

## Transition to the Gospel for Skeptics

This evangelistic script was developed by Dave Geisler (Meekness and Truth Ministries) and Prof. Rob Koons (Philosophy Prof. U.T. Austin) to be used with the article *“Two Sources of the Knowledge of God”* by Dr. Rob Koons, which is located on our web-site at: [www.meeknessandtruth.org](http://www.meeknessandtruth.org)

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### Intro:

#### Advantages to using this approach

1. It doesn't make the assumption that the individual you are trying to reach “buys” into the belief that God exists to begin with.

*For some people there is no use talking about Jesus as the Son of God unless there is a God who can have a son. And for some there is no use talking about the Bible as the word of God unless there is a God who can have a word.*

2. It uses apologetics in a way that encourages people toward making a decision about Jesus Christ.
3. Although it contains apologetic material, it does not allow others to get you bogged down in defending difficult philosophical issues such as God's existence, etc.
4. It allows you to uncover the nature of people's barriers to belief in God and Christianity, and provides opportunities for further dialogue with them.

**There are a number of transitions you can use to open the door to sharing what you believe and why. Here are a few:**

#### Transition 1:

W.P. Alston, Professor of Philosophy at Syracuse University, says,

“Human beings have a deep-seated need to form some general picture of the total universe in which they live, in order to be able to relate their own fragmentary activities to the universe as a whole, in a way meaningful to them.” We call this a sense of coherence.

#### *The Five Key Questions*

I believe that there are five critical questions that people need to address, in order to develop make sense out of their own lives. The questions are:

1. Who am I?
2. What is my purpose?
3. Is there a God?
4. If so, what is God like?
5. What does God have to do with me or my purpose?

Can I show you one way to think through the answers to these kinds of questions?

**Transition 2:**

I realize that we live in a world that has a hard time believing that any one religious perspective can be better than another. But can I share with you some of the reasons why I believe Christianity is true, and what difference it could make in your life?

**Transition 3:**

Can I share with you some of the reasons why I believe Christianity is True?

**Transition 4:** (Develop your own transition and let us know if it is helpful!)

*Please note: The following script can be explained on a piece of paper or napkin*

**Evangelistic Script*****Seeing the Big Picture***

I believe that every individual makes observations, consciously or unconsciously, about the world around them, draws some kind of speculation from that about what “ultimate reality” is, and then determines the significance of that for their own lives. The problem, however, is that different people draw *different* conclusions about the nature of ultimate reality, even though they observe the *same* world.

***Basic Worldview Perspectives***

For example, one individual looks at all the beauty of nature around him. He sees the trees, the birds, the flowers, the lakes, the beautiful blue skies, and says, “I believe that there is a God, and that he is good.”

A second individual comes along, looks at the same world, and says instead, “I see war, famine, poverty, discrimination, hatred, loneliness, man’s inhumanity to man. I conclude that there is a God, but that this God must be evil.”

A third individual also agrees that there is a “God” but concludes that we are all a part of God. He does not believe that God made the flowers and the birds and the trees but rather that God *is* the flowers, the birds, and the trees. “We’re all god! There is no separation between God and his creatures. We are all one and the same.” This is the basic pantheistic view.

Now, a fourth individual comes along and says, “Wait, you’ve got it all wrong. There is no God! All that exists is the natural universe.” This is the basic atheistic view.

*Let’s say you don’t fit into any of these, well I’ll draw another place for your view as well)*

Now, certainly God cannot be good, evil, and non-existent at the same time. What is the problem?

***Problem of Inference***

The problem is that each person makes observations about the world around them, and then draws certain inferences about the nature of the supernatural based on those observations. An inference is a step or process of reasoning. Yet isn’t the problem with inference accuracy or verification? The fact is that we all bring individual biases and sometimes even irrational prejudices to the task of inferring the nature of ultimate reality, and those biases and prejudices introduce distortion and uncertainty into our conclusions.

However, these problems are not completely insurmountable. Certainly, not all worldview perspectives can be true and some seem to make more sense than others.

## **Support for Belief in a Theistic God in Fields of Science and Philosophy**

For example, in the last 20 to 30 years, more and more leading scientists and philosophers are coming to the conclusion that the universe did have a beginning.

As a result, the evidence appears to support belief in a Theistic God (See Rob Koons' article "Two Sources of the Knowledge of God" located on our website at <http://www.meeknessandtruth.org>). All the same, we must admit that this conclusion is not universally agreed upon.

But, let's just assume, for the sake of argument, that we could resolve most of the problems normally associated with inference and that as a result, the evidence does seem to point, firstly, to the existence of a Theistic God, and secondly, to his innate goodness! Even in a best-case scenario, we would still be left with some unanswered questions about this Theistic God. For example, we might be able to determine from inference alone that He is creator of the world and that He is infinite and eternal, but still there would be so many other important things that we wouldn't know--such as what He thinks of us, what He expects of us, and what possibilities there might be for a personal relationship with Him. So, even if we could know from inference alone that a Theistic God exists, it still might not be enough to be relevant to your life or mine.

But what if, in addition to all the knowledge we might gain from empirical observation and sound logical inference, there is an additional means of obtaining information about the supernatural? What if it were possible for God to take the initiative, and come down to us in human form and tell us what He is like and how we should relate to Him, and do all of this in ways we could understand? Then, we might be able to fill in some of the missing pieces about God that observation and inference alone cannot provide. The technical term for this kind of knowledge is "special revelation."

So one could ask the question, has there ever been a time in history, when an individual has claimed to be God, and provided some kind of evidence to substantiate it? Well, Buddha did claim to point to the way and Muhammad did claim to be a prophet of God. **However, Jesus Christ is the only major religious leader who ever claimed to be God.** So it seems that we should deal with Jesus' claim first.

Jesus claimed to be the higher authority that helps man to answer those questions that inference alone cannot answer about God. Now, if Jesus were truly God, then He would know what the truth about God is. And, if Jesus spoke the truth about God, then whatever anyone else says about God that contradicts what Jesus says would have to be false. So the next question becomes, what did Jesus say about God? Jesus said three basic things:

*(This is where you insert your evangelistic presentation of the gospel if you don't want to use these three points).*

### **1. God loves us.**

Jesus said that God loves man very much and that the source of meaning and purpose in life is found in a personal relationship with Him.

*(Note: Show them that this statement provides the answer to the first two questions: "Who am I?" and "What is my purpose?")*

### **2. Man is separated.**

Jesus spoke of the fact that there exists a separation between God and man due to personal sin.

### **3. Christ spoke of Redemption.**

But Jesus spoke of redemption because God's love for Man is so great!

## **Evidence that Supports the Credibility of Jesus' Claims**

Now we need to recognize that the problem with **revelation** is **credibility**! There are many other people who claim to be God, yet most are in mental institutions! So one needs to ask, "What makes Jesus' claims better or more credible than the claims of others?" There are at least four strands of evidence that validate Jesus' claim to be God.

### ***1. Messianic Prophecy***

There are numerous prophecies concerning the Messiah (or God-appointed savior) that were fulfilled in the life of Jesus, such as: that he would be born in Bethlehem (Mic 5:2), raised in Egypt (Hos 11:1; Matt 2:15), yet called a Galilaean (Isa. 9:1-2,6). (feel free to discuss others as there are at least 191)

The ninth chapter of Daniel pinpoints the death of the Messiah to a period corresponding to the 30's A.D., and in addition predicts that soon afterward the prince of a new world empire would destroy Jerusalem (as the Roman emperor Titus did in 70 A.D.).

Also, Psalms 22 contains a medically accurate description of a crucifixion. We know that David wrote the psalms in about 1000 B.C., but crucifixion wasn't commonly practiced in Palestine until the Romans introduced it (at the earliest) a few centuries before Christ's lifetime.

### ***2. Evidence for the Resurrection***

We know that Jesus really did die. He was placed in a solid rock tomb, with a very large bolder rolled into a fixed position in the front of the tomb. There were at least four to eight armed guards placed at the entrance of the tomb. Yet, we also know something else. Three days later something happened. The tomb was empty. The Apostle Paul claimed that more than 500 people at one time saw Jesus alive after his death, and that dozens of others saw him on a number of occasions. This makes the Resurrection one of the best-substantiated events in all of history.

Jesus Resurrection Appearances

***(Note: The fact that Christianity arose in Jerusalem, the very city where Christ was crucified, in the years immediately following the event, means the Jewish leaders who adamantly opposed Jesus would have had plenty of opportunity to expose the resurrection as a lie. You can be sure that if there really had not been as many as 500 witnesses at one time who confessed to seeing Jesus alive after his death, the Jewish leaders would have buried Christianity in the first century!)***

### ***3. Changed life of the Apostles***

When Jesus was crucified, the apostles all became cowards and were very discouraged. They were scared, scattered, and skeptical. Yet, three days later, something occurred to change them so completely that they were willing to suffer painful martyrs' deaths for their changed beliefs. (Eleven of the 12 apostles died a martyr's death.) What could have transformed a bunch of scared, scattered, skeptics into the greatest missionary society the world has ever seen!?

- People will die for what they think to be true but no one dies for what they know to be false.

*(Note: In fact a well-known Jewish New Testament scholar, Pinchas Lapide does not believe that Jesus was the Messiah, yet believes that God raised Jesus from the dead. He says, "If the Disciples were totally disappointed, and on the verge of desperate flight because of the very real reason of the Crucifixion, it took another very real reason in order to transform them from a band of disheartened and dejected Jews into the most self-confident missionary society in world history." He concludes that a bodily resurrection could possibly have been that reason. [Time, May 7th, 1979])*

#### 4. Personal testimony of how God has made a difference in my life.

*(Remember the main purpose in explaining in detail all the apologetic information above is to get the opportunity to ask the following important questions)*

#### Important Follow-up Questions

##### *Question 1:*

Well, (Name of Person) we have looked at a lot of evidence today. What would you say is your biggest barrier to belief in God or Christianity?

##### *Question 2:*

What would it do for you personally, if you were to discover that there was adequate evidence to believe that there is a God, and that you can know Him personally?

##### *Question 3:*

What would motivate you to get answers to these questions?

Or a more direct approach:

##### *Question 4:*

**Can you think of anything that is keeping you from making a decision today to accept Christ into your life?**

-- End of Script --

This evangelistic tool is a work in progress.  
Send your suggestions or comments to:  
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#### References

1. Josh McDowell, *Evidence that demands a verdict*, San Bernardino, CA. Campus Crusade, 1972
2. W.P. Alston, "Problems of Philosophy of Religion," in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, reprinted ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 6:286.
3. Nick Repak, *Video Lecture: The Relativistic Bog*.

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4. Prof. Robert C. Koons, *Two Sources of the Knowledge of God*.
5. Bill Heth, Unpublished notes, *The Relativistic Bog*, 1975.
6. Norman Geisler, Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, 1999

### **THINGS TO BEAR IN MIND ...**

- Without being able to pinpoint what will motivate them to get answers to these kinds of questions, you might be wasting your time and theirs by just talking about the evidence!
- Explain clearly the difference between belief *that* and belief *in*!

When witnessing to a non-believer, always point out that there are two decisions one needs to make about Christ, in order to become a Christian. First, he must decide if there is enough evidence to “**belief that**” Jesus really is the Messiah. Secondly, once he has determined that there is good reason to believe that Jesus is who he claims to be, he must also decide if he wants to put his trust in Christ, “**believe In.**”

- Remember that the purpose of this evangelistic/apologetic script is not to answer all objections against Christianity. Rather, it is to allow you to uncover the nature of a person’s barriers to belief in God and Christianity, and to provide opportunities for further dialogue with them.
- Remember that Apologetics can be used as a “pinprick” to help awaken people from the delusion of their own distorted worldview, so that the Holy Spirit has an opportunity to work on their hearts!

### **How to witness to a skeptic overview**

- 1. There are five fundamental questions that we all tend to wrestle with.**
- 2. We all make observations about the world around us and then draw some kind of conclusion about the supernatural based on those observations.**
- 3. People draw different conclusions.**
- 4. The different conclusions which people draw cannot all be right.**
- 5. The problem with drawing conclusions based on inference alone is accuracy.**
- 6. Even if we could determine from inference alone that a Theistic God exists, that might not be enough information to be relevant to us.**

7. **Special Revelation could possibly fill in some of the missing pieces about a Theistic God that inference alone cannot provide.**
  8. **Jesus Christ claimed to be that higher authority who answers the questions about God that inference alone cannot provide.**
  9. **Jesus told us three specific things about God.**
  10. **Acknowledge that the problem associated with revelation about God is credibility.**
  11. **Jesus provided some evidence to substantiate his claim to be God.**
- **Important follow-up questions!**

**What is your biggest barrier towards belief in God or Christianity?**

**What would motivate you to get answers to these questions?**

**Can you think of anything that is keeping you from making a decision today to accept Christ into your life?**