

Josiah was only eight years old when he became King of Judah. Both his father and grandfather had been evil kings that had worshipped Molech, Asherah, and the Baals. They had forgotten the true God of Israel and had turned his Temple into shrines to idols. Why, then, did Josiah, at the early age of 16 decide to serve the living God and destroy all the idols that his father had worshipped?

The history of Josiah is found in the parallel passages of 2 Kings 22-23 and 2 Chronicles 34-35. He not only destroyed and desecrated the idols of his father, he also ordered the Temple repaired, repented when he heard the words of the Book of the Law given through Moses, renewed the covenant, reinstated the keeping of the Passover, and listened to the prophets of God. Josiah was on a mission. That mission was to destroy evil and return his people to the LORD their God. He understood from the Law that was read to him and the prophets of his time, Jeremiah, Zedekiah, and Huldah, that the LORD was ready to destroy his people because of their overwhelming disobedience and worship of detestable idols.

When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his robes. He gave these orders to Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Achor son of Michaiah, Shaphan the secretary and Asaiah the king's attendant: "Go and inquire of the LORD for me and for the people and for all Judah

about what is written in this book that has been found. Great is the LORD's anger that burns against us because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book; they have not acted in accordance with all that is written there concerning us." 2 Kings 22:11-13

Josiah sent to inquire of God through Huldah the prophetess when he understood the gravity of the situation. He received good news and bad. The destruction of Jerusalem was coming. There are consequences to disobedience. However, because Josiah had humbled himself and sought God, he would be spared from seeing the destruction. He would rest in peace.

There are many righteous, faithful prophets and servants of the LORD who are spared from seeing destruction in this same way:

The righteous perish, and no one ponders it in his heart; devout men are taken away, and no one understands that the righteous are taken away to be spared from evil. Those who walk uprightly enter into peace; they find rest as they lie in death. Isaiah 57:1-2

It appears strange that death would be an escape from seeing death and destruction but a promise given to Daniel gives us a clue as to what God has in store for his servants. Daniel was shown many awesome and troublesome prophecies of a time to come. He was overwhelmed by

it but he was promised rest and then an inheritance:

"As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance." Dan 12:13

Daniel had already been told about the resurrection and now he had the promise that he would be a part of it:

But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever. But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end..." Daniel 12:1-4

Paul, too, was looking forward to the "time of the end" and connected it to the promised return of Jesus:

For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge,

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Good King Josiah

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will award to me on that day- and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing. 2 Tim 4:6-8

Why did Josiah, decide to serve

the living God and destroy all the idols that his father had worshipped? We're not told but we can believe that he will be blessed with all those who have trusted God and await his promises:

These were all commended

for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect. Hebrews 11:39-40

Bible Principles

Pleasing our Father

The testimony concerning King Josiah tells us that he "did what was right in the eyes of the LORD...not turning aside to the right or to the left." This is a remarkable servant of God. He understood that there is no compromise. To serve God requires complete and total obedience in all things. Of course we know that only Jesus was completely obedient to God but what an example King Josiah has given us: destroy the idols in our lives and do not turn to the left or the right in our service to God.

Jesus, of course, is our ultimate example of obedience to God:

To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." 1 Peter 2:21-22

We may think that it was easier for Jesus to do everything right, to always obey God since he is the Son of God. But the Bible tells us differently. In fact, it was necessary for Jesus to be made like us and be tempted in every way that we are:

For this reason he had to be

made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. Hebrews 2:17-18

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are-yet was without sin. Hebrews 4:15-16

During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him. Hebrews 5:7-9

Jesus was tempted to disobey God just like we are but, in hu-

mility, every time and in every way he always said "yes" to God and "no" to disobedience:

They did not understand that he was telling them about his Father. So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am [the one I claim to be] and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him."

Notice the reason that Jesus says that his Father has not left him alone. He always does what pleases his Father. Notice also from the verses in Hebrews that he was made perfect by learning obedience and only then did he become the source of eternal salvation. It wasn't just the dying on the cross that brought salvation. It was the perfect obedience of dying on the cross that brought salvation and exaltation.

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death- even death on a cross!

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Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:8-11

It was obedience, even to death, that overcame evil. It was obedience, even to death, that overcame death.

Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justifica-

tion that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. Romans 5:18-19

We are called to follow Jesus. We are called to follow in his obedience through faith. Those who believe in Jesus do as he has done.

Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus

Christ. Romans 1:5-6

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. Romans 6:12-14

Jesus, our High Priest, is alive. He is able to help us in our temptation. With his help and, in humility, let us do everything that pleases our Father, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left.



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There are many reasons for believing that God exists, and that the Bible is a reliable revelation of Him. The editor and authors of Reasons - Evidence for God, Jesus & the Bible have done seekers a service by bringing together in one volume essays discussing each of the reasons we can have for faith in God, Jesus and the Bible.

The book itself is 233 pages long. It is printed on quality paper with clear typography and almost no typos or other distracting errors. There is an introduction, twelve chapters and an epilogue. The chapters are divided into 2 sections called "Reasons for Seeking" and "Reasons for Believing". It is published by Willow Publications, 2011 under the auspices of the Christadelphian Ejournal of Biblical Interpretation, a journal established within the last decade to publish scholarly material from a Christadelphian perspective.

In the first chapter ("Philosophical Arguments") Tom Gaston presents what are sometimes known as the "classic philosophical" proofs for the existence of God. These are purely philosophical proofs, and while they speak to the question of the existence of a God, they can prove very little about such a God beyond existence. Some of the arguments are weaker than others, and counter-responses to all of them have been determined by philosophers and other thinkers over the years. However, they are all still worth considering. The reader may find in them a basis for understanding how we can

begin to think about God and the question of God's existence.

Peter Jeavons describes a frequently used proof in Chapter 2 ("Fine-tuning") sometimes known as the "anthropic principle". According to this argument the current condition of the universe as a stable entity, capable of producing an environment for life, relies upon the precise values of a large number of constants. If any of these constants had varied much from their current value, then the universe as a place where life can exist could not have come into being. This argues then for design, for a designer who knows what those constants need to be and ensured that the universe is defined by those values. Otherwise, the probability of the all of the constants occurring naturally correctly is quite huge. This argument has some strength to it but we are not given sufficient information to know what range each these constants could have occurred within, whether and how the values were constrained by the laws of physics and chemistry. If there is large room for variability then the probability of them occurring as they did is indeed very large. However, if each constant is constrained to one or several values then the probability of our universe coming about as it did is significantly increased and the argument for design is weakened.

Chapter 3 ("The Origin of Life") by Paul Boyd, offers what is perhaps the most compelling argument for a God who created life. There is a great deal of evidence

for the development of life via evolution, but scientists continue to be baffled by the question of how life came to be in the first place. Life is a mind-bogglingly complicated phenomenon, relying upon thousands of complicated elements interacting to make even the simplest cell function. How such an entity could form out of much less complex and interactive substances is being investigated by scientists, but after decades of searching we do not appear to be much closer to finding an answer. In this case then an argument for a designer, an intelligent being who assembled at least the first living thing, becomes much stronger.

The fourth chapter ("Consciousness") contains perhaps the most difficult proof to understand. The author (John Launchbury) argues that consciousness is something that cannot be understood from observing it externally. Consciousness must be studied from inside, using such "technologies" as insight meditation. The author then goes on to argue that consciousness is built into the universe even at the lowest levels of structure. At these lowest levels, called "quantum mechanics", the observer is part of the system. Information about any particle will be incomplete because the act of observing it changes it. Consciousness can therefore be thought of something which permeates the universe, which supports the idea of the existence of a being who is conscious and inhabits the entire universe. However, this position

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Book Review **Reasons - Evidence for God, Jesus & the Bible (cont)**

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is definitely a minority opinion in consciousness studies. Most scientists who study consciousness expect to discover mechanistic explanations and descriptions of consciousness, and what we know so far about consciousness fits into that paradigm. And quantum indeterminacy only really applies at the lowest levels of structure. At higher levels statistical laws apply and mechanistic explanations are accurate.

Tom Gaston's second contribution to the book is the 5th chapter ("Morality"). In it he argues that the existence of morality implies the existence of a supreme being who is moral in and of himself and thus the source of morality for human beings. C.S. Lewis has argued that all humans have an instinctive knowledge of right and wrong which he argues is given to us by God. However, in this chapter the author begins from the opposite end, which is to consider whether morality can come from natural sources, instead of from a divine source. His conclusion is that human beings do have an innate moral dimension which could only have come from God.

The question of evil is the subject of the 6th chapter ("The Problem of Evil"), by David Levin. The questions of why evil exists, and why God allows it to exist are big ones, and people have been considering these issues for thousands of years. This subject is likely to be the most sensitive for many readers, since many, if not all, of us have been exposed to

evil to one degree or another, sometimes gross evil that leaves us distressed and crying out to God with questions. Ultimately Levin does not offer an answer to the problem of evil, but also makes a strong case that there is no real satisfying answer. Readers hoping for a good answer for the question of why God appears to allow evil to exist will not find one. It is better to serve and obey God and trust that His plan will be carried out to an ultimate end where Good will triumph.

The next six chapters form a section called "Reasons for Believing" which address the reliability of the Bible and the historicity of the events it describes.

In chapter 7 ("Textual Criticism") Jonathan Burke discusses whether the Bible has been passed down to us accurately over the thousands of years since it has been written. Burke points to the large number of manuscripts that are available for both Old and New Testaments, many of them going far back towards the original documents. The manuscripts are almost identical, with only minor variations due to scribal errors. And even most of these discrepancies can be worked out by comparing texts. Ultimately we can place our trust in the Bible as a faithful record of what was written hundreds or thousands of years ago.

Andrew Perry focuses on issues related to the Old Testament and history in chapter 8 ("The Old Testament and History"). There have been many questions among

scholars as to whether events as described in the Old Testament are historical, in particular the first 11 chapters of Genesis. There is a great deal of archaeological and other evidence to support the reliability of the the Old Testament. Perry brings forth evidence that supports the historicity of these events, and encourages us to look at Genesis 1-11 in some different ways which help it to make more sense.

Chapter 9 ("Bible Prophecy") by David Alexander takes a look at another of the most compelling reasons to believe in God and the Bible: the large number of prophecies made in the Bible that have been fulfilled as they were described. These fulfilled prophecies witness to the reliability of the Bible and its Author. Alexander covers the prophecies in Daniel, the "national prophecies" (describing the fate of the nations around Israel) and prophecies concerning Jesus, among others.

The continuing existence of the nation of Israel is the subject of Chapter 10 ("Israel: God's Chosen People") by Reg Carr. Against the odds the Jewish people have survived persecution and assimilation for thousands of years as a distinct people. Scattered for more than 1800 years, the 20th century saw the regathering of the Jews and the re-establishment of Israel as a nation with territory which has miraculously survived, surrounded by enemies, for more than 60 years. Thousands of years ago God promised Abraham

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Book Review **Reasons - Evidence for God, Jesus & the Bible (cont)**

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that he would "become a great and powerful nation" (Gen 18:18) and that the land of Canaan would belong to his descendants forever (Gen 17:8). The continuing existence of the Jews and Israel, who are these promised descendents of Abraham, is a powerful proof that God exists, and that He keeps His promises.

Chapter 11 ("The Historical Jesus") by Andrew Perry deals with the question of the historicity of Jesus. Did he actually exist? Did the things written about him in the Gospels actually happen? Perry examines the ample evidence that there was a histori-

cal figure of Jesus. This is not doubted by many scholars, but over the years scholars have challenged how much of the Gospels was actually said or done by Jesus. Perry goes on to deal with these objections and shows that we have good reason to trust the Gospel records.

The resurrection of Jesus is an important part of the Christian religion, and it is not going too far to say that Christianity stands or falls by whether the resurrection happened. The final chapter, Chapter 12 ("The Resurrection of Jesus") by Simon Dean is perhaps the most important chapter in the book as he carefully examines the

evidence for the resurrection of Jesus and answers the common objections to it. The conclusion that he comes to is that the resurrection is historical fact, that the New Testament records are reliable and that only the resurrection could turn a band of scattered and leaderless followers into a small army of believers who were willing to face scorn, persecution, privation and death to preach Jesus to the nations.

Reasons is well worth looking at for anyone who wishes to enhance their faith in God, Jesus and the Bible. Not all parts will be equally meaningful to all, but all should find something in that

The book: Reasons—Evidence for God, Jesus & the Bible

may be purchased at

<http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/willowpublications> (page 2)

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Living in the Historical Triangle of Eastern Virginia, we are surrounded by history. For Americans, artifacts from 400 or 500 years ago seem ancient. A trip to England makes our history seem like yesterday with history going back 1800 years to Roman times. Go a little further to the Middle East and archeologists are finding artifacts from several thousand years ago.

With Bible in hand, think about what you have in your hand. The writings bound in this book go back at least 2000 to 3000 plus years ago. The writers varied from shepherds to kings, from wealthy men to exiles in captivity. Some were persecuted and murdered for the things they wrote. The history in the Bible has been verified by archeologists. Manuscripts from 2000 years have been found which verify the accuracy of the scribes' translation and copying work. The writings include detailed histories, beautiful and lyrical poetry and songs, prophecies of the future, laws to govern a nation, and promises yet to be fulfilled. It has been preserved, copied, translated into hundreds of languages, and

mass printed. The words written by King David of Israel 3000 years ago can now be bought in any corner drug store.

For all of this the Bible is an amazing book. But it is much more than this. It is the God of heaven and earth, the creator of all, telling us his thoughts, his plans, his purpose, and his promises. It is full of power and majesty. It is the final authority. It is the only book that brings life.

Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets. Amos 3:7

He who forms the mountains, creates the wind, and reveals his thoughts to man, he who turns dawn to darkness, and treads the high places of the earth- the LORD God Almighty is his name. Amos 4:13

...and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed

and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:15-17

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:20-21

This Bible was inspired by God, written by prophets, preserved by scribes, and translated by scholars. It tells the thoughts of God himself and brings life and salvation to those who read and do the things written therein:

Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near. Revelation 1:2-3

It's now in your hands.

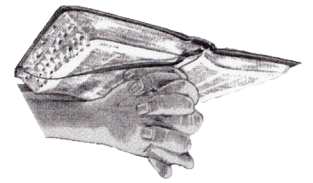
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Everyone is welcome so please join us each week.

New Seminar
Bible Prophecy from
Genesis to Revelation
See Page 3 for details

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Daily Bible Readings for January, February and March

Read the Entire Bible in One Year

Day	JANUARY		FEBRUARY		MARCH	
	Old Test	New Test/Psa	Old Test	New Test/Psa	Old Test	New Test/Psa
1	Gen 1,2	Matt 1	Exo 11,12	Matt 28	Lev 23, 24	Acts 24
2	Gen 3,4	Matt 2	Exo 13,14	Psalm 9, 10	Lev 25, 26	Acts 25
3	Gen 5,6	Matt 3	Exo 15,16	Psalm 11,12	Lev 27, Provb 7	Acts 26
4	Gen 7,8	Matt 4	Exo 17,18	Acts 1	Provb 8-10	Acts 27
5	Gen 9,10	Matt 5	Exo 19,20	Acts 2	Num 1,2	Acts 28
6	Gen 11,12	Matt 6	Exo 21,22	Acts 3	Num 3,4	Psalm 19,20
7	Gen 13,14	Matt 7	Exo 23,24	Acts 4	Num 5,6	Romans 1
8	Gen 15, 16	Psalm 1,2	Exo 25,26	Acts 5	Num 7,8	Romans 2
9	Gen 17,18	Matt 8	Exo 27,28	Acts 6	Num 9,10	Romans 3
10	Gen 19,20	Matt 9	Exo 29,30	Acts 7	Num 11,12	Romans 4
11	Gen 21, 22	Matt 10	Exo 31,32	Psalm 13, 14	Num 13,14	Romans 5
12	Gen 23,24	Matt 11	Exo 33,34	Acts 8	Num 15,16	Romans 6
13	Gen 25,26	Matt 12	Exo 35,36	Acts 9	Num 17,18	Romans 7
14	Gen 27,28	Matt 13	Exo 37,38	Acts 10	Num 19,20	Romans 8
15	Gen 29,30	Psalm 3,4	Exo 39,40	Acts 11,12	Num 21,22	Romans 9
16	Gen 31,32	Matt 14	Provb 3,4	Acts 13	Num 23,24	Romans 10
17	Gen 33,34	Matt 15	Provb 5,6	Psalm 15,16	Num 25,26	Romans 11
18	Gen 35,36	Matt 16	Lev 1,2	Acts 14	Num 27,28	Romans 12
19	Gen 37,38	Matt 17	Lev 3,4	Acts 15	Num 29,30	Romans 13
20	Gen 39,40	Matt 18	Lev 5,6	Acts 16	Num 31,32	Romans 14
21	Gen 41, 42	Matt 19	Lev 7,8	Acts 17	Num 33,34	Romans 15,16
22	Gen 43, 44	Psalm 5,6	Lev 9,10	Acts 18	Num 35,36	Psalm 21,22
23	Gen 45, 46	Matt 20	Lev 11,12	Psalm 17,18	Provb 11,12	Psalm 23-25
24	Gen 47, 48	Matt 21	Lev 13,14	Acts 19	Provb 13,14	Psalm 26-28
25	Gen 49, 50	Matt 22	Lev 15,16	Acts 20	Provb 15,16	Psalm 29,30
26	Provb 1,2	Matt 23	Lev 17,18	Acts 21	Deut 1,2	Mark 1
27	Exo 1,2	Matt 24	Lev 19,20	Acts 22	Deut 3,4	Mark 2
28	Exo 3,4	Matt 25	Lev 21,22	Acts 23	Deut 5,6	Mark 3
29	Exo 5,6	Psalm 7, 8			Deut 7,8	Mark 4
30	Exo 7, 8	Matt 26			Deut 9,10	Psalm 31,32
31	Exo 9,10	Matt 27			Deut 11,12	Mark 5

See page 7 for some thoughts on the daily readings.
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