond the reaches of matter, is seen as the domain in which God resides.⁹⁰ It describes 'the third heaven' as a place that reaches God. Science reserves judgement on 'the third heaven'. At present it is probing to see outside our universe. Two relevant theories being explored are: we will find multiple universes, or we will find nothing. Either way, when dealing with infinity, it will be quiet a few years before we can probe to the edge of matter and into whatever is beyond. If space probe 'Discovery' does not find it before 2025 AD its power batteries will fail and science will have to wait to the next generation of technology for its answer.

Scripture, which was written long before modern science, bears remarkable similarity to modern findings. Something in these early inhabitants gave them the confidence to lay out an order that modern discovery confirms.

In the meantime, Scripture, which was written long before modern science, bears remarkable similarity to modern

life form called 'spirit. God had no origin. That's why in Exodus 3:14 He says, "I am that I am,"

88 See Deuteronomy. 11:17, Deuteronomy. 28:12 , Judges 5:4

89 See Psalm 19:4,6, Jeremiah 8:2, Isaiah 13:10

90 See 1 Kings 8:30, Psalm 2:4, Matthew 5:16

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

findings. Something in these early inhabitants gave them the confidence to lay out an order that modern discovery confirms. While science and religion agree broadly on the formation and order of matter, they divide on a basis of purpose built into matter. Science does not propagate a purpose, only that matter exhibits two laws -a tendency for survival on the one hand and a natural self annihilation on the other⁹¹. Early Babylonians expressed this in primitive terms as a battle between two higher forces. Ahura Mazda who championed life and survival against Nergal who sought to destroy it.⁹² Hebrew writers also recognised these two scientific laws. They use the words *bōhū* and *tōhū*:⁹³

*The earth was barren [bōhū], with no form [tōhū] of life; it was under a roaring ocean covered with darkness. But the Spirit of God was moving over the water.*⁹⁴

In the beginning God created matter out of nothing. What was created first was dead material. It had no form and no

91 Ultimately there would be no available energy left. Stemming from this fact we find that the most probable state for any natural system is one of disorder. All natural systems degenerate when left to themselves.

92 Nergal Evil god of the underworld who brings sickness, fear and war on mankind. He is the consort of the death-goddess Ereshkigal. Scientist may object to the quaint expressions but the underlying principle is very much a modern scientific observation.

93 Pronounced Bohoo and Tohoo : see also Jeremiah 4:23 tohu: formlessness, confusion, unreality : bohu (superficial, an undistinguishable ruin -- emptiness, void.

94 Gen 1:2

Chapter 3 The Beginnings of Life

life. It was shaped and fashioned to become *tōhū*. Once shaped, it was impregnated with life (*chay*).

Moses, in writing Genesis, did not write up a scientific study but gives a picture of this order. Just as the early Babylonian observation of opposing forces was described as fighting gods so, in line with both Egyptian and Babylonian understanding of the time the process of creation was described in Genesis. To Eastern scholars of the day, everything, from pyramid to

painting followed this same order. Egyptian painters first made something to paint on, (be it papyrus, clay or brick). Next they sketched out the shape, finally they filled it in. Egyptians were the first to build or paint by numbers. Engineering pyramids followed exactly the same logical sequence. When God produced matter it was disorder - a formless mess – a primordial soup. God settled it down into a void (*bōhū*)

Then God put some shape into it, but it was still empty (*tōhū*). Then He began to fill it with structure colour and beauty in the form of life (*chay or khah'ee*).

What Is Life?

Guardian Science April
2000

Life looks increasingly like a chemical experiment that took over the laboratory. All living things turn to dust and ashes when they die, or, to put it another way, to constituent atoms and molecules of hydrogen, oxygen, carbon, phosphorus and so on. ...

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

Be you scientist, atheist or Christian; be you living 5000 years ago or at High school today, the order and process of creating (engineering) is the same. The first step of creation is the vision, (*the spiritual concept*), next comes the choice of medium or material to make it physical, (*tōhū*). Then you map the medium out, setting its boundaries (*bōhū*), then you bring it to life. According to Moses, God uses this basic order.

For the first three portions of 'yom', he sets out the canvas and forms the shapes. For the next three portions of 'yom' he began to fill the earth and brings it to life. Christians developed the doctrine of a tripartite man by this observation. Body without life, mind or spirit is tōhū - a blank canvas material. With life it becomes animal. Body with life and spiritual dimension is mankind life.

As we have asked before, what is life? This is a question that keeps anyone, from biologists to poets, from bishops to philosophers, up at night. Scientists can't agree on an

Enuma Elish Epic in Sumerian Cuneiform

The first tablet begins:

When the sky above was not named, And the earth beneath did not yet bear a name, And the primeval Apsū, who begat them, And chaos, Tiamat, the mother of them both, their waters were mingled together, And no field was formed, no marsh was to be seen; When of the gods none had been called into being.

Chapter 3 The Beginnings of Life

absolute definition. Theologians can't either, are the cells of your body alive? What about a computer program that learns and evolves? Can a wild fire - which feeds, grows, and reproduces - be considered a living entity?

To the Babylonian, life was material that has the ability to shape and reproduce. Today we suggest live material must as a minimum incorporate :

1. A membrane separating it from the environment.
2. A way of storing information or specifications that instructs a cell how to reproduce. (DNA?).
3. A way of reading stored information and responding by organising itself, (Intelligence?).
4. A means of copying the information and passing it on to offspring, (reproduction?).

The early Hebrew would agree, but would introduce one further distinction between live material (animals) and human-beings.

To be human rather than animal, God breathed spirit into mankind. Human beings being fashioned or shaped into the image of God [*Tselem*] :⁹⁵

God said, "Now we will make humans, and they will be in our image and like us. We will let them rule the fish,

95 Tselem or tseh'-lem תְּסֵלֶם. Tselm is not a physical characteristic rather a 'shading' or resemblance of character.

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

the birds, and all other living creatures."⁹⁶

From this statement in Genesis Chapter 1, Moses has set the scene for interpreting the rest of scripture:

*You are dust made alive and given the characteristic displayed by God your creator. Now have a lot of children! Fill the earth with people and bring it under your control. Rule well over the fish in the ocean, the birds in the sky, and every animal on the earth. I have provided all kinds of fruit and grain for you to eat. And I have given the green plants as food for everything else that breathes. These will be food for animals, both wild and tame, and for birds. Thus, at the end of this period, Spiritual God was satisfied he could entrust mankind with the custody of the earth under his instruction*⁹⁷

Spirit is where consciousness, insight, purpose, motivation, understanding and creativity reside. Are cells conscious? Do you find pigs or porcupines writing poetry? Maslow's Hierarchy of needs is not applicable to animals, at least not beyond level one or two- the need to eat. So we meet the fourth division between atheist and Christian.

As it has been asked many times before, Is it really feasible that a monkey at a typewriter, (even given an

96 Gen 1:26

97 (Genesis 1:27-31 BLV)

Chapter 3 The Beginnings of Life

eternity of time), would stumble on the complete works of Shakespeare? More to the point would his monkey friends be able to interpret and analyse it once he had typed it? Why would a monkey want to write a play that his monkey mates could not understand? Given the basic psychological rule that 'all behaviour is goal orientated', what goal would cause the monkey to aim at writing prose when he cannot speak it or act it?

Mankind does this sort of exercise because it can. The capability drives the desire in the spiritual realm; It is done for pleasure. In the physical realm the need drives the behaviour. Our monkey friend will soon lose his interest in a typewriter when his stomach rumbles. Evolution without an objective has no need of the spiritual. Evolution with an objective is evidence of a design and a goal.

Scientists will recognise a progression from animal to intelligent mankind because it is evident. The bone of contention is not between Scientist and Christian, nor between Scientist and Atheist but between Atheist and Christian. Christian argues for a spiritual God who planted into creation the drive for creativity for no other reason than spiritual God is by nature creative. Atheist argues that within just thirteen-billion-years, (while our monkey friend is still typing on his typewriter), mankind has stumbled from dust to cultural, intellect, logic and

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

creativity through no other means than it chanced to do so⁹⁸.

So then there is contention between atheism and religion with science being neutral. The first main material contentions between atheism and Christianity is how something came from nothing. Science will never be able to observe that phenomenon because any attempt to demonstrate such a process must start with something—especially if there is a human there to observe it happening. Equally, science will not be able to demonstrate that something came from nothing unaided, as the experiment itself will need to be designed and assisted by something.

Chance itself is a law and therefore causal. Any experiment to produce something out of nothing will itself be instigated by a scientific mind, not a mere chance happening. The atheist who claims a chance collision of particles produces mass will simply be met with a Christian's response, *'My, how clever of God to think of doing that!'* Science may demonstrate how colliding particles produce mass, but whether it was caused by impersonal chance or a pre-existent power, remains in the domain of belief.

A myth is not a legend that never had a factual base; rather it is one that has lost sight of its factual base.

98 Bear in mind that chance itself is causal and therefore determines outcome.

Chapter 3 The Beginnings of Life

The second tug of war taking place is over how order came from chaos. Mainstream scientists relate a primordial soup resulting from the big-bang, settled into order through forces that attract or repel each other⁹⁹. Thus, the elements were formed rather like a jig-saw puzzle trying various bits for shape, colour, size, and orientation. Science describes how it probably happened by chemistry but gives no initiating cause. Atheism claims its initiating cause was chance-which itself is governed by mathematical law, Abrahamic faiths follow the account in Genesis chapter-one where the spiritual is said to be the influencing cause.

Using the imagery of 'brooding' over the chaos,¹⁰⁰ the Ancient writer is calling on picture language familiar in his time. Both Babylonian and Egyptian of the time demonstrate the need of an outside influence to make things fit. Enuma Elish¹⁰¹ is older than Genesis and so sets the stage like Genesis chapter-one. Labelling such records as myths makes more of the way it is written down than the scientific rational of the period. Babylonian scientists

99 I simplify the matter for the sake of space and time in this book. For a fuller explanation of the process there are many books available, for example : '*Science for non-science majors*'

100 "And the Spirit of God brooded [raw-khaf' - A primitive root; to brood; - flutter; move, shake.] upon the face of the deep."

101 The *Enûma Eliš* is a Babylonian cuneiform recovered from the ruined Library of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh it describes how minor powers called gods mate the particles into order.

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

recognised the earth was formed out of a chaotic soup and by logic deduced chaos needed some outside assistance to bring it to order. A myth is not a legend that never had a factual base; rather it is one that has lost sight of its factual base. The question today is just as it was then, was the outside influence that settled chaos into order, mathematical chance or an intelligent force aiming at a goal. Christians claim the greater logic is creation of matter has a design and therefore a designer behind it- even if that designer only produced the laws within which chance operates.

A third focal point of contention is over how life developed in a dead material. Why should it? *'From dust you came and to dust you shall return'*. Chance has exploitation at its heart, not well-being. To make one lottery winner rich means to make a thousand punters poorer. Atheist argues survival of the fittest demonstrates the principle of chance- which it does. The fittest exploit the weakest or the richest exploit the poorest. The few survive on the backs of the many. Darwin used the term *'evolution of the species'* to describe a process of an adapting world. Such a term has supposed a goal built into it. It was a Sociologist, Herbert Spenser who invented the term, *'survival of the fittest'*, in order to justify the dominance within the species. The two are not mutual. The second expressed the political emphasis because the first was too neutral.

Chapter 3 The Beginnings of Life

Any quality that makes living animals and plants different from dead matter also demonstrates within it the desire for progress. Before the nineteen-thirties, H. J. Muller claimed this desire to be the work of the genes,¹⁰² Increasingly today it is being defined as the influence of DNA, (or RNA)¹⁰³. But within that process there is a desire for life to outlive its allotted time and material by regenerating itself into younger material. Life itself cannot be observed simply by behaviour. Humanity comes with a spiritual dimension. The cat will catch the mouse whether it is hungry or not, but mankind has a moral and spiritual dimension that restricts its instincts, controls its behaviour, cares for the weakest and helps the vulnerable. In short Mankind has a spiritual dimension. Without this, there is no hope, no creativity, no consciousness, no intelligence, no love, no order, no improvement and no future. With a spiritual dimension however we are introduced to the subject of sin because animals react to a behaviour handed down and therefore cannot be said to sin but mankind has a choice because of its spiritual capacity.

*Life came
out of non-
life and non life
wants to reclaim
it.*

102 Nobel-prize winner, H. J. Muller, 1922, "Variation due to Change in the Individual Gene"

103 The difference, so I am told, is 1 oxygen and 1 hydrogen molecule

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

In summary then Science can only look for evidence of life where it sees electro-chemical responses. It cannot presume to know if there is life without these. Therefore, It can never say if life causes material to respond causing electro-chemical evidence or if electro-chemical responses cause life rather than just demonstrate it. Babylonian science favours life entering material to cause it to grow. Theologians and Philosophers started from this base. Life was seen as an eternal force which, while in a different form, caused the material evidence examined by science. Arguably then, it survives in a different form outside if material life after death. Later, (by the time of the Sadducee - I guess), life was seen as purely a material reaction and ceased on death. The argument will go on in the form of belief - on both sides - for many hundreds of years yet.

What we can say about life is that it inherits the attributes of struggle against its demise, (survival), and a desire for advancement, (destiny).

The ancients recorded material progress in the sentence:

From dust you came and to dust you shall return.

Life came out of non-life and non life wants to reclaim it. Humanity on the other hand, has the awareness of this struggle built in to it. This, the religious call spirit. The spirit is not just the survival needs built into creation, it

Chapter 3 The Beginnings of Life

provides in Homo-Sapien the capacity to co-operate or reject the aims and goals of a life giver. The pinnacle of creation (or evolution) is denoted by the presence of a human spirit which is more than learned behaviour. Spirit gives human-beings the capacity to co-operate with or refuse to co-operate with the objectives of a creator. This we describe as humanity

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

Chapter 4 The Beginnings of Humanity

It has been said, human-beings are the crown of creation. It has been said, human-beings are a cut above other creatures because they have a spirit. It has been said, Human beings are just the natural evolution of other animals. It has been said, Human beings are the result of natural selection. You can take your pick.

So what constitutes the human-being? And what constitutes the spiritual? Arguably¹⁰⁴ there are twenty aspects of a human-being:

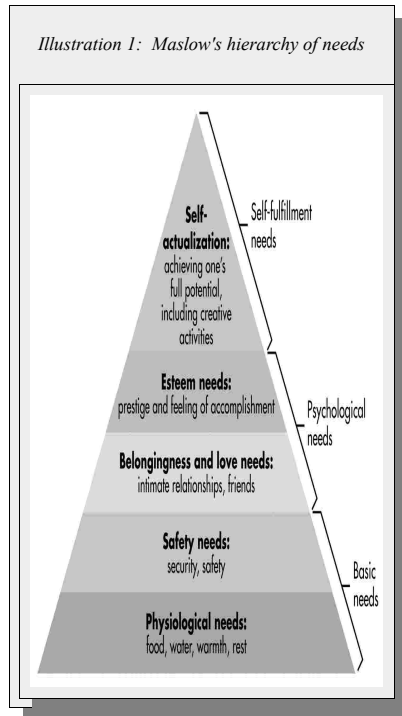
1. Physical being: Provides our sense of personal space and also provides the responses to our five senses of touch, smell, sight, sound and taste
2. Self-Determination: gives power and freedom to choose. (self will)
3. Proposition: plants the desire for continual learning
4. Intelligence: requires comprehension and interpretation
5. Emotion: needs passion, hate, love, humour, happiness, excitement, loneliness, sadness, gratitude and fear
6. Planning :provides a vital link between where we are and where we want to be.
7. Harmony: establishes boundaries and symmetry in our lives.
8. Purpose: gives relevance and identity.
9. Creativity: produces the inventor, the artist, the poet,

104 Depending on the book you read and the authors point of view.

Chapter 4 The Beginnings of Humanity

the musician, the discoverer and adventurer the means by which we progress.

10. Principles: intuitively provides a sense of right and wrong. Conscience it is sometimes called.
11. Vision: drives ambition and responsiveness to challenge
12. Worship: religious or not this gives us respect of higher powers, respect for laws and purposes to which we are subject.
13. Self-consciousness: is the - "I exist and have meaning and significance."
14. Intuition: drives behaviour from ideas, concepts, plans and designs. It allows us to visualize and project.
15. Aesthetics: gives perceptive and appreciates beauty, grace, elegance and refinement. It lifts us up from mere existence
16. Trust: harbours belief, values, faith, confidence, dependability, authenticity, commitment and reliability.



I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

17. Love: (albeit on a spectrum from Love to hate), is the primary driving force and the highest ethic. It looks for companionship, relationships, personal commitments, affection, devotion, passion, tenderness and bonding. At the love end it is self-sacrificing, at the hate end it is self-absorbing
18. Leisure: fun loving, it relishes games for no other purpose than enjoyment. It accounts for the desire to enjoyment rather than just striving to survive.
19. Security: The “fight or flight” attribute and the need for sustenance and shelter.
20. Socially needful: reaching out to and receiving from others.

Maslow condensed these twenty items into a hierarchy of five need levels, each creating a stepping stone for higher ideals. Theologians have largely grouped them into three, Body, Mind, Spirit.¹⁰⁵

Early Babylonians understood the make-up of human-beings to be physical, mental, relational, and moral. We can categorise these into groups, but there is a union of them all.

Belonging to the body would be the five senses :- touch, taste, smell, see and hear. (Loosely those mentioned in aspect 1. above)

105 (Spirit is often sub divide into Relationship).

Chapter 4 The Beginnings of Humanity

Belonging to the soul, the decision making centre :- emotion, intellect and will.(Loosely those mentioned in aspect 2 to 7 above)

Belonging to the spirit would be the driving cause of creativity, insight, motivation, consciousness. (Loosely those items mentioned in 8 to 17 above).

While items 18 to 20 can be categorised into a social aspect, many modern theologians sub section these under the spiritual.

Science of course has no problem explaining the physical. Touching, tasting, feeling, smelling hearing and seeing are well studied and well documented. For the mind, the nervous system carries electrical or chemical signals through the body to the brain where these are interpreted and acted upon. No surprises there.

The spirit causes a little more of a problem because it does not always follow the discipline rules of science.

Making a pun on the word Pneuma, (which means both wind and spirit), Jesus gives the following insight:

*Only God's Spirit gives new life.
The Spirit is like the wind that*

*Creating a law
and then
describing how to
get round it is a
mark of a legalistic
society that has lost
its spiritual
discretion.*

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

*blows wherever it wants to. You can hear the wind, but you don't know where it comes from or where it is going.*¹⁰⁶

Spiritual matters deal with the 'why' not the 'what' in cause. Why should a person lay down his life for another? The natural result of an enemy is hate isn't it? Why should a person love his enemies? The natural tendency in a human is to lie, cheat or steal for his own survival, why should it be surrendered to honesty and integrity for greater good? The scientist but not the science, can give a rational reason for motivation but at best it is only a calculated guess.

The scientist can call upon Mathematicians to give a probability in these sorts of experiment. There may be traceable cause in the material but the initial motivation is random, and science cannot determine it under its own discipline. The spirit is that part of a human that lifts a person above the natural and expected behaviour. Humanity is distinguished from animal behaviour by its ability to call on higher but invisible principles like love, joy, patience, grace, forgiveness, or generosity. The spirit in human-beings, even if not proven, is non-the-less observable. Here are a few Anonymous answers to the question, 'What is spirit?':

106 John 3:8

Chapter 4 The Beginnings of Humanity

'The Human Spirit is the very essence of man, the life source at the time of conception and it is present until physical death'.

'It's the simple things such as, desire, hope, belief or curiosity, the things that keeps you going they fuel your life. Just like the seeds. In here lies our inner talent, gifts, interests, dreams, goals, life purpose and all that is the fundamental of life forces'.

'The human spirit is the term used to describe a human being's ability to take on things, however bad they might be, in his stride and deal with them head on. When they talk about the exemplary human spirit, they talk about that combination of hope, faith, resilience, patience and related qualities which give the individual the strength to get himself out of, or through hard times'.

If a human-being was just body it would have no power to interpret what it touches, tastes, hears or sees in a dimension of time. Animals are body and mind and have powers to store nuts for a future, but no powers and no reason to build universities, theatres, cathedrals or conduct scientific experiments.

One thing is clearly understood by Jesus, The spirit is distinctive to human-kind. Speaking to Nicodemus, a head ruler and theologian of his day, Jesus said:

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

Jesus answered, be very assured of this Unless a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and the person born of the Spirit is spirit. Don't get bogged down with semantics when I say it necessary for you to also be born from above.¹⁰⁷

Without spirit, human-beings are no more than animal having instinct and five physical senses but no concepts, no higher morality, no insight behind occurrences.

The human spirit is the dark matter of the human-being. Scientist recognises that the normal tools for investigating the universe do not apply to dark matter. To explore dark matter requires a different criterion. To postulate that dark matter exists, science has to take a broad view rather than its customary detailed view. Dark matter is hypothesised because it is observed the whole universe would be incomplete without it. Likewise, observing the human being show he is incomplete without a spirit.

Second, science makes its proof by defining and repeating a process. The spirit can only be observed by its characterisations. Put a person in the same conditions twice and there is no guarantee of the same reaction.

Third, Science cannot concoct a chemical or electrical impulse experiment to produce character or human spirit.

107 John 3:5 -7.

Chapter 4 The Beginnings of Humanity

As Steven Hawkins has said:

“The primitive forms of artificial intelligence we already have, have proved very useful. But I think the development of full artificial intelligence could spell the end of the human race.”

Fourth, Science looks for rules to which the physical must be subject, but the spirit is not bound by rules. It is not contained by the law of gravity, nor the law of thermodynamics but is like the millions of snowflakes formed in identical weather conditions, each is unique. Imagination can travel to outer space in the virtual and return to earth to create a film, giving expression and virtual life as it does in Star Wars.

Life itself is not simply material. Life has the final say as to if it will live in material form or not. Scientists or Doctors may revive a heart after heart failure with an artificial pump. We may artificially replace many components in the body, but coupling up those artificial components in lab does not produce life. Life is bigger than a body and mind. A computer may be perfect in material state, it may also hold its memory. But it is dead unless power is applied to wake it up. Life is in essence spirit. Without it, morality, creativity, reproduction or even survival of the fittest cannot exist.

This is the essence of Jesus' teaching :

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

... receiving life from him, his life gave light to everyone. John 1:4

Humans give life to their children. Yet only God's Spirit can change you into a child of God. Spirit gives new life. The Spirit is like the wind that blows wherever it wants to. You can hear the wind, but you don't know where it comes from or where it is going.¹⁰⁸

Then everyone who has faith in the Son of Man will have life.¹⁰⁹

God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him will have lasting life.¹¹⁰

The Father has the power to give life,¹¹¹

You search the Scriptures, because you think you will find eternal life in them. The Scriptures tell about me,¹¹²

The Spirit is the one who gives life! Human strength can do nothing.¹¹³

"I am the way, the truth, and the life!"¹¹⁴

108 John 3: 6-8

109 John 3:15

110 John 3:16

111 John 5:21 -26

112 John 5:39

113 John 6:63

114 John 14:6

Chapter 4 The Beginnings of Humanity

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

Chapter 5 The Beginnings of Sin

Without a spirit, human-beings would have no concept of sin:

“Sin is a riddle, a mystery, a reality that eludes definition and comprehension.”¹¹⁵

What constitutes Sin? What is its origin? What is its source?

Theology and science alike have long sought to answer this question. Science only asks *'why have things gone wrong'*? Other disciplines, looking at the world from the eyes of Homo-Sapien, ask *'why should we suffer'*? Or, *'Why is there imperfection'*?

Why call it sin? What is the history of this term?

In the city of Ur around four-thousand BC, the Caldeans had a god named Sin, (Su-en). The story goes - Sin was the father of the sun god Shamash. Nanna was the full moon goddess and responsible for the welfare of cattle and crops. Sin would sometimes chastise Nanna thus causing her to hide, (resulting in a crescent moon), and interfering with the prosperity of the cattle and crops.

115 Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology

Chapter 5 The Beginnings of Sin

Gradually Nanna became depicted as a bull, because its crescent shape resembled the horns of a bull on its side. These yarns were recognised as fairy stories even by most of those that told them, but the recognition of aggravated imperfection remained as the moral of the story. The concept that interference caused imperfection or '*shortfall-from -fullness*' remained after the story was told.

Over time, the Hebrews adopted their word '*hattat*' to mean 'shortfall'. Then, as this concept occupied more of the Hebrew mind, they added many other words to describe in more detail what they meant by short-comings:

Pesa : meant the breach of a relationship or rebellion.

Awon : meant perverseness.

Segagah : covered error or mistake.

Resa : meant godlessness, injustice, and wickedness.

Amal : portrayed mischief or oppression.

*S*in is a riddle, a mystery, a reality that eludes definition and comprehension.”

*Baker's
Dictionary of
Biblical Theology*

All these terms have become incorporated in our one word, sin.

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

Early religion could not bring itself to blame God for the presence of imperfection in creation. As time went by, many Rabbis admitted that if God is the source of everything it follows also of sin itself. Although God is not responsible for actual sin only for the possibility of sin to exist.

The fact that imperfection is present in nature has taxed the minds of theologians heavily, mainly because of a misconception that 'good' means the same as 'perfect'. In the Genesis account of creation, each time God said 'it is good', it is followed by another step in the process of creation, that is, another step in the process toward perfection. Early Babylonian thinkers were more relaxed about gods and imperfection. They associated this process with a war within nature¹¹⁶. The gods waged war against each other over differences of opinion in a power struggle.¹¹⁷ While we smile at their picture story explanations today, it was based on the scientific observation that nature inherits characteristics from its origins, and '*therefore*', said the ancient theologians, '*from the gods*'. After all, who among us has not had a conflict between will and emotions within? So, the argument goes, '*If nature is at war with itself then it must be because creator gods must be at war*'. If gods go to war, then so should humans. Humans have learned to follow this

116 We have incorporated some of their thinking in the discussion of life being by nature a struggle against the no-life material from which it came

117 For further reading : War and the purposes of God ; W.W. Lucas, MA, LL.M

Chapter 5 The Beginnings of Sin

behaviour. In old testament times, there was an annual season for going to war.

More discerning scholars settled for the Genesis story which describes the relationship between God providing the means to sin but man's responsibility in choosing to sin. God planted the tree and put a spiritual barrier round it in the form of prohibition.¹¹⁸ Mankind chose, to override the prohibition justifying his own actions: First, he desired in his spirit to become like god¹¹⁹. Second, by Physically seeing sin looked good and lusting it¹²⁰. Surely this is the most basic of conflicts between will and emotion built into all human-beings.

There is no common ground for defining this little word sin. It causes indignation and outcry in a modern western world when we use it and many definitions seek to lessen its impact.

According to Gandhi, the seven sins are:

Wealth without works, pleasure without conscience, knowledge without character, commerce without morality, science without humanity, worship without sacrifice, and politics without principle.

That definition alone makes our world a very sinful place.

118 Figurative or real as your theology allows.

119 (a conceptual> imaginative>motivational transaction)

120 (an emotional> rational> decision transaction)

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

If sin is breaking the law, then whose law? If God's law then who has the monopoly on understanding God's intentions behind his law? The church cannot be arbiter because it has interpreted scripture differently through its ages. The church of the middle ages would include disobedience as sin, especially to pope or king. A sinner of yesteryear, was anyone who disagreed with authoritative opinion, or did not pay his tithes on time. To the Jews of Jesus' time, not paying your taxes to the Romans might be thought of as a virtue not a sin. But then, the Pharisees of Jesus' time, invented new sins every day in the Sanhedrin.

One day they came to Jesus demanding to know why his disciples played fast and loose with the laws. Jesus put the ball straight back in their court saying why do you play fast and loose with God's commandments?¹²¹ Jesus taught his disciples to live by God's principles but the Pharisees, finding those principles hard, chose to legislate with as many get-out clauses as possible. In the end, folk could not keep one law without breaking another, so handbooks were introduced to show how to get round conflicting laws. Much the same happens today as the behaviour of some policemen, politicians, bankers and businesses persons bear witness.

Each Pharisee would introduce 'get out clauses' to justify his behaviour in line with the natural bent of a control freak. Today we call it intellectualising – making excuses

¹²¹ Matt. 15 :1-9.

Chapter 5 The Beginnings of Sin

to justify my actions. Creating a law and then finding a way round it is a mark of a legalistic society that has lost its spiritual discretion. Laws do not define sin they may deter and persuade people to modify behaviour but cannot change the heart of a person. Laws may even provoke anger and cause sin when a person becomes imprisoned by them.

If sin is a transgression of the law, who is not guilty?

Can 'getting round the law' clear you of sinning? Jesus did not seem to think so. Many of his stories say so. The tax collector and the Pharisee, Abraham and Lazarus, The Pharisees discourse on divorce to show but three.¹²²

The main Christian denominations vary in their definition of sin:

1. The Anglican 39 articles states - "Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam ... but it is the fault and corruption of the Nature of every man."
2. The Assembly of God statement says - "Man was created good and upright; for God said, "Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness." However, man by voluntary transgression fell and thereby incurred not only physical death but also spiritual death, which is separation from God."
3. The Baptist Union declaration is - "In the beginning man was innocent of sin ... By his free choice man

122 Luke 16:23-25, Luke 18:10-14, Luke 18:2-9

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and inherited a nature and an environment inclined toward sin."

4. Lutherans say - "Sin came into the world by the fall of the first man ... By this Fall not only he himself, but also his natural offspring have lost the original knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, and thus all men are sinners already by birth..."
5. Methodists argue- "Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the corruption of the nature of every man."
6. Presbyterians - ". . . believe the Bible when it says that "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)"
7. The Roman Catholic catechism states - "... Adam and Eve committed a personal sin, but this sin affected the human nature that they would then transmit in a fallen state. It is a sin which will be transmitted by propagation to all mankind, that is, by the transmission of a human nature deprived of original holiness and justice."

Christians conclude that sin entered the world at the time of Adam.¹²³ This is significant because Adam represents the first creation with spiritual capacity. Before this, life was not accountable for sin. A tree or a bird had no

¹²³ According to theologians, sin entered creation with Lucifer the angel of light seeking to disobey God and overthrow Him, but sin was not accounted to human-kind before Adam and Eve sought to disobey God over eating the forbidden fruit.

Chapter 5 The Beginnings of Sin

capacity to disobey God, they just did what plants and animals do. This did not mean there was no physical death before Adam as some have supposed. Adam ate as any Homo-Sapien would. In the act of eating he killed both plant and animal. Come to that, many a clumsy dinosaur must have trodden on an ant or two, of that I am sure. Nor does the presence of death mean the world was imperfect. When the English bible declares *God said It is good*, it translates the Hebrew word ' *tobe* ' meaning: pleasant, better, bountiful, at peace, fine or pleasurable. It does not include our modern understanding of perfection. Perfect [*Heb: shaw lame*] is used in verses like 1 Kings 8:61 to describe the state of being out of tune with God. It is not used in connection with original creation:

*Let your heart therefore be perfect with the LORD our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day.*¹²⁴

David picks up on the theme to clarify it later in his prayer for Solomon. Perfection is not just being in tune to God's desires but also acting out God's desires in behaviour:

*... give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes, and to do all these things, and to build the palace, for the which I have made provision.*¹²⁵

124 I kings 8:61

125 1 Chronicles 29:19.

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

Since mankind began organising itself it has had to admit imperfection in creation. Just how far back in human history does the tribal healer go? The first healers were depicted in the Lascaux caves paintings in France, between 13,000 and 25,000 B.C. However, there is evidence that Neanderthals living 60,000 years ago in present day Iraq used plants for medicinal purposes¹²⁶. Earliest medical man learned how to hold people by fear. These enchanter were known as "Nahash," or "Nachash," from the Hissing sound they made in their ritual. Ammonites, used the word to mean Enchanter, Healer or Seer It is translated from the Hebrew into English as *serpent*, not for its shape but for the sound and character.¹²⁷

Christians are apt to cover all imperfection under the term sin. Once they started doing this they were forced to divide between material and formal imperfection. This distinction divides between the objective: (self determined in its circumstances), and the subjective: (actions which

126 A burial plot uncovered several types of healing herbs buried with Neanderthals laid out ritualistically.

127 It has been suggested that this explains the statement by God. '*On your belly you shall go*' was a play on words. According to this idea, Adam and Eve were the first homo-sapiens. God was saying to a pre-Homo-Sapien enchanter who came into the garden to contradict His command, that this was the end of his species and they would be forever remembered as no more than a snake. (*Gen 3:14 And the LORD God said unto the necromancer, Because you have done this, you are cursed, you will return to dust be remembered as a snake* [loose transliteration]) : I leave this to the reader's fancy to explore or reject.

Chapter 5 The Beginnings of Sin

are consequential of another). Material sin might be a person taking property believing it to be his- (objective). It would become formal if he took the property knowing it belonged to another. To the recipient of the deed it makes no odds, sin hurts - be it intentional or not. However, the distinction does emphasise the spiritual nature of sin as opposed to the material condition of a material world.

Science recognises imperfection in material but by way of neutrality does not want to join the blame game. Science drops out of the debate on sin because science does not acknowledge sin. Imperfection is a natural result of chance. Some win some lose. Therefore the natural course of evolution just happened.

Science does however, invest heavily in medical cures and preventions to try to overcome 'nature's imperfections'. Science also recognises the relationship of cause and effect in conditions like greenhouse warming or greed, although once again it might not want mankind to be blamed. Science attributes the imperfect state of material to its condition at formation. As the big explosion took place and flung particles into space they collided with other particles, some, (because conditions were right), stuck together while others repelled each other or passed on by. Two hydrogen elements might stick to one oxygen element forming water when the conditions were right. But not every hydrogen element paired, then found an oxygen particle passing by, if they had we would have no

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

hydrogen. Other elements formed a different relationship or remain alone as oxygen or Hydrogen elements. Science concludes chance encounters simply formed what they formed. When dealing with human sin, science would simply put this down to ignorance. Thalidomide or Global warming may be mistakes of mankind and unforeseen chance but this is due to a learning curve, not spiritual sin.

Chance itself needed to be weighted by conditions. Neutral science observes simply that processes of a material world are not perfect. Circumstances and chance play a role. It is for others to explain why. For the scientist, material world is flawed but intelligent life has a built in motivation in order to aspire. It is described as survival of the fittest. The chance theory is not compatible with the survival of the fittest theory:

“Survivors aren't always the strongest; sometimes they're the smartest, but more often simply the luckiest.”
128

*“In a world where the weakest has the gun the strongest dies”.*¹²⁹

Humanists interpretation goes one step further, 'imperfection of nature is down to randomness of chance

128 — Carrie Ryan, *The Dark and Hollow Places*

129 Anon

Chapter 5 The Beginnings of Sin

at its formation'. Cynics add, '*Sin is blaming man because religion is afraid to blame its god*'.

Christianity, on the other hand, has become afraid of the 'C' word, even though its authoritative writings and ancestral inheritance happily talk of Chance:

*I returned and saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and **chance** happens to them all.*¹³⁰

*And watch. If it goes up by the way of its own border to Beth-Shemesh, He has done us this great evil. But if not, then we shall know that it is not His hand that struck us. It was a **chance** that happened to us.*¹³¹

*So she went and came and gleaned in the field behind the reapers. And she happened by **chance** upon the tract of field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelech. Ruth 2:3*

Have you noticed how often Jesus portrayed his father God as an extravagant entrepreneur taking a chance?

The landowner in the parable of the sower sowed seed on good and bad land expecting a return but accepting that

130 Ecclesiastes 9:11

131 1 Samuel 6:9

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

some would fail. The master who entrusted various amounts of money to his stewards before setting off on a long journey committed his wealth to chance, albeit a calculated chance. To the one who buried his money he said explicitly:

*... I will judge you out of your own mouth, wicked servant! You knew that I was a harsh man, taking up what I had not laid down and reaping what I did not sow.*¹³²

To the disciples who asked, 'Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?', Jesus gave a remarkable answer,

*'Neither this man sinned nor his parents, but let it be so that the works of God could be revealed in him.'*¹³³

I do not pretend to understand what Jesus was saying or quite where the commas should go in the original¹³⁴, but it is clear Jesus recognised the chance element of nature happened to this man:

*"The complicated doctrine of 'free-will' has one clear result; the goal of God is achieved by his abundance of creation and not dependent on the dictate of any individual choice"*¹³⁵.

132 Luke 19:22

133 John 9:2 -3

134 There is no punctuation in Ancient Hebrew

135 Unknown source; It is out of this doctrine, that the doctrine of free-will developed.

Chapter 5 The Beginnings of Sin

It is clear Jesus did not blame this man's condition on sin but circumstance. Sin may contribute to circumstance but Jesus took the opportunity to correct the state of this man by changing his circumstances. We might say Jesus *'weighted the man's chances in favour of wholeness'*. Jesus constantly recognised that creation is in a process of movement toward his father's goal of perfection. Jesus seems to be more scientific than many of his followers who want to blame every material fault on man's sin. He refused to point a finger when the disciples asked about the blind man's fate¹³⁶. But He also confronted others with the spiritual responsibility to:

*'Go, and sin no more!'*¹³⁷

So then, we have as circumstances, the relationship of matter to higher laws, the natural state and inclination of material and the chance of an encounter to take into account when we look at sin. These three form the condition of creation but do not constitute sin. A person cannot be blamed for the conditions into which he was born, he inherits the weightiness of such conditions. It might have been better if 'inherited-weightiness' carried a different word to sin to distinguish it from sin by person.

136 John 9:3 Jesus answered, Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

137 John 8:11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more. ; see also rich young ruler and other incidents.

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

Sin lies in the spiritual. Sin does not lie in the freewill but in the decision of the freewill. Theologians tell us that Satan, an angel of light, a spiritual being, was the first to sin. He did this by reasoning, deciding and determining his own act of rebellion. Reasoning, deciding and determining are attributes of the spiritual.

Presently, science is preoccupied with the idea that free-will is an illusion:

'No one is responsible for their actions since it is all determined by the brain' ¹³⁸

'So it seems we are no more than biological machines and free will is just an illusion' ¹³⁹

The basis of one experiment's premise was:

'If it is possible to predict peoples' action on the basis of neural activity that proceeds their conscious decision? If so then free will is an illusion' ¹⁴⁰.

Brain scanners can indeed show a choice of left hand or right hand responses up to six seconds before a conscious action occurs. So some Scientists concludes 'free-will' is only a response to neurological decision. But is the premise of the experiment itself right? Where does free-

138 Wolf Singer

139 Steven Hawkins

140 Chris Frith

Chapter 5 The Beginnings of Sin

will reside? Does free-will make its decision before or after it enters the conscious mind? This experiment shows only that a decision has been made before a neurological response. On what evidence does the premise conclude self-will resides in the neurological system?

These are not new questions. Theology struggled with them long before the scientific age. Calvinists pre-empted modern science by believing everything that occurs to man is pre-ordained. Salvation is for the elect, it is for those that God has foreordained to be saved. We only appear to choose to follow God, they say. As the old joke goes, *'Thank God that's over'*, said the Calvinist after falling down stairs.

Some Babylonian scholars grappling with the same question, decided mankind did not have free-will because the planet formation determined a person's fate. It is now time for scientists to have a go at trying to work it out. Beware though, make sure the premise is right before the experimental conclusions are interpreted. Take good note of the experiment but be sure the conclusions are not pre-determined by the belief of the scientific body setting the premise. Your belief is your free choice – if you will forgive the biased theology.

In Genesis chapter-three we are introduced to an incident. Depending on your theological belief or disbelief, it may be a true record or an illustration of what happened in the

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

earliest life of Homo-Sapien. What are the circumstances in this account? Our first Homo-Sapien couple are in ideal conditions; (A garden is prepared and enclosed from the surrounding fields, beasts and chaos). They are aware of and absorbed in the implications of, a higher law; ('You shall not eat of this one tree'). In the condition set, is the proximity of a chance encounter; (the tree is there in the garden). These two people are special to the account because they are the first creatures with a spiritual dimension to their lives. There is other life about. The account clearly states the separation of this couple from the beasts of the field¹⁴¹. This couple are protected in a garden until they become aware for themselves of the difference between good and evil; until they have matured enough to decide for themselves right from wrong. Once they take this responsibility on themselves, (and no longer accept the judgement or authority of a higher being), they are given over to their own devises.

According to this account, although a spiritual dimension has been around before this time, Homo-Sapien is the first material creature to incorporate it. This new capacity has the potential to grow or to die within its material host. It has the capacity to direct the material in its choices. It has the capacity to grow the character of Homo-Sapien or die leaving mankind as no better than the animals previously created. This spiritual capacity is the mark between

141 Gen 2:15 ; Gen 3:22-23

Chapter 5 The Beginnings of Sin

animals and mankind. From time to time science does an experiment to show how animals and humans behave alike. Animals use tools, animals protect their young, animals can learn – especially if there is a reward at the end. These are mental capacities and are similar to mankind. Are they spiritual attributes or mental functions? What do we mean by 'spiritual'?

Spiritual attributes demonstrate themselves through the mental and behavioural functions. The atheist scientist, who starts with a premise that spirituality is the result of mental consequence, seeks to demonstrate through experimentation how this might occur. Once again science simply demonstrates the similarity of individual traits in animal and human behaviour. It does not declare it as spirituality influence. That is for the interpreter of the experiments to decide. It is the experimenter's free choice based on belief.

Secularism degraded the meaning of the term spiritual through the Latin word soul, meaning "animating or vital principle in man"¹⁴², It ended up with the term spiritual meaning "an aesthetic enjoyment of arts or music".¹⁴³ Thus, the secularist sees the human-being as able to absorb through the spirit into his nature from outside him/herself, (but mainly through the arts).

142 Some add '*and animals*'

143- as we have already discussed in chapter 3

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

Sociologists, referring to 'the spirit of the age', or 'the community spirit' advance the understanding that spirit is absorbed from outside the physical frame, not just by arts but also relationships.¹⁴⁴ This field of thought opens up spiritual influence to include the collective emotions or agreements via the capacity to empathise or co-operate in laws.

If science was the judge of a murder trial it might determine 'who-dun-it' but it could not pass sentence. That is out of its jurisdiction.

(The collective spirit of supporters at a football match influencing individual behaviour -for example).

Theology also points to the spiritual as an entity outside of human-kind, not being generated from within but able to influencing human nature. God in his original state is stated as Spirit without physical body.¹⁴⁵ The spirit of God is often said to descend upon, be absorbed into and regenerate mankind.¹⁴⁶ Solomon argues :

'Dust return to the earth because it is self destructive

144 The concept includes propaganda and identity. Propaganda may modify but relationships and identity are the root in which spirit works. This concept led to the development of eastern religions like Hinduism which believes in the recycling of spirits until they achieve a state of perfection and are accepted in Navarna.

145 John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

146 Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to ... ; also Romans 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Chapter 5 The Beginnings of Sin

*and the spirit survives because that is everlasting'*¹⁴⁷

Paul argues,:

'Human nature on its own is naturally self destructive but the nature of spirit can transform it'.¹⁴⁸.

In other words, human nature in its natural state is sinful, (self destructive), but the human-being under the control of the spirit is righteous.

Love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, righteousness and truth are tangible resultants of spiritual influence.¹⁴⁹ Spiritual attributes influence the material world. Health, for example, has been under the researchers eye for a few years now. Hope, comfort, compassion, selflessness, altruism, faith, forgiveness, prayer and other spiritual facets have all been shown to affect physical health for good. Whereas hate, greed, fornication, covetousness, controlling, addiction, selfishness and many other animal instincts lead to its degradation and destruction.

Science has little to say about sin. First, it does not acknowledge there is such a thing. Second it defers

147 Ecclesiastes 12:7 Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

148 For the flesh fights against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. Gal 5:17

149 Galatians 5:22 ; Ephesians 5:9

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

morality, ethical and spiritual decisions to others outside of the scientific discipline. Science would say this is how you make an atom bomb but it is up to others to justify its use. If you ask science to dissect morality and define its cause or affect, it cannot. It does not have the means within its discipline. There is no DNA to define a moral or ethical code:

*'How does one begin to deal with the challenge of finding a "moral compass" in a world in which individuals must: "make sense of the senseless"; do the right thing on a daily basis to deal with short-term needs while not understanding the long-term consequences; find a psychological rationale for surviving in one's cultural environment which suppresses fundamental human needs; deal with frightening unknowns created by new technological advances which challenge outmoded world views; not use knowledge and powerful technologies to deny basic human needs and rights of individuals ; and search for some "universal" truths to assist moral judgements in a pluralistic world of conflicting religious ethical values?'*¹⁵⁰

Psychology tries to answer, but Scientists are not keen to acknowledge psychology as a part of science.

150 James E. Trosko PhD In Genetics Professor of paediatrics and human development USA

Chapter 5 The Beginnings of Sin

If science was the judge of a murder trial it might determine 'who-dun-it' and even how it was done, but it could not pass sentence. That is out of its jurisdiction. Science is subject to moral judgement only because scientists are, it cannot dictate it.

No! From here on we must call upon other disciplines for a comparison. Morality is the distinction between right and wrong. Ethics is the distinction between a virtuous and non virtuous character. In a pluralistic society, everyone decides his or her own standards of morality and everyone gets to decide what is virtuous. Laws can help contain a standard of behaviour within a society but who makes the laws? The dictator? Parliament? The lobby that shouts loudest? The religious might say God decides. But if God is united, does Western civilization interpret God aright through the Christian tradition? Is Sheria law the right interpretation of God's standard? If there is no common standard there is no universal sin, everyone interprets sin by his or her own understanding or belief. Christians claim the Bible is the standard, but Christians cannot agree on its interpretation. One will argue you should 'keep holy the Sabbath day' the other 'Sabbath was meant for man not man for the Sabbath' Besides, what do we mean by Holy?

Am I to conclude that the opposite of sinfulness is

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

righteousness? Certainly the scriptures would have us believe sinfulness brings death but righteousness gives life, that is a root theme throughout scripture¹⁵¹. From Genesis to Revelation we see the unveiling of a plan to lead humanity from a state of self destruction to a place of righteousness and life.

Sin, at root is a decision of free-will that develops into a negative or destructive attitude or behaviour. If it is not free-will that determines man's action, then it is not sin. To be free-will, there has to be choice. To be sin there has to be decision.

Jesus' comments that lusting is sin before it has a chance to develop into conscious action¹⁵². As already discussed, animals are not condemned by God for following their instinct but mankind, having been given the means to rise above animal instincts, is expected to behave out of higher considerations. Two cats fighting over territory are regarded as acting out nature's instinct. Two humans fighting over territory are required to examine motivation-(hatred, greed, revenge etc.). The beginning of sin came at the beginning of spiritual insight. Spiritual insight gives the means to transform sin by righteousness or to continue an action out of animal instinct. This is often done within a person before it rises to the conscious. The conscience,

151 (All unrighteousness is sin 1 John 5:17),

152 Matthew 5:28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Chapter 5 The Beginnings of Sin

which is regarded as a spiritual attribute, resides in the sub-conscious of human beings. Free-will and conscience decide behaviour before the mind works out the details.

Jesus put it like this:

If you were blind, you should have no sin: but now you say, We see; therefore your sin remains ¹⁵³.

Paul writes:

*If you are guided by the Spirit, you won't obey your selfish desires*¹⁵⁴.

Ravi Zacharias¹⁵⁵ states it like this:

The greatest ethic is love. Where there is love there has to be the possibility of freedom. Where there is freedom there will definitely be the reality of sin and evil. Where there is the reality of sin and evil there is need of a saviour. Where there is the reality of sin and evil there is the possibility of redemption and a Redeemer. So from the freedom of choice to the reality of evil, to the saving grace of Christ and the redemptive work of Christ, only in the scriptural terms is the question legitimate.

What then is the essence of sin? Sin has two prongs to its fork: the law, (or rather the breaking of spiritual law), and

153 John 9:41

154 Gal 5:16

155 A modern day Christian apologist

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

relationships (or rather the violation of relationships with God or man). Sin, we are told by theologians, opposes God's law. But defining God's law or good relationship protocol for everyday living is an impossible task. We rely on the debate of human beings to discover and agree moral law:

*Sin hates rather than loves, it doubts or contradicts rather than trusts and affirms, it harms and abuses rather than helps and respects.*¹⁵⁶

Sin is also a condition. There are lies and liars. People can be 'controlled' by 'sin' :¹⁵⁷

*This said, we have hardly defined sin, and with good reason. Sin is elusive. Sin has no substance, no independent existence. It does not even exist in the sense that love or justice do. It exists only as a parasite of the good or good things. Sin creates nothing; it abuses, perverts, spoils, and destroys the good things God has made. It has no program, no thesis; it only has an antithesis, an opposition. Sometimes wickedness is as senseless as a child who pulls the hair or punches the stomach of another, then honestly confesses, "I don't know why I did that." In some ways sin is an absence rather than a presence: it fails to listen, walks past the needy, and subsists in alienation rather than relation.*¹⁵⁸

156 Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology

157 Matt 23:28 .

158 Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology

Chapter 5 The Beginnings of Sin

There is no absolute definition of sin but we know it when we see it. Pro 6:16 -23 says:

*There are six or seven kinds of people God doesn't like:
The proud, the liar, the murderer, the evil schemer, the
quick tempered, the false witness, the trouble maker..
The Law of the Lord is a good guide to what constitutes
sin and its teachings shine brightly. Correction and self-
control will lead you through life.*

If we attempt to define sin in law the definition become tainted by the opinions and words of the legislators. Pharisees are guilty of doing just that. To legislate against strong drink on the evidence of Samson or John the baptist is to grossly misunderstand the nature of sin. These two took a Nazarite vow to God¹⁵⁹ not to drink alcohol. The sin was not in taking a drink but in breaking a vow. Sin is in the heart. Sin's source is not in action but in the spirit of human beings. David discovered that after the Bathsheba incident.¹⁶⁰ During his time of repentance David wrote Psalm 51:

*I know my sins, and I cannot forget my terrible guilt.
You are the one I have sinned against God, because I
disobeyed you. So it is right and fair for you to correct
and punish me. I have had a weakness in this area of my
life since the day I was born. But you require complete
honesty and acknowledgement in order to teach true
wisdom.*

159 Samson's parents took the vow on his behalf.

160 2 Samuel 11

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

Sin it is not instant, but like a seed in the ground it grows out of sight until it finally pushing into the light. In its earliest stages of growth it is difficult to distinguish between good or bad. A person, praying for ten-pounds out of a need, may see the money found on the street as an answer to prayer (just as Peter found his tax revenue in the fish's mouth)¹⁶¹. The person with a bundle of notes in her purse will not have the same justification in pocketing the money. To the scientist, prayer has nothing to do with the situation; it is a matter of chance. To others, the coincidence demands further examination as it is evidence of a God who interferes by changing the level of chance. It is justification for the way a person behaves. While it is clear, at one end of the spectrum, mugging an old lady is sin regardless of any prayerful need, at the other there are many grey areas we meet during the day. These are justified not by our belief alone nor by our action but by our faith.

The one thing we can say about sin is that it opposes life. Sin is destructive. It may lead to Physical death, spiritual death, moral death, or death of society. It may come in the form of eroding standards of morality, another person's well-being, positive attitude to life or physical torment. Sin, at root, opposes a creators intention for full life in

¹⁶¹ Matt : 17,27

Chapter 5 The Beginnings of Sin

every creature.

This does not make it any easier in the debate of law and order or social conscience. Nor does it help in predicting the way ahead for human-beings, but it is demonstrated after the event in the form of deterioration. Life incorporates both struggle and prediction as part of its nature and therefore it requires faith as a major tool in its armoury.

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

Chapter 6 The Beginnings of Faith

Faith is not a religious word. Faith has been hijacked by religion, or at least the world has abandoned it to religion.

Normally, the number-five bus will take me to my chosen destination. On that basis I believe in the number-five bus for my purposes. And I demonstrate my belief in the number five-bus by getting on it when I want to reach my destination. Faith, the action of my belief, means getting on the bus out of my belief that it will achieve my objective. The other day it did not. It was re-routed by a higher authority because of road works. Some time ago it did not reach its destination at all because its engine failed. My faith in the number-five bus remains despite the slight probability that something may go wrong.

The problem is not in my faith, nor in the science, it is in the interpretation and understanding. Given that conditions of mechanics, environment, human and management are met, the bus will arrive and on time at the destination stated. When the commuter at the bus stop says she has lost faith in the bus it is not a statement about the bus. Rather, it is a recognition that the theoretical assumption incorporated in a premise, will only deliver given expressed conditions. Usually the statement of the commuter is about the inability of the bus company to foresee and iron out all adverse conditions. Faith is an

Chapter 6 The Beginnings of Faith

integral part of the human psyche. Psychologists tell us it essential for human-beings to develop. Science has not yet determined a gene or chromosome in which faith resides but it is a part of human make-up. John Westerhoff¹⁶² describes four aspects of faith : Experienced faith, Affiliation faith, Searching faith and Owned faith, each grows within a human-being to play a part in forming character. He does not tie his observations to human progression of age but of spiritual growth of character.

Professor James W. Fowler, developmental psychologist, concludes his research by showing a progression of faith development in line with age (see Illustration 2).

Scientist of the no-god persuasion have tried to distance science from religion in statements encapsulated here by Steven Hawkins:

There is a very, very important difference between feeling strongly, even passionately, about something because we have thought about and examined the evidence for it on the one hand, and feeling strongly about something because it has been internally revealed to us, or internally revealed to somebody else in history and subsequently hallowed by tradition. There's all the difference in the world between a belief that one is prepared to defend by quoting evidence and logic and a belief that is supported by nothing more than tradition, authority, or revelation.

162 John Westerhoff ; Psychologist author of : 'Will our children have faith?'

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

Title ..	<i>Development</i>
Primal or Undifferentiated	a sense of trust / distrust and safety / fear about the universe
Intuitive- Projective	Intuitive images of good and evil. fantasy and reality are the same.
"Mythic-Literal"	Discovery of material and abstract fact and fiction
Synthetic-Conventional	discovery of conformity and rebellion arising out of abstract thought
"Individuative- Reflective"	Taking personal responsibility for beliefs and feelings
"Conjunctive"	acknowledges paradox and transcendence relating reality behind the symbols of inherited systems. becoming more open to paradox and opposing viewpoints
"Universalizing"	Transcending belief systems to achieve a sense of oneness with all being.. Conflict events are no longer viewed as paradoxes

Illustration 2: stages of faith development : Professor James W. Fowler, developmental psychologist

Peter, pre-dating Steven Hawkins by two-thousand years put it much more succinctly in his letter to Asian churches:

... be always ready to give an answer to everyone your reasons for the hope that is in you¹⁶³

Faith has the same attributes in science as in religious belief because it is part of human nature. Both start with

163 1 Peter 3:15

Chapter 6 The Beginnings of Faith

an insight that needs testing. The scientist might like the idea of scientific faith being different and may accuse the religious of having no foundation for their beliefs. That is based on the unscientific claim that only science has the true basis for belief. Scripture is full of people who put their belief to the test and found it to work. Abraham, a scientist of his day, subjected his faith to many tests. His strong faith that his descendants would inherit a land only occurred four-hundred years after his death, but it proved to be right. How did he know it would be?

The older the discipline of science becomes, the more reliant on the discoveries of those that have gone before, Scientists have faith in their predecessor's discoveries. Scientists have faith in their teacher's teachings. Paul, that great man of religious faith, spent more time debating the reliability of his faith in the chambers of Ephesus with sceptics than he did proclaiming it in the synagogues to believers. Paul himself had put a great deal of faith in his teacher Gamaliel which he later discounted. Faith moves on with experience. Experience refashions belief.

Belief [*pisteuo*] is put to the test through faith [*pistis*]. Paul's great philosophy in life was:

*Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.*¹⁶⁴

164 1 Colossians 14:20

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

*For every one that uses milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.*¹⁶⁵

*“Much of the problem stems from the different starting points of our divergence with Darwinists. Everyone, scientist or not, must start their quests for knowledge with some unprovable axiom—some prior belief on which they sort through experience and deduce other truths. This starting point, whatever it is, can only be accepted by faith; eventually, in each belief system, there must be some unprovable, presupposed foundation for reasoning (since an infinite regression is impossible)”.*¹⁶⁶

One purpose of science is to find truth. But then, artists, mathematicians and poets share that same goal

It is claimed by Christians that we are 'Saved By Faith'?
Sorry to disappoint you but faith cannot save anyone.
Shock! Horror!

No! We are saved by the action of God. We are saved by His design and His plan. As we shall see in the next chapter, salvation is made up of many components gathered together into a strategy designed by God. Faith is only the final link in that long chain. Just as faith is the

165 Hebrews 5:13

166 Plait quotes this as do many others - author unknown

Chapter 6 The Beginnings of Faith

channel through which the scientist can test her hypothesis so Christian tests his hypotheses of salvation through faith.

Why is faith selected as the channel of salvation? Why not hope, or love, or patience, or even good works?

First, if sin is a product of the spirit then a spiritual facet is required to rectify it. Interestingly, when you refer to the term spirit, it is rarely connected to human beings.

Google “attributes of the spirit” and it will automatically try to direct you anywhere away from 'Holy-Spirit' to 'hocus-pocus'. The google world is far more comfortable talking about personality or character when referencing the abstract in human beings than it is in referencing a spirit.

Personality comes from the Greek word *persona*, - 'to wear a mask', So the *persona* is a covering worn by the personality. Character comes from the old French word “*caractere*”, meaning “The combination of qualities or features that distinguishes one person, group, or thing from another”. In Old English it was rendered “the distinctive imprint on the soul”. Today we might say “the parts of the human science cannot reach”.

One purpose of science is to find truth. Artists, mathematicians and poets share that same goal. So what if one claims to be right and the others disagree?

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

Science might say, we are simply the product of our DNA:

'DNA neither cares nor knows. DNA just is. And we dance to its music'.¹⁶⁷

To which the poet, philosopher and theologian chant together, 'then why dance at all'? It is for the spirit of mankind to call the DNA into line with external influences. Spirit not DNA calls for us to dance. Spirit calls for creativity to make music for dancing and actions for prancing. Does an orchestra playing music have DNA. In an orchestra individuals respond to the spirit of the music. At a football match supporters respond to the spirit of the game. Grace, faith, hope, love, worship, patience and so on are all spiritual attributes. These travel through the community to be caught by the spirit of a person. DNA may respond to the spirit in chemical and electrical impulses causing the dance but the Spirit is the instigator.

According to scripture, faith has been selected as the channel of grace, because there is a natural response in faith by the receiver.

In rather quaint language, Spurgeon puts It like this :

Suppose that I am about to give a poor man an alms: I put it into his hand--why? Well, it would hardly be fitting to put it into his ear, or to lay it upon his foot; the

167 Richard Dawkins *River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life*(1995), 133

Chapter 6 The Beginnings of Faith

hand seems made on purpose to receive. So, in our mental frame, faith is created on purpose to be a receiver: it is the hand of the man, and there is a fitness in receiving grace by its means.

Faith is the packaging. Reaching out or responding is a response to test reality. In the case of Spurgeon's alms, reaching out is the test to prove the premise. In the case of salvation, faith is the test to prove the promise! The action gives proof one way or another providing the tests is sound. Of course if I do not need alms or do not trust the giver will deliver, then I will not exercise faith by reaching out.

So then, we have raised the question as to why faith is medium of salvation. It is important because it enables us to see the way ahead and go for it. I do not know who, but someone rather cleverly put it like this:

If you do not see it before you see it, you will never see it

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

Chapter 7 The Beginnings of Salvation

Salvation is another of those religious words that has narrowed through time.

Salvation, according to most dictionaries, is:

Deliverance from danger or suffering.

To save is to deliver or protect.

The word carries the idea of victory, health, or preservation.

Around twelve-hundred AD, the French language changed the concept of many English words, among them the Hebrew concept of Genesis 49:18, '*I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD*'. Before this time, the Literal Hebrew understanding of this phrase was "I have been plaited with Yesh" (lit: *I have been plaited to Yesua with the promise of freedom from my constraints*). Yeshua¹⁶⁸ is the Hebrew word for Saviour and it refers to a person who will fulfil the promise by freeing me from my constraints. This appears in verb form over fifty times in the book of Psalms alone. Alongside the other patriarchs in the early biblical story, Jacob rehearsed his faith in promises that his children will see fulfilled long after he has gone to his grave. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job, Moses and others

168 From yasha = deliverance, rescue, salvation, safety, welfare

Chapter 7 The Beginnings of Salvation

believed the prophetic promises by “*braiding the promise*” with Yeshua who would bring it to pass. These were not constrained to the lifetime of the believer yet the believer expected to see them fulfilled. Integral to the belief was the belief that life continued after the body failed.

By the middle ages, the Roman church, (under the influence of Greek Mythology), was using the Latin word 'Salvationem' from the root “Salvus” meaning “sound” or “whole”. This word effectively broke the braid between the means and the promise. Salvation was soon transferred away from Yeshua to the church which claimed the right to broker the conditions for salvation. This quickly became corrupt, ending in indulgences and penances and the priest's absolution as the conditions of salvation.

Sometimes, the Bible uses the words saved or salvation to refer to temporal, physical deliverance.¹⁶⁹ Sometimes it refers to the need for mental or spiritual power to change life style or overcome unwanted behaviour.¹⁷⁰ Sometimes the biblical term “salvation” concerns an eternal, spiritual deliverance. When Paul told the Philippian jailer what he must do to be saved, he could conceivably be talking about avoiding a certain execution. If he had been reported to his superiors for sleeping on duty this was inevitable. Far more likely he was referring to the jailer's eternal

169 Such as Paul's deliverance from prison in Philippians 1:19.

170 Numerous psalms are about this sort of salvation.

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

destiny¹⁷¹ When Jesus equated being saved with “entering the kingdom of God”, he expresses the concept of being braided with a king capable of establishing salvation. This concept covers the change in direction starting here and continuing into eternity.

Salvation and sin are terms a scientist rejects. However, science is in its infancy, it has yet to explain the implications of terms like '*the survival of the fittest*'. We still need “*freedom from my constraints*” even if these constraints just happen by chance. When things go wrong the natural instinct built into Homo-Sapien is to look for a way out. Life, by its very nature, does not just sit back and accept defeat. Life itself carries the desire for salvation. Anything that has life shows its desire to live by growing.

Like many religions, science has found a sound-bite on which to hang some theories without exploring the deeper implications. Closer examination of such a phrase as '*the survival of the fittest*', logically incorporates the acceptance of the statement “life has a history and a destiny”. This is something humanity has recognised innately from its outset. Why else would life procreate? Why else would nature go to war for that matter? From the smallest virus to the largest dinosaur, life inherits a survival drive toward a destiny. Scientific work on viruses has shown even these tiny creatures tone down their deadly nature once they have learn killing their host

171 Acts 16:30-31)

Chapter 7 The Beginnings of Salvation

means destroying their own species.

There is no scientific definition of life. NASA scientists, who tried to define it, ended up agreeing, not to define it, but simply to list recognisable characteristic of '*life as we know it*' – Jim¹⁷². Inherent in life at its most basic is a survival instinct. Anything said to be alive inherits a sense of destiny for which it struggles to survive. Inheritance itself requires the destiny drive of its donor.

In the late nineteen-sixties, computer programming took off and 'everyone' became an expert programmer. Before this, computers were programmed in binary, their natural 'life' consisted of electrical bits being either in an on state or an off state. '*Basic Language*' came along sounding almost human. '*Basic language*' was simply groups of binary code assigned a recognisable name. A computer knows no different because it can only respond if a bit switch is energised from its natural state of not. Basic language requires an intermediary process called compiling. The compiler simply turns higher language, (understood by Human-beings), into binary (understood by the computer). No matter how sophisticated the programming language, it has inherited binary because computers, by nature, can only respond to bits switched on or not switched on. Programmers are destined to ever more clever development through '*Object Orientated*

172 For the benefit of Trekki fan, I don't think Mr Spock ever actually said "It's life Jim, but not as we know it."

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

Languages. No matter how sophisticated the language, it inherits binary as its base.

In the same way, all life has inherited a desire to survive. This is demonstrated in the scientific doctrines of '*adapting*', '*survival*', '*procreating*' and so on. All life inherits that desire simply by being alive. No matter how sophisticated it may become in the growth of its spirit, material life has a history, an inheritance, a struggle to survive and a destiny built in. if it does not, it is not alive. Science may conclude that life matter is electrical or chemical in process. It may be right in the discovery of switches for genetic codes, but the inherent spiritual drives are needed to direct the material life toward its destiny.

Remember, both religion and science recognise life proceeded from nothing, Matter was formed through an emerging chaos which developed a survival instinct and a sense of destiny¹⁷³. Neither survival nor destiny are material by nature. Neither are to be found in all matter. They *are* however, both found in life. Combined, they form the basis of another spiritual quality

I sent three snails flying across the garden this morning because they found their way into my greenhouse up the glass and eaten half my cabbage plants. Such a primitive animal has developed enough intelligence to find obscure food but it has not developed a social conscience.

173 Genesis 1: 1-3

Chapter 7 The Beginnings of Salvation

- hope.

Science and religion agree that life is not perfect in its material form. Life fights life in the material world - bacteria, viruses, genetic imperfection, environmental hazards and much more, all material life consumes life to survive. Science would see this as energy evolving and surviving. Religion chooses to see it as evidence of a fallen world that rebelled against its creator.

According to scriptures, God saw this life as good:

I have provided all kinds of fruit and grain for you to eat. And I have given the green plants as food for everything else that breathes. These will be food for animals, both wild and tame, and for birds. God looked at what he had done. All of it was very good.¹⁷⁴

Adaptation and procreation are also inherent in life according to the observations of NASSA. Once again these are accepted by science, religion and a biblical creator God who saw this as good:

So God created humans to be like himself; he made men and women. God gave them his blessing and said: Have a lot of children! Fill the earth with people and

174 Gen 1:29 - 31 .

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

*bring it under your control.*¹⁷⁵

That is the way things are; both science and religion agree it to be so. So, where do science and religion part company? They must part company over the moral and spiritual judgement. Science can only say That is how things are! Science cannot pass judgement on it or give a hope for the future. Scientists may, because they are part of the human race and incorporate the human faculty of a spiritual dimension; science cannot because it is a tool limited by its disciplines. The scientist uses the tool to discover what is, then formulates theory or explanation. Science itself cannot speak in mental or spiritual realms nor form morality or ethical code.

Religion also is a tool. The religious person can make judgements within religion's discipline. Because this tool deals with the spiritual realm, (hate, envy, greed, selfishness, jealousy and the opposites of such) it has formulated a different set of disciplines to science. It tries to deal with the root causes. Its overriding discipline proceeds from the understanding that the spiritual came first and these affect a chemical or electrical path in matter. These are intertwined with matter as a driving force turning matter into behaviour. These spiritual attributes affect the genetic balances through the electrical and chemical make-up of mankind, a mechanism recognised by Moses in his law¹⁷⁶, and by writers in the

¹⁷⁵ Gen 1:27-8

¹⁷⁶ Exodus 34 : 7 ... *that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of*

Chapter 7 The Beginnings of Salvation

latter books of the bible.¹⁷⁷

Neither science nor religion can prove which came first – the spiritual or the physical. Scientist presumes, (because the discipline of science requires it), the physical must have come first. Christianity says the Spirit came first:

*God is spirit. So the people who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.*¹⁷⁸

Christianity presumes matter inherits spiritual attributes as its driving force. Human-beings process behaviour through thoughts, meditations, interpretations and ideas because they inherit life. Matter just is! The spiritual process forms the behaviour and drive. The ability to adapt, for example, had to be built into the earliest and most basic forms of life otherwise the species would die. Life implies intelligence- intelligence to find food, intelligence to reproduce. Intelligence to improve, intelligence to adapt. Any progressive design in life, any objective or life transition, any achievement toward a goal, depends upon it. Human-beings have developed the spiritual power to live by moral, social and ethical

the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, beyond the third and to the fourth generation.

177 Read the whole of Romans chapter 7 to follow Paul's Logic --v :19 *I don't do the good I want to do; instead, I do the evil that I do not want to do.* | James also in ch 4:1 From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?

178 John 4:24

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

standards.

I sent three snails flying across the garden this morning because they found their way into my greenhouse, up the glass and had eaten half my cabbage plants. Such a primitive animal has developed enough intelligence to find obscure food and to travel the length of my garden to eat it, but it has not developed a social conscience or a spiritual discernment to modify its actions. It is not content to eat one lettuce for its needs, it destroys them all.

Early religions built doctrines of Salvation around a notion of gods who foresaw material life as fragile. Human-beings, observing creation's process, noticed painting a picture is vulnerable while the paint is wet -but it must be wet to paint onto the canvas. Pyramid builders learned a brick wall is vulnerable while its lime cement is wet -but it needs to be wet in the building stage to bond the wall together. Ancient academics documented the principle and theologians and philosophers applied it to the building blocks of life itself. Early Hebrew writers, compiling Genesis, were not naive. They described a progression in creation, culminating in human-beings who have a spirit. Spirit is the medium by which mankind communicates with God. Thus, Genesis chapter-one proclaims God conceived the idea, God spoke, material was formed - first into a primeval chaos, then into life, culminating in

Chapter 7 The Beginnings of Salvation

human-beings capable of communicating with their creator via the spirit.

Salvation did not become necessary because mankind determined his own future in deliberate disobedience. (Scripture tells the story of spiritual beings rebelling before the material was formed). Salvation was recognised as a need at the point of creation because the nature of life itself emerged from a state of nothingness.

Life itself had to fight nothingness to exist

The sun, moon, and stars will crumble to dust. The sky will disappear like a scroll being rolled up, and the stars will fall like leaves dropping from a vine or a fig tree.¹⁷⁹

Remember that you made me from clay; are you going to crush me back to dust?¹⁸⁰

Our bodies will return to the dust of the earth, and the breath of life will go back to God, who gave it to us.¹⁸¹

Religions build on the hope of a time when this destiny is reached and creation is in permanent state. Some religions, Christianity among them, have a doctrine of a new body – one that has been perfected beyond the material struggle.

179 Isa 34:4

180 Job 10:9

181 Ecc 12:7

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

In the between time, life is vulnerable and needs salvation. It is only possible to anticipate this because mankind has the spiritual capacity of hope. But what is hope?

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

Chapter 8 The Beginnings of Hope

Hope is another word that has lost its meaning over the years.

Created from clay, Pandora was the very first woman, according to Greek mythology. Pandora was given a wedding gift of a box containing strife, despair, corruption, agony, death and many other evils. Zeus instructed her not to open it. However, Pandora's curiosity got the better of her. And in a second, all the evils escaped into the world. Frightened at what she had done, she shut the lid. Only one thing remained under the lid - Hope.

Only Hope was left within her unbreakable house, she remained under the lip of the jar, and did not fly away. Before [she could], Pandora replaced the lid of the jar. This was the will of aegis-bearing Zeus the Cloud gatherer.”

Pandora's box

My question is, what was hope doing in a box of bad things in the first place?

Friedrich Nietzsche, a German philosopher suggests

Chapter 8 The Beginnings of Hope

'Hope... is the worst of all evils, because it prolongs the torments of Man.' Taking hope alone, he has a point, but hope never comes alone. Hope has to have a foundation on which to build, otherwise it is no more than wishful thinking. It is wishful thinking that I might win the lottery, because I don't *'do'* the lottery, so there is no basis on which to hang hope.

Wishful-thinking only becomes hope when there is a basis for believing something possible. Abraham hoped for a promised land for his descendants. His hope was not based on the land nor even the promise itself, but on the God who promised it. Abraham had built a trustworthy relationship with his God and felt able to trust his God to deliver. God did, four-hundred years later. Hope without faith is inactive. If I did do the lottery, my hope would couple with a faith in lucky chance. Faith becomes the action of my hope when I buy that lottery ticket. Lucky chance does not have very good track record of delivery, it only promises one in any given number of odds. It cannot promise I will win, only that *someone* will win. It is not a fair master. It does not say I must spread my winners fairly. It is not subject to any laws of fairness or justice.

Ancient Hebrew writers had a word for that, “peh”, they would say, meaning *'you are blowing at the wind'*. We moderns translate it as hope. That might be fine if we had another word to interpret *'tik-vaw'*. We do have a phrase but we don't use it. *'Anchored chord'* is the closest we can

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

get. Job answered his critics who wanted to blame him for his misfortune saying :

*Though all is darkness, it is as the morning.
I am secure, because there is hope.*¹⁸²

Read it again as early Hebrews did :

*Though all is darkness, it is as the morning.
I am secure in the darkness because I have a chord
anchored to the light.*

David of Psalm fame expresses hope poetically :

*For his anger is but for a moment but His favour is for
a lifetime. Weeping may stay for the night, but joy comes
[is anchored] in the morning.*¹⁸³

To the Christian, hope is a chord anchored to Christ. If Christian has tested Christ by a life of relationship and experience and found him trustworthy, then hope is strong. Otherwise hope does not have an anchor.

Babylonians expressed their hope of an eternal destiny in story form. The gods at war with one another eventually surrender to the good God because good God is the origin and creator and bad god cannot destroy it.

Ancient philosophers see this deferred perfection as the

182 Job 11:18

183 Psa 30:5

Chapter 8 The Beginnings of Hope

creation of hope, (much like Pandora's box). The universe can live in harmony only after the defeat of the destructive gods¹⁸⁴.

Hinduism, developing its hope of eternal life in reincarnation, (a circular or spiral process toward nirvana). Nirvana is the perfection of creation by process of upward evolution.

Science of course, prefers the term 'optimism' to hope because it assumes optimism to be the product of a disposition produced within the chemistry of a person.

Science puts its optimism in the evolution of intelligence within human-beings. It assume humanity can solve its own problems. The science council recently awarded one-point-four million dollars in funding for new research in the social sciences on hope and optimism. In its brief it states the following foundation point:

Social scientists have defined the terms "hope" and "optimism" in many ways. Researchers often begin with the common-sense notion of dispositional optimism, which is the relatively stable expectation that good things rather than bad things will generally happen. They then go on to use or make reference to concepts such as the optimism of everyday life, big optimism, little optimism, private optimism, public optimism, explanatory style optimism, here-and-now optimism,

184 Zoroastrianism developed out of this notion.

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

and end-of-the-story optimism, among others. One goal of the present project is to clarify which definitions, constructs, and measures related to these and other terms are the most theoretically and practically fruitful, and which might have significant interdisciplinary import. Optimism has received more attention in scientific studies than has hope, and therefore a wider range of measures and characterizations have been proposed, validated, and applied for optimism than for hope. As a result of this imbalance, different evaluative procedures will be used for proposals addressing optimism as opposed to those addressing hope.¹⁸⁵

Science's optimism lies in finding ways to stop destructive forces destroying life.

Humanists rely for their hope in a fundamentally good nature in human-beings progressing through future generations into a better world.

Hope is something that everyone can have, rich or poor; people of all races, backgrounds and positions in life; hope is universal.”

Anon

Each of the above is an expression of a Hope of Salvation. Each of these calls upon the resources of human-beings to find from within themselves the Salvation of the universe. Biblical faiths, recognising mankind has to many flaws to

185 The Hope and Optimism initiative is a \$4.8 million, three-year grant at the University of Notre Dame and Cornell University. The project explores the theoretical, empirical, and practical dimensions of hope, optimism, and related states.

Chapter 8 The Beginnings of Hope

hope in, believe salvation has to be initiated from outside of human-kind. Having turned hope toward a Creator God, Biblical faiths fully expect the creator to have designed salvation into the initial process of creation. The creator having determined the purpose of creation and seeing it through, is the only one in a position to see its fulfillment:

*Now glory be to God, forever and ever through endless ages because of his master plan of salvation*¹⁸⁶

The Biblical narrative starts out with a Creator, who has drawn the plans for his creation, acknowledging all life came out of a natural state of nothing. That vacuum from which life came has a powerful pull like gravity, to return life to its natural state of nothingness. But that final pull which, (from where material life stands appears to win in death), leaves behind an influence, character and personality, in a different form. Science expresses this in its law of conservation¹⁸⁷, *energy is not destroyed but leaves a resultant in a different format.* Science is exploring this in connection to black-holes and anti-matter in the universe.

Christianity has always seen a God who has seen material as temporary and has a new medium for life to continue.¹⁸⁸

186 Ephesians 3:20

187 One of most basic laws of science is the *Law of the Conservation of Energy*. Energy cannot be created or destroyed; it can only be changed from one form to another.

188 No, I am not saying eternal life is anti-matter I am saying the same principle

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

This is part of the hope of people accepting the biblical version of life, by faith the material life is a gateway to eternal life:

*And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away;*¹⁸⁹

*... And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise*¹⁹⁰

*In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*¹⁹¹

*... in the Resurrection from among the dead, the men do not marry and the women are not given in marriage. For indeed they cannot die again; they are like angels, and are sons of God through being sons of the Resurrection.*¹⁹²

In Biblical terms, faith is not the complete picture of salvation. Faith connects a person to the means of salvation just as a pallet of building material relies on a builder's strop to link it to the crane hook. The crane is capable of lifting building materials into position only

applies in the spiritual world

189 Revelation 21:1

190 Luke 23:43.

191 John 14:2

192 Luke 20:36

Chapter 8 The Beginnings of Hope

when it is connected by a strap around the hook of the crane. Becoming attached by faith in Jesus Christ, attaches people to the bigger plan of salvation, according to the scriptures. Just imagine the 'intelligent' brick sitting in the new building contemplating - '*chance brought me to my new situation from the mud of the builder's yard*'. It might be tempted to think it so because it cannot appreciate the beauty or purpose of the whole plan. Part of that plan incorporates hope. If the original understanding of Salvation is a braiding with something, the chord of hope is part of that braiding - as is faith!

Somewhere along the line, the loss of the original meaning for hope has giving it a life of its own. From early days, right through Biblical times, into Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic it had two essentials in its understanding. Early understanding incorporates both a feeling of or desire for a particular thing to happen and a confidence in someone or something that could bring it to pass.

In other words, Hope of Salvation relies on faith in something or someone for its deliverance. Hope is then is both a desire for something and an expectation of its fulfilment. Salvation itself cannot give that expectation. It has to be brought about by braiding it to someone or something that has the ability to deliver it.

A person might reasonably say 'I hope for eternal life and I expect science will in time, deliver it'. That is hope in

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

science. If a person has a good relationship with science, (that is, if a person has seen scientific deliverance for past wants or desires), that will give greater confidence science can deliver on that hope¹⁹³.

The same principle applies to ancient kings of Egypt who expected their gods to collect them and take them to paradise. We cannot prove if their gods did or did not deliver. We can say their bodies are still there but we cannot say if life that left the bodies moved on elsewhere. Most people would decide from material evidence the gods did not deliver. Looking simply at the The second law of Thermodynamics, we conclude everyday life leads us to a universal law of decay:

'The ultimate cause of why everything ultimately falls apart and disintegrates over time. Material things are not eternal. Everything appears to change eventually, and chaos increases. Nothing stays as fresh as the day one buys it; clothing becomes faded, threadbare, and ultimately returns to dust. Everything ages and wears out. Even death is a manifestation of this law. The effects of the 2nd Law are all around, touching everything in the universe'.

The scriptural argument however, balances this with the Law of the Conservation of Energy. If, *'in the material*

193 Some have taken the step of being kept in a frozen state until the knowledge is found.

Chapter 8 The Beginnings of Hope

universe, 'energy cannot be created or destroyed but is changed from one form to another,' So it is also true in the spiritual realm.

Hope then, is a chord consisting of three strands belief that something is possible, a desire for it to happen and a faith in something or someone to bring it about.

The scriptures themselves encourage hope, these are the records of our ancestors who have searched in hope for answers, their records give witness to the faithfulness of a Creator God. The greater the discovery of the character of this God the greater the confidence that arises in ability to deliver what he promises.

Creation encourages hope. If matter can come from nothingness because it has been designed and developed, then it demonstrates the ability of this God to deliver what he conceived in spirit and ordained in the material. Of course if it did come about by lucky chance then hope has to be reduced because lucky chance by nature has no built in objective.

Life encourages hope because it has built into it survival. The strength of that hope is dependent on its material frame. If it comes from the evolution of a material world, it can have no hope of survival outside of the physical world. If on the other-hand, it has been designed by an intelligence that is clever enough to produce matter from nothing, that intelligence has has experience of life outside of the material and its horizons can predict and produce an

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

eternal existence outside of the material. An existence in which the personality, character and essential being can continue outside the imperfections of the material.

Humanity encourages hope because it is not dependent on material. Humanity is spiritual. It is concerned for society, future, others, welfare, service and so on. If humanity is simply a product of a material evolution it has no hope because the material has no vision outside of material limitation. Humanity is limited to the here and now because that is all it knows. It might co-operate with other material for its own benefit but vision is limited by its own demise. If, on the other hand, humanity is implanted in material from a source outside of material then material has every hope of becoming like its source, including eternal life.

Sin of itself has no hope because it is by nature selfish. Survival of the fittest is the limit of its hope. It might hope to be among the fittest but the nature of material shows that it declines and the younger fitter eventually take over. Sin of itself does not have the capacity for hope it is intent on instant gratification and has little thought of future. The Scriptures state it like this: '*the wages of sin is death*'. Literally '*sin is self destructive*.' The sinner may have more hope because the sinner by definition has a spiritual dimension. But, the sinner only has this hope outside of

Chapter 8 The Beginnings of Hope

sin. Hope has to come from outside of the sinner. To complete the scriptural quote :

The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life

Salvation has hope if it is in an external source that has the ability to provide it. Science, by its nature cannot provide salvation because its laws limit it to material laws and material itself deteriorates. The only hope can come from designer from outside of material. A spiritual designer who has experience about life outside of material can provide hope. But that hope would have to be built into the material world.

Faith fills the bill as a spiritual quality, it links salvation to the material person through his or her spirit. It points to a source that is able to deliver. It reinforces hope.

Because hope contains faith, hope becomes effective when faith is placed in a reliable source for hope.

As scripture has it:

Now abides faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love.¹⁹⁴

For God so loved the world that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life¹⁹⁵

194 I Corinthians 13:13

195 John 3:16

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

That, surely, is the foundation and guiding principle for all doctrinal development.

Chapter 8 The Beginnings of Hope

I-Think-I'd-better-Think-It-Out-Again!

Alphabetical Index

Astrology.....	19
Babylonians.....	18, 69, 83, 97, 155
Belief....	8, 14, 17, 22pp., 33, 48pp., 59pp., 68, 71, 73, 75, 77, 80, 89, 93, 96, 100, 120, 122, 126, 131, 133p., 136p., 142, 162
Christ.	20, 24, 33, 36, 44, 49p., 54pp., 68, 71pp., 77, 80, 85, 87pp., 91, 110p., 113, 116, 126, 128, 137p., 148, 150, 155, 158, 160
Code of Hammurabi.....	43
Egypt.....	19, 28, 40, 70
Enchanter.....	113
Enuma Elish.....	90
Faith....	7p., 20, 24, 47pp., 53, 56, 59pp., 71, 73p., 77p., 80, 90, 96, 100, 103, 124, 131pp., 136pp., 154, 157pp., 162, 164
Faith [.....	136
Faith.....	7
Francis Collins.....	66
Gandhi.....	108
Hammurabi.....	43
Hope.....	7, 77, 92, 100, 124, 135, 138p., 146p., 150p., 153pp.
Humanity.....	95
Jesus....	14, 22p., 32p., 46pp., 52pp., 75p., 98, 100pp., 109p., 116pp., 127p., 143, 159p.
Library in Ebia.....	40, 44
Maslow's Hierarchy of needs	87

Moses.....	32, 42, 63, 84p.
Moses,.....	32, 42, 63, 84p.
Nachash.....	113
Nahash.....	113
Ope.....	157
Personality.....	138
Personality	71, 138
Philosophers.....	85, 93, 149, 155
Pistis].....	136
Psychology.....	47, 78, 125
Salvation.....	48, 50, 53, 120, 137p., 140pp., 150p., 158pp., 164
Science....	14pp., 19, 23, 25, 33, 39p., 45, 49, 59p., 63, 65p., 68, 72pp., 77p., 81pp., 89p., 93, 96, 98p., 101p., 105, 108, 114p., 119p., 122, 124pp., 132pp., 136, 138p., 143, 145pp., 156pp., 160p., 164
Scripture. .	21pp., 32, 35p., 47, 49pp., 68, 80pp., 87, 103, 109, 127, 136, 139, 146, 150, 160, 162p.
Sed.....	63
Self-will.....	120
Sin.....	13p., 16p., 19, 21, 23p., 31p., 36, 43p., 46, 48pp., 55p., 59, 61, 65, 67, 69pp., 75p., 78p., 84, 86, 90, 92p., 105pp., 113pp., 124, 126pp., 137pp., 143, 146, 157, 161, 163p.
Sociologists.....	123
Steven Hawkins.....	64, 67, 102, 134p.
Yeshua.....	141p.

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