

UNDERSTANDING GOD'S PLAN FOR MAN

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What is life all about? Is this all there is? Is there life after death. Is there a heaven and hell? Do we cease to exist? Is there a dependable resource that can answer life's most probing questions?

FAITH – HEBREWS 11:3

Everyone exercises some sort of faith – that our car brakes work, that a chair will hold us up, or that our bank can be trusted. Daily, we all exercise unconscious faith. Our faith can be:

1. Unreasonable – believing in something in spite of the evidence.
2. Blind – believing in something without any evidence.
3. Reasonable – believing in something because of the evidence.

THE BIBLE – A DEPENDABLE RESOURCE

1. Empirical evidence – comes by observation or experimentation.
 - A. Josh McDowell – “No other work in all literature has been so carefully and accurately copied as the Old Testament. I believe there is more evidence for the reliability of the New Testament, than for any other 10 pieces of classical literature put together.”
2. External evidence – comes from data outside itself.
 - A. **MICAH 5:2** – The birthplace of Christ was prophesied 700 years before it took place. This is only one of many fulfilled prophecies.
3. Internal evidence – must pass the test of internal validity.
 - A. **LUKE 2:4, 11** – Micah prophesied it, Luke confirms it.
 - B. The bible contains 66 books written by 45 authors from three continents who wrote in three languages over a period of 1500 years, yet having no contradictions.
 - C. Two pieces of criteria are used to test the validity of an ancient work. First, the closer the manuscript is to the original work, the less chance of error or miscopy. Second, the greater the number of handwritten documents, the greater the accuracy of the

writings in question.

- Plato's Tetralogies. No living scholar questions the validity of that work. Yet, all we have is seven manuscripts. The gap being 1200 years.
- Aristotle's Ode to Poetics. 49 copies, 1400-year gap.
- Homer's Iliad – 1,827 manuscripts.
- Bible – 66,420 manuscripts and scrolls. The New Testament has 24,000 manuscripts. The gap is 35-40 years.

GOD'S PLAN FOR MAN – FOUR PHASES

1. The Father's dream for a family. **GENESIS 1:26-27**
 - A. Man was created in God's image and class, not in any other class of being. He was God's under ruler who had to prove his loyalty.
2. Redemption from a sin catastrophe.
 - A. Man's condition:
 - Dead in sins, a child of wrath, without hope or God. **EPHESIANS 2:1-4, 11-12**
 - Unable to save himself. **MATTHEW 19:25-26**
 - Condemned. **JOHN 3:16-18**
 - Has no legal approach to God. **GENESIS 3:22-24**
 - B. The requirements.
 - Incarnation, crucifixion, incarceration, resurrection.
 - C. Man's need.
 - Pass from death to life, sins remitted, declared righteous and justified. Reconciled to God, legally adopted and born into God's family.
3. The dream come true.
 - A. **COLOSSIANS 1:18-22 (AMPC)**
 - B. **JOHN 1:10-13**
 - C. **JOHN 5:24**
 - D. **GALATIANS 4:4-7**
4. The family home.
 - A. The new heavens and earth. **REVELATION 21:1-4**