

# Roots in Ripon

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*Chuck Roots*

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## Easter: Fact or Fiction?

If you are a regular reader of my column then you know that I am a professing Christian. To more precisely identify the type of Christian I am you would want to use words like: evangelical, born again, Bible-believing, Jesus follower.

So, it comes as no surprise that I firmly believe in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as recorded in the New Testament. And this weekend is the Christian celebration of Jesus' sacrificial death on a Roman cross, followed by his miraculous resurrection from the dead.

Can such an event really be proven? This question is frequently asked, most frequently by skeptics, but also by those who want to know but really have no means of tracking down conclusive evidence.

Because our world for the past 200 years has focused in on science and the answers it frequently discovers about our world and the universe we live in, people have been conditioned to expect that proof for anything must be measured by some sort of testing under specific conditions measured in a laboratory. If that is your means of proving anything, then you already know that God, and the existence of God, cannot be measured in this way. He is not going to be reduced to a microscope's magnification of germs captured between glass slides, or culture cells in a Petri dish. If the discovery of God was so easily reduced to scientific lab results, can you honestly say you'd be impressed with this God?

Let's consider instead another means of establishing the existence of a thing. Ontology is the branch of metaphysics that studies the question of what it means to exist. Metaphysics is a branch of philosophy that deals with questions of knowledge and the existence of the world, which includes ontology, cosmology, and epistemology. Such philosophical disciplines are exhausting and can often leave the inquirer more confused than before.

My purpose is to simply look at some of those arguments for the existence of God, followed logically by the life and ministry of Jesus.

One of the arguments for the existence for God is intelligent design. A useful analogy has often been used to explain the necessity for the existence of God. The analogy goes like this: "Just as a watch demands a watchmaker, so the Universe demands a God." This is not a conclusive argument, but it does convey the basic

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thesis that the obvious order exhibited throughout our universe strains the credibility of disorder (Big Bang Theory) creating order.

Another argument for the existence of God is found in the hypothesis that an individual is entirely incapable of even thinking of God unless a sovereign God places such a thought in the mind of that individual, and therefore the whole human race.

One final argument for God's existence is the argument from creation. Have you never stood in awe while soaking in the spectacular colors splashed across the horizon at sunset? Or stood on the rim of the Grand Canyon as the Colorado River meanders by a full mile below? Or been amazed by the design, function and usefulness of the thumb?

In more recent times, the discovery of DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid), "a self-replicating material which is present in nearly all living organisms as the main constituent of chromosomes. It is the carrier of genetic information." Last summer my wife and I had our DNA tested. From a few drops of spittle, and nothing else, the researchers of my DNA knew exactly where my ancestors came from, and where they migrated in America. And this DNA which is impossible to see without powerful microscopes, contains all the information necessary for my existence.

The Bible asks the rhetorical question: "Is anything too difficult for God?" The answer is No. So, that means if God chose to bring about the salvation of sinful humans, and he wished to demonstrate the full force of his love for us, then would it not stand to reason that he would provide the means by which you and I could be saved?

God chose to pay the price himself. He was willing to sacrifice his own son, Jesus, to open the door for each and every person to receive his forgiveness, and with that, the promise of eternal life with him in heaven forever.

"But we don't know that to be empirically true," someone might argue. And I would agree. Neither you nor I saw Jesus during his earthly ministry. But we have written records of those who did see him. Many of these witnesses were so utterly convinced of his death and resurrection that they were willing to die in their firm belief.

Two thousand years of Christians have embraced Jesus Christ, many martyred for their faith in him. You see, those Christians all knew something special. Jesus is not dead. He is not in the tomb. He is alive! And that's a fact!

When Mary and the other women came to the tomb of Jesus to anoint him in burial, they did not see him. An angel spoke these words of hope to them: "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here. He has risen!"

He has risen indeed! Happy Easter!