

Room for Doubt, Room for Faith, and Room for Me  
 Matthew 11:1-27  
 February 1, 2004  
 Peter Hiatt

I've been gone a while, and it's good to be back. People wonder what I've been doing. Well, I was concerned about *you*. I wanted to do something helpful for your faith. So during my time away, I proved the existence of God:

Pete's Proof of the existence of God<sup>®</sup>

- Age of Universe - 15.5 billion years
- Speed of Light -  $3 \times 10^8$  m/sec -  $c$
- Angle of Repose in Earth's Axis -  $23^\circ$  -  $\Delta_{aa}$
- Planck's Constant -  $\lambda \sqrt{2\pi} E_{\text{ph}} = h = 6.63 \times 10^{-34}$  J-sec

- Considering that increasing Bible distribution in Sub-Saharan Africa can be represented by a Standard Sine Wave and expressed as the Integral  $\Theta_1, \Theta_2$ :



$$\rightarrow \sqrt[3]{\frac{S_{\Theta_2}^4 \times 15.5 \text{ billion years}}{c \text{ ("I am the light")}} + \frac{\Delta_{aa}}{h}}$$

- ⊗ the # of Christians in Grand Rapids -  $G_m$
- ⊕ the Feeling you get when some one "Praise The Lord"

$$\left( \sqrt[3]{\frac{S_{\Theta_2}^4 \times 15.5 \text{ billion yrs}}{c} + \frac{\Delta_{aa}}{h}} \right) G_m + PTL = \text{GOD}$$

Taking into account . . .

- the age of the universe is 15.5 billion years
- the speed of light (represented by “C”)
- the angle of repose in the earth’s axis (23 degrees)
- Planks Constant . . .

If you consider that increasing Bible distribution in Sub-Saharan Africa can be represented by a standard sine wave and expressed as integral . . .

If you take the cube root (because God is the Trinity) of that integral times 15.5 billion years divided by “C”—the speed of light (and Jesus said “I am the Light”) . . . plus delta aa prime . . . times the number of Christians in Grand Rapids, Michigan (“GM”) . . . plus the feeling you get when someone says “Praise the Lord” . . .

Do the math! It all adds up to *God*.  
GOD EXISTS!

[Dialing on cell phone] Is this the Denver Post? This is Pastor Peter Hiatt. I have front page news: I have proved the existence of God!

Isn’t that great? Imagine all the people who will come to faith tomorrow! And now you have *no choice* but faith! . . . yet you doubt.

1. In 1078 A.D., the Archbishop of Canterbury, St. Anselm, presented the Ontological Argument for the existence of God:

- Imagine a being greater than which none can be conceived.
- Now, suppose that being doesn't exist.
- Well now, that being greater than which none can be conceived is a being of which a greater *can* be conceived.
- That's impossible! So that being must exist, and that being is God.

Did you get that?  
Maybe you're not smart enough.

2. In the 13th century, Thomas Aquinas doubted that proof but presented a new proof for the existence of God: the Five-fold Cosmological Argument. [Recorded flute music begins to play "Lord of the Dance" quietly in the background.] Basically, if you take the sum total of all caused things, there must be an uncaused cause that caused all those things. *God* is the uncaused cause, the unmoved mover, necessary being-ness. But people like David Hume doubted Thomas Aquinas.
3. At the beginning of the 19th century, William Paley presented the Teleological Argument, the argument from design: The universe is like a watch, so there must be a watchmaker. [Music grows louder.]
4. At the end of the 19th century, Immanuel Kant doubted the Teleological Argument but formulated the Moral Argument: We sense within us a "moral law"; therefore, there must be a "moral lawgiver."

Do you sense that law?  
Maybe you're not good enough.

5. [Music becomes loud.] Well, there are historical arguments, but you can always doubt history . . .

Hey, guys, shut that music off! Can't you see I'm trying to prove the existence of God so that these people can have faith? [Music stops.]

6. Well, like I was saying, there are proofs: ontological, cosmological, teleological, moral, historical . . . and arguments from personal experience. Yet you can always doubt someone's experience. Why doesn't God give experience on demand?

At times I've felt this incredible burden to evangelize everybody, and I've been really frustrated with God, because I go to all this work to convince people God exists, and all He'd have to do is turn somebody into a toad or a newt, and then they'd have faith, right?

When the Pharisees said, "If you're the Christ come down from the cross," why didn't He? He could have come down off the cross, said "See, told ya," and then gotten back up and finished atonement. Why wouldn't He? What if He had? Would they have then had faith? or something else?

You know, with all these proofs, it's easy to assume that faith is like the answer to a complicated equation. That's why I used to wonder, "Why aren't all the smart people Christians?" There should be a direct relationship between IQ and faith. Yet there are dumb Christians and smart Christians.

Well, no matter how hard you try to prove God, there always seems to be room for doubt for someone. And if there isn't room for doubt, it's like Jesus makes sure there is. (He only performed miracles for those who already had some faith.) It's like wherever Jesus went, and wherever He goes, He goes out of His way to make sure that people don't *have* to believe, aren't *forced* to believe. There's always room for doubt. Yet He wants us to have faith. And aren't reasons and proofs the way to get faith? But how could we prove God?

Jesus said He was the truth; not simply *true*, but the *Truth*. So to ask "Is it true that Jesus is the truth?" already assumes truth—Jesus. If Jesus is the Truth, maybe I can't prove Jesus. Yet I can't prove anything else without Jesus.

We're like fish in the bottom of the sea trying to prove there is, in fact, an ocean and we're wet.

We're like a baby in the womb trying to prove there is a mother.

"In Him we live and move and have our being," wrote Paul. How could we prove God?

Some people have said that because you can't *prove* God, there is *no God*. "I'll only believe what can be proved without a doubt. Science."

1. I have a geology degree from CU. Do you realize that in the last fifty years, Darwin's Theory of Evolution has just been shot full of holes by lack of scientific proof?
2. Carl Sagan used to say, "The universe is all there is, was, or ever shall be." Physicists and cosmologists now say,

“Everything—space and time—seems to have just sprung into existence.”

3. At Border’s on vacation, I picked up a book entitled Quantum Reality. It’s about the fundamental building blocks of reality quantum particles and how they’re . . . not really there. They’re not there unless you *observe* them or *want* them to be. For it seems the observer creates quantum realities, as if spirit is more real than matter. Cornell physicist David Mermin writes, “We now know that the moon is demonstrably not there when nobody looks.” Well, that means maybe *you’re* not there unless someone is observing you.

Descartes said, “I think, therefore I am.” (That’s not a *proof*.) There’s a bumper sticker that says, “I doubt, therefore I might be.”

You see, whether you’re a materialist or a spiritualist, it seems we’re stuck with doubt, as if God has built uncertainty into the very fabric of our reality: God’s Uncertainty Principle (not Heisenberg’s). Then no matter how hard we try to turn the world into a machine and ourselves into computers, we can’t do it. We’re stuck with this crazy thing that we call *choice*. Maybe a better word for it is *faith*. And faith must operate in freedom. Faith is not the absence of doubt, but the belief in the presence of doubts: “assurance of things hoped for”—assurance of things you can’t prove. Perhaps there’s room for doubt so that there’s room for faith. So perhaps we’re free to believe what we *want* to believe.

Frederick Buechner writes, “Without somehow destroying me in the process, how could God reveal himself in a way that

would leave no room for doubt? If there were no room for doubt, there would be no room for me.”

Well, now that I’ve made you doubt everything, listen to James 1:6: “He who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways, will receive anything from the Lord.”

Now our text, Matthew 11:2:

*Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, “Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?”*

John doubts. And that’s amazing. John is Jesus’ cousin. He knew the miracle stories of His birth, he saw the Spirit descend as a dove upon Jesus, he heard in prison (says verse two) about the deeds (miracles) of Jesus. And if faith is a matter of being good enough or smart enough, John should have tons, for he is the pinnacle of “the law and prophets.” But John doubts.

*And Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is he who takes no offense at me.”*

Well, verse two told us John has already heard that Jesus does these things. See, this isn’t *proof* but *word*. Actually, in Isaiah

35 and 61, Isaiah prophesies the Messianic Age saying, “Then the blind will see, the deaf will hear, the lame will leap, good news will be preached to the poor, and the Messiah will proclaim liberty to the captives, the opening of the prisons.” But, you see, John is *in* prison. He must be thinking, “Cousin, this is *great*. The blind, the lame, the lepers . . . but I’m in *prison*. Where are you? They’re going to cut my head off!” You can relate to that kind of doubt, can’t you? “OK, Jesus, I believe with my heart that you’re the Messiah, but are you the Messiah *for me*? I’m hurting, and where are you?”

It’s like Jesus says to John, “Yes, I’m the Messiah (more than you ever imagined). I do set the captives free, and I am setting you free, but John, you must still suffer, and I must suffer. And blessed is he who takes no offense at me.”

Are you offended by Jesus?

I think you are every time you doubt, every time you say, “How could God allow this or allow that? What kind of Messiah would allow John to be beheaded in prison?” You’re offended by a Messiah who chooses to suffer and asks you to follow. The cross is the offense—the “scandal” of this world.

Well, John doubts publicly, and now you’d think Jesus would just *rip* on John. Next verse . . .

*As [John’s disciples] went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to behold? A reed shaken by the wind? Why then did you go out? To see a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, those who wear soft raiment are in kings’ houses. Why then did you go out? To see*

*a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written, 'Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee.' Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has risen no one greater than John the Baptist . . . ."*

("No one greater than John the Baptist," but, of course, that's because at this time there were no Presbyterians . . . kidding!)

Jesus didn't rip on John; He outrageously complimented John. It's like Jesus assumes we'll all doubt. It's what we *do* with our doubt that matters.

- John doesn't hide his doubts or hang on to his doubts or leave his doubts in the dark.
- John is honest about his doubts.
- John exposes his doubts to the light.
- John takes his doubts to Jesus. And Jesus isn't *reasons*; He's *the Reason*—the way and the truth. You may say, "John didn't know that." Right. But I think he wanted that.

Do you want Jesus to be the truth? Perhaps that's the real question. Think with me:

To really doubt what's good, you have to believe in the Good.

To really doubt what's real, you have to believe in the Real.

To really doubt what's true, you have to believe in the Truth.

So to really and truly doubt Jesus, you have to believe in Jesus, the Truth.

To doubt nothing in this world is insane, but to doubt everything is more insane, for then you have nothing to doubt *with*. I think that's the double-minded, doubting man that James talks about. The doubting man makes doubt an idol.

- He doubts in order to protect himself from truth.
- He doubts because he believes, and he doesn't want to believe.
- He's trying to kill the truth; that is, crucify Jesus and go insane.

But if you doubt because you kind of believe and want to believe the truth, then you're seeking the truth. That is, you're seeking Jesus, and Jesus says, "Seek and you will find." Then the real issue when you doubt is not: Are you smart enough (to understand and decipher the prophecies and the evidence) or good enough to believe; the real question is:

Do you want to believe, or are you offended at Jesus?

If you want Jesus, you'll seek Jesus, and seeking Jesus, you'll find Jesus, because Jesus has already found you. He's making you seek. But if you don't want Jesus, then I imagine you will seek a world without Jesus, and I believe they call that Hell. Don't seek it, or you may find it.

*“Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has risen no one greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”*

What a thoroughly bizarre thing to say! In a little while, Jesus will say, “You must become like a child to enter the kingdom” (Matthew 18:3). “Of such is the kingdom of Heaven” (Matthew 19:14).

John is the pinnacle of the Old Testament, the greatest of the law and prophets. What does a child do better than John?

*“From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and men of violence take it by force.”*

Well, men of violence had just taken John by force. Soon they’ll take Jesus by force. The experts in “the prophets and the law” were trying to take the kingdom by force, so they crucified its king. Religious people try to be smart enough and good enough to take the kingdom by force and capture the king. They say, “You owe me, Jesus,” and “You have to bless me; I fulfilled the law and the prophets.”

*“For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John . . . .”*

Did you get that? The law and the prophets prophesied. The law wasn’t really about the law. And the prophets weren’t really about the prophets. It’s like the whole Old Testament is preparation for something more, like a song about someone else.

*“For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John; and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”*

The issue is, can you *hear* something.

*“But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market places and calling to their playmates, ‘We piped to you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.’ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon’; the Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Behold, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds.”*

(Some ancient manuscripts say, and Jesus in Luke 7:35 says, “Wisdom is justified by her children.”)

Do you know why I married Susan (which, by the way, was a huge step of faith in the midst of a whole lot of doubts)?

1. It wasn't because we used a dating service and filled out a psychological profile or deciphered some prophecy. It wasn't because I was smart enough.
2. And it wasn't because someone convinced me I really should. It wasn't because I was smart enough *or* good enough.
3. It wasn't simply because she was beautiful. There were lots of pretty girls, and I dated some. But the moment I thought I captured one, she no longer seemed so pretty or

wonderful. If you captured God—proved God—comprehended God, I wonder if He'd seem so pretty and wonderful, even though He is.

Well, I believe I married Susan because one day in high school, I dumped her. I thought I had captured her, like fruit from a forbidden tree, like wanting the “knowledge of the good” more than “the Good.” I don't mean *sex*; I thought I'd captured her attributes. But then she was no longer attractive, so I dumped her . . . and she let me go. So then she seemed attractive. (See, it was all about me and my conquest.)

The next day I drove to her house, and her mom told me she was at the park. I drove to the park, sat in the distance, and watched her as she fed the ducks in the rain . . . weeping. Watching her weep, I wept. She “wailed” and I “mourned.”

You see, I didn't capture her; she captured me that day with her tears. I didn't prove her; she proved me with her broken heart. Three years later on October 30, 1981, I dropped to my knees and said, “Will you marry me?” And like I've told you, she jumped up, knocked me over, and *danced*. I'd die for that dance.

Two years later on May 28, 1983, we both danced, and almost everyone we knew was there and danced with us. It was our wedding banquet. I married Susan not because I proved her, but because she proved me by letting me break her heart. So when I saw that she wept, I wept. I forgot myself and loved someone else. And when she danced, I danced. The mourning turned into dancing, and the dancing bore fruit. “Wisdom is justified by her children”: Jonathan, Elizabeth, Rebekah, and Coleman.

According to Jesus, the problem with this faithless generation is not that they have doubts and questions like John. It's not that they're not *smart* enough or *good* enough. The problem is they're *dead*. They neither weep nor dance . . . zombies. On the night before He is crucified (when the heart of God, broken by us, is nailed to a cross for all the world to see), Jesus says to His disciples, "Truly, truly, you will weep and lament, but your sorrow will turn into joy, your mourning into dancing. You will weep and you will dance."

So maybe faith isn't the correct answer to a problem as much as accepting a great invitation to dance. And God isn't a problem to be solved but a bridegroom asking us to dance.

Remember what we've preached about the dance this year?  
God is like a dance: three persons, one dance:

and that dance is *love*  
and love is *life*  
and life is *self-giving*.

And all that join this self-giving dance are the kingdom of Heaven. What is outside the dance is strictly and solely Hell (C. S. Lewis). We dance to the music of the kingdom of Heaven. Music seems illogical, but it's ultra-logical. Music is more logical than the human mind can comprehend, yet we can recognize it and surrender to it. We cannot comprehend music, but music can comprehend us. It can find a place in us—bypass our conscious mind and will, cause us to lose ourselves and dance entirely free and unrestrained yet entirely ordered by the rhythm of the dance.

Jesus is the Logos—the Logic—the Word—the Rhythm of the Dance. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”

Dance makes music visible,  
 Like song makes rhythm audible.  
     Jesus is the Word of God incarnate;  
     Jesus is the Love of God manifest.  
         He is Love descended into our Hell,  
         Dancing alone but calling us to come join Him.

On the cross, the rhythm of the dance is revealed at great pain.  
 The cross is the judgment of the world.

For all that are offended at Jesus and hate the music,  
 they doubt Him away. They explain to explain Him  
 away. They may have a million facts, but none have  
 meaning. They are alone in Hell.

But for all that hear the music and come to the cross,  
 for all that weep for their sins and dance to the tune of  
 God’s grace, they pass through the cross (die and live)  
 and join the great dance.

At the cross, the piper piped, and He’s still piping. It’s not  
 proofs and reasons that lead to the piper. It’s the piper that  
 leads to reason (like Led Zeppelin sang). He may use science,  
 philosophy, and Bible studies, but the piper always leads us to  
 reason. He *is* the reason . . . for everything. In other words,  
 “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”  
 (KJV) or “word of Christ” (RSV).

The Word of God is the rhythm of the dance.

[Music starts again.] Dealing with doubt is not a matter of solving some problem in some proof. Dealing with doubt is going to the cross and surrendering to His music. If you hear, you will seek, and “seeking you will find.” The piper will lead you to reason—the reasons that you need.

And then walking by faith is not making yourself or forcing yourself to believe, so much as surrendering to a music, a logic that’s all around you, the Word that upholds all things. That music is vibrating everything in this room, but only the living can hear it and dance to it. The music is love. God is love.

So you do your thing and order your world, but there’s music playing. Every now and then you forget yourself and weep with someone weeping, or rejoice with someone rejoicing. You actually love without trying. You move in rhythm to the music greater than yourself. You move in rhythm; you move in Jesus—His body—making the music visible. You begin to dance His dance. And to the extent you dance, you walk in faith. The faith isn’t forced, like a great dance isn’t forced. It’s not you; it’s the music that’s found a place in you. It’s faith. And faith abides. It lasts forever. Doubts will pass, but faith is eternal. God is growing faith from your doubts in this fallen world. [Music stops.]

The Greeks had a legend that Amphion built Thebes with the music of his lute, which was so melodious that the stones danced into walls and houses voluntarily.

I believe that’s the way Jesus builds the New Jerusalem. We’re like stones: so dead we can’t even hear the music, and we don’t want to dance. Yet He calls us and chooses us to

choose Him in freedom voluntarily. So He enters us with His music and dances His dance. We become His body—living stones—the New Jerusalem. It’s not “Is God real?” but “Am I real?”

Dancing with Jesus makes us real forever.

Jesus said, “The least in the kingdom is greater than John,” and “the kingdom is constructed of the childlike.” What can children do better than John the Baptist? *Weep . . .* and dance. Children forget themselves very easily because there’s not much of them to remember. Their hearts are easily captured; they easily forget themselves and surrender to the piper.

A few months ago, I heard Graham Cooke tell about an older, middle-aged, heavyset woman who came to him for prayer. She was insecure; she didn’t feel smart enough or good enough or faithful enough. Graham shared that he received a word from the Lord and didn’t know what it meant. He said, “I heard the Lord say, ‘Keep doing on earth what you are famous for in Heaven.’” She began weeping. She knew what it was. Finally, she told them: Every morning she would shut the door and close the drapes, then she’d move all the furniture in order to make room, and then she’d put a worship CD in her stereo and *dance*.

Perhaps in this world God has made room for doubt,  
so that there’s room for faith,  
so that there’s room for me to learn to dance . . .  
and like it.

So on that night when He told His disciples, “You will weep and you will lament, but your sorrow will turn into joy,” He

took bread and broke it saying, “This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

“This is what I want you to do!”

“This is what I want you to see!”

“Body broken.”

In the same way after supper, He took the cup and said, “This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me.”

Jesus isn’t asking you to understand this, comprehend this, explain this. He’s asking you: “Do you want to dance?” He says in just a few verses, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” How could that be? Maybe it’s a *dance*. Your life is to be His dance, and the dance is called faith.

[Communion]

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[Movie Clip, The Green Mile: John Coffey watches Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers dance on screen. “Are these angels? Angels just like up in Heaven.”]

May you weep. Don’t be afraid. Weeping is part of how God wakes us up. Some of you feel like all you’ve got is weeping. Well, the weeping turns into dancing. The sorrow turns into rejoicing. So for some of you who feel like your life has been nothing but weeping, I think you will be some of the very best

dancers. So may you weep with Him over a fallen world. May you weep and may you dance.

He said the kingdom of Heaven is at hand. And the Revelation tells us that the New Jerusalem is coming down. We are called to begin dancing even here. The piper is piping, and we can dance even now by faith. May your life be that dance. In Jesus' name, amen.

Relevant Texts and Quotations (from bulletin)

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you." Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy.

-Isaiah 35:1-6a

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn . . .

-Isaiah 61:1-2

Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is he who takes no offense at me."

-Matthew 11:2-6

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all men generously and without reproaching, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways, will receive anything from the Lord.

-James 1:5-8

And Jesus answered them, "Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and never doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it will be done."

-Matthew 21:21

Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has risen no one greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

-Matthew 11:11

Without somehow destroying me in the process, how could God reveal himself in a way that would leave no room for doubt? If there were no room for doubt, there would be no room for me.

-Frederick Buechner

I have seen the God-given task with which the sons of men are to be occupied. He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.

-Ecclesiastes 3:10-11

Materialists and madmen never have doubts.

-G. K. Chesterton, Orthodoxy

"Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."

-Matthew 7:7

One may, of course, be confused and one may doubt; but whoever once believes has something like a *character indelibilis*. He may take comfort of the fact that he is being upheld. Everyone who has to contend with unbelief should be advised that he ought not to take his own unbelief too seriously. Only faith is to be taken seriously; and if we have faith as a grain of mustard seed, that suffices for the devil to have lost his game.

-Karl Barth, Dogmatics in Outline

"Thou doubttest because thou lovest the truth. Some would willingly believe life but a phantasm, if only it might for ever afford them a world of pleasant dreams: thou art not of such! Be content for a while not to know

surely. The hour will come, and that ere long, when, being true, thou shalt behold the very truth, and doubt will be for ever dead. Scarce, then, wilt thou be able to recall the features of the phantom. . . . But to him who has once seen even a shadow only of the truth, and, even but hoping he has seen it when it is present no longer, tries to obey it—to him the real vision, the Truth himself, will come, and depart no more, but abide with him for ever.”

-George MacDonald, Lilith

Indeed, many have doubted. And there have been those who felt obliged to refute their doubt with reasons. But these reasons backfire and foster a doubt that gets stronger and stronger. Why? Because demonstrating the truth of Christianity does not lie in reasons but in imitation; what resembles the truth. Yet we Christians prefer to take this proof away. The need for “reasons” is already a kind of doubt—doubt lives off reasons. . . . If someone wanted to be his follower, he said to that person something like this, “Venture a decisive act; then you can begin, then you will know.” . . . The proof does not precede but follows; it exists in and with the life that follows Christ.

-Soren Kierkegaard

Decision is the awakening to the eternal.

-Soren Kierkegaard

The poet only asks to get his head into the heavens. It is the logician who seeks to get the heavens into his head. And it is his head that splits.

-G. K. Chesterton, Orthodoxy

And it's whispered that soon, if we all call the tune  
Then the piper will lead us to reason.  
And a new day will dawn for those who stand long  
And the forest will echo with laughter . . .

-Led Zeppelin, “Stairway to Heaven”

“But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market places and calling to their playmates, ‘We piped to you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.’ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon’; the Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Behold, a glutton and a

drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds.”

-Matthew 11:16-19

“Blessed are those who mourn . . . .”

-Matthew 5:4a

Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing; thou hast loosed my sackcloth and girded me with gladness . . . .

-Psalm 30:11

Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; never be conceited.

-Romans 12:15-16

The distinctions, freedom and order generate the dance: their reconciliation is the dance.

-Marcia Tanner

For in self-giving, if anywhere, we touch a rhythm not only of all creation but of all being. For the Eternal Word also gives Himself in sacrifice; and that not only on Calvary. For when He was crucified He “did that in the wild weather of His outlying provinces which He had done at home in glory and gladness” [George Macdonald]. From before the foundation of the world He surrenders begotten Deity back to begetting Deity in obedience. . . . From the highest to the lowest, self exists to be abdicated and, by that abdication, becomes the more truly self, to be thereupon yet the more abdicated, and so forever. This is not a heavenly law which we can escape by remaining earthly, nor an earthly law which we can escape by being saved. What is outside the system of self-giving is not earth, nor nature, nor “ordinary life,” but simply and solely Hell. . . . All pains and pleasures we have known on earth are early initiations in the movements of that dance: but the dance itself is strictly incomparable with the sufferings of this present time.

-C. S. Lewis, The Problem of Pain

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*In struggling with doubt, these have been my favorite books:*

- *Disappointment With God by Philip Yancey*
- *Mere Christianity by C. S. Lewis*
- *Orthodoxy by G. K. Chesterton*

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