



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

May 27, 2018

Jump Start # 2076

Acts 1:3 "To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God."

Recently I led a teen study. Love the energy and hearts of those young people. We started with a video showing several college age students. Everyone of them claimed to be an atheist. Two remarkable things stood out about their claims. First, most admitted to giving up on God around the age of 14 or 15. It wasn't when they went off to college, it was before. And, one by one, they all said the same thing, 'there was no evidence' for God. Parents and shepherds in the church ought to be concerned about this and do all that they can to overcome this growing wave of nothingness.

Our verse, one of several like this in the N.T., states that Jesus presented many convincing proofs of this resurrection. Proof. Convincing Proof. How can I know that God is? Paul declared in 2 Timothy, "I know whom I have believed." Can we have such confidence?

Four Proofs. Learn these. Share these. Know these.

1. The natural world. The world about us does not point to chaos, chance and weirdness. It shows design, order, structure and connection. The Romans were told, "His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made..". Proof for God? Get out of the house, get out of the city and go look around nature. The video the kids watched talked about one of the strongest proofs, DNA. DNA is the book of life. Every living thing has DNA. Trees do. Kittens do. People do. DNA is the code that determines a tree will be a tree and a human a human. But it's more than that. DNA is so complex and so detailed, it determines what kind of tree a tree will be. It will determine what color of rose a rose bush produces. It determines our skin color, hair color, height, eye color and bone structure. If stretched out, our DNA would reach the sun. So detailed and so complex is this DNA that it has to be completely right to make what it makes. It can't be close. It can't be 75% right. Remember the movie, The Wizard of Oz? When Dorothy first meets the Scarecrow, they come to an apple orchard. As they pick up some of the apples, the apple trees talk. They then throw apples at Dorothy and the Scarecrow. Cool part of the movie. If evolution was true, why don't we find trees that talk? In theory, there ought to be whole forests of talking trees. But what nature does show us is a tree is a tree, a bird is a bird and a human is a human. DNA. Right every time. Chance? Luck? God? Convincing proofs...look around the world we live in.

2. The Bible. There is no getting around the DNA topic. But there's more proof, the word of God. If there is no God, then there is only one other option about the origin of the Bible and that is human. Who? How when it was written not in a month, but over centuries? Explain specific prophecy being fulfilled? Explain the accuracy with sciences and history and geography. Explain the impact the Bible has. Why hasn't it been

(OVER)

disproven? Why do people stay up at night reading it? Why is a Bible app one of the number one downloaded apps of all time? Why have people risked their lives to sneak the Bible into places where it was outlawed? Why have people died believing this book? Each of these questions deserves an honest answer from those who deny God. Why has no other book been produced like the Bible? If man wrote the Bible, why can't man write a similar book? Nothing comes close. Why does it appeal to our hearts like it does? Why has it changed and helped so many people? Convincing proofs...just open the book and read it.

3. The resurrection of Jesus Christ. Acts 17 shows Paul "explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, 'This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ.'" The resurrection of Jesus is the exclamation point of the Bible. Through that resurrection, death was conquered, Satan was defeated, and hope for better things became a reality. The resurrection of Jesus wasn't done in a secret. The tomb of Jesus was secured with a large stone, Pilate's seal and Roman guards. There was no getting out. There was no stealing the body. Yet, up from the grave He arose. And, He appeared, first to women. Women, whose voice didn't count in court. Women, who had little freedom and few rights. Then He appeared to the apostles. Then to more than 500 people. Not for a moment. Not a glimpse. As our verse today says, for over 40 days. They saw Him. They heard Him. They were with Him. And that eye witness story was told all over the known world. How simple it would have been to discredit that small band of believers. The Jews would have loved to do that. The Romans could have easily done that. Show the body. That's all that was necessary to kill this movement. Yet no one could. No one did. And those early disciples died violently, proclaiming that Jesus was the resurrected Savior. Even at death they would not renounce their story. Even at death they knew. Some would say they were deceived and disillusioned. Easy to say that centuries later and without any proof of that. Or, it could be that these folks had actually seen Jesus. Where's that proof? The New Testament. The enduring faith that has survived for generations and centuries. Convincing proofs...the resurrection of Jesus.

4. The human heart. Built within each of us is a sense of goodness, right and wrong and morality. Everyone has a line, and once that line has been crossed, it is wrong. Why is stealing wrong? The only thing atheists can say is because there is a law and it hurts others. Change that law and they'd be hard pressed to claim that stealing is wrong. Gun violence is taking center stage of many discussions. Arm the teachers. Ban guns. Lots of talk. Why? If the Darwinian concept of survival of the fittest is true, then shooting others seems logical. Animals kill other animals. That's nature. And, if all that we are is an animal, then why is killing other humans wrong? We know it's wrong. People that do not go to church know it's wrong. People that haven't read the Bible know it's wrong. People from different cultures know it's wrong. People in other nations know it's wrong. Why? Because built within us is a sense of right and wrong. We are wired to know that certain actions are shameful, harmful and not appropriate. It's not because of laws, it's because these things are just wrong. We won't allow a 50 year old man to marry an 8 year old girl. That's wrong. It doesn't matter if there is a law on the books about that or not. It's plain wrong. It's beyond reason, logic and our moral compass within us screams that this cannot happen. Where did that moral compass come from? Just happened. Evolved? From nothing came everything? Does nothing ever make anything? One answer. Only one answer makes sense. Only one answer is backed with proof. Only one answer, GOD.

Four simple, yet complex reasons to know that God is. When doubters claim, 'there is no evidence,' they are wrong. The evidence is there. It's everywhere. It just may be that their unbelieving heart has blinded their eyes and they refuse to see what is before them. To acknowledge that God is, means I am accountable, responsible and must know Him. It means that His ways, not my ways are ultimately right. It means that happiness isn't a right, nor the most important thing in life. What is, is holiness and walking with God.

Convincing proofs. It's there. There are lots of books that will lower the nets upon these topics. But this is enough to begin discussions. This is enough for a non believer to think. This is enough for someone to realize that there is no evidence for atheism. It's an unsupported myth. It lacks logic, reason and proof. It tries to prove itself by discrediting God. It fails every time.

I know whom I believe...

Convincing proofs.

Roger Shouse (Used by Permission)

