“Where is the REAL Eyewitness Account of the Resurrection?”

I read your article “Evidence that Jesus Didn’t Become the Christ Till Centuries Later?” You cited two or three historians but no eye-witness accounts. I wonder if you can provide me with an eye witness account of someone (e.g. Pontius Pilate) who was alive at the time of the resurrection and within five years wrote an account of that (considering people forget details and add details with time). I understand that the gospels cannot be taken as eye-witness accounts as the first one wasn’t written till maybe 40 years after Jesus’ death, and supposedly the original copy doesn’t exist.

Along with most other conservative scholars, I actually do believe that the Gospels contain eyewitness testimony about the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus. Many conservative scholars hold that the Gospel of Mark was written as early as the 50’s or 60’s of the first century. Furthermore, there is evidence from Mark’s passion narrative that he may have relied on a source dating to within seven years of Jesus’ crucifixion.

It’s true that we do not have the original manuscripts of any New Testament book. However, we have copies dating to the early second century and later. Also, it’s worth saying that we don’t have the original manuscripts for ANY book of the ancient world (not Plato, Aristotle, Tacitus, Pliny, Josephus, etc.). The New Testament manuscripts that we do possess are both earlier and more numerous than is true for any other book of antiquity.

Finally, about a non-Christian eyewitness source dating to within five years of Jesus’ death. There is none. The earliest non-Christian writings we have are probably those of Josephus, the Jewish historian, who was writing near the end of the

first century.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

Exploring God's Relationship to Time

Written by David Pattillo and Michael Gleghorn

Introduction

Why does time flow the way it does? Can we alter time, or is it beyond our grasp? Is time travel possible? Is God inside or outside of time? Does everyone experience time the same way we do? When faced with the question, What is time? we encounter one of the most fundamental human inquiries, as well as one of the most difficult philosophical questions. Every person seems to experience the flow of time every single day, yet when asked to define it, we are often at a loss for words. Thus, for the purpose of this article, we shall define time as a relation of events involving earlier than and later than.

Two views of time

When it comes to the philosophy of the nature of time, there are essentially two views: the *dynamic, tensed,* or *A Theory;* and the *static, tenseless,* or *B Theory*. It is traditionally said that on the *A Theory*, the present is ontologically privileged. That is to say, the present is the only thing that is really real; the past has happened and the future will

happen. It is much easier to see what distinguishes the *A Theory* when it is compared with the *B Theory*, which holds that all moments are equally real. That is (according to the *B Theory*), from our perspective it is 2007, 1950 is in the past and 2050 is in the future. But for the people in 1950 (who also exist at *that* time), both 2007 and 2050 are in the future. Likewise, for the people in 2050 both 1950 and 2007 are in the past. The *B Theory* holds that it is ignorant to think of our moment of the world as the real moment, or the moment occupying some privileged position. According to the *B Theory*, any tensed idea, or sentence whose verb has tense (i.e., past/present/or future), would actually be more accurate if it were translated into a tenseless idea or sentence (i.e., one that has a tenseless verb and time stamp to say when something happened, rather than a tensed verb) since tensed ideas imply that the present moment of time is superior to, or more real than, all other moments. For instance, according to the *B Theory*, the tensed sentence, JFK was assassinated, would misconstrue reality as if the year 2007 (or any year after 1963) is more real or significant than the years 1907 or 1963, because it has a verb in the past tense. This theory holds that the sentence would be better put On November 22, 1963, at 12:30 P.M. CST JFK *is* assassinated.{2} This tenseless sentence is preferred on the *B Theory* because there is no moment that can claim to be the true present moment; rather, there are just equally real moments. Advocates of the *B Theory* say that reality is one long 4-dimensional block, and we are just experiencing one moment of that block, but all the moments are equally real or existent. The *A Theory*, on the other hand, would say that *tensed verbs* (verbs in the past/present/future tense) do reflect reality; there really is a past, present, and future, and they are always changing as time flows and the future becomes present and then past.

Which one of these views is correct has vast implications for the way we interpret reality. For example, it will have an

effect on the way we understand God and His relation to the world. One might think that this would be the proper time to turn to Scripture to see whether it supports an *A* or *B Theory*. However, its important to recognize the fact that Scripture is not entirely clear with respect to this issue. Therefore, we will postpone looking at the Bible until our discussion of Gods relation to time. For the present, we need to discuss which of the two theories is superior and why.

A vs. B

The most powerful argument for the *A Theory* is its intuitiveness. That is, we experience the flow of time in just as real a way as any other experience in our lives. We very directly experience the present. To say that event e is occurring now is no different than saying that event e is occurring.{3} When we look forward to the future or regret the past, we are experiencing the *A Theory* because, if you think about it, on the *B Theory* there is no difference between past, present, and future.{4} Lastly, when a kid says: I wish it were Christmas morning, or I wish I were already done with this test, he is expressing the *A Theory*. That is, he wishes that the present moment, say t_1, were replaced by some other moment, say t_2. This expresses the idea of *temporal becoming* (the idea that the present moment changes as we pass through time), which is an experience of the *A Theory*. As William Lane Craig puts it, We thereby presuppose the reality of temporal becoming, since our wish expresses our belief in a changing and objective present.{5} Thus the *A Theory* very comfortably coheres with what we experience in everyday life.

Now, the B theorist may ask, Why accept this experience as anything more than an illusion? To answer this we must briefly digress with a discussion of Alvin Plantingas *epistemology*, or theory of knowledge. When evaluating beliefs, many skeptics want to reject anything that is not certain. This was especially prominent in the philosophy of Ren Descartes, who

rejected all his sense experience because it could have been wrong. After all, when you think about it, we could be in the *Matrix*.{6} It could be that everything you think is real is just electrical impulses interpreted by your brain. Or it could be that the world was created five minutes ago, and you were created with all the memories you currently have. Or maybe you are the only mind in the universe, and everyone else is just a robot, cleverly designed to give the appearance of having a human mind. And the list of possibilities goes on and on. None of these can be disproven, but should we conclude that we really dont know whether anyone else actually exists? Plantinga doesnt think so. He has developed a theory that labels these and other similar beliefs as *properly basic beliefs*.

Think about it this way. If you are reading this online, the belief that there is a computer in front of you is properly basic; that is, it is a foundational belief formed in correct circumstances. Therefore, you are warranted in believing it until presented with some *defeater* of your belief. In this case, a *defeater* would have to be some good reason to believe that your senses are deceiving you. In other words, according to Plantinga, common sense beliefs about sensory experience, memory, the existence of other minds or other similar beliefs should be regarded as innocent until proven guilty (i.e., judged reliable until proven otherwise). Likewise, our experience of real temporal passing and an objective past, present, and future warrants belief in the *A Theory* until a strong counterargument is offeredstrong enough to cause us to doubt this experience.

Another major argument for the *A Theory* is what is known as the *ineliminability of tense*.{7} Simply put, this is the idea that tensed statements imply tensed facts which further imply a tensed reality. B theorists have made numerous attempts to show that tensed sentences can be translated into tenseless sentences that do not imply a tensed reality. However, all

these attempts have failed. Craig illustrates:

> *This point is underlined by the ineptness of some of the supposed tenseless translations of tensed sentences. Take, for example, the tensed sentence It is now 4:30. We can imagine situations in which a persons life would depend on his holding such a belief. But the tenseless counterpart of this sentence is either It is 4:30 at 4:30, which is a mere tautology, or It is 4:30 simultaneous with this utterance, which is useless unless we also know that This utterance is occurring now, which is a tensed belief. In both cases the tenseless versions are insufficient to motivate timely action because they do not inform us whether or not it actually is 4:30.{8}*

If tensed sentences lose some meaning when translated into tenseless sentences, then there is some important meaning in tense, namely, that reality is reflected by tense. Therefore, if tenseless sentences cannot capture the facts expressed by tensed sentences, then there must be tensed facts. And thus we have a strong argument for temporal reality.

Next we turn our attention to some problems with the *B Theory* of time. While there are numerous problems, we will discuss just two of them.{9} First, the *B Theory* of time greatly misconstrues some biblical ideas, one example being the doctrine of *creation ex nihilo*. For the B theorist, the universe beginning to exist simply means that it has a starting point, just like a yard stick has a first inch.{10} The problem is that on this view There is in the actual world no state of affairs of God existing alone without the space-time universe. God never really brings the universe into being; as a whole it co-exists timelessly with Him.{11} So while the universe depends on God, the idea of *creation ex nihilo* is severely stripped of meaning since the universe always timelessly exists with God. That is, in some sense, God and space-time seem to be equally necessary in their

existence.

The other major biblical problem is that evil is never really vanquished.{12} On the static theory of time [*B Theory*], evil is never really vanquished from the world: It exists just as sturdily as ever at its various locations in space-time, even if those locations are all earlier than some point in cosmic time (for example, Judgment Day).{13}

Furthermore, events like the crucifixion are never past or done away with. They simply remain timelessly forever, which seems hard to reconcile with Christs victory over death.

A second argument against the *B Theory* has to do with the impossibility of the existence of *actual infinites*. It has now been almost universally agreed upon by mathematicians and philosophers that an actually infinite number of things cannot be actualized in the space-time universe. The idea of *actual infinites* creates many paradoxes. For instance, what is infinity minus infinity? Well mathematically one gets contradictory answers. For example, one could say that the answer is infinity. But the answer could also be 4, or 0, or any other number you want. This led the great mathematician David Hilbert to say, The infinite is nowhere to be found in reality. It neither exists in nature, nor provides a legitimate basis for rational thought…the role that remains for the infinite to play is solely that of an idea.{14}

Thus, what we have in the space-time universe are not *actual infinites*, but *potential infinites*. For example, you can start counting 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and continue this process for a potentially infinite time (i.e., you can keep going as long as you want). But you will never reach a moment when you can stand up and exclaim, Im done! Ive counted to infinity! In the same way a line three inches in length can be divided in half, and then in half again, and then in half again, ad infinitum. But it can never actually be divided an infinite number of times. For this reason, in addition to compelling scientific

and theological evidence, essentially all philosophers and scientists have now come to believe that time is finite in the past.

However, the future is different. We know that the future is not finite but infinite. We know this both philosophically and biblically by the promise of *everlasting* or *eternal* life. Therefore, most scholars have concluded that the future, like numbers, is potentially infinite. We can keep adding years forever, but we will never reach an end. But this is inconsistent with the *B Theory*. Since every moment of time in fact exists at once, and the future has no end, there is an actually infinite number of years in the future. But since we know that there are no actualized infinites in the real world, we can safely conclude that the *B Theory* is wrong in its description of the future.

So we have seen two strong arguments for the *A Theory*, from our experience of temporal reality and the ineliminability of tense in language, and two ways that the *B Theory* seems clearly implausible, from *creation ex nihilo* and the impossibility of *actual infinites*. Other attempts have been made to revive the *B Theory*, but suffice it to say that they have been answered thoroughly.{15}

Gods Relation to Time

We now turn to how an infinite God relates to our passage of time. There are some things of which we are certain. First, time began a finite time ago. We know this from the Bible,{16} philosophy,{17} and science.{18} Second, we know God neither began to exist, nor will He ever cease to exist.{19} We can further conclude that God existed before time.{20} This is best exemplified in Jude 25: …To the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, *before all time* and now and forever. Amen.{21}

Since we know that God existed before time,{22} we can conclude

that without the universe, God existed timelessly.{23}

We then must ask ourselves, how does God relate to the universe since it began? Here again we find two common positions. One is that God is timeless. By this it is meant that God, while the creator and sustainer of the world, was not affected by the creation of the world and remains constant outside the universe, just as He was before the act of creation. The other common position is that God is *temporal*. That does not mean that God is limited by time, but rather that He is intimately related to temporal things. He thus has a past, present, and future, just like other temporal things. Since there is no beginning or end to His existence, this position is also sometimes called *omnitemporality*.

There are two main arguments in favor of Gods *omnitemporality*. First, there is the argument from Gods relation to the universe. When God brought the universe into being, He stood in new relationships that He did not have before. Once the universe exists, He now is the sustainer of and is co-existent with the universe.{24} He could have remained timeless, but since He created the universe He went through an *extrinsic change*.{25} If God undergoes this change, then surely He must be temporal. That is, we can speak of a past, present and future for God. In the past He had one relation and in the present He has another relation. This provides a way to associate God with time, and that is all the omnitemporal view of God requires.

The second major argument for Gods *omnitemporality* comes from His omnisciencespecifically, His knowledge of tensed facts.{26} That is, as the present is constantly changing, true sentences are constantly changing. For instance, there are tenseless truths that are always true such as: The World Trade Centers *are* attacked on September 11, 2001. However, on September 10, 2001, the sentence The World Trade Centers will be attacked tomorrow was true, but this statement is not true

on September 11th. What is true on September 11th is the statement, The World Trade Centers are being attacked today. Finally, any time since then, the true statement has been, The World Trade Centers were attacked on September 11th. All of these statements can be true or false depending on when they are made. That is because the verbs relate the sentence to the present. Thus, a God who knows only tenseless truths (as the *tenseless view* of God proposes) would seem to be very ignorant indeed, for there are seemingly limitless things He would not know. However, if God does possess knowledge of the truth of tensed sentences, this would seem to make Him temporal. As Dr. Craig puts it, any being which does know tensed facts cannot be timeless, for his knowledge must be in constant flux, as the tensed facts known by him change.{27} Thus we have a second powerful argument for God being temporal .

On the other hand, the major argument for Gods timelessness is what is known as the *incompleteness of temporal life*.{28} This is the idea that temporal life is so limited that a perfect God would not experience it. Certainly the fleetingness of our own lives has led to many existential questions of the meaning of life given that it will all end relatively shortly. Surely God would not be limited in this way. Well, this is a plausible argument and does carry some weight, but I am not sure how much. For one thing, because of Gods complete omniscience and ability to experience whatever He wants, the past is never really lost to God, which makes temporality far less of a limitation. Secondly, since He never ends, and we His children never cease to be in company with Him (assuming we have received His free gift of eternal life), there really is no need for Him to try to grasp onto fleeting moments as we so often do. So, while this argument seems plausible, it does not seem to me to be remotely powerful enough to call into question the powerful arguments we have for the *omnitemporality* of God.

Thus, it seems we have good reason to think that God is

timeless without creation and temporal since creation.{29} But it is important to remember that He did not have to create. Rather, His free decision to create a temporal world also constitutes a free decision on His part to exist temporally.{30} Many would now ask how it makes sense for God to exist timelessly and then temporally. It seems plausible to say that time is a relation of events. That is, Gods existence without creation was just simple, unchanging Trinitarian perfection, and it does not make sense to talk about before and after when there was no change. However, at the moment of the creation, we now have an event, and we can start relating events by temporal distance from the creation. Thus we conclude that God existed timelessly, and then created time and space, giving us the first mark of time, and time has been flowing ever since.

So then, we have seen that there is a real past, present, and future. God, though timeless, created, thus giving us temporal relations. We can speak of past, present, and future for God since He is intimately related to temporal things and has temporal knowledge. Since the first event, we now have a flow of time that will never end as we live on into eternity with or without God.

Notes

1. I owe a great credit to both Dr. William Lane Craig for most of the ideas of this paper, and to Michael Gleghorn for help in developing these ideas.
2. I have picked up Dr. William Lane Craig's use of italics to symbolize a tenseless verb.
3. William Lane Craig. *Time and Eternity, Exploring God's Relationship to Time.* (Crossway Books: Wheaton, Illinois) 133.
4. Ibid., 136.
5. Ibid., 140.
6. Reference to the 1999 film *The Matrix*, in which a complex computer program used unconscious humans to power, and thus perpetuate itself. Human brains were meanwhile tied to an

imaginary world, the matrix.
7. Ibid., 115.
8. Ibid., 118.
9. Ibid., 188-215 for a more comprehensive list of the problems.
10. Ibid., 210.
11. Ibid., 213.
12. Ibid., 214.
13. Ibid.
14. *Philosophy of Mathematics*, ed. with an Intro. by Paul Benacerraf and Hilary Putnam (Prentice-Hall, 1964) p. 151.
15. Ibid., 143-188.
16. Gen 1:1; Ps 90:2; Jn 1:1-3; I Cor 2:7; Jude 25.
17. This is supported by arguments and illustrations about the impossibility of the existence of actual infinites (e.g. Hilbert's hotel, etc.). Also, it has been noted that if time never began, we could never reach our current moment. You cannot count up to infinity by adding one number at a time. If the past was infinite, and we only complete one year at a time, we would never reach 2007.
18. This is supported by the second law of thermodynamics, as well as by arguments for the Big Bang (e.g., the red shift of light from distant galaxies and the cosmic microwave background radiation). For more information see *The Kalam Cosmological Argument* by William Lane Craig.
19. name="text19″>That God is the beginningless cause of the universe is the conclusion of the Kalam Cosmological argument. Also see Gen 1:1, Ps 90:2, Is 41:4, Is 57:15, John 1:1-3, II Tim 1:9, Rev 4:8.
20. name="text20″>I Cor 2:7, Jn 17:24, Jude 25. See also the conclusions from the Kalam Cosmological argument.
21. name="text21″>The Bible, New American Standard Version (Zondervan, Grand Rapids) 2000, emphasis added.
22. name="text22″>I say before here to mean God's existing without time, even though it is actually impossible to speak of before time since before is a temporal relation.
23. Some, like Newton, have proposed that God existed in His

own infinite past separate from the creation of physical time. However, I feel that this fails to cohere with the biblical and philosophical evidence.
24. William Lane Craig. *Time and Eternity*, Exploring God's Relationship to Time. (Crossway Books: Wheaton, Illinois) 87.
25. Ibid., 87. When a being goes through an extrinsic change, the change does not effect the being's nature. The idea of an extrinsic change is the idea of a change apart from you. For instance, I can be behind you in line and then cut in front of you. You never changed, but you went through extrinsic relational changes in that you were related to me by the in front of relation and now you are related to me by the behind relation.
26. Ibid., 98.
27. Ibid., 99.
28. Ibid., 67.
29. Ibid., 241.
30. Ibid., 87.

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"You Can't Say Edgar Cayce was a Failure as a Prophet!"

Your comment about Edgar Cayce being an "abysmal failure" as a prophet is a completely subjective view of his work. There are those who believe that the things of which Mr. Cayce spoke are true. Also, because you can not have a truth without it being believed and it having both epistemic certainty as well as facts to back it up, you can not say as a "truth" that he was a failure as a prophet. Even Nostrodamus was off in many of his predictions, yet he was accurate in what he said.

Thanks for your e-mail. Lou Whitworth, the author of the article you read about Edgar Cayce, is no longer with Probe. Please allow me to reply in his stead.

You begin by stating:

> *Your comment about Edgar Cayce being an "abysmal failure" as a prophet is a completely subjective view of his work. There are those who believe that the things of which Mr. Cayce spoke are true."*

Although I would probably not have chosen to use the adjective "abysmal", the claim that Cayce was a failure as a prophet is actually not subjective. It is based on the objective authority of God's Word in the Bible. The Bible actually sets up an objective standard for determining whether someone is, or is not, a true prophet. This standard is nothing less than 100% prophetic accuracy. In Deuteronomy 18:20-22 we read the following:

"But the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. And you may say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?' When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him."

In light of this passage, the Christian reasons as follows:

1. Edgar Cayce uttered certain prophecies, or healing remedies, that were not accurate.

2. God's word says that a true prophet is always accurate

in what he predicts.

3. Therefore, Edgar Cayce was not a true prophet of God. Biblically speaking, he was a false prophet.

This, of course, is not to deny that Edgar Cayce may have uttered some prophecies and healing remedies which were accurate. But since he also uttered some false prophecies, God's word indicates that he was not a true prophet. The same reasoning would also apply to the prophecies of Nostradamus. As you yourself pointed out, "Nostradamus was off in many of his predictions".

There is another passage of Scripture which seems particularly relevant to Edgar Cayce. Remember, even Cayce at times wondered about the true source of his special powers. In Deuteronomy 13:1-4 we read the following:

"If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you to find out if you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall follow the Lord your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him."

This passage is especially interesting in light of Cayce's own comments concerning his powers:

"The power was given to me without explanation…it was just an odd trait that was useful in medicine…That's what I always thought, and against this I put the idea that the Devil might be tempting me to do his work by operating through me when I

was conceited enough to think God had given me special power" (Edgar Cayce: The Sleeping (False) Prophet).

Since Cayce was quite familiar with the Bible, he had every reason to be suspicious of the source of his power, especially since he made predictions which did not come true.

But please let me also briefly address your description of truth. You write:

> *"…because you can not have a truth without it being believed and it having both epistemic certainty as well as facts to back it up, you can not say, as a "truth" that he was a failure as a prophet."*

I would simply have to disagree with this statement for two reasons:

1. I can imagine many examples of something being objectively true and yet not being believed by anyone, not possessing epistemic certainty (a very difficult criterion to meet, by the way), and not even having any independently verifiable facts to back it up! For instance, suppose an angel appeared to an unbeliever and told him to repent of his sins and to put his faith in Christ for salvation. Suppose this was an objective experience, capable of sense verification (sight, hearing, touch, etc.) by anyone who happened to be present. But suppose no one was present but the unbeliever – and after having this experience, he concludes it was merely a subjective hallucination! Furthermore, suppose everyone who hears this story accepts his interpretation; namely, that the event was simply a hallucination – not an objective experience. Finally, suppose that the angel leaves absolutely no physical trace of his appearance – nothing to confirm that the appearance had been an objective event in the external world! In this case, it would be absolutely TRUE to say that an angel had appeared to this man, etc. However, no one actually BELIEVES this to be true (including the man who

experienced it), it LACKS epistemic certainty, and there are NO independently verifiable facts to support that this event actually happened. The only evidence that this event actually occurred is the man's memory, which he believes pertains to a hallucination – not an actual visit from an angel. In spite of this, however, it would still be TRUE to say that the event actually occurred in the real, mind-independent, external world of the observer; it was completely objective. Such examples could be multiplied, but you get the idea.

2. Since there are good reasons to believe that the Bible is the Word of God, I think that one can legitimately conclude that Cayce was a false prophet by biblical standards. And if this is true, then Cayce was ultimately a failure as a prophet according to the standard of the Ultimate Judge of all such matters, namely, God Himself. The Bible gives us God's standards for determining whether someone is, or is not, a true prophet. Cayce failed to meet these biblical standards. Therefore, the Christian has good grounds for believing that Cayce was not a true prophet.

I know that there are indeed those who believe that the things which Edgar Cayce spoke in his trances are true. But I hope you can see why biblical Christianity must reject that belief.

I wish you all the best,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

"You're An Absolute Idiot As

Far as Your Knowledge of Yoga Is Concerned!”

Would you please let Michael Gleghorn know that he is an absolute idiot as far as his knowledge of yoga is concerned—especially Iyengar yoga?

It is a sign if ignorance to talk about something that one knows nothing about. If more people in this world practiced yoga, as opposed to organized religion, this world would be a much better place!

Hello,

Sue forwarded your letter to me. Thanks so much for writing! I guess I never do anything halfway; if I’m going to be an idiot, I’m going to be an “absolute idiot”—partial idiocy just wouldn’t satisfy me! :o)

I’m sorry you didn’t enjoy my response on yoga. I guess you won’t much like my upcoming radio program on the subject either. Just so you know, I did try to quote primarily from authoritative yoga sources (including the Iyengar website and various yogis, swamis, etc.). Furthermore, before sending that reply to my correspondent, I had Brad Scott (formerly of the Ramakrishna Order) read it for accuracy. He thought it quite good.

Most likely you disagree with my personal perspective on yoga. That doesn’t surprise me. I certainly don’t expect everyone to agree with me.

I write from within a Christian worldview perspective. If you don’t share that perspective, it’s not surprising that you would not agree with some of my remarks. The worldview upon which most of yogic philosophy is based is utterly incompatible with biblical Christianity. If you’ve accepted

yogic philosophy, we would doubtless differ on a great many issues (e.g. the nature of God, of man, of salvation/liberation, the uniqueness of Jesus, what happens after death, etc.). If one of these competing worldviews is true, the other must be false. For many reasons (virtually every article on Probe's website addresses these reasons in one way or another) I'm a completely convinced Christian. I therefore do not want to see my brothers and sisters in Christ led astray by embracing what I honestly believe is a false worldview. And that is really my main objection to yoga. It's certainly nothing personal against those who practice it.

I certainly wish you well, but since you refer to me as an "absolute idiot" I'm hardly convinced that the world would be a better place if more people practiced yoga. I would hate to be called such names by the majority of the world's inhabitants! :o)

Grace and peace to you,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

"Is There a Christian Alternative to Yoga?"

I have a question in response to your postings regarding Yoga and Christianity. This posting addresses the incompatibility of Yoga with Christian beliefs. I agree with the content of the article and have many other resources that express similar views.

However, I am trying to find a Christian alternative for

flexibility, stretching, and exercise that give similar health benefits. I am aware of the concern with some of the Yoga postures and want to stay away from anything that could be potentially harmful. I can find many resources to warn of the potential concerns of Yoga practice even for exercise, but I cannot find much in the way of positive alternatives.

Can you point me to some good sources for Christian stretching and exercise alternatives to yoga? This would be very beneficial for myself and for me to pass along to others.

Thanks for your question—it's a very good one! I wish I could give you a very clear and direct answer to your question, but unfortunately I cannot. Nevertheless, although I do not have a great deal of personal experience with stretching and exercise alternatives to Yoga, I do believe that there are probably some very worthwhile alternatives available.

[Note from the webmistress: Check out PraiseMoves, an orthodox Christian stretching program from a former yoga instructor who knows what she's doing. I am very impressed by her explanation of why yoga and Christianity are not compatible.]

A couple possibilities which you may want to consider are gymnastics and ballet. I know that those who are involved in these practices have to be very flexible, and of course both are extremely good forms of exercise. You can probably find some helpful books and/or videos on the web or at your local bookstore. You might even want to see what options are available in your area to get supervised training (e.g. a gymnastics or ballet class, etc.). In addition, you can probably find some helpful books which simply deal with the subject of stretching. Of course, some of these books may incorporate some stretches which are also used in yoga. But my personal opinion is that this would probably not be harmful. I tend to think there is a pretty big difference between incorporating some yoga stretches into a more comprehensive stretching program (on the one hand) and actually practicing

the discipline of yoga (on the other).

I wish I could be of more help. But if you begin with gymnastics and ballet (and general books on stretching) I think you can probably find something that will accomplish all you like without the potential dangers from yoga practice. Even if you're not interested in gymnastics or ballet, books on these subjects could maybe point you in the right direction. You might also consider calling a local gymnastics coach, or ballet instructor, and asking their advice.

I wish you all the best!

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

"Is It Spiritually Safe to Watch TV Shows Like Star Trek?"

I read your article on space aliens (UFOs and Alien Beings) and thought it was interesting. I have a question regarding watching TV shows such as the new Star Trek series. My husband is a big fan of it and a new Christian. I've expressed my opinion to him that I don't think there's life on other planets, and he feels there might be. Could this show be harmful by opening us up to a spiritual attack?

Thank you for your letter. I personally don't believe that there's anything wrong with watching the new Star Trek series. Further, I don't believe that simply watching this show poses

any serious spiritual danger. Of course, with any movie or TV show, there's always the danger that the show will teach or promote ideas that are actually false. It's therefore important to think carefully and critically about the ideas being presented. But this isn't simply a danger arising from movies or television. We can also be exposed to false ideas through radio, books, magazines, the internet, and even friends and relatives.

Thus, I don't think there's anything wrong with watching this TV series. But as the apostle Paul said to the Thessalonians, I think we need to "Test all things" and "hold fast what is good" (1 Thess. 5:19).

Hope this puts your mind at ease.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

"Was Man Created Twice, in Genesis 1 and Genesis 2?"

Why does it seem like man was created twice? Once in Genesis 1:27 and a second time in 2:7.

My own view is this. Genesis 1 is an overview of the entire creation event. Genesis 2 is a more detailed and specific description of God's creation of mankind. Thus, whereas Genesis 1 mentions the creation of man only briefly, Genesis 2 goes into significantly more detail. The two accounts are not contradictory, but complementary. Genesis 2 simply elaborates on the creation of man in particular.

An excellent website that deals with all sorts of biblical and theological issues is The Biblical Studies Foundation at www.netbible.com/index.htm. I use this site quite often and regularly recommend it to others as well.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

"Was Isaiah Written by Two Authors?"

I was told in an Old Testament class that Isaiah was written by two authors. Is this true and if it is does that change the validity of the prophecies in the book?

Also, I have always believed that the gospels were found in different places but were in harmony. Is this true or what were the origins of the gospels?

I am a Christian but have been beating myself up trying to find answers to all of these questions I have.

Thanks for writing Probe Ministries. It is a very common view among moderate to liberal biblical scholars that Isaiah had two authors. Indeed, some even believe that there were three (or more) authors of this book. A disbelief in the validity of predictive prophecy may well be one of the reasons for adopting this view. However, I personally am persuaded that this view is incorrect. One conservative scholar makes the following points:

1. There is predictive prophecy in Isaiah 1-39 (often attributed to the “first” Isaiah who lived prior to the Babylonian Captivity). Thus, one does not escape predictive prophecy simply by asserting that chapters 40-66 were written later in history by another author. For instance, Isaiah 7:16, 8:4 and others are prophecies which were fulfilled shortly after they were given, whereas 9:1-2 is a prophecy about the coming of Messiah (fulfilled hundreds of years after it was given). Such examples could be multiplied.

2. Although there are some differences in the literary style of chapters 1-39 and 40-66, this does not at all mean that the entire book could not have been written by one person. After all, if such standards were applied to the works of Shakespeare or Milton, we would have to deny that they wrote much of what is attributed to them. Clearly, the same author can make use of diverse literary forms.

3. There are also similarities between both sections of Isaiah. For instance, compare 11:6-9 (allegedly by first Isaiah) with 65:25 (allegedly by second Isaiah). Other passages could be mentioned. Such passages argue as persuasively for a single author as any differences might argue for two authors.

4. Most importantly (in my view) is the New Testament use of Isaiah. First, quotations from chapters 40-66 (allegedly from “second” Isaiah) are simply attributed to Isaiah (see Matthew 3:3 and Acts 8:28-33 for just two examples). Second, in John 12:37-41, there are quotations from Isaiah 53:1 and 6:10, and both are attributed to the same Isaiah who saw the glory of the Lord (John 12:41).

Thus, I think there are good reasons for believing that there was only one author of the book of Isaiah.

Concerning the Gospels, I will certainly admit that there are some difficulties in harmonizing them on all points. However,

I do think it’s possible to harmonize them in large part. Also, it’s important to remember that sometimes problems are resolved with the discovery of new data from archaeology, history and the like. This has happened many times in the past and will likely happen more in the future.

I take the traditional view on the origins of the Gospels. Namely, that Matthew and John were written by the apostles of those names, that Mark was written with eyewitness testimony supplied by the Apostle Peter, and that Luke was written by the physician, who thoroughly researched the subject before writing (see Luke 1:1-4). All of the Gospels were written in the first century, probably between the dates of the mid-50’s to early 60’s for Mark and the 90’s for John.

Hope this information helps put your mind at ease a bit.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

“Is There a Specific Reference to Heaven or Hell in the OT?”

Is there any specific reference to Heaven or Hell in the Old Testament or did this notion emerge solely as a result of the Persians’ Zoroastrian influence on the Jews?

The OT contains numerous references to heaven. Many of these refer to the physical heavens (Gen. 1:1, Psalm 19:1, etc.). Nevertheless, there do also seem to be a number of references to heaven as the dwelling place of God (1 Kings 8:30, Psalm 11:4, etc.).

As for the term "hell," it depends on which English translation you consult. The KJV, for instance, translates the Hebrew term "Sheol" as "hell." The NASB, on the other hand, simply renders this term "Sheol." The NIV translates this term in a variety of ways: the grave, death, the depths, etc., depending on the context. Strictly speaking, sheol (the Hebrew term) does not refer to hell in my judgment. It might refer to Hades (i.e., a temporary place of punishment for the unrighteous dead between death and resurrection) in some contexts. But hell, as I understand it, is properly understood as the second death, the Lake of Fire, the place of eternal punishment. And this is not true of either Sheol or Hades (see Revelation 20:13-15). Thus, the Hebrew term Sheol can, in certain contexts, be used in a manner similar to the NT term Hades (e.g. Job 26:6; etc.), but I personally don't think it refers to hell (strictly speaking).

I do not think it's necessary to suppose that Zoroastrianism was solely responsible for the NT doctrines of heaven and hell. In the first place, the OT does refer to heaven as the dwelling place of God, distinct from the physical universe. For another, the OT concept of Sheol is often used to refer to the place of the dead (i.e., the place of the dead between death and resurrection). This actually parallels the NT doctrines of Abraham's Bosom or Paradise and Hades (see Luke 16:19-31). In the OT, Sheol was apparently a place for both the righteous and unrighteous dead. It may have been a place of rest for the righteous and a place of torment for the unrighteous. However, in the course of progressive revelation, we have been given a clearer vision of the afterlife (including the eternal state) in the NT. Thus, I think this

can be easily explained in terms of progressive revelation, rather than as borrowing from Zoroastrianism.

In case you're interested, I have written a previous reply about Zoroastrianism. Although this reply is attempting to answer some questions other than what you've asked about, it may nonetheless be of benefit to you.

I hope this helps.

Sincerely in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

"Did Jesus Preach Immortality?"

Dear Probe, I have studied the Gospels. My question is: Did Jesus Christ preach Immortality? If so for certain ones or for all?

Thanks for your letter. Jesus taught that salvation (including eternal life) was freely available to all men through faith in Him alone (see John 3:16; 14:6). Technically, Jesus did not preach the Greek doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Rather, he taught that all men would be raised bodily from the dead, some to glory and everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting death in the lake of fire (See John 5:28-29; Revelation 20:11-15). Of course, there is an intermediate state between death and resurrection in which the physically dead experience personal, conscious existence (presumably in a

disembodied state), but this is not man’s final state of existence. The final state is the resurrection of the body.

I personally believe that Christ died for all men and that all men are offered eternal life through faith in Him (See 1 Tim. 2:4-6; 2 Pet. 3:9). Unfortunately, not all men will avail themselves of this gift. Therefore, some will be condemned to eternal separation from God in the lake of fire (the second death).

I hope this is helpful.

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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