**12 QUESTIONS LENOIR CITY**

*Question 11: How do I know you exist?*

R. C. Sproul, in his book *Defending Your Faith*, recalls reading a novel in which a dialogue ensued between a priest and a scientist. The scientist remarked, “You give me your faith, and I will give you my reason.” Sproul comments, “This glib exchange underscores the widespread assumption in our day that reason and faith are incompatible and antithetical. Faith is viewed as a subjective, emotive quality leaned upon by the weak or uneducated. It is the opiate of the masses, the bromide for the unintelligent. Faith is a crutch to support the psychologically crippled—those who lack the scientific and sophisticated view of the real world” (7). But the truth is that faith is reasonable, not unreasonable. Faith is defensible. Faith has substance to it (Heb. 11:1). Christians are not required to flee into the land of irrationality in order to escape the challenges of the atheist or skeptic.

**An Answer in Three Steps**

* Establish the existence of God
* Establish the inspiration of the Bible
* Establish the deity of Jesus of Nazareth

**The Existence of God**

* There are four families of arguments for God’s existence: ontological, cosmological, teleological, and moral.
* For the sake of time and space, we are only going to focus on a line of evidence that is concerned with finding the “first cause” for all that we see around us.
  + The testimony of Scripture is that God, an eternal and intelligent being, created everything (Gen. 1:1; Ps. 33:6; Acts 14:15; Rom. 1:19-20; Heb. 11:3; Rev. 4:11).
  + The testimony of atheists is that everything either came from eternal matter or from nothing.
  + As such, the three predominant options for the origin of the universe are as follows: (1) eternal God (intelligent mind); (2) eternal matter (mindless matter); (3) nothing🡪something.
  + Theists argue that the first option is the most rational, sensible choice: God, an eternal and intelligent being, brought everything into existence.
* Furthermore, given God’s nature, which can be ascertained from a consideration of the four families of arguments, it can be surmised that not only would God *want* to reveal Himself, but He would *have* to reveal Himself.

**The Inspiration of the Bible**

* Without question, the Bible is a unique book.
  + The Bible claims to be inspired by God (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; cf. 2 Pet. 3:15-16).
  + The Bible has survived countless controversies, various burnings, and public condemnation so as to become the #1 bestselling book in the history of the world.
  + The Bible is a compilation of 66 books written by 40 individuals over a period of 1,500+ years.
* But just because the Bible claims to be from God doesn’t automatically make it so; however, the contents of the Bible support its claim in compelling ways:
  + Stunning unity (theme, purpose, and doctrine)
  + Spectacular scope (creation to consummation)
  + Supernatural foresight (fulfilled prophecy)
  + Superior insight (unparalleled wisdom and transformational)
* Neil Lightfoot sums up the matter well: “The *claims* of the Bible plus the *contents* of the Bible equal a *convincing case* for the Bible as the inspirited Word of God” (*How We Got the Bible* 203).

**The Deity of Jesus Christ**

* The deity and continuing existence of Jesus is tied to the biblical doctrine of His resurrection (Rom. 1:1-4; cf. 1 Cor. 15:12-23).
* Five facts support the belief that Jesus was, in fact, raised from the dead.
  + Jesus died by crucifixion (John 19:31-37).
  + The disciples of Jesus believed that He rose from the dead and appeared to them (Acts 1:3, 22; 2:32; 3:15; 4:20; 5:30-32; 10:39-41; 13:30-31; cf. 1 Cor. 15:1-8).
  + Hardened skeptics, like James (1 Cor. 15:7) and Paul (1 Cor. 15:8), were turned into staunch believers.
  + Key social institutions of Jewish life changed quickly and dramatically.
  + The tomb was empty (Luke 24:1-2).
* In light of these five facts, it is reasonable to believe that Jesus, who was/is God (John 1:1; Col. 1:19; 2:9; Titus 2:13), conquered death and exists even now.