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Islam’s Rule of Thumb

The Resurrection Versus the Qur’an In the Light of Logic

By David Wood

*Mount Everest is much larger than my thumb. However, I can cover the entire mountain simply by placing my thumb in front of my eye. This is an optical illusion created by my perspective as a viewer.*

David, that's a pretty good analogy to Christianity: by putting your thumb in your eye, you can blind yourself to the mountain of evidence that science has produced proving that your beliefs are nothing more than a pile of crap.

*Because my thumb is much closer to me than Mount Everest, I can make it appear as if my thumb is larger. Similarly, the sun and the moon look exactly the same size from earth, but that’s only because we’re much closer to the moon. If we were to travel to the moon, we would be even closer, and it would look much larger than the sun. Yet none of this changes the fact that the sun is millions of times larger than the moon, and that Mount Everest is millions of times larger than my thumb.*

David, your explanation would even have third grade schoolchildren yawning. Is your audience really this stupid?

*Many Muslims are convinced that Islam is supported by a great deal of historical and scientific data. Christians are just as convinced that the evidence, when properly examined, points to Christianity. Muslims and Christians can’t both be right, so it seems that at least one of the groups is seeing something analogous to an optical illusion.*

David, the most important phrase in your paragraph was, *"at least one*."

*Perhaps the evidence for Christianity is really no bigger than my thumb,*

David, I would call that wishful thinking. The evidence for Christianity would be dwarfed by the thumb of an amoeba ... if they had thumbs.

*while the mountain of evidence for Islam stands far off on the horizon. Historically, scores of arguments have been offered in support of Islam and Christianity. With the rise of skepticism in the West, this abundance of arguments has increased as both religious and secular belief systems have competed for the honor of being "The Most Reasonable System."*

David, "Most reasonable?" In your belief system the sun froze in the sky for 24 hours, so it has already eliminated itself from the competition for most reasonable.

*Because there are so many arguments, interested seekers may sometimes get lost in the search, and the task of deciding between two competing systems may appear hopelessly difficult. One possible way of cutting through this difficulty is to find the most persuasive argument for each of the systems in question and to analyze these arguments carefully.*

*Thus, in order to compare the evidence for Islam and Christianity, our first step could be to examine the strongest argument for Islam, and to compare it with the strongest argument for Christianity. This technique presents us with something of a "showdown" between the world’s two largest religious systems.*

David, that's like deciding which science is more powerful, astrology or alchemy.

*Islam’s central apologetic has always been the Qur’an. One of the most popular modern arguments for Qur’anic inspiration is its supposed scientific accuracy. This is a modern argument, however, and it is full of holes. For instance, Muhammad claimed (1) that stars are really missiles used by angels to shoot demons, (2) that human embryos go through a "blood clot" stage, (3) that people used to be 90 feet tall, (4) that the sun sets in a pool of murky water, and (5) that ants can talk. Due to the abundant scientific inaccuracies in the Qur’an and the Hadith, the Muslim argument for scientific precision is unconvincing.*

David, let's compare those 5 arguments, which you just admitted were inaccurate and unconvincing, to similar claims in *your* holy book.

1) All the stars were created on the same day, yet science finds very few that are the same age.

2) The first human did not go through an embryo stage but was created by an invisible man out of magic mud.

3) People used to live to be 900 years old.

4) The sun traveled backwards once.

5) Snakes and donkeys can talk.

You know David, I can't see much difference. The only difference I see is that you view the first set as inaccurate and unconvincing, and the second set as containing hard scientific facts.

*There is another argument for Qur’anic inspiration, however. Muslims sometimes claim that the Qur’an is so masterfully written, so brilliant and awe-inspiring in every detail, that it could only have come from God.*

David, what a coincidence: I've heard Christians say the exact same thing about the Bible. Imagine that.

*Indeed, this argument comes from the Qur’an itself. In my opinion, this is Islam’s strongest argument. Many Muslims may disagree, but since this is the argument that Muhammad himself used, Muslims should have great respect for it.*

*In evaluating arguments it often helps to put them into the appropriate logical form. In the case of Islam (as in the case of Christianity), the central argument can be put into a syllogistic pattern known as modus ponens. When put into this pattern, Islam’s strongest argument becomes the following syllogism:*

*Premise One:*

*If unbelievers can’t produce something comparable to a chapter of the Qur’an, then it must be from God.*

*Premise Two:*

*Unbelievers can’t produce something equivalent to a chapter of the Qur’an.*

*Conclusion: Therefore, the Qur’an must be from God.*

*The first premise of the Muslim argument is false (unless we are open to the idea that all of the world’s great authors and poets received their works from God). Hence, since one of the premises of the Muslim argument is false (or, at the very least, impossible to establish), the entire argument is to be rejected.*

*The second premise is just as problematic. Thus, the legitimacy of Islam hangs primarily on a syllogism with two false premises. It is difficult to imagine how people could ever be convinced by such an argument, yet Islam has grown dramatically over the past thirteen centuries and is currently the second largest religion in the world.*

David, I don't think Muslims are convinced by arguments; I think they are convinced by what other Muslims have threatened to do to them if they resist. That, and what Allah has threatened to do to them after they die. If I lived in such a hellhole, I would be on my knees, praying to Allah 5 times a day, myself. It's either that or a very unpleasant death.

*The largest religion is Christianity, which is founded on a different argument. On numerous occasions, Jesus predicted that he would rise from the dead:*

*From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.*

David, the problem with those predictions is that they were recorded decades after the life of Christ so there is no way to verify that He really made those predictions. In other words, it isn't a prediction when one writes about the past.

*Additionally, the Apostle Paul used Jesus’ resurrection as proof of the Christian message.*

David, the Resurrection *would* be proof of the Christian message, if it could ever be proven to have happened. Unfortunately for you, it hasn't.

*In Acts 17, Paul says that God "has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed.*

David, you have no difficulty using critical thinking skills when evaluating a competitor like Islam. But look how quickly you discard those skills when evaluating your own. You just referred to a prediction - one that never came true. Just how long are these predictions good for, before you will admit they failed?

I can answer that one for you David. The answer is 'never'. They never expire. But year after year after year, for 2,000 years ... that one has failed.

*He has given proof of this to all men by raising Jesus from the dead."*

David, I see a problem with that last claim: if God gave proof *to all men* by raising Jesus from the dead, why weren't the Chinese notified? Or the Japanese? Or the Australian aborigines? Or the Eskimos? Or the Indonesians? Or the Africans? Or India? And He forgot to tell anyone in the entire Western Hemisphere.

In fact, it seems like the only people who knew about it lived in a tiny little desert in the middle of nowhere.

*Putting this argument into logical form, we arrive at the following:*

*Premise One:*

*If Jesus rose from the dead, then his message was from God.*

*Premise Two:*

*Jesus rose from the dead.*

*Conclusion:*

*Therefore, his message was from God.*

David,

Premise One: The "then" portion does not logically follow from the "if" portion. There may have been other reasons He rose from the dead (for example: aliens using advanced medical techniques).

Premise Two: Is unproven speculation and wishful thinking.

So your conclusion is based on two fatally flawed premises.

David, it is utterly stunning how you have no problem thinking logically and rationally when trashing someone else's religion, and can then make similar unproven claims, and not even see that you are doing the exact same thing they did. You just gave a perfect example of how religious belief poisons the mind and prevents it from functioning properly.

*The truth of the first premise of the Christian argument seems self-evident.*

Sorry David, "self-evident" doesn't cut it in a scientific debate, or in any discussion of logic. See what I mean about your critical thinking skills disappearing when you need them to?

No. You don't.

*So the question for us is: "Would God raise a heretic from the dead?" I think Muslims and Christians would agree that he would not.*

David, apparently God did because, if you'll recall scripture, hundreds of zombies were raised from the dead and entered Jerusalem. Are you claiming that these zombies were all Christians, and if so, can you provide biblical support for that claim?

*Thus, if Jesus’ claims weren’t heresy, what were they? They must have been true.*

David, Jesus' claims *must* have been true? Is that because they were self-evident?

*The first premise, then, makes sense in light of what we know about God.*

David, I agree that it makes sense in light of what we know about your God. It does make sense that He would sacrifice His own son on a bloody cross just because He couldn't bring Himself to forgive one man who disobeyed Him in a garden long ago. But making sense and being true ... are two different things.

*This brings us to the second premise: "Jesus rose from the dead." Unlike the first premise, this one isn’t self-evident.*

David, obviously you haven't got a clue how logic works. You spent 10 minutes on a web site, thought 'syllogism' sounded really intellectual, and then used your newfound knowledge to attack Muslims. That explains why you aren't able, or willing, to apply the rules of logic to your own beliefs.

*Rather, it is a matter of historical investigation. The interesting thing is that the historical evidence for the resurrection of Jesus is exceptionally good. When it comes to Jesus’ death and resurrection, there are a number of historical facts, which, when combined, can only be accounted for by Jesus’ physical resurrection from the dead. Consider the following list of historical facts compiled by Dr. Gary Habermas:*

*(1) Jesus died due to the severity of crucifixion*

David, there is no proof that He ever existed in the first place. Until you can prove that, how He died is a moot point.

*(2) was then buried.*

David, see previous reply. Before one can be buried, one must first exist. By 'assuming' His existence you are 'begging the question'.

You must *prove* He existed.

*(3) His death caused the disciples to lose hope and experience despair.*

David, it doesn't sound like they had all that much faith in Him, does it? If they weren't even convinced Jesus was God after all that time, maybe they had a good reason?

*(4) Although not recognized to the same degree as the other findings here, most scholars seem to hold that the tomb in which Jesus was buried was found empty just a few days later.*

David, body-snatching isn't all that rare of a phenomenon.

*Critical scholars even acknowledge that*

*(5) the disciples then had real experiences that they believed were literal appearances of the risen Jesus.*

David, and these incredible and amazing events weren't recorded for ... decades? I guess rising from the dead wasn't such a big deal in those days, was it?

And how could scholars know that the disciples had real experiences? That is a preposterous claim.

*(6) These experiences transformed the disciples from apprehensive followers who were afraid to identify with Jesus into bold proclaimers of His death and resurrection, even being willing to die for this belief.*

David, in other words, it sounds like the Disciples found a way to cash in on Jesus' misfortune.

*(7) This resurrection message was central in early Christian preaching*

David, actually that message was of secondary importance to the main message, which was "Donate." We know this because it is still the main message in Christianity today.

*(8) was especially proclaimed in Jerusalem, where Jesus had died shortly before.*

David, shortly before? The first Gospel didn't appear until nearly 40 years after Jesus left the building.

*(9) the Christian church was established and grew,*

David, Islam can make the same claim. In fact, in the 21st century, *only* Islam can make that claim since Christianity is crashing worldwide.

*(10) featuring Sunday as the primary day of worship.*

David, you people celebrate on Sunday because that is the day Jesus supposedly arose. Yet when you add 3 days to Friday ... you get Monday. David, you had better hope that isn't one of the questions on the entrance exam at the Pearly Gates.

*(11) James, the skeptical brother of Jesus, was converted when he believed he also saw the resurrected Jesus.*

David, His own brother thought Jesus was a fraud: that should tell you something. James' conversion can be easily explained by how he felt when he saw all the Disciples cashing in on the scam.

*(12) Saul of Tarsus, the famous persecutor of the church, became a Christian a couple of years later after an experience that he, similarly, believed to be an appearance of the risen Jesus.*

David, all you've proven is that people who see things are more likely to become Christians. We already knew that.

*Almost all of the above facts are granted by nearly all scholars, regardless of theological background.*

David, unfortunately for you, not one of your "facts" proved anything.

*Notice that, whereas the Muslim position cannot be reconciled with the facts of history, Christianity fits the facts perfectly.*

No David, I didn't notice that. I only noticed that you noticed that.

*The point to be made is that, whereas Islam’s best argument is based on two false premises, Christianity’s greatest claim is based on one self-evident premise and another premise that can be investigated historically.*

David, your premises were just as false as those of Islam. You just refuse to see it.

*This means that we can know by a careful examination of the evidence whether Christianity is true.*

David, that's actually pretty bad news for you because after 2,000 years of careful examination of the evidence, the only argument you have left ... is blind faith.

*Yet Islam has absolutely nothing resembling such an argument. Like it or not, Islam will therefore always lose in a showdown with Christianity.*

David, if I were you I would stay away from newspapers, TV news, and the Internet because the news for Christianity is pretty gloomy. Islam, on the other hand, is growing fast and is expected to surpass Christianity by the end of this century. In other words, Allah is single-handedly fighting all 3 Christian Gods ... and basically kicking the holy snot out of Them.

*When it comes to evidence, the resurrection of Jesus is the Mount Everest of apologetics.*

David, Jews don't accept it. Muslims don't accept it. Hindus and Buddhists don't accept it. Rational people don't accept it. In fact, only 1/3 of Earth's population believe that your non-union carpenter was the Son of God. And as I just pointed out, your numbers are dwindling fast.

At the current rate, by the end of the century, your 'Mount Everest' will be nothing more than a pile of rubble that could easily fit inside a backpack ... for midgets.

*Muslims are living on the Crescent Moon, and it seems large to them, much larger than the Son of God, whose blinding radiance fills the universe.*

David, when Jesus is floating above dozens of African children and watching them slowly starve to death, do you think they see His blinding radiance, or does that come after He finally, mercifully ... lets them die?

*Nevertheless, this optical illusion caused by Islamic perspective doesn’t change the facts. Jesus of Nazareth died on the cross for our sins and rose from the dead, proving that the Christian message is true. Sadly, as the evidence for Christianity presses forward, many Muslims are racing away from the truth as quickly as they can. With the Qur’an in their passenger seats, they look at Jesus in their rearview mirrors and think, "Well, he’s not so big." They should be careful, however.*

*OBJECTS IN MIRROR MAY BE CLOSER THAN THEY APPEAR.*

David, you Ghost Worshippers are so consistent. You people never fail to end your arguments ... with threats.

Probably because ... it's all you've got.

David, you began this essay with an analogy about Mount Everest and how easy it is to delude one's self; and then you proceeded to do exactly that - delude yourself; by criticizing Muslims for doing exactly the same things ... that you do.

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THE SCIENCE SEGMENT

Did a 'Forgotten' Meteor Have a Deadly, Icy Double-Punch?

When a huge meteor collided with Earth about 2.5 million years ago and fell into the southern Pacific Ocean, it not only could have generated a massive tsunami but also may have plunged the world into the Ice Ages.

A team of researchers say that because the Eltanin meteor -- which was up to two kilometers across -- crashed into deep water, most scientists have not adequately considered, either its potential for immediate catastrophic impacts on coastlines around the Pacific rim, or its capacity to destabilize the entire planet's climate system.

This is the only known deep-ocean impact event on the planet and it's largely been forgotten because there's no obvious giant crater to investigate, as there would have been if it had hit a landmass.

But consider that we're talking about something the size of a small mountain crashing at very high speed into very deep ocean, between Chile and Antarctica. Unlike a land impact, where the energy of the collision is largely absorbed locally, this would have generated an incredible splash with waves literally hundreds of meters high near the impact site.

Some modeling suggests that the ensuing mega-tsunami could have been unimaginably large -- sweeping across vast areas of the Pacific and engulfing coastlines far inland. But it also would have ejected massive amounts of water vapor, sulphur and dust up into the stratosphere.

The tsunami alone would have been devastating enough in the short term, but all that material shot so high into the atmosphere could have been enough to dim the sun and dramatically reduce surface temperatures. Earth was already in a gradual cooling phase, so this might have been enough to rapidly accelerate and accentuate the process, and kick start the Ice Ages.

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FAMOUS QUOTES

MARK TWAIN (No Biography - Previously Quoted)

"A man is accepted into a church for what he believes

and he is turned out for what he knows."