

The Search for God Begins at the Incarnation

The Distinction Made Between the Creator and the Creation

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

St. John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

In the Incarnation the Creator and the Creation Come Together

St. John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

St. John 1:29; 34 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!... ³⁴"And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."

Jesus, True God and True Man, is the Truth

St. John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Manifested: The Son of God took on Human Flesh (Incarnation)

1 John 1:1-4 That which was from the beginning, **which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled**, concerning the Word of life— ²the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us— ³that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. ⁴And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.

The Apostles Eyewitnesses of Jesus: Particularly His Resurrection from the Dead!

St. John 20:24-29 Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." ²⁶And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" ²⁷Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand *here*, and put *it* into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." ²⁸And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed *are* those who have not seen and *yet* have believed."

Romans 1:4 ...*and declared to be* the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

...so that We May Believe the Truth and Promise

St. John 20:30-31 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹but **these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.**

St. John 21:24-25 This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and **we know that his testimony is true.** ²⁵And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.

For Certainty of Our Faith these eyewitness-Apostles delivered the Word to us

St. Luke 1:1-4 Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, ²just as **those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us,** ³it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴that you may know **the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.**

Acts 1:1-3 The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, ²until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, ³to whom He also **presented Himself alive** after His suffering **by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days** and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Always Intending to be real History

2 Peter 1:16-18 For **we did not follow cunningly devised fables** when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were **eyewitnesses** of His majesty. ¹⁷For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." ¹⁸And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

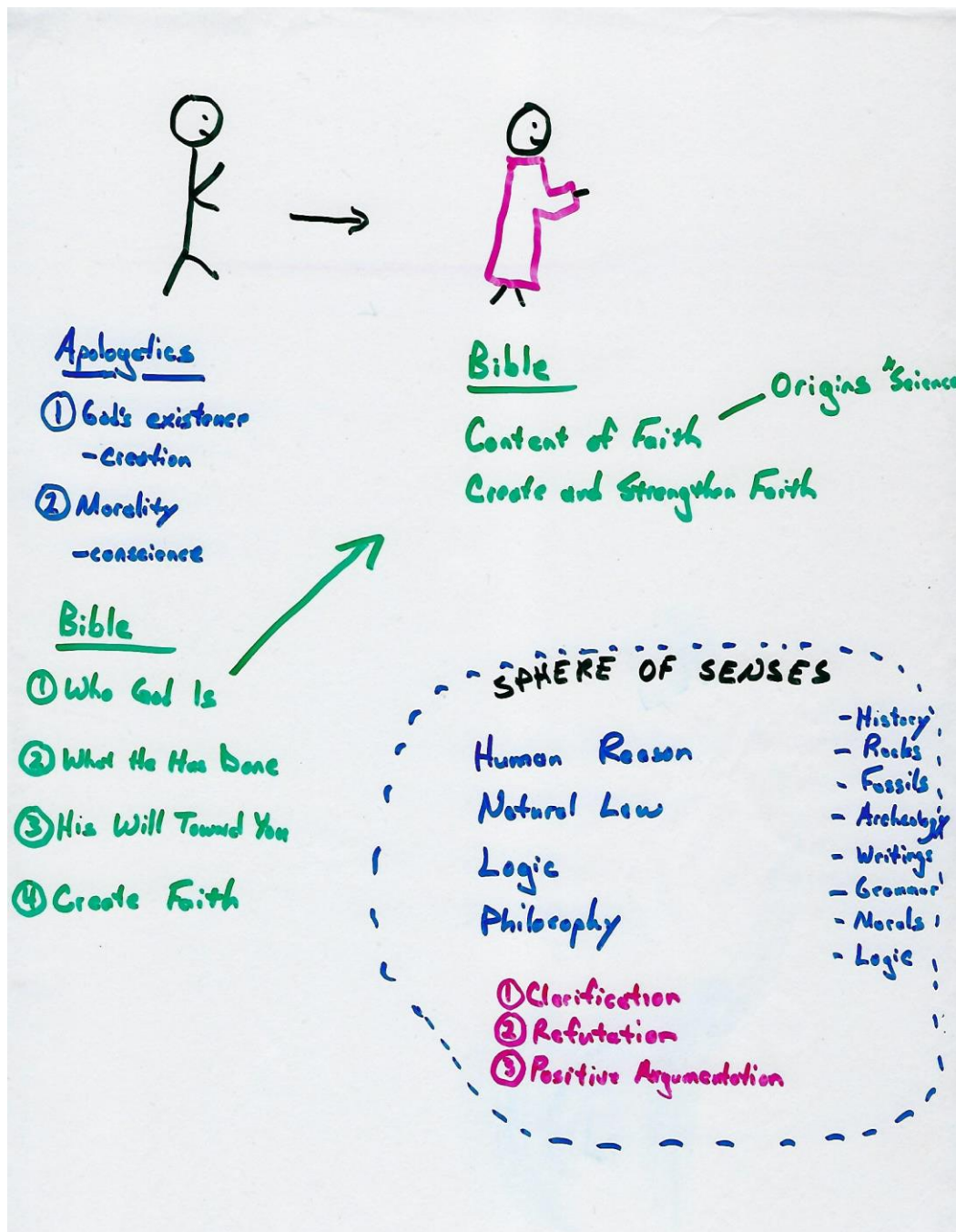
The Apostles Preach the Prophetic Word Confirmed in Jesus

2 Peter 1:19-21 And so we have **the prophetic word confirmed**, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; ²⁰knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, ²¹for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.

Acts 17:2-4 Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them{synagogue}, and for three Sabbaths **reasoned with them from the Scriptures**, ³explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and *saying*, "This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ." ⁴And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas.

The Incarnation Prophesied

Genesis 28:12-17 Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: "I *am* the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. ¹⁴"Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. ¹⁵"Behold, I *am* with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you." ¹⁶Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know *it*." ¹⁷And he was afraid and said, "How awesome *is* this place! This *is* none other than the house of God, and this *is* the gate of heaven!"



Luther in Galatians (26:29)

Therefore whenever you consider the doctrine of justification and wonder how or where or in what condition to find a God who justifies or accepts sinners, then you must know that **there is no other God than this Man Jesus Christ**. Take hold of Him; cling to Him with all your heart, and spurn all speculation about the Divine Majesty; for whoever investigates the majesty of God will be consumed by His glory. I know from experience what I am talking about. But these fanatics, who deal with God apart from this Man, will not believe me. Christ Himself says: “I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father, but by Me” (John 14:6). Outside Christ, the Way, therefore, you will find no other way to the Father; you will find only wandering, not truth, but hypocrisy and lies, not life, but eternal death. Take note, therefore, in the doctrine of justification or grace that when we all must struggle with the Law, sin, death, and the devil, we must look at no other God than this incarnate and human God.

But when you leave the doctrine of justification and have to engage in controversy with Jews, Turks, or sectarians, etc., about the power, wisdom, etc., of God, then you must use all your cleverness and effort and be as profound and subtle a controversialist as possible; for then you are in another area. But when it comes to the conscience, to righteousness and life (which I want to be noted carefully here) against the Law, sin, death, and the devil; or when it comes to satisfaction for sin, the forgiveness of sins, reconciliation, and eternal salvation, then you must disabuse your mind completely of all speculation and investigation into the majesty of God, and you must pay attention only to this Man, who presents Himself to us as the Mediator and says: “Come to Me, all who labor, etc.” (Matt. 11:28).

When you do this, you will see the love, the goodness, and the sweetness of God. You will see His wisdom, His power, and His majesty sweetened and mitigated to your ability to stand it. And in this lovely picture you will find everything, as Paul says to the Colossians: “In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (2:3); and “In Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (2:9). The world does not see this, because it looks at Him only as a man in His weakness.

This is why Paul makes such a frequent practice of linking Jesus Christ with God the Father, to teach us what is the true Christian religion. **It does not begin at the top, as all other religions do; it begins at the bottom. It bids us climb up by Jacob’s ladder; God Himself leans on it, and its feet touch the earth, right by Jacob’s head (Gen. 28:12). Therefore whenever you are concerned to think and act about your salvation, you must put away all speculations about the Majesty, all thoughts of works, traditions, and philosophy—indeed, of the Law of God itself. And you must run directly to the manger and the mother’s womb, embrace this Infant and Virgin’s Child in your arms, and look at Him—born, being nursed, growing up, going about in human society, teaching, dying, rising again, ascending above all the heavens, and having authority over all things. In this way you can shake off all terrors and errors, as the sun dispels the clouds. This vision will keep you on the proper way, so that you may follow where Christ has gone. When Paul wishes grace and peace not only from God the Father but also from Jesus Christ, therefore, this is what should be noted first.**¹

¹Luther, M. (1999, c1963). *Vol. 26: Luther's works, vol. 26 : Lectures on Galatians, 1535, Chapters 1-4* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works (Ga 1:4). Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House.