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# FROM SCIENCE TO CHRISTIANITY

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Hypothesis Testing, Theory, Model, Experiment and Practice



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## **Abstract**

This manuscript is about how to start from relying on science to be more certain about Christianity. This is because science is so pervasive in our everyday life that we expect that it works almost every time. However, when it comes to Christianity, we need to have faith because most of the time God does not appear to respond to us. Therefore, we feel uncertain about beliefs in Christianity. Instead of being uncertain, this manuscript tries to find a way so that we are more certain about our beliefs in Christianity. We borrow our method to be certain from science. Science faces a similar situation as in believing in Christianity because its knowledge is fallible. Scientists themselves cannot be certain that the scientific knowledge is true all the time. So, they rely on a method called hypothesis testing to make their decisions to believe or not in scientific knowledge. We borrow this method to believe in Christianity. Therefore, we need evidence to make our decision of belief. We mention some evidence from past miracles to help us to make decisions. These include Eucharistic miracles, Marian apparitions, incorruptible corpses, etc. After we decide to believe in Christianity, we work out a theory of Christianity based on the salvation plan of God. We try to substantiate the principles in the theory by referencing testimonies from the Bible and from evidence of miracles that happened. We show that these principles are related to models and experiments that we formulate based on our beliefs in Christianity. Having obtained an understanding of Christianity like a (historical) science, we formulate our practice as a Christian.

Keywords: Science and Religion, Christianity, Principle, Hypothesis Testing, Scientia, Historical Science, Theology

## Preface

This is a manuscript that is not too long and not too short to help people to be more certain about beliefs in Christianity. I am motivated to write this manuscript because I am trying to persuade my family to believe in Christianity since I do believe in it. I hope they have joyful eternal life as well. I find it difficult to discuss with my family about Christianity because they are not interested in it and some of them has strong resistance to believe. Before I die, I hope I can write something to help them to escape from the eternal fire of hell. Since I am writing this to help my family, I might as well help others. It is all up to you whether you decide to believe or not. Even if you believe, you may not want to be a Christian. So, it is up to you. To me, the fire of hell is real because there were Marian apparitions (i.e., more than once!) which took children to witness the fire in hell. God has been trying to show that He should be feared because He was not very pleasant to mankind in the Old Testament. If you do not fear, then you are basically told how bad this would be for eternity. This is the point where my family members get very upset because they feel that I am forcing them to believe. However, I am doing this to tell them that hell is real and they should avoid it because I love them. In the end, I must leave it to them to decide. There is not much that I can do apart from writing this manuscript and praying to God to guide them to believe.

I also write this manuscript for myself. I have a shaky faith because I often have doubts about my beliefs especially Christianity because it involves a lot of miracles in the Bible that I find them hard to believe. When I was studying at University, my friends asked me to join their Bible study. After some studies, they began asking me whether I believed or not. At that time, I find it very difficult to decide because all of my beliefs were based on the Bible and I did not fully understand what the Bible wrote. So, I said that Jesus Christ could be an alien from outer space, who has visited us with all the miracles. Now, obviously I do not believe that anymore because He took the form of a human being to visit us, He said that He is the Messiah, He is the Son of God and there are many miracles after the New Testament was compiled, which relate to the religious message instead of some alien from outer space. At one time during my University life, I believed but my faith was shaky and I would explore the world by myself instead of taking refuge in God. Now, I am trying to solidify what I know about Christianity with this manuscript so that my faith is not that shaky.

Presently, I am not a baptised Christian yet and I do not claim that I profess the faith of Christianity. Therefore, I do not know whether what is in this manuscript is a heresy or not to some church or religious organization. For example, I may believe at present that Jesus Christ has a (spiritual) body (1 Corinthians 15:40-53) even before His incarnation. This may be a heresy. I do not know. So, please be careful in what you believe. Do not take what I wrote for granted or based on their face value. Please investigate yourself before you come into any conclusion even though I hope you are more certain about the beliefs in Christianity.

Lastly, I would like to mention that this manuscript is an expansion of my published journal papers in this area as well as the slides on “Testing the Son of God Hypothesis” (available in slideshare). If you have read some of my works on this topic, you are still encouraged to read this manuscript as I have made some significant expansion and rearrangement. I hope you will find it useful.

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## 1. Introduction

Science is prevalent in our daily life. We rely on science to work in order to accomplish our daily activities like taking the train from one place to another, having a medical examination of our illness, etc. Every day, we trust science to work for us. However, this is not so with religion like Christianity. We are told to have faith because God does not appear around us, and miracles are hard to come by. There may be only silence in our prayers as most of us are not pious enough to have the Holy spirit to talk to us. Even if you look at events beyond the prayers, we still do not know whether our prayers are answered or things just happened by coincidence. Therefore, it is not a surprise that some people are abandoning their faith and relying on science instead. Atheists think that there is no God or that God is a delusion (Heathen Media, 2019), so theology is just talk about nothing. Some (e.g., Damper, 2022a) proclaimed that there are no miracles so there is no evidence that God exists. However, many of us are not certain that there is God or not unlike the baptised Christians or the confirmed atheists. This manuscript tries to lead many of us from the perspective of science to believing in Christianity. Personally, if I do not believe that the core Christianity beliefs are true, I will not be writing this manuscript. The objective of writing this manuscript is to get many people to have joyful eternal life. Such an objective is strange because if you believe in science, it seems that it is hard to believe in the possibility of having an eternal life or life after death as science and religion are thought to be in conflict by some (e.g., Damper, 2022b). Therefore, we need to go through some evidence that would support such beliefs. Our assumption here is that you trust science but is uncertain about Christianity.

Who says we can get joyful eternal life? It was Jesus Christ who lived over 2,000 years ago. On what authority can He say such a thing? In Christianity, He is the Son of God or God the Son. So, He has supernatural power to do that. However, if we believe in science, can we believe in this kind of claims as science does not deal with the supernatural (or does it)? And, it was a long time ago that Jesus Christ lived. Are we certain that Jesus Christ said such things or implied such things? Did Jesus Christ claimed Himself to be the Son of God? Well, we have documentary evidence based on the Bible, specifically the New Testament. However, it was written nearly 2,000 years ago. Is the Bible a reliable and accurate source? Some doubts the Bible as accurate descriptions of historical events because people have found contradictions in the Bible. Some atheists like Richard Carrier (2014) even doubts whether Jesus Christ existed or He is just a myth, and some doubts the Gospel as mythology (Harmonic Atheist, 2022) because atheists feel the Bible cannot be trusted. In summary, it is highly uncertain that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, who actually said that we can have joyful eternal life. So, how can we believe in the core beliefs of Christianity if we are a man of science?

Why do we need to have joyful eternal life? If we die, would we not be alright to have nothing? However, if Christianity is true, then we will go to hell if we do not believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. How do we know that there is hell or not? Again, we have high uncertainty as to whether there is such a place. In fact, some Christians believe that there is no hell and all people will be saved since God is so loving. However, many Christians do believe that there is hell and God is also just instead of only loving. So, we have to be clear about what we are betting in this decision whether to believe or not in the core beliefs of Christianity. Table 1 shows the contingencies of whether to believe in the Christian core beliefs and whether such beliefs are true. If Christian core beliefs are false, then there are not many drastic consequences of finite influences. The only cost would be your time and effort spent in the church services.

If Christian core beliefs are true, then the consequences are dramatic which have infinite impact. If we do not believe but the Christian core beliefs are true, then we may have eternal torment in hell. The safest bet would be to believe in the Christian core beliefs and the only cost for us would be paying our church services. If you do not think paying church services is any cost, then this is the Pascal wager. If you do not believe in the Christian core beliefs, then potentially you have an infinite loss because you may get eternal torment. According to Pascal, it would be rational to believe in Christianity given such contingencies. However, is it as simple as that because outwardly you may say you believe but inwardly you have lots of doubts as we said there are lots of uncertainty in Christian beliefs. As a result, if you are not transformed by your Christian beliefs, would you still be saved by Jesus Christ if He is indeed the Son of God? In the end, what does it mean to truly believe in the Christian core beliefs? Since the core Christian beliefs are so uncertain, how can we maintain our beliefs against challenges from science?

Christian Core Beliefs	True	False
Believe	Joyful Eternal Life	Cost of Doing Church Service
Not Believe	Eternal Torment	No Cost

Table 1: Contingency Table of Christian Core Beliefs are True and Whether to Believe them.

While (core) Christian beliefs are uncertain, are scientific beliefs certain thereby explaining why we can rely on science? (SciShow, 2017) In the 17th century, various (physical) laws were formulated like the Newton's laws of motion. This gives the impression to the public that such scientific knowledge (i.e., laws) is infallible. However, philosophy of science in modern times has generally come to accept that scientific knowledge is fallible. One reason is due to the problem of induction. The reason is that the physical laws are generalizations of the properties of the phenomenon, and these generalizations are based on induction in which after observing the phenomenon to have the property a number of times, scientists proclaim that the phenomenon always has such property, and such proclamation is considered to be a law of nature. However, it has been argued notably by Hume (1748) that there is no intrinsic reason why something happens many times implies that it will happen again. Russell (1912) used an example of chickens observing the farmer feeding them many days. While the chickens expect that the next day the farmer will feed them, the farmer may slaughter the chickens for meat the next day. So, what we observed many times to repeat does not guarantee us repetitions in the future. This is the induction problem and it implies that the scientific knowledge like laws of nature is fallible. Having said that, one can say that there is strong tendency for the scientific knowledge to hold and that is why we can rely on such knowledge in general. In science, the process to decide whether we accept such properties as laws is called hypothesis testing (Starmer, 2021a; 2021b; 2021c) in which the stated property holds or not is subject to a statistical test with a certain accepted level of confidence (e.g., 95%). Hypothesis testing is a mechanism to make decisions under uncertainty with a scientifically accepted level of performance to decide to accept the property holds or not. Later, we will use hypothesis testing to help us to decide whether to accept that Jesus Christ is the Son of God so that we make our decision under uncertainty in a scientifically accepted manner. In this way, we handle the uncertainty in deciding on (core) Christian beliefs the same way as that of scientific beliefs.

At this juncture, we would like to make clear that this manuscript is not about making the decision for the reader about believing in Christianity. This is because I got a Ph.D. in science or engineering instead of history, philosophy, etc. so I do not consider myself to qualify to

make the decision for the reader. Also, there is a vast literature in this topic and in related areas to do justice to recommend a decision in examining every aspect in depth and in scope of such topics. Instead, this manuscript merely introduces the topics so that one can explore the literature and find out for oneself whether to believe in Christianity or not, as well as providing the mechanism to help oneself to make decision under uncertainty and outlining the landscape of the arguments. It is hoped that the reader will make her/his conclusion in a scientific way after examining the evidence by going through the literature herself/himself (as a start by viewing the highlighted videos mentioned in Appendix A).

Why do we focus on Christianity (Barron, 2023)? Why not other religions? One factor is due to the author's bias. Another factor is that the God of Christianity claims to be the greatest, the almighty, maker of the world and heaven, etc. Buddhism for example does not make such claims but it believes in consciousness (possibly beyond the natural world in 4 dimensional spacetime) and possibly reincarnation which is suggestive to the existence of spiritual beings. While the existence of Buddha is relatively certain (Smith, 2018), the historicity of the ancient writings is not. Moreover, the problem occurs when we are allowed to believe in spiritual beings, because the more powerful spiritual being may not allow us to worship or believe in the less powerful spiritual being. As a result, we may be transgressing the commandment of the more powerful spiritual being and consequently we would have sinned before the more powerful spiritual being causing us to be punished. Therefore, we need to believe in a religion where that God is the greatest and at least claim to be the greatest. One may argue why not Islam since it is an Abrahamic religion with the most powerful God as Christianity. However, Islam has few miracles after Mohammad died whereas Christianity has many miracles (after the New Testament was written) with evidence that we can use to help us to make decisions under uncertainty. If we are a man of science, how can we believe in miracles? Our quick definition of a miracle is that it is an event that has some supernatural cause. Since we are a man of science, we seem to believe that there are supernatural causes before we are doing the hypothesis testing if we assume there are miracles. What we asked the reader to do is to examine the evidence of the miracles and decide using hypothesis testing whether Jesus Christ is the Son of God. We do not assume the miracles are true or not, and we look at the evidence of the miracles. In addition, there are evidence to suggest that there are supernatural phenomena. Consider the cases of near-death experiences (Mays and Mays, 2015; UVA Engagement, 2022) which have been reported many times (Capturing Christianity, 2019). In one case, the patient in an operating theatre has an out of body experience (OBE). Her consciousness or soul floated out of the body and observed plus memorized the 12 digit serial number of a ventilator machine, which her physical body cannot perceive in the operating theatre. This 12 digit serial number was later verified to be correct (Rivas, Dirven and Smit, 2013) so that her OBE experience is not a hallucination. Her consciousness or soul is not observed by the medical staff in the operating theatre, so her soul may be considered as supernatural. Therefore, this is a kind of evidence to support that there is supernatural phenomenon. Also, this suggests that there is life after death as the soul or consciousness may survive after death (because the patient has no signs of life for as long as hours). So, having a joyful eternal life is not an impossibility after all even if we believe in science.

The rest of this manuscript is organized as follows. Section 2 introduces what we mean by science. We refined our understanding of experimental science to historical science, and we apply this understanding to Christianity in general. Before we put forward our belief and

knowledge of God as a science, we need to establish whether God exists. Otherwise, our study is not open minded according to Damper (2022a;2022b). Therefore, Section 3 is about deciding whether Jesus Christ is the Son of God and therefore deciding on the existence of God. We examine the evidence of some of the miracles of each type and try to come up with a probability that we do not believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Then, we perform a hypothesis testing on this belief and decide based on a 95% confidence level that we believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God. After believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, we want to organize our religious knowledge like that of (historical) science that consists of theory, model, experiment and physical situation, because we want to be more confident in our knowledge of God like that of science. Such religious knowledge belongs to our theology called Scientia Theology which is presented as several sections in this manuscript. Therefore, Section 4 outlines a theory of Scientia Theology which consists of the aim, definitions, assumptions, principles, etc. Section 5 describes some models of Scientia Theology as examples. Such models support some of the principles in the theory and some of the principles in the theory are applied to the models similar to scientific theory applied to scientific models. Section 6 describes some experiments of Scientia Theology as examples. These experiments may examine artefacts left or documented after the miracles. Section 7 depicts our perspective on physical situations in light of our beliefs in Christianity. Section 8 looks at issues in the practice of a Christian life. Finally, Section 9 draws the conclusion.

It should be made clear early that we are not relying on just knowledge in our faith of our religious beliefs. To believe in Christianity, knowledge, feelings, attitude, etc. should be combined as one in our religious beliefs because such beliefs should transform the person so that his character should reflect this, and his character does not just include his knowledge but his feelings, attitudes, etc. Having said that, it seems to be very difficult to say one believes in this sense as this is very hard to achieve. What one can say is that many Christians are trying to transform themselves in this process hoping eventually their religious beliefs will transform their character. Therefore, being a Christian is more like embarking on a journey of transformation which may take place slowly and steadily. Having said that, this manuscript emphasizes on the knowledge about Christianity because there is a lack of knowledge compiled in a form that can directly counter the questions that non-believers (e.g., atheists) posed, which typically questioned whether the core beliefs of Christianity are true. For most of us, we do not have the experience that the Holy spirit speaks to us or we do not have the experience of a miracle from God. So, we are uncertain whether to believe or not. This manuscript is written for these people.



## 2. How to Apply Science to Theology?

Our perception of science is that its knowledge is reliable because we rely on science and its application to technology in our daily life. The reliability of scientific knowledge comes from the scientific process (i.e., hypothesis testing) of accepting the knowledge in the scientific community as well as the ingenuity of the scientists. It is part of the aim of scientific study (Luk, 2017) to acquire reliable, accurate scientific knowledge where the reliability of the scientific knowledge is measured and the risk of accepting the scientific knowledge is assessed. If we can borrow this scientific process in accepting knowledge of theology, potentially we can have reliable knowledge of theology like science. In addition, the scientific knowledge is organized into theories, models and experiments which correspond or relate to reality individually so that such knowledge is supported by evidence. This increases the reliability of the scientific knowledge because there is evidence to support such knowledge. Therefore, we would like to organize knowledge of theology like that of science so that we are assured that our knowledge of theology is supported in a similar way as in science by evidence.

### 2.1 How does Science Organize its Knowledge?

Science organizes its knowledge in terms of theories, models and experiments interacting with each other where experiments also interact with physical situations. Figure 1 shows how scientific knowledge is organized. In science, before we use a theory or a model, we have to test a theory or model to decide whether we accept such scientific knowledge. After we accepted the scientific knowledge, we can use such knowledge to solve technical problems. In this case, the theory may be applied to build a novel scientific model which is applied to solve the problem in a physical situation.

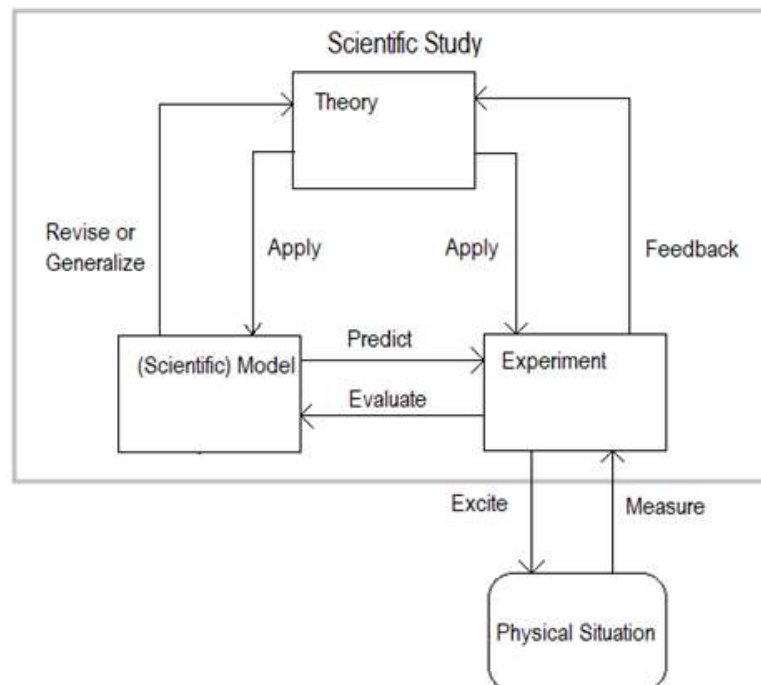


Figure 1: A model of (experimental) science in which the knowledge elements (or entities) like theory, model and experiment interact with each other. Only the experiment knowledge element interacts with the physical situation.

As a theory contains physical laws, testing a theory involves testing the physical law which is typically formulated as a universal statement. A universal statement typically expresses some properties that hold for all cases. A simplified, example universal statement is “all swans are white”. Note that some universal statements are formulated without explicitly indicating the for all clause. For example, Newton second law says that force equals to mass times acceleration. This law should be for all mass and acceleration, the amount of force equals to the mass times the acceleration. It is because the universal statements are for all cases, that is why we expect that we get the same results if we repeat the experiment (i.e., the repeatability of the experiment). In the theory, we have to test whether this statement is true or not so we can sample some swans and observe whether they are all white. If so, then there is evidence to support this universal statement. If not, we can reject this universal statement. One problem is that even if we sample a lot of swans and they are all white, we do not know whether the next swan we observe will be white or not. This is the induction problem discussed earlier in Section 1. So, we model this as a random experiment in hypothesis testing where we sample swans and assign a probability (say  $p < 1$ ) of observing a swan that is white (i.e., our null hypothesis). After  $n$  trials, if all the swans are white, then we can work out the probability that all  $n$  swans are white as  $p^n$ . If this probability,  $p^n$ , is less than 5%, then we accept the universal statement (i.e., the alternative hypothesis) that all swans are white with a confidence level of 95% instead of the null hypothesis that individual swan being white has a probability of occurrence of  $p$ . So, this is how science decides whether to accept certain universal statements, and the reliability is based on our 95% confidence level. This is obviously a highly simplified example to illustrate how universal statements are accepted in a theory. In practice and in general, this is more complicated as we need to set up and calculate the probabilities for an alternative hypothesis. However, we will not deal with the complications here.

For accepting a scientific model, we need to measure the accuracy of the model in predicting some physical quantities that are measured in experiment. Typically, the model operates within a range of values and the predicted quantities also vary. Therefore, one can compare the predicted values with the target values to see if the predicted values are accurate. Statistical tests (like regression analysis) are again used to show that the predicted values are both accurate and reliable based on confidence levels similar to testing a theory. Similar to testing physical law, testing model is still cursed by the induction problem. This is because when we predict certain physical quantities only certain values out of a range are used. The range of values typically has an infinite number of values (for example real numbers) and it is impossible for the test to make predictions for every possible values in the range (because there are an infinite number of them). So, we have to be settled with taking a sample of values in the range, and therefore the induction problem applies. In summary, scientific knowledge is fallible as we only find evidence to support our scientific knowledge. We cannot prove that our scientific knowledge is true or 100% accurate all the time because we have an infinite number of possible samples to test if we want to prove our scientific knowledge (which we cannot do). Therefore, we rely on statistics and probability to help us to accept the scientific knowledge as accurate or true given the uncertainties we face.

In summary, we cannot really prove a theory or a model. We can only find evidence to support the case as we only find samples to support rather than exhaustively testing for all cases. This means that science is unlike Mathematics in which one can deduce the theorems with certainty if the proof is found to be correct. However, we should caution that even in this case the

theorems are correct only in the sense that we have accepted a set of axioms or assumptions from which we derive the theorems. If we do not accept the axioms or assumptions, then the theorems do not follow. Then, it brings into the questions as to how we are going to accept the axioms or assumptions. In Mathematics, these axioms or assumptions are just asserted as true whereas in philosophy, these assumptions are taken to be self-evident or easily accepted as true. For example, Descartes' famous assertion that "I think therefore I am" is taken to be self-evident that we exist since we think. However, in philosophy, not all arguments can be reduced to a set of assumptions that all philosophers will agree as self-evident. Hence, there is usually disagreement amongst philosophers. In science, we may use technical methods (like hypothesis testing) to establish the assumptions are true given a certain level of risk, and then we may use deductions to further our conclusions from the assumptions. That is why science is fallible and yet reliable since the assumptions can be false but usually are true. That is also why science can progress since a scientific theory and/or model are not necessarily final as they can be wrong and superseded with a better theory or a better model.

After accepting the theory and model by doing experiments, additional experiments may be carried out to test the theory and model. We can draw an instance diagram (Figure 2) as an example from Figure 1 if we regard Figure 1 as an entity-relationship (ER) diagram. What Figure 1 depicts is that a set of theories, a set of models and a set of experiments are interacting with each other. Then, Figure 2 depicts how a theory instance interacts with model instances and experiment instances, as well as physical situation instance indirectly. Figure 2 is more complicated than Figure 1 as it shows that more than one physical instance support the theory or model. Since the theory instance and model instance are ultimately related to the physical situation instances, we feel that the theory instance and the model instance are supported by evidence from the physical situation instances. Therefore, we feel that the theory knowledge and model knowledge are more reliable than just based on arguments.

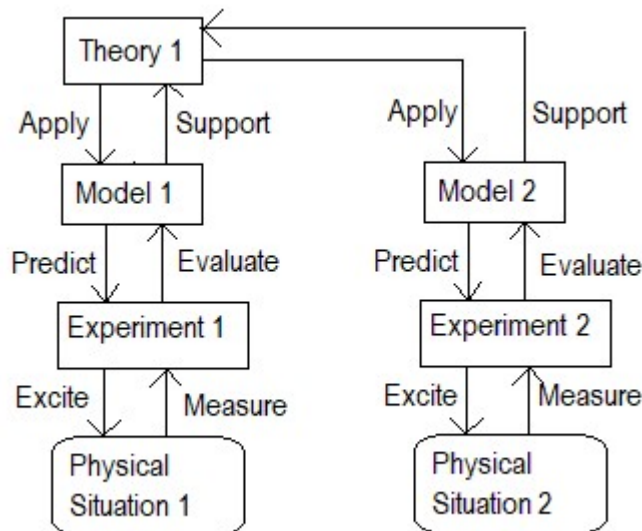


Figure 2: An instance diagram showing that theory 1 instance generated two model instances (i.e., 1 and 2). These model instances make predictions in the corresponding experiments which evaluate the corresponding models by exciting and measuring the corresponding physical situation instances, respectively.

The theory, model and experiment are called entities in Figure 1 rather than sets because entities are concepts rather than sets which may refer to a group of items in the physical world. In Luk (2017), the theory, model and experiment entities are actually entity clusters that have detailed structures inside. For examples, the theory entity clusters have statement entities like the aim of the study, definitions, assumptions and principles, and the model entity clusters have model-specific assumptions, simplified descriptions of the physical situation and predictions. However, we will not deal with such details here. We mention this because the reader can drill into details if (s)he wants, but this should not affect our discussion here.

There is a misconception that science furnishes scientific knowledge that is highly accurate or exact. While this may be the case for some scientific discipline (e.g., physics), other scientific disciplines (e.g., medical) may only achieve a reasonable level of accuracy (say 50%). In general, scientific knowledge can guaranteed us to perform better than random guesses (say 20%) (Luk, 2017) which represent that we have no knowledge of the domain. How much better than random guesses will depend on the specific discipline or topic. Usually, the scientific community keeps track of the best performing methods as the state-of-the-art, and papers can usually be published if the reported methods can perform better than the state-of-the-art so that the best method is being documented.

## 2.2 Historical Science

So far, the science that we have been discussing is called experimental science or operational science because the theory, model and experiment are about present-day events in which we can make observations in the experiment and repeat the experiment for verification. Another type of science is called historical science (Cleland, 2001) because it uses scientific methods to investigate past or historical events. Examples of historical science include the big bang theory or the meteoroid impact theory. Here, we introduce historical science because we want to use scientific methods to investigate some of the historical events mentioned in the Bible which has an impact on our beliefs in Christianity.

Historical science is very similar to the experimental science that is discussed in (Luk, 2010; 2017). The difference is that instead of carrying out experiments in a controlled setting, historical science (Cleland, 2002) examines the traces left behind by a historical event by observational studies or in an experimental setting. Therefore, an experiment in historical science may include observational studies in which the investigator makes observation of the traces left behind by a historical event. Thus, the meaning of experiment in historical science is broadened.

Like experimental science (Luk, 2010; 2017), historical science also organizes its knowledge in the form of theories, (scientific) models and experiments interacting with reality via physical situations. However, there is a minor difference between experimental science and historical science. It is that a model in historical science does not describe a current physical situation. Instead, the model describes a historical event which left traces or relics for historical science to experiment with. Figure 3 depicts how knowledge is organized in historical science.

In experimental science, a physical law is supposed to happen all the time because it is usually a universal statement. However, in historical science, we are interested in usually a singular event instead of events that can be repeated as many times as we want. So, historical science looks for various pieces of evidence (possibly from different sources) that would support or

deny the singular historical event. The pieces of evidence can be tested in experiments so that these (experimental) events about the evidence can be repeated even though the historical event is singular. Hypothesis testing needs to be developed for the singular historical event based on multiple evidence from experiments about the relics or artefacts that we have. This is done by Luk (2021) and elaborated further in Section 3.3 of this manuscript. Unlike experimental science which focuses on testing the universal statements, historical science is usually focused on testing the existential statements like whether the singular historical event happened. Therefore, the hypothesis testing needs to take into account of this (see Sec. 3.3).

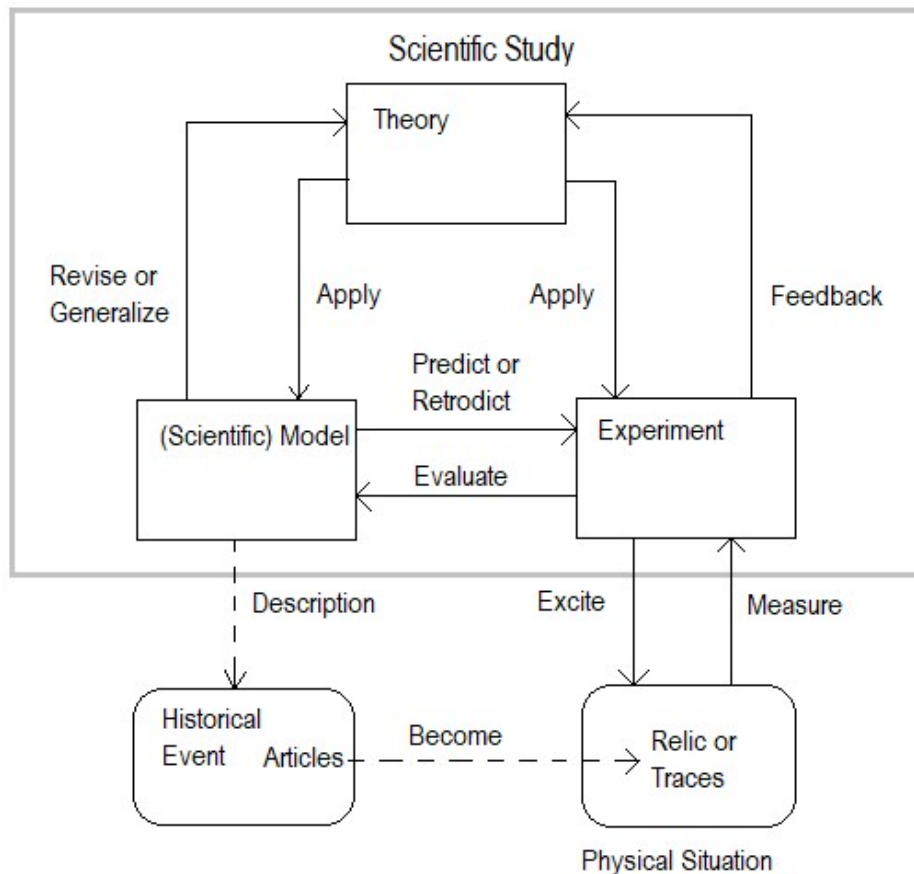


Figure 3: A model of historical science in terms of how the knowledge elements are organized. Note that experiments include observational studies. This is similar to the process model of scientific study as in Figure 1.

In historical science, a model rarely predicts what will happen in the future in the experiment. Instead, the model of historical science typically retrodicts what happened in a historical event by examining the traces or relics left behind by the historical event. Since there may be more than one model that are proposed to describe the historical event, experiments on the relics or traces are done to select the surviving model as the best explanation/description of the historical event. The proposed models are typically called hypotheses, and the confirmed, surviving model may be called the scientific model that best describes the historical event. The model is considered scientific if there is strong reason to believe that the description of the historical event is accurate, and typically multiple lines of evidence are required to substantiate a model

to be called scientific since the historical event may be underdetermined and/or overdetermined (Tucker, 2011).

With multiple historical events, there may be multiple models that describe well the historical events. Some common properties of these models may be able to be identified in due course, and these properties may be used to formulate principles in a theory. Therefore, there is a theory knowledge element in historical science. The principles may have predictive ability, so they may be verified by experiments. In other cases, the principle or law may be derived from other (scientific) theories. For example, the big bang theory is a cosmological model of the existence of the known universe from the earliest known period. This model is consistent with the Hubble-Lemaître law in the theory, which can be verified now.

One reason why experimental science is more likely to command more trust than historical science is that the experiments in experimental science can be done by repeated trials producing reproducible results as a demonstration of the power of its knowledge. In addition, the (scientific) model may make predictions with great precisions in the controlled experiments (e.g., Rainville et al., 2005) so that scientists have great trust in their models or theories. By contrast, historical science typically cannot carry out controlled experiments (because they may be singular events), and the historical events cannot be repeated at will to test the reproducibility of the experiment. Having said that, historical science typically does not require repeated demonstrations unlike experimental science because historical science is trying find support for the existential statements rather than the support for the universal statements. Nevertheless, historical science assesses the reliability (Luk, 2017) of their experimental results when the scientists examine relics or traces of the historical events so that we have some assessment of the reliability of the (scientific) knowledge. Moreover, instead of relying on replication of results, historical science uses multiple sources of evidence to support their (scientific) knowledge so that we can be more certain of our (scientific) knowledge. In some cases, statistical methodology like examining the *p*-value (Starmer, 2021c) can be used to accept or reject hypotheses as in experimental science (e.g., Luk, 2021). In the end, the ability to repeat the experiment to replicate the results does not guarantee that future experiments will succeed in replicating the results (Luk, 2019) as indicated in the induction problem, demanding us to use a statistical methodology to accept or reject a hypothesis, even though we have great trust in this process. Therefore, multiple lines of evidence are required both in experimental science and historical science. Moreover, when scientific knowledge is applied to uncontrolled situations rather than in controlled experiments, the predictability of the scientific knowledge may fall, and sometimes auxiliary assumptions or heuristics (e.g., in predicting turbulent flow) are used to come up with a simplified model to make predictions which may not be very reliable or accurate. In fact, there is no guarantee that the (scientific) model has (very) high accuracy merely that it must be better than by random guess (Luk, 2017) and that its performance is higher than or similar to the state-of-the-art for such work to be published (which can be relatively low in some domains). Finally, (scientific) knowledge in historical science may be used to predict events in experiments nowadays, which can be replicated, so that historical science and experimental science are not separate entities without any interactions (e.g., as in Eucharistic miracles). Therefore, it is hard to conclude (e.g., Cleland, 2001) that experimental science is superior to historical science.

### 2.3 Applying Historical Science to Theology

Applying historical science to theology, we may organize our theology based on theories, models and experiments. The theory of our theology has a set of principles or laws which are generalized from the models of historical events. These historical events may be events depicted in the Bible. The Bible (at least certain parts of it) can be regarded as our trace of the historical events, which is being examined in an experiment. The logical model that we can formulate from the Bible by observation and integration is the proposed model that describes the historical event. For example, all four Gospels have some description of the events surrounding the discovery of the empty tomb of Jesus Christ. These descriptions need to be integrated into a coherent, consistent logical model of the historical event that best describes the discovery of the empty tomb. Alternatively, we need to select one or more of the descriptions to formulate the model of the discovery of the empty tomb and weave out the unsupported ones. Note that we now rely on the formulation of logical or qualitative models (as scientific models) instead of quantitative models (in most experimental sciences), which is permitted as argued by Luk (2018). Also, note that as the God of Christianity is a living God, there may be other traces outside the Bible such as Eucharistic miracles, Marian apparitions, etc. that we can base our beliefs on.

Our theory in our theology is based on the salvation plan of God, which shows God loves us because God saves us from sins. The theory starts by establishing the attributes or characteristics of God first because other principles in the theory are dependent on these attributes. In the past, various authors have talked about the attributes of God but there is no definitive set of attributes of God in the literature. Therefore, we list out some attributes of God and we provide citations to the Bible where these attributes are inferred. In this connection, we regard those parts of the Bible as historical events supporting as evidence or claims of the attributes of God. In addition, the miracles after the last Apostle died are used to support that God is almighty being able to perform those miracles. For other principles, they are mostly extracted as salient knowledge from the Bible. Most of them are supported by miracles after the last Apostle died or by the Shroud of Turin if we consider it as authentic shroud that once wrapped Jesus Christ body. In this way, most of the principles in our theory have evidence (including testimonies) to support them as required in historical science so that our theory is not a fairy tale.

Our models in our theology are supposed to be models of historical events as in any historical science. Since there are so many events described in the Bible, we need to select some events as examples to illustrate how we model those historical events. To show that those models are related to the principles in our theory, we need to find well-known historical events to model. We selected the crucifixion event and the resurrection event because they are well known and central to Christianity beliefs. For these two historical events, we build two models, one model for each event, and we consider the evidence (including testimonies) that support each model as a historical event. These two models of historical events are then used to support the Principle of Salvation in our theory. The two models help us to clarify what happened in the actual historical events, which the theory cannot do. Also, the two models show which parts of the historical events are supported by evidence that may lead us to infer how the historical events unfold. Again, the theory does not have the details to show this so that the models are needed apart from our theory.

In our theology, our experiments are tests that are done on artefacts or traces left behind in the historical events or their related events (in history). We also want to show that our experiments are related to the model of the historical events and the model is related to some principle in our theory. Since there are so many events in the Bible, we selected a well-known historical event which is the last supper event as described in the Bible. While we do not have direct evidence from the last supper event, we have related evidence from the related events of the last supper event. These related events in history are the Eucharistic miracles that turn bread into flesh and wine into blood. These flesh and blood are left as artefacts or traces behind the Eucharistic miracles, in which they are being tested scientifically. For example, the blood type is determined and the part of the body where the flesh came from can be determined as well. Such information has predictive values as they can be used to predict the artefacts or traces left behind in similar events (i.e., Eucharistic miracles) in the future. In this way, our model of the last supper event has prediction/retrodiction ability as required by models in historical science.



### 3. Deciding on Jesus Christ is the Son of God

Theology requires the inquirer to assume that God exists before the inquiry. Otherwise, there is not much to talk about in theology. Damper (2022a) argued that theology cannot be an open-minded inquiry because of the assumption that God exists in theology. For Damper (2022a), an open-minded inquiry in theology would require us to entertain both possibilities that God exists and God does not. Therefore, this Section of our manuscript will examine whether Jesus Christ is the Son of God which if it turned out to be affirmative, it would imply that God exists. This will then form the basis that we can talk about theology as a historical science. If the reader concludes that God does not exist after reading this Section, then there is the Pascal Wager argument (see Table 1 in Section 1) that suggests the reader to go through our theology even though the reader does not believe in God. The reader can also have a wait-and-see strategy to read our theology before making the final decision for herself/himself since our theology will cite evidence used to support the theological points made.

Does Jesus Christ exist historically (Casey, 2014; Metatron, 2022)? First, we have the Bible (specifically the New Testament) as a source to tell us that Jesus Christ existed. Some scholars may question the validity of the Bible as a reliable, accurate historical source. In the extreme, few scholars (e.g., Richard Carrier, 2014; Godless Granny, 2023) considered that Jesus of Nazareth is a myth. However, most experts (e.g., Ehrman, 2012) believed that Jesus of Nazareth did exist in history around 2,000 years ago. Their belief is partly based on the Bible being the best source (as some finds archaeological support; see McDowell, 2023a) among other documents like the Gospel of Thomas, and partly based on the existence of other historical documents. Second, we have an ancient document by Josephus who was a Jew and not necessarily a Christian. While the passage by him about Jesus of Nazareth is thought to be interpolated by later Christians, there is no disagreement that the original passage did refer to Jesus of Nazareth, so His existence was affirmed by Josephus. Third, another document is Tacitus which mentioned Jesus of Nazareth. Again, the passage was thought to be interpolated by later Christians, but it supports the belief that Jesus of Nazareth existed. Fourth, there are alleged accounts (Rainbowlightstudio, 2021; Mythos, 2022) of Jesus Christ in his missing years (aged 13 to 29) where He was thought to be in India. Some of the monasteries have sacred writing about Issa who was thought to be Jesus. However, we are not all that certain because the sacred writing was not (carbon) dated yet. Apart from those documents, there are some archaeological evidence related to Jesus (Kennedy, 2022; McDowell, 2022a). Also, there are other minor sources that support Jesus of Nazareth existed (e.g., the dead sea scrolls suggesting Jesus [Top Box TV, 2022]), and we will not go through them as we believe the existence of Jesus Christ is well supported already (Gullota, 2017), which is in agreement with most scholars nowadays. In summary, we believe that Jesus Christ existed historically.

#### 3.1 Core Christian Belief

To have joyful eternal life, we need to work out what is our core belief of Christianity so that the core belief would implicate that God exists justifying the writing of our theology in the later Sections of this manuscript. Also, we need to identify the core belief of Christianity because as scientists we may not believe the entire Bible literally. This is because some of the writings in the Old Testament is like mythology (e.g., Genesis 6) so that it is hard for a scientist to believe literally although we may believe it metaphorically. If we do not need to believe

everything what the Bible says literally, then what things do we believe in Christianity. Furthermore, for a scientist, making fewer claims would be better as claims may be shown not to hold in the future, so there is a preference to commit less to the writing to avoid the commitment being shown to be false later. In the case that the commitment is shown to be false, scientists usually revise their theories in the light of new evidence as in scientific revolutions (Kuhn, 1996). Therefore, a scientist may adopt a core belief perspective of Christianity rather than believing in everything that is written in the Bible, so that we do not have to come into conflict with some of the scientific theories (like evolution theory) even though they may be provisional. Therefore, our approach is to state the central belief in Christianity and work out what the belief entails us to believe and decide whether a scientist can believe such things without being incompatible with science. Thus, we have to go through the details of these beliefs instead of relying on the standard summaries of Christian tenets like the Apostle's creeds or the Nicene creeds.

The core belief in Christianity that leads to joyful eternal life is based on Paul's assertion of the justification by faith (i.e., by believing), and that is the belief that:

Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Messiah who is crucified for our sin redemptions, died on the cross, buried and resurrected three days later.

The belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God would implicate that God exists. Otherwise, if God does not exist, then Jesus Christ is the Son of Nothing which does not make sense. Also, Jesus Christ believed in the existence of God because He prayed to the Father. If there is no God, then the prayers by Jesus Christ would be in vain. If there is no God, then we cannot believe that Jesus Christ would be resurrected. In fact, it is not any God but the God that Jesus Christ refers to. That would mean it is the God that the Bible refers to as Jesus Christ is a Jew.

Previously, we have glossed over a point that Jesus Christ prayed to the Father but not to God, so what is God? Some may think that this is a mystery but Christianity does reveal something about God. God refers to the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit in unity. However, how can all three qualified as God and accept people's worship without being accused of idolatry. One can think of the Father and Holy Spirit as made of the same substance or similar spirit so that there is no problem of being worshipped. For Jesus Christ, He is a man. According to Scripture (Thessalonians 5:23), a man has a body, a soul and his spirit (Reichenbach, 2021). It is believed that the spirit of Jesus Christ is like the Holy Spirit or made of substance or spirit similar to the Father. Therefore, worshipping Jesus Christ is allowed in Christianity, and similarly veneration to the virgin Mary or other saints whose spirit may be the Holy Spirit (Note that we are not encouraging Christians to worship saints since we do not know for sure the spirit of which saint is the Holy Spirit). In fact, this so-called substance (or spirit) may be some supernatural organic thing which can think separately or together. So, what the Father knows may imply Jesus Christ knows and the Holy Spirit knows as well. However, during the time that Jesus Christ lowers Himself to be a human walking on earth, He may not know what the Father thinks because He needs to be bounded by the predicament of human existence, even though Jesus Christ has supernatural power because of His spirit being made of the same or similar substance or spirit as the Father. Therefore, the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are united as one spiritually. How do we know that Jesus Christ has God's spirit or the Holy spirit? Apart from the miracles that He made, when John baptised Jesus Christ, we were told in the Gospel that the Holy Spirit descended to Jesus Christ as a dove. Moreover, just before

the last breath of Jesus Christ during crucifixion, Luke Gospel indicated that He commended his spirit to the Father (as probably His last words). Note that in Matthew for example, Jesus Christ cried out “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (for fulfilling the prophesy probably to help Jews or others to believe in Jesus Christ as the Messiah) but that was not the last words of Jesus Christ as Matthew indicated that Jesus Christ cried out further but did not record what He said. So, we suspect that Luke recorded the last words of Jesus Christ before he died. So, how did the Gospel come to know about this. This may be due to the fact that after Jesus Christ was resurrected, He was with the disciples for forty days and we suspect that He told the disciples about the significance of His last words before death during that time; or John and several woman followers were at the crucifixion who heard Him. In summary, we agree that God is the Holy Trinity except that the Father is a supernatural being rather than a person. While we may refer the Trinity to the Nicene creed, it is not easy to grasp this understanding of the Holy Trinity there.

Since Jesus Christ is part of the Holy Trinity, the name of the role of Jesus Christ is given to be the Son of God or God: the Son. Jesus Christ is described as the Son of God because He inherits God’s capability just like the son inherits the wealth of his father. The name, Son of God, is preached to the Gentiles because it is easier for the Gentiles to know who Jesus Christ is instead of the Messiah, which most likely only the Jews understand at the time. Therefore, Jesus Christ made use of this name to the Gentiles so that He is associated with God and inherits the power of God. Did Jesus Christ claim to be the Son of God? In John’s Gospel, Jesus Christ referred to Himself as the Son of God. In Luke’s Gospel (Chapter 4), a daemon claimed Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Peter, His disciple, identified Him as the Son of God. Finally, after the resurrection, His disciplines refer Him as the Son of God. Therefore, there is no doubt that in Christianity, Jesus Christ claims to be the Son of God. In addition, the Gospel wrote that when Jesus Christ was baptised by John the Baptist, a voice came from heaven saying that He is my Son where He is Jesus Christ. In the transfiguration which was also mentioned in the epistle of Peter apart from the three Gospels, a voice came from a cloud saying that He is my beloved Son whom I have chosen. These voices are believed to be the voice of God or the Father, so that the passages suggest that God identifies Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

Jesus Christ often referred himself to be the son of man instead of the Messiah or the Son of God during his days on earth. One reason is that the term son of man does not arouse any trouble that Jesus Christ foresaw with the authority at the time (like the Pharisee). In Luke’s Gospel, he was indicated as the Messiah by Simone. Also, in John’s Gospel, Jesus Christ told the Samaritan woman that He is the Messiah. Therefore, Jesus Christ did claim himself to be the Messiah but not in front of the Jews to avoid any troubles thereafter.

Can Jesus Christ be resurrected from the dead (e.g., Wright, 2003; Oblivion, 2012; Hutchinson, 2016; Canfeld, 2016; GracePres,2016; Fradd, 2022; Wallis, 2022; McDowell, 2023b)? According to three Gospels, Jesus Christ was alive after he was dead three days. However, the three Gospels have different accounts about the discovery that Jesus Christ was alive after the resurrection. Some of these accounts may appear as contradictory. For example, Mary Magdalene appeared at the tomb with other women, and there is another account that she appeared by herself. However, these accounts can be made less contradictory if we consider her to arrive at the tomb twice: once with the women, and afterwards she arrived by herself after Peter and the other disciple. Therefore, the four accounts can be reconciled in some way to make the resurrection believable. However, why do we not doubt these accounts? The

authors of the Bible appear to be writing down as the events occur. For example, all the Gospels identified that the women found that Jesus Christ is not in the tomb first. If the author wants his/her account to be believed by others, by twisting the facts of the events, then the author can claim that some man has discovered first that the tomb was empty because women in a Jewish society cannot testify in courts at the time (Premier Unbelievable?, 2021). Note that one should not rely on the Gospels being too consistent as this may raise suspicion of collusion (Strobel, 1998). Moreover, the New Testament sometimes shows some embarrassing moments of the well-known disciple, Peter, who claimed to disown Jesus Christ three times before the rooster crows. If the New Testament is a fiction, such moments may not be recorded in the Gospel. Finally, if the New Testament tries to make people believe by twisting the facts, then the New Testament need not show that the disciples do not understand what Jesus Christ was talking about during His preaching. Instead, the New Testament should include fake responses of the disciples that they understood Jesus Christ preaching, so that the belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is reinforced. However, the New Testament did not make this kind of twists to make people believe. Therefore, we believe that the New Testament can be believed to be telling the truth. Also, if Jesus Christ is the Son of God, then God can resurrect Jesus Christ. So, the belief of resurrection is not that outrageous if we believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

For our sin redemption, Jesus Christ needs to be sinless because if he has sinned, his death is only for his own sin and he cannot redeem our sin. According to the Old Testament, our original sin condition is passed down from Adam and Eve through birth. That is why Jesus Christ was not conceived in a conventional way. Instead, it is through the work of the Holy Spirit that the Jesus Christ body was conceived in the virgin Mary so that Jesus Christ does not have the original sin condition like us. Without this original sin condition, Jesus Christ may be able to communicate with God or the Father directly throughout His life as He does not need to be separated from God like us. Jesus Christ is also unlikely to have sinned since in John's Gospel, Jesus Christ was performing baptism for other people and He had started his ministry before his baptism by John the Baptist. Jesus Christ also performed miracle before the baptism, like changing water to wine according to John's Gospel. Therefore, we believe that Jesus Christ has not sinned and that birth by a virgin is possible if Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

What is sin in Christianity? Sin is about transgressing the rule of God. For example, the ten commandments were given to the Jews when they have a covenant with God. For Adam and Eve before the fall, the instruction not to eat the fruit of the knowledge tree is a rule or command from God. The punishment of sin for human is death. That is why Jesus Christ has to die for us because it is the punishment of our sins (not His) by God.

In summary, we have to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God which helps us to believe that God exists, He is born from the virgin Mary and He was resurrected after death.

### 3.2 Miracles

What evidence do we need to believe in Jesus Christ is the Son of God? The direct answer is the believe in miracles which are controversial that we might want to avoid them (See Miracle Hunter, 2015). However, religion is predicated on miracles according to Mackie (1982). In other words, if there is a religion which has no miracles, would you consider subscribing to that religion or worshipping that God? So, how do we believe in miracles? We need to find evidence to believe in miracles (Strobel, 2018). However, does miracle exist and what is a miracle? Here, we define a miracle to be some events due to supernatural causes. This

definition implies that there are supernatural phenomenon and that the supernatural can cause the natural world to change. Are there supernatural phenomena? Then, we have to define them as phenomena outside the natural world. What is the natural world? We take this to mean the spacetime based on 3 dimensions plus the time dimension that scientists feel they are in everyday. However, string theory (Kurzgesagt, 2018) in physics suggests that there are more than 4 dimensions. In one type of string theory, it is suggested that there are 11 dimensions or more for spacetime. If there are supernatural phenomena, then they may exist say in the higher dimensions whereas our daily life happens in say the lower 3 dimensions plus the time dimension. According to some string theory, supernatural phenomena can exist, and if we can interact with the supernatural phenomena, then we can study them as if though they (Fishman, 2009; Eastwell, 2011) are natural world phenomena so that our definition of the natural world is enlarged. However, string theory is not a scientific theory yet because it does not have evidence or experimental findings to support it in physics.

Is there any supernatural phenomenon? In this case, we are questioning the existence of supernatural phenomena instead of verifying a universal statement. Questioning the existence of something (like phenomenon) only requires us to show that the phenomenon to occur once, then we can believe the existence of the phenomenon because it is pointless to repeatedly show the existence of the phenomena if they already existed. Therefore, we do not need to repeatedly demonstrate that the phenomenon exists unlike verifying the universal statement. If there exists strong evidence for the existence of supernatural phenomenon, then we can believe in the existence of supernatural phenomenon.

As alluded earlier in Section 1, near-death experience (NDE) suggests the existence of supernatural phenomenon. While there are many NDEs, some NDEs do not have corroborating evidence that there are supernatural phenomena because their NDEs may not correspond to what happened in the objective reality experienced by other people who were alive (DW Documentary, 2023). However, there are some NDEs that have corroborating evidence that there are supernatural phenomena. It is these NDEs that support the existence of supernatural phenomena. The corroborating evidence include remembering the 12 digit serial number of the ventilator machine (Rivas, Dirven & Smit, 2013), which could not be perceived by the patient who experienced NDE, and the identification of a 1985 quarter on an 8-foot high cardiac monitor (Mays and Mays, 2015), which was outside the physical view of the patient who experienced NDE. While NDE supports the existence of supernatural phenomena, can NDEs cause the natural world to change? If the NDEs cannot change the natural world, then the patients cannot wake up remembering the NDEs (since the soul or consciousness is completely separate from the body without any interactions). Therefore, it is likely that NDEs can cause the natural world to change.

Apart from NDEs, are there other evidence of supernatural phenomena and causes? One type is due to the research in reincarnation (Weird World, 2020; de Moraes and Moreira-Almeida, 2020; Moraes et al., 2022). An authority on reincarnation research is Ian Stevenson, a psychiatrist from the University of Virginia. Over a period of 40 years, he carried out more than 2,500 case studies and published 12 books including the book on “Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation” (Stevenson, 1974). He documented subjects’ statements and then identified the deceased person whom the subject identified with, and verified some facts of the deceased person’s life including matching birthmarks and birth defects to wounds and scars by examining medical records such as autopsy photographs (Cadoret, 2005). He also looked at

European cases of reincarnation types (Stevenson, 2003) where purported bias in the acceptance of reincarnation in Eastern societies is absent as criticised in his previous work. Nevertheless, for our purpose, it is not necessary that every case studied by Stevenson to be genuine reincarnations. Instead, if only one strong case of reincarnation or possessed state (see [Gallagher, 2020; McDowell, 2023c] for demonic possession) is supported, then this would lead us to believe of the existence of supernatural phenomena, and Stevenson has some corroborating evidence in some of the strong cases. In addition, reincarnation or possessed state suggests that the supernaturals can cause the natural world events to occur. For example, if reincarnation is supernatural, then it must have caused the subject to memorize or to be aware of certain events beforehand in order to claim reincarnation to have occurred. Likewise for a possessed state, the spiritual being must have caused the subject to realize certain events beforehand in order to claim reincarnation to have occurred. Therefore, reincarnation or possessed state does not just support the existence of supernatural phenomena, but also that supernaturals can cause natural world events to occur. In summary, we try to establish the possibilities of miracles based on evidence obtained so that we do not exclude miracles based on arguments from naturalism which relies on physical laws (i.e., universal statements) to exclude miracles but these laws are based on trust or faith of the scientist that these laws work which is doubted by the problem of induction.

Hume (1748) has produced an argument against miracles as follows:

“That no testimony can establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind, that its falsehood would be more miraculous, than the fact, that it endeavours to establish”

If Hume is referring to testimony as statements or documentary evidence, then by providing other types of evidence (like a photograph as in Marian apparition) then this argument will not apply. Alternatively, testimony can be taken to be of any type of evidence so that it has the widest possible interpretation rather than a statement in court. Hume’s argument is very strange because it requires us to make a decision about the falsehood of a testimony being more miraculous than the testimony. How can one judge whether something is more miraculous or not? Aside from this practical difficulty, why would the falsehood of a testimony being more miraculous would imply that there was a miracle? While a testimony of a miracle is usually surprising, the falsehood of such a testimony is usually not surprising. So, Hume looks like judging whether there is a miracle based on how surprising the testimony is, is itself a fallacy since whether a testimony is surprising or not has no bearing on whether something is miraculous or not. While a miracle will usually surprise people, a surprising thing or event may not be a miracle. So, Hume is tricking people to believe in his argument based on abduction which is not necessarily true. Hence, whether the testimony is surprising or not is irrelevant to whether the event is a miracle or not. Another interpretation is probabilistic. This is based on the log odds of the probability of a miracle given the evidence against the probability of no miracle given the evidence. For Hume’s argument, we have to assume that the probability of the evidence given the miracle is similar to the prior probability of no miracle, which are close to one. Then, one decides whether there is a miracle or not by comparing the prior probability of a miracle with the probability of seeing the evidence given there is no miracle. If the ratio of these two probabilities is greater than one, then we accept that there is a miracle. This is similar to (Bayesian) hypothesis testing (Luk, 2019) which usually assumes more probabilities to have certain values since it has more prior probabilities (whereas our hypothesis testing has

less probabilities to be assigned), and which it cannot tell us the risk in accepting or rejecting the hypothesis because the probability distribution of the ratio of probabilities is usually unknown. In addition, Millican (2011) suggested that many interpreters of Hume have overlooked an important distinction between a type or class of testimony and a particular piece of testimony. Nevertheless, there are still many philosophical arguments (McGrew, 2019) for and against miracles and we cannot discuss this in details here. The interested reader should start by reading McGrew (2019). One point to note is that Hume was living in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when physical laws are promoted. At that time, physical laws were thought to be immutable and applies everywhere and all the time due to the uniformity assumption. In here, we have given an account that physical laws while believed to be immutable and applies everywhere and everytime, are not proven. Instead, we just find evidence to support that the laws are true. Similarly, Hume may also think that the evidence may prove miracles but now we know that evidence can only support the existence of miracles rather than proving it. We will stop here as philosophy may have never ending arguments, and we leave the reader to determine by herself/himself.

At this juncture, we would like to mention the position of the die-hard sceptics who believe in naturalism. Such sceptics will not believe in miracles whatever evidence are given. They may be disguised as objective, rational sceptics appearing to be willing to accept miracle if it was true. However, when strong evidence is provided to them, they will delay their decisions to believe in miracles demanding that perhaps as science advances there may be naturalistic explanation later. They do not provide any timeline when they will decide as a result they may wait indefinitely for a naturalistic explanation of a miracle. Similarly, even if the sceptics are eye-witnesses of the miracles, they may still deny that miracles happened. They would say that it was an illusion by some kind of magic that has a naturalistic explanation later. Such a position of a sceptic is considered to be a die-hard sceptic and it is not possible for them to believe in miracles because effectively they just believe in naturalism whatever the evidence provided. Such a position is dangerous because Christianity requires us to make a decision before we die in order to receive joyful eternal life. In our next subsection, we do not require the sceptics to make a binary decision directly on believing in the evidence of a miracle. Instead, the sceptics are asked to assign rough estimates of the probabilities that they will believe in the evidence of the miracles. In the end of the process, they will then find out whether their combined probability recommends them to believe or not in Jesus Christ being the Son of God. Consequently, we avoid the sceptics to make binary decisions to believe in the evidence of the miracle or not, and the reader is urged to go through the details of the evidence of the miracles to assign the probabilities in an appropriate way.

Note that the supernatural beings provide the miracles and not the evidence of the miracles. The miracles interact with the natural world that we know so that we can observe them. This interaction may be registered in some medium in the natural world, which becomes a piece of evidence. For example, The blessed Virgin Mary (the supernatural being) may have asked God to provide us with the miracle of the sun at Fatima where the sun appeared to dance around. People took photographs of the miracle, so these photographs become our evidence. The evidence was collected by human beings, and the evidence was the result of the interaction between the miracle and the natural world so that we can register them as traces of the miracles. These traces are our evidence. We examine the evidence that we have and consider the likelihood that the evidence supports that the miracle happened. Therefore, it is possible that a

miracle happened and no evidence was collected apart from eye-witness testimony. In this case, we have to rely on the testimony as our evidence to support the miracle happened. However, some philosophers (like Hume) may not put much weight to testimonial evidence, and other types of evidence are much desired. For some miracles, it is possible to have multiple types of evidence supporting that a miracle happened. In this case, the combined weight of the evidence may be stronger than the weights of the individual types of evidence. In the worst case, the combined weight is the maximum weight of the individual types of evidence. Based on this intuitive understanding, we develop our probabilistic arguments for combining the probabilities which represent the weights of the evidence.

One may argue that if God provides a miracle that everybody is sure to believe in God, then we do not have to rely on faith. However, this is not possible. If such a miracle exists, it will happen in a finite amount of time. After the miracle happened, we are left with traces of the miracle that only provides us with evidence in the future to make the decision for our future generations. One may argue that if God makes a miracle that lasts forever, then everybody will believe in God. However, people will study the miracle as if it is a natural phenomenon because it always exists. People will then come up with some naturalistic explanation to reason away that it is not a miracle but a natural phenomenon and will start to doubt the beginning of the miracle is a miracle. For example, suppose God suddenly carries out a miracle splitting the sun into two during human history. After the splitting of the sun, we are left with two suns in the solar system. Then, people may think the splitting of one sun into two is a natural phenomenon that happened in our solar system (or it was done by aliens). It is just that our ancestor could not explain this and called it a miracle by God. Even if there is no naturalistic explanation for splitting the sun into two, the sceptics will wait for a possible naturalistic explanation in the future. Therefore, we end up with some people not believing in God. Also, God may not want to create such a miracle so that all will believe because the reason why we are in this state or condition is that Adam and Eve lacked faith and transgressed the command of God by eating the fruit of the knowledge tree of good and evil. Therefore, we are now being tested for our faith or belief in the Christian God. That is why God is not always with us. In addition, God loves us and gives us free will. If God is always with us, some of us may feel intimidated or feel they are forced to make certain decisions. However, God wants us to choose freely whether to believe in God or not. Therefore, we will not be able to find God most of the time so that we feel we make our decisions freely. In fact, some of us are so accustomed to God being absent that they think God does not exist. God likes to interact with those who are faithful or who will be faithful because the presence of God will not intimidate their decision making. However, not every faithful person will interact with God (physically) like hearing his voice, because the interaction with God needs to be unpredictable to show that this is from God (i.e., this is God's will) instead of some correlating factor that can predict when God will interact with people, in which case people may find naturalistic explanation for the interaction.

Some atheists complain that miracles are only experienced by believers although Saint Paul is perhaps an exception. God usually performs miracles for the faithful because they have earned the miracles by God, because in general God does not want to affect the free will of most people to believe or not and because God may want to settle some religious issue by performing a miracle. For example, the Eucharistic miracles happen in churches so those experience the miracles are usually believers. Since God has foreknowledge, even though some people may not believe, they may experience a miracle by God because they will eventually believe in God



(even if they had not experienced the miracles). There is also no guarantee that anyone experience a miracle will believe in God. For those who experienced a miracle but not believe in God, they do not have any advantage from God to believe. It is those who do not believe in God but believe after the miracle is experienced and that those are known by God not to believe had there been no miracles experienced that those people have an advantage of believing in God. This might have been Saint Paul but he believed in the Old Testament before, he had to endure hardship afterwards to spread the Gospel and eventually he died for his religious beliefs after the conversion so you may think that he earned the miracle afterwards. Note that Saint Paul believed in Jesus Christ not just because of the miracle since Saint Paul checked the scripture about Jesus Christ being the Messiah after the miracle. If the scripture did not point to Jesus Christ being the Messiah, Saint Paul might not have believed in his new faith in Jesus Christ.

Note that we need to make a distinction between miracles by God and miracles by Saints. For example, in Marian apparitions, the miracle is performed by the blessed Virgin Mary and not by God. That is why people of different persuasions like atheists, muslims, communists, etc. can experience the miracles (by the blessed Virgin Mary). Some would have converted to Christianity but some still did not. That is alright because the miracles are done by the blessed Virgin Mary instead of God. Now, I speculate that the Saints request God to perform miracles, and God grants the requests case by case. Since God has complete knowledge, God knows what the miracles the Saints want. After the requests are granted, the Saints then decide when, where, how, etc. to perform the miracles. In doing so, we cannot attribute the miracles are done by God instead we can only attribute these miracles are done by the Saints so that we cannot accuse God for being unfair (and therefore being just which is an attribute of God) by giving advantage to those who experience the miracles for believing in God.

Some miracles are approved by the church, and the church wants to find out whether the reported phenomena are truly miracles from God. This is because the church has a vested interest in approving whether the phenomena are miracles from God as a wrong decision would lead many followers in making the wrong beliefs. Also, the church is concerned with the miracles are from Satan or the devil instead of God. So, the church has to be very careful about the cause of the phenomena. In addition, if the phenomena are found to have a natural cause later, then the reputation of the church would be undermined, causing the followers to have the wrong beliefs. The church also wants to approve miracles that spread the correct message of the Christian faith, instead of causing idolatry. For example, Marian apparitions taught people to believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God instead of worshipping Mary. The advantage of approving miracles by the church is that this is a sign from God so that people can strengthen their faith. In the past, the church has approved and not approved claimed miracles, and approving miracles usually takes years by the church. Also, many Marian apparitions have received “no decision” or negative response to the supernatural character of the events so that those that are approved with supernatural character (like Fatima) are worthy of belief.

What are the consequences if we believe or not believe in miracles? If the miracles were false but we believed in them, then we will only consider that we are foolish or stupid to believe in such things. If this leads us to the wrong beliefs in the message of Jesus Christ, then we have to be careful in what that we are believing in. Identifying the core faith of Jesus Christ message may help. However, if the miracles are truly done by God but we do not believe in them, then will we offend God? If we look in the Bible and observe those who saw miraculous signs but

still do not believe, then we will find that one type of examples is the Pharisees. They were considered “wicked” because they refused to believe in signs and wonders that Jesus Christ had performed as in “In spite of his wonders, they did not believe” according to Psalm (78:32). Also, they were considered “adulterous” because they have left the true worship of God to follow man-made rules and traditions. In our case, instead of adulterous, if we do not believe in God because we do not believe in the miracles, then we will have offended God by disbelieving in God. However, if we believe in God but disbelieve in the miracles even though the miracles are done by God, we may be considered “wicked”. In any case, if there is a miracle, we have to examine it carefully to ascertain whether we believe it or not. In our methodology here, fortunately we do not have to make a binary decision but to assign an estimate of a probability of the miracle happening.

For some, believing in miracles categorically is very difficult because magicians are well known to provide magic which is like a miracle, but yet we do not believe magic as miracles. So, why do we believe in miracles if we do not believe in magic? One reason is that the magician is skilled in providing deception or fakery whereas those involved in the miracles that we mention are ordinary people not skilled in deception. Also, the miracles may appear several times over a long span of time in terms of hundreds of years, and they may involve people seeing the miracles at different locations. Thirdly, the church investigates these miracles to see if they are authentic or not. As said, the church while wanting people to believe also has its credibility at stake if it approves the miracle. In the past, some faction within the church may be positive about a miracle and some faction may not be. Therefore, the church tries to assess the evidence impartially. More recently, some of the miracles are investigated scientifically or independently, for example by inviting scientists, journalists and lawyers to monitor the investigation in order to obtain some credibility. Fourthly, the miracles have some religious messages or significance whereas magic is unrelated to religious beliefs but purely designed to deceive the spectators. Finally, the miracles left us with evidence that we can investigate later whereas magic is done only once or twice for a performance instead of leaving the evidence for us to find out if it is really magic or not. For example, in our lady of Lourdes, Saint Bernadette Soubirous died and her dead body became an incorruptible corpse which is on display now for many years. So, this evidence is available to us all the time whereas magic just tricks us for ten or twenty minutes. Therefore, the miracles that we have are quite different from magic. Instead of requesting people to believe in miracles categorically, we now request people to assign subjective probabilities of their beliefs instead.

### 3.3 Hypothesis Testing

As we accept that miracles are not ruled out by naturalism, we can consider the process of weighing the evidence that leads us to believe that the miracles happened, which implicate that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. The weighing process is subjective which is done by assigning a subjective conditional probability (Starmer, 2022a),  $p(H|E)$ , by a subject that the hypothesis,  $H$ , is true or false given the evidence,  $E$ , is true or occurred. Our null hypothesis,  $H_0$ , is that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God, and our alternative hypothesis,  $H_1$ , is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Our null hypothesis states the obvious conclusion when the subject has never heard of Jesus Christ and so the subject is unlikely to think Jesus Christ is the Son of God.  $H_1$  is the negation of  $H_0$ , so  $H_0$  and  $H_1$  cover all the cases. The evidence will be discussed later in

the next section. After the discussion about the evidence of the miracles, the subject should then assign the conditional probability. If this probability,  $p(H|E)$ , is 0.5, then the subject does not know whether to believe in the hypothesis given the evidence. If  $p(H|E)$  is 0, then the subject does not believe in the hypothesis given the evidence with absolute certainty. Similarly, if  $p(H|E)$  is 1, then the subject believes with absolute certainty in the hypothesis given the evidence. In most cases, such extreme beliefs with absolute certainty are unlikely, so  $p(H|E)$  is usually somewhere between zero and one, instead of zero or one.

The evidence,  $E$ , is actually a class of evidence related to a miracle type instead of individual pieces of evidence of a miracle. Therefore, the probability,  $p(H|E)$ , is the probability of the hypothesis given the class or group of evidence of the miracle type. In this way, the conditional probabilities of the hypothesis  $H$  given the different classes or groups of evidence of different miracle types can be multiplied together by assuming that these probabilities are conditionally independent of each other as these are evidence from different miracle types. A miracle type is actually a series of miracles where a number of miracles of the same type apparently happened over the course of time. For example, one miracle type is the Eucharistic miracle which happened around 700AD as well as in 1992, 1994 and 1996. So, this series of Eucharistic miracles happened for  $H_1$  and they are grouped together which potentially may be linked or dependent on each other. For the probabilities of evidence of each individual miracle, we have  $p(H_1|e_{i,1}) \dots p(H_1|e_{i,m})$  where  $e_{i,j}$  is the evidence for the  $i$ -th miracle type of the  $j$ -th miracle (between 1 and  $m$ ). Since these probabilities may be dependent, we take the maximum of these probabilities as  $p(H_1|E_i)$ , i.e.:

$$p(H_1|E_i) = \max_j \{ p(H_1|e_{i,j}) \}.$$

where  $E_i$  is the  $i$ -th class of evidence for the  $i$ -th miracle type. Since  $H_0$  is the negation of  $H_1$ , we have

$$p(H_0|E_i) = 1 - \max_j \{ p(H_1|e_{i,j}) \} \dots (1)$$

In general,  $p(H_1|E_i)$  is bounded as follows:

$$\max_j \{ p(H_1|e_{i,j}) \} \leq p(H_1|E_i).$$

Since we use the lower bound of  $p(H_1|E_i)$ , the estimated  $p(H_0|E_i)$  is an upper bound in equation (1). To carry out the estimation of  $p(H_0|E_i)$ , we assign various subjective probabilities,  $\{p(H_1|e_{i,j})\}$ , for the evidence of the  $i$ -th miracle type and the evidence for the different  $j$ -th miracles, and then proceed to pick the largest subjective probability from the different  $j$ -th miracles of the same  $i$ -th miracle type. Finally, we use the above formula to compute  $p(H_0|E_i)$ . For example, the Eucharistic miracle type (say  $i = 2$ ) has say four miracles (in 700+AD, 1992, 1994 and 1996) so that we look at the evidence of the four miracles individually. After examining the evidence of the four miracles individually, we assign the subjective probabilities for the evidence of each miracle, say  $p(H_1|e_{2,1}) = 0.1$ ,  $p(H_1|e_{2,2}) = 0.6$ ,  $p(H_1|e_{2,3}) = 0.4$  and  $p(H_1|e_{2,4}) = 0.3$ . Next, we pick the largest probabilities (i.e., 0.6) out of the four probabilities and then we arrive at  $p(H_0|E_2) = 1 - 0.6 = 0.4$ . Based on this probability, then we compute  $p(H_0|E_1, \dots, E_n)$  and  $p(H_1|E_1, \dots, E_n)$  which will be justified in the next section and which will be discussed how to calculate later in Section 3.3.3.

### 3.3.1 Logical Foundation

We have the miracle types  $M_1, M_2, \dots, M_n$  that would implicate the hypothesis  $H_1$  which is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Now, these miracle types are related to the hypothesis that Jesus Christ is the Son of God so that if at least one of the miracle type is true, then  $H_1$  is true. It follows that we can write the logical statement:

$$(\exists i, M_i) \Rightarrow H_1 \dots (S_1),$$

where  $\exists$  denotes “there exists” and  $\Rightarrow$  is the logical implication. However, we need to consider the possibility that if Jesus Christ is not the Son of God, then none of the miracle types related to the notion that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is true. It follows that:

$$(H_0 = \neg H_1) \Rightarrow (\forall i, \neg M_i) \dots (S_2),$$

where  $\neg$  is the negation and  $\forall$  denotes “for all”.

### 3.3.2 Bayesian Probability Calculation

In the following subsections, we will discuss the various evidence that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, so you can formulate your degree of belief as a probability,  $p(H_0 | E)$ . To obtain this probability, one just computes one minus  $p(H_1 | E)$ , i.e.,  $p(H_0 | E) = 1 - p(H_1 | E)$  since  $H_0$  in the probability is really “not  $M$ ” (i.e., the miracle type) and  $H_1$  in the probability is really “ $M$ ”. Without loss of generality let us assume that we have three evidence types or classes, one way to help us to make the decision is to calculate  $p(H_0 | E_1, E_2, E_3)$  using Bayes’ rule (Starmer, 2022b) as follows:

$$p(H_0|E_1,E_2,E_3) = p(E_1,E_2,E_3|H_0)p(H_0)/p(E_1,E_2,E_3).$$

We assume that  $E_1, E_2$  and  $E_3$  are conditionally independent given  $H_0$  (MIT OpenCourseWare, 2019) so that we have:

$$p(H_0|E_1,E_2,E_3) = p(E_1|H_0)p(E_2|H_0)p(E_3|H_0)p(H_0)/p(E_1,E_2,E_3)$$

The conditional independence assumption is reasonable since  $H_0$  is about Jesus Christ is not the Son of God and the classes of evidence,  $E_1$  to  $E_3$ , are supporting that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Next, we assume that the different classes of evidence are coming from independent sources (Ace Tutors, 2021) since we assume that  $H_0$  is true. We have

$$p(H_0|E_1,E_2,E_3) = p(E_1|H_0)p(E_2|H_0)p(E_3|H_0)p(H_0)/[p(E_1)p(E_2)p(E_3)].$$

Using the definition of conditional probability (Starmer, 2022a), the above is rewritten as

$$p(H_0|E_1,E_2,E_3) = p(H_0|E_1)p(H_0|E_2)p(H_0|E_3)/[p(H_0)p(H_0)].$$

In general, suppose we have  $n$  evidence classes or types instead of three. The general formula for the conditional probability is

$$p(H_0|E_1,\dots,E_n) = p(H_0|E_1) \times \dots \times p(H_0|E_n) / p(H_0)^{n-1} \dots (2)$$

Excluding the consideration of the denominator in equation (2), the highest probability for  $p(H_0|E_1,\dots,E_n)$  is one and that requires each  $p(H_0|E_i)$  is one for all  $i$ . If  $p(H_0|E_i)$  is one, then we are saying that given the evidence of the  $i$ -th type of miracles we believe that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God, which is equivalent to ignoring the evidence of this type of miracles in

equation (2). Also, to calculate the probability, we do not carry out random sampling (of all cases as for universal statements) because we are only interested in probabilities for which there are evidence of the miracle types. We are not sampling from all cases (as for universal statements) but only those cases in the existential statement S1.

By S2, we can rewrite  $p(H0|E_j)$  as:

$$p(H0|E_j) = p(\text{not } M_1, \dots, \text{not } M_j, \dots, \text{not } M_n | E_j).$$

Next, we assume that “not  $M_i$ ” is conditionally independent from  $E_j$  for  $i$  does not equal to  $j$  so that:

$$p(H0|E_j) = p(\text{not } M_1|E_j) \times \dots \times p(\text{not } M_j|E_j) \times \dots \times p(\text{not } M_n|E_j).$$

Now, miracle class  $M_i$  being false is independent of  $E_j$  for  $i$  not equals to  $j$  so that:

$$p(H0|E_j) = p(\text{not } M_1) \times \dots \times p(\text{not } M_{j-1}) \times p(\text{not } M_j|E_j) \times p(\text{not } M_{j+1}) \times \dots \times p(\text{not } M_n).$$

After we assume that the prior probability that a miracle does not happen is approximately one (i.e.,  $p(\text{not } M_i) \approx 1$ ), we have:

$$p(H0|E_j) \approx p(\text{not } M_j|E_j).$$

Therefore, equation (2) becomes:

$$p(H0|E_1, \dots, E_n) = p(\text{not } M_1|E_1) \times \dots \times p(\text{not } M_n|E_n) / p(H0)^{n-1} \dots (3)$$

Note that by the law of the excluded middle, we have  $p(\text{not } M_i|E_i) = 1 - p(M_i|E_i)$ . So, we can consider to assign the probability  $p(M_i|E_i)$  since  $E_i$  is the  $i$ -th evidence type for the  $i$ -th miracle type, and we can then proceed to work out  $p(\text{not } M_i|E_i)$  before we substitute it into equation (3). Also, we can generalize  $\max_j \{ p(H_{1,j}|e_{i,j}) \} \leq p(H1|E_i)$  to  $\max_j \{ p(M_{i,j}|e_{i,j}) \} \leq p(M_i|E_i)$  so that we can assign the maximum subjective probability of the individual miracle  $M_{i,j}$  given the piece of evidence  $e_{i,j}$  for all  $j$  to  $p(M_i|E_i)$  as a lower bound estimate of  $p(M_i|E_i)$ .

### 3.3.3 Calibration or Estimation

In hypothesis testing, we will reject the null hypothesis if the probability is less than 0.05, i.e.,

$$p(H0|E_1, \dots, E_n) < 0.05,$$

and we will accept the alternative hypothesis H1. It might be argued that if we have enough pieces of evidence (say  $n$ ), then even if we do not know whether to believe or not (i.e.,  $p(M_i|E_i) = 0.5$ ), the product of the probabilities will end up being arbitrary small for  $n$  to be arbitrary large. However, this will not happen. This is because the so-called pieces of evidence are actually pools or categories or classes of evidence instead of individual facts. For example,  $E_i$  could be the miracle type like Eucharistic miracles so that this refers to a group or class of miracles rather than an individual miracle. Therefore, this group or class of miracles is treated as just one piece of evidence so that there are not many pools or categories or classes of evidence. In addition, we are looking for evidence to support that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and there are not many pools or categories or classes of evidence that would support such a claim. So, there will not be a lot of evidence to multiply in the joint probability. Therefore,  $n$  cannot be arbitrary large because of the interpretation of the probability  $p(M_i|E_i)$ .

Alternatively, we can calibrate the probability  $p(H|E_1, \dots, E_n)$  to be 0.05 when  $p(M_i|E_i)$  is 0.5 for all  $i$  so that if we do not know whether to believe in all the miracle types, we would be on the boundary between accepting or rejecting the null hypothesis  $H_0$ . In this case, we can work out  $p(H_0)$  by solving the following, using equation (2):

$$0.05 = 0.5^n / p(H_0)^{n-1}.$$

Therefore,  $p(H_0) = 0.5 \times (0.5/0.05)^{1/(n-1)}$ . Since we have nine classes of evidence or miracle types in the next section,  $p(H_0) = 0.667$  for the case that if we don't know for all the evidence classes to believe in each miracle type, then we do not know whether to reject the null hypothesis or not. What this suggests is that if  $p(H_0) > 0.667$ , then  $p(H_0|E_1, \dots, E_9) < 0.05$  for  $p(H_0|E_i) = 0.5$  when  $i$  is 1 to 9. In this case, we will reject the hypothesis that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God, so we would accept that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (even we do not know whether Jesus Christ is the Son of God given the individual class of evidence). Now,  $p(H_0)$  is the prior probability of the null hypothesis that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God. If you ask someone who has not heard of Jesus Christ and ask him/her to assign a prior probability that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God, then we expect that the probability (i.e.,  $p(H_0)$ ) to be close to one or we expect that it would be much larger than 0.667. Thus, if we hold that we do not know from the following individual classes of evidence that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God, then overall we should believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God given the nine classes of independent evidence that we provide. Note that Bart Ehrman (*Premier Unbelievable?*, 2019) said that miracles are the least probable but the historical science tries to find the most probable historical event so that miracles as the explanation of the historical event are not to be taken seriously. However, the miracles are the least probable because the probabilities are the prior probabilities of the event. When we look at the miracles given the evidence, then the conditional probabilities may not be the smallest. In the next section, we will examine each class of evidence to come up with my belief that I do not know whether that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God or I lean to believe that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God. Note that we will now assume  $p(H_0) = 0.667$  in the next section as we have nine evidence classes, because that would calibrate our probability to the boundary of accepting/rejecting the null hypothesis if we don't know whether to believe in each class of evidence for a miracle type.

We have glossed over a point: while we have evidence of believing in the miracle (type), how can this miracle type implicate that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. One possible answer is that we are estimating the probability of  $H_0$  that is Jesus Christ is not the Son of God. So, even if we have the evidence, we do not believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God. There can be two ways to do that. One way is that given the evidence, the subject does not believe in the miracle type, so the subject does not believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God. The other way is that the subject believes the miracle type given the evidence but does not believe the miracle type implicates  $H_0$ . The other possible answer is that the miracle types are related to the Christian church so that if we believe in the miracle type (which may or may not be approved by the church), then this miracle type is related to the church. Assuming that Christians belonging to the church believe the Apostle creed or Nicene creed, then the miracle type related to the church would implicate that Jesus Christ is the Son of God as the creeds contain such statement. For example, the Shroud of Turin suggests that there was a resurrection miracle which implicates that the man with the image on the shroud is Jesus Christ who is suggested to be the Son of God according to the shroud. A sceptic may argue that Jesus Christ can have an NDE (Wallis, 2022), so there was no resurrection by God. However, people experiencing NDEs typically have no

signs of life for hours and not for days. In addition, this NDE hypothesis cannot explain why Jesus Christ was appearing to and interacting with the disciples afterwards in a healthy state rather than in a bad state of severe injury. If Jesus Christ had an NDE and woke up after three days, He would have been limping to see disciples who would probably take Jesus Christ to see the doctor. Then, the sceptic may argue that the New Testament made up the scene with an active Jesus Christ, but some of the disciples would be required to die for such beliefs later, so these disciples are unlikely to lie about this. In the next section, when we discuss about the evidence of the miracle types, for those miracle types that are not obviously related to the hypothesis that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, we will give a brief discussion to relate the evidence to that hypothesis.

### 3.4 Evidence to Believe

Note that in Luk (2021), several miracle types were lumped together as one (i.e., miracles after the Bible was written and compiled) as a kind of miracle supertype. This is not preferred since we should combine only miracle types together, instead of combining miracle type with miracle supertype. One might argue whether the Bible has documentary evidence of multiple miracle types. In here, we only consider the Bible as one evidence class or evidence type for one miracle type for simplicity. Arguably, one can divide the Bible into various miracle types and assign probabilities accordingly, but that would generate issues about which miracle type to include and how many miracle types. We leave it to the reader if (s)he wants to consider this possibility.

For most of the evidence classes except the Shroud of Turin and the Bible, we will provide a series of miracles happening at different times. While there are references that have tables of most of the miracles in the series, we cannot copy those tables in this manuscript due to copyright issues. Therefore, we provide tables of selected examples instead, and references are provided so that if the reader is interested, (s)he can find those sources to read the data in the full table. Note that in our table, the selected examples usually follow chronologically but it may not necessarily imply that we do not skip some examples in the chronological order.

Note that it is important not to limit the reading of the evidence types to the summaries that we provide as it may be very easy to dismiss those evidence based on our short summaries. Instead, the reader is urged to read some of the references cited in here so that the reader is aware of the details of the miracles, the evidence of which has been documented in great details to show that the miracles are genuine. Without reading the details to assign the probabilities of the reader may render these probabilities as inaccurate. Therefore, the hypothesis testing of H1 and H0 may be invalid. The reader is advised to read the cases with stronger evidence of the miracles because the subjective probability of the evidence for the miracle type is based on the maximum subjective probability assigned to the evidence of the individual miracle. If the reader has time, (s)he is recommended to read at least two or three cases with strong evidence of the miracles before assigning the subjective probabilities. The reader may use our references cited here and web search engines like Google to find related information about evidence for those miracles.

We do not claim that our miracle types are exhaustive. We only serve to illustrate how this can be done. The reader is welcomed to find more miracle types for herself/himself. To illustrate this point, we have included examples of some miracle types that we have not included in the calculation of the probability. We will go through the miracle types that we considered for calculating the probability one subsection by one subsection. In each subsection, I will mention

my subjective probability so that we can calculate the overall probability that we accept the hypothesis that Jesus Christ is the Son of God in Section 3.5. The reader is urged to read the cited material or go to find out the facts behind the miracles himself or herself before coming to the conclusion that these are all hearsays by reading this manuscript. Many of these materials come from various places like web sites by searching Google, Wikipedia, Youtube, learned journals, news articles, conference proceedings, books, etc. so that they should be accessible to the reader. These materials contain much more details or facts that I can include here, and this may be pivotal to your beliefs and assignment of subjective probabilities. I hope you will not just rely on what I wrote here to decide on your beliefs or to assign the subjective probabilities.

To help the reader to assign the subjective probabilities, we provide a verbal scale that maps the qualitative description into subject probabilities or their intervals as follows:

- Certain miracle occurrence corresponding to 100% subjective probability similar to the strong theist position in Dawkin's theistic milestone;
- De facto miracle occurrence corresponding to 90%-99% subjective probability similar to the de facto theist position in Dawkin's theistic milestone;
- Confident miracle occurrence corresponding to 80%-89% subjective probability;
- Reasonably confident miracle occurrence corresponding to 70%-79% subjective probability;
- Not so confident miracle occurrence corresponding to 60%-69% subjective probability;
- Leaning towards miracle occurrence corresponding to 51%-59% subjective probability similar to leaning towards theism position in Dawkin's theistic milestone;
- Do not know whether miracle occurred or not corresponding to 50% subjective probability similar to the completely impartial position in Dawkin's theistic milestone;
- Leaning towards miracle absence corresponding to 41%-49% subjective probability similar to leaning towards atheism position in Dawkin's theistic milestone;
- Not so confident miracle absence corresponding to 31%-40% subjective probability;
- Reasonably confident miracle absence corresponding to 21%-30% subjective probability;
- Confident miracle absence corresponding to 11%-20% subjective probability;
- De facto miracle absence corresponding to 1%-10% subjective probability similar to the de facto atheist position in Dawkin's theistic milestone;
- Certain miracle absence corresponding to 0% subjective probability similar to the strong atheist position in Dawkin's theistic milestone.

The "milestones" in Dawkin's theistic probability scale correspond to some qualitative description of our verbal scale where we added finer distinctions in the scale for confident, reasonably confident and not so confident descriptions. These descriptions are necessary because Dawkin's milestones would have left a big gap between the de facto milestone and the leaning towards milestone where people may neither just lean towards theism nor being a de facto theist. Note that we assigned a probability of 90% to 99% for the de facto miracle occurrence which can correspond to the 90%, 95% and 99% confidence levels used in statistics.



### 3.4.1 E<sub>1</sub>: Shroud of Turin

Shroud of Turin (e.g., Fernández-Capo, 2015; Fazio, 2019) is a piece of linen shroud that is thought to have wrapped Jesus Christ after the crucifixion. It bears the negative image of a man who was flagellated and crucified. Previous historical and scientific evidence points to it being a medieval creation. In 1390, it was attested that the local bishop wrote that the shroud was a forgery and that the unnamed artist has confessed. Previous radiocarbon dating done in 1980s (Dickman, 1988) suggested that the sample of fabric taken at a corner of the shroud is consistent with the medieval date. However, the proponents of the shroud for Jesus Christ suggested that the radiocarbon dating is unreliable as it was taken from a corner of the shroud (e.g., Benford and Marino, 2008) that was repaired in medieval period leading to the medieval dating result. Later dating by co-workers and Fanti (2018) based on various threads believed to be taken from the shroud points to dates from 300BC and 400AD which includes the period that Jesus Christ had lived. There are other pieces of evidence to suggest that the Shroud of Turin is much older than the earlier radiocarbon dating. For example, Rogers (2005) argued that the absence of vanillin in the threads of the shroud suggested that the shroud is quite old, somewhere between 1,300 years ago and 3,000 years ago. Therefore, the shroud is unlikely to be just 840 years old. In 2019, researchers (Casabianca et al, 2019) obtained access to the raw data of the previous radiocarbon dating of the shroud of Turin, and they found that the data was heterogeneous, invalidating the results. The researchers called for a more careful radiocarbon dating of the shroud. While the exact date of the shroud is still a mystery, I personally believe, though not strongly, that the shroud of Turin is of the Jesus Christ era as I believe that the sample was taken from a corner that was tampered with during the medieval period. In addition, a team in 2002 did some restoration work on the shroud, for example, by replacing the back cloth. The Swiss textile historian Mechthild Flury-Lemberg found a peculiar stitching pattern (Fischer, 2023) which was similar to the hem of a cloth found in the tombs of the Jewish Masada Fortress, which dates back to between 40BC and 73AD. As a result, this corroborates that the shroud of Turin is in the time when Jesus of Nazareth was crucified. Also, some (Stalley, 2020) has implicated that Galatians 3:1 in the New Testament was referring to an object like the shroud of Turin, which the Galatians saw so that information implicating the Shroud of Turin was as early as 20 years after the crucifixion. Hence, the belief that the shroud of Turin once wrapped Christ is not that far fetched.

Given that the period is in the era of Jesus Christ, how do we know that the negative image is Jesus Christ? Apart from the shroud of Turin, there is a relic of Jesus Christ called the Sudarium of Oviedo which is a small piece of cloth that wrapped around the head of Jesus Christ after his death. Now, the blood type found in the Sudarium of Oviedo is AB which is the same blood type found in the shroud of Turin. In addition, researchers have mapped the geometric points of the face of Jesus Christ on the Sudarium of Oviedo to those of the face of the man's image on the shroud of Turin, and they (Moreno et al., 1998) found that these geometric points correspond to each other as well as other type of correspondences (Barta et al., 2015). So, there are some pieces of evidence to suggest that the image of the man on the shroud of Turin is Jesus Christ.

The significance of the shroud of Turin is not that it is just a relic of Jesus Christ. It is based on the fact that there was a resurrection miracle. The miracle may involve ultraviolet light (Di Lazzro et al., 2010) radiating from Jesus Christ body onto the shroud of Turin that is mysteriously laying flat at the bottom and at the top of Jesus Christ body. The power of the

ultraviolet light to make the negative image on the shroud of Turin is enormous, something that can still not be achieved with current technology. The mystery suggested that the body of Jesus Christ is hanging in mid-air so that the shroud of Turin can be placed flat at the bottom and on top of the body of Jesus Christ in order to register the image. If the image was formed based on shining ultraviolet light from a body wrapped with the shroud, then we should see creases and distortions to the image that are absent from the shroud of Turin. Therefore, some suggested that the body of Jesus Christ was literally raised up as in the Scripture. Furthermore, the image on the shroud can be projected to obtain a 3-dimensional response based on the grey level intensities on the image using the VP-8 image analyzer (Schumacher, 1999). Such a device has been used also to photographs but they cannot produce the vertical reliefs like those of the shroud of Turin. There is also no directionality (e.g., Ramesh, 2010) in the image of the shroud so that this suggests radiation coming out from the body. Some has analyzed the image and found the images of teeth behind the lips like X-ray images (Carreira, 2010) as well as hand bones, suggesting that the image was formed by radiation. Some also suggested that it was neutron radiation (Phillips, 1989) because of the depletion of nitrogen level in the blood stain (Fanti, 2021). In this case, the neutron flux will make the carbon dating to be invalid. For the resurrection observation, this is only implicated by the occurrence of a miracle registered in the shroud of Turin which depicted a “moved” image. Since the (stroboscopic) image (Catalano, 2017) registered moved fingers, this suggests that if the shroud of Turin wrapped the body of Jesus Christ, then He was alive (Calatayud, 2022) after the crucifixion, implicating there was a resurrection event. While it is not easy to swallow these theories as there may be more twists to them (e.g., some suggested that the image was formed by bas relief but the histogram of the grey level registers of the image suggest that it was not), I have the tendency to believe that the shroud of Turin has registered the resurrection miracle even though I am not one hundred percent certain. Let us say that my subjective probability  $p(\text{not } M_1|E_1)$  is 0.35 where  $H_0$  is the hypothesis that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God. The reader is welcomed to explore STERA (2021) web site for more evidence about Shroud of Turin, the discussion between Matt Fradd (2023) and Father Andrew Dalton, the more recent dating result of a sample of Turin Shroud by X-ray (De Caro et al., 2022), and the recent summary of Shroud of Turin (Metatron, 2023) even though it misses some evidence for the authenticity of the shroud like finding traces of pollen from Palestine and the original carbon dating was heterogeneous (Casabianca et al, 2019). Overall, our subjective probability,  $p(M_1|E_1)$ , is 0.65 which is significantly higher than no preference of belief and disbelief.

Note that the Shroud of Turin supports the hypothesis that Jesus Christ is the Son of God because the shroud is related to the resurrection event which is possible because Jesus Christ is the Son of God. If Jesus Christ is not the Son of God, then He is not born without the original sin (condition), so that Jesus Christ’s suffering and subsequent death on the cross may only redeem his original sin instead of ours. This would nullify the purpose that Jesus Christ went on the cross to be crucified. Therefore, if the Shroud of Turin is authentic, then it is related to the claim that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

There are obviously various hypotheses that try to explain away the resurrection event. For example, one assumes that the disciples have group hallucinations of Jesus Christ but hallucinations by a group of people having the same event happening are almost unheard of. Another example advanced by Bart Ehrman (Mythvision, 2023) is that Jesus Christ was left on the cross for the scavengers because he found that Romans did leave crucified people to be

eaten by scavengers as part of the punishment. However, if this is the case, then the Jewish authority at the time would like to know this to discredit the resurrection event. All the Jewish authority needs to do is to point to the remains of Jesus Christ instead of inventing a story that His body was stolen. So far, we still have not heard of a plausible explanation about Jesus Christ after the crucifixion.

### 3.4.2 E<sub>2</sub>: Eucharistic Miracles

There are quite a number of miracles that happened after the Bible was written and so they are not mentioned in the Bible. The first type is the Eucharistic miracles (e.g., Fradd, 2021a; Catholic365, 2022) which happened over a span of over 1,000 years. Eucharistic miracles are related to the hypothesis that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. The miracles are about turning the consecrated bread and wine into flesh and blood of Jesus Christ, which have the power to wash away sins. This was thought to be possible because the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is relived in the Eucharist where Jesus Christ is the Son of God who has this ability to wash away or forgive sins. Since the Eucharist is a central part of the church service, the Eucharist miracles support the claim that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

The better Eucharistic miracle that we are aware of is at Lanciano, Italy (Fradd, 2021b). The miracle alleged to have occurred in the eighth century. According to the tradition, a monk had doubts about the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. When he said the words of consecration, the bread and wine turned into flesh and blood. The miracle was claimed to be authentic by the Catholic Church. Recent investigations around 1970 by Dr. Linoli (1971) show that the flesh is some type of cardiac tissue of blood type AB. This corroborates with the blood type found in the Sudarium of Oviedo and the Shroud of Turin, and the tissue was identified by examination under a microscope.

There are other recent Eucharistic miracles in Argentina, Mexico, Venezuela and Poland. For the Buenos Aires case of Argentina in 1996 (Serafini, 2021) which has been documented independently by an independent lawyer (Tesoriero, 2007; Reason To Believe, 2023) and an independent journalist, the tested blood type was AB and the tissue found was some type of cardiac tissue. They appear to corroborate with the findings at Lanciano. The Buenos Aires case involved a consecrated host which was dropped on the floor. Another person picked up the host and informed the parish priest, Father Pezet, who followed instructions of the Church to put the host in a container filled with water hoping that the host will dissolve. The container was put inside the tabernacle. After some days, the tabernacle was opened to remove the fallen host but it was found to have some reddish stains that grew by the day instead of dissolving in the water. The parish priest told the Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio (now Pope Francis), what had happened. The Archbishop decided to carry out an investigation that led to the Buenos Aires case. It might be argued that the parish priest and his associates may have tempered the evidence when the wafer was locked in the tabernacle. However, the cardiac tissue identified was in the left ventricle of the heart so that if some tissue was taken from there, the human would have to die. Moreover, the scientist who investigated the blood and cardiac tissue found living white blood cells which only have a life span of 1 to 3 days in a living human body so that had the sample came from a dead person, the white blood cells would have all died after the sample was transported from Buenos Aires to New York later (after 3 years). Therefore, it is unlikely that anyone has tempered with the evidence or

sample. Further analysis of the DNA samples shows that there was no genetic profile for the DNA but the scientific analysis of the DNA of the maternal part can be carried out. They found that the sample from the statue case and the sample from the case of the communion host were related, possibly coming from the same person.

Table 2 shows some examples of Eucharistic miracles happening in the past starting from Lanciano, Italy in the 8<sup>th</sup> Century upto 2008 at Sokolka in Poland. Not all Eucharistic miracle examples are included due to copyright issues. The reader is referred to Cruz (1991) and San Clemente (2016) for a more extensive list of examples, and Serafini (2021) for some recent examples as well as the Carlo Acutis (Pierce, 2020) list, part of which is listed in Wikipedia (2023a) on Eucharistic miracle webpage. Some of these miracles were subject to scientific investigations and most corroborate with the blood type being AB and the tissue is of the cardiac tissue type. To formulate our probability  $p(M_2|E_2)$ , it is not necessary that we believe in all the Eucharistic miracles to have a high probability. Instead, we only need to find one or more Eucharistic miracle that we deeply believe in, then we can assign a high probability since we are taking the maximum of the probabilities of the evidence for the individual miracle. I believe that the Eucharistic miracle of Lanciano and the ones of Argentina in 1992, 1994 and 1996 are trustworthy, as scientific investigations have been carried out, and in some cases independent investigators were called upon to document the investigations. Therefore, I would assign a high probability to  $p(M_2|E_2)$ , and let us say 0.7 so that  $p(\text{not } M_2|E_2) = 0.3$ .

Time	Place	Country	Remarks
8 <sup>th</sup> Century	Lanciano	Italy	Monk had doubts about transubstantiation
1194	Augsburg	Germany	Used wax to seal host but turned to flesh
...	...	...	...
1996	Buenos Aires*	Argentina	Overseen by Archbishop Bergoglio
2008	Sokolka	Poland	Placed the host in a container of water

Table 2: Examples of Eucharistic miracles at different times. The table does not contain all the examples. There are over 100 recorded Eucharistic miracles (see [Cruz, 1991; San Clemente, 2016] for some examples) in the past. The example with an asterisk is a highly probable miracle that deserves further reading.

### 3.4.3 E<sub>3</sub>: Marian Apparitions

Marian apparitions (Aleteia, 2022) involved a vision of the blessed Virgin Mary (Insight856, 2018) who can be viewed by the subject(s) and possibly others with the subject(s). Many Marian apparitions are usually accompanied by other miracles to substantiate the claim that the blessed Virgin Mary is seen by the subject(s). For example, the Marian apparition in Fatima (Dalleur, 2021) is accompanied by the miracle of the sun in which the sun appeared to dance around in the sky. Marian apparitions support the hypothesis that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, because the blessed Virgin Mary led the subject(s) and others to believe in Jesus Christ is the Son of God instead of worshipping the blessed Virgin Mary.

While there are many Marian apparitions reported, not that many have been approved by the church because of the credibility of the church is at stake. Usually, the church passed on the judgment that there is no decision or negative judgment to many reported Marian apparitions

instead of approval. The church mainly used the following to approve the Marian apparitions as authentic according to Magis Center (2021):

1. “There must be moral certainty, or at least great probability, that something miraculous has occurred, something that cannot be explained by natural cause, or by deliberate fakery;
2. The person or persons who claim to have had the private revelation must be mentally sound, honest, sincere, of upright conduct, and obedient to ecclesiastical authority;
3. The content of the revelation or message must be theologically acceptable, morally sound and free of error;
4. The apparition must yield positive and continuing spiritual assets: for example, prayer, conversion, and increase of charity.”

In the past, there has been Marian apparitions spanning hundreds of years (if not thousands if the Marian apparition when Mary was still alive is included). Table 3 shows some examples of Marian apparitions from Wikipedia (2021) which reported over thirty cases. We do not believe that every miracle is genuine, and only some of these miracles are true would suggest that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is worth believing in. Therefore, are there any convincing Marian apparition miracles in the past?

Year	Place	Country	Remarks
1531	Tepeyac	Mexico	Imprint an image on the cloak (tilma) (GabiAfterHours, 2022)
1830	Rue du Bac	France	Miraculous medal that was connected to many miracles
...	...	...	...
1917	Fatima*	Portugal	The miracle of the Sun
1968	Cairo	Egypt	Intermittent apparitions lasting 2 to 3 years (Christian Mysticism, 2023)

Table 3: Examples of Marian Apparitions at different times. The table does not contain all the examples. There were over 30 Marian apparitions in the past which have been approved (e.g., some by the Holy See or some for pilgrimage). See a list of Marian apparitions from Wikipedia (2021). The example with an asterisk is a highly probable miracle that deserves further reading.

Perhaps, one of the more convincing examples is the Marian apparition at Fatima (St. Paul Center, 2022) in Portugal. The reasons why it was considered more convincing is that the miracle was foretold to three shepherd children who were made to disclose the information in the earlier Marian apparitions (on 13<sup>th</sup> July 1917). As a result, many people were aware that there would be a miracle and therefore they went to north of Fatima to experience that. On 13<sup>th</sup> October 1917, the miracle happened lasting about 10 minutes, and there were many eye-witnesses to provide testimonies, some of which were reported in the newspapers. However, nowadays some meteorological events were found to be similar to the “dancing sun” miracle (Hambling, 2019). Nevertheless, before the “dancing sun” phenomenon, testimonies of Fatima eye-witnesses indicated that the sun appeared to move toward the earth, and some are afraid so they knelt down and pray that the miracle would end. Hence, the foretold miracle at Fatima was not that similar to the meteorological events where spectators did not observe the sun moving toward the earth. In addition, some photographs were taken and later these were used as evidence (Delleur, 2021) that there was a miracle happened. Specifically, the photographs

show that there were two light sources. Also, the angle of inclination of the dancing sun was about 30+ degrees instead of the expected 42 degrees, suggesting that there was a miracle. The catholic church took an investigation about the miracle and the bishop, Jose da Silva, declared that the miracle was “worthy of belief” on 13<sup>th</sup> October 1930. However, there are some Christians who doubt that the miracles were due to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Instead, they think it was some demonic deception related to the coming of the end times. Since this suggests that there are spiritual realms, therefore believing in a Christian God is more pressing. Therefore, my degree of belief of miracles leans towards believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Let us say that my subjective probability  $p(M_3|E_3)$  is 0.7 or  $p(\text{not } M_3|E_3)$  is 0.3.

Some denomination of Christianity did not think highly of the miracle of Fatima and what the blessed Virgin Mary has said to the three children. Therefore, we need to be careful in believing the message brought about by Fatima and make sure it does not contradict with the core beliefs of Christianity. If we stick to our core belief of Christianity, even if the miracle is from Satan or the devil, we will believe in the same thing as before so that this will not lead us astray. This is because if there is Satan or devil, then there is God and the fake blessed virgin Mary will help us to believe in the true God that we want to believe in. If the blessed Virgin Mary is true, then we will believe in the same God that the blessed Virgin Mary believes so there is no problem. The particular denomination of Christianity that has trouble with the miracle and apparition at Fatima is concerned that these are not consistent with Scripture. While there are many charges of inconsistencies with Scripture, we only highlight two. First, the blessed Virgin Mary was referred to as the “Most Holy Mother” with an “Immaculate Heart” meaning that Mary did not have the original sin. The Bible did not refer Mary as being sinless. However, in another earlier Marian apparition (i.e., Lady of Lourdes), the blessed Virgin Mary declared herself as the Immaculate Conception (born without original sin). Earlier the Pope declared the blessed Virgin Mary catechisms including Immaculate Conception. The other denomination may declare that the earlier Marian apparition was due to Satan or the devil. However, the seer later received a holy death (i.e., incorruptible corpse) after prayers for such ending. The Catholic church has been debating whether Mary has original sin for hundreds of years, and it was finally resolved by the Pope and the earlier Marian apparition. While there can be further debate with the other denominations, if we consider the miracle of Fatima points us towards our core belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, then we should not be far wrong. Second, there is a concern by the other denominations that we offer prayers to the blessed Virgin Mary or to saints because such offering is not found in the Scripture. The other denominations did indicate that “the Holy Spirit makes intercession for us according to the will of God with groanings that cannot be uttered” (Romans 8:26). However, it is possible that the blessed Virgin Mary and the other saints, who are humans, have the Holy Spirit with them and their Holy Spirit intercedes with their bodies and souls for us. It should be noted the New Testament focused on Jesus Christ instead of the blessed Virgin Mary and the saints. Also, the saints were not recognized by the church because the Catholic church was not formed at the time. In Acts (10:25), Peter was being “venerated” by Cornelius who was told to “Stand up, I myself am a man.” However, if Peter realized that he was with the Holy spirit, Cornelius may be venerating Peter’s Holy Spirit instead of Peter’s soul and body.

Another series of Marian apparitions appeared in Ukraine (Vadis, 2022). The apparitions occurred after being separated by hundreds of years. In 1637, the blessed virgin Mary appeared in Hurshiv, Ukraine. People planted a willow tree in honour of the apparition. About a hundred

years later, a spring appeared beneath the planted willow tree and the spring water has healing powers. An icon of the blessed Virgin Mary was placed above the willow tree and pilgrimage started. On May 12, 1914, two weeks before the start of World War I, the blessed Virgin Mary appeared to 20 people and she warned: “There will be a war. Russia will become a Godless country and Ukraine, as a nation, will suffer terribly for 80 years and will live through the world wars, but it will be free afterward.” On April 27, 1987, the blessed Virgin Mary appeared again in Hrushiv. Over a four month period that ended on August 15, 1987 (the Feast of the Assumption), thousands of witnesses reported to have seen the blessed Virgin Mary who predicted that one day Ukraine would become an independent state which happened from August 24, 1991. Apart from the miraculous spring water, the blessed Virgin Mary provided predictions that have occurred, including: World War I, Russia became a Godless state (the Soviet Union), Ukraine suffered for about 80 years, there are more than one world war, and Ukraine became an independent state. These remarkable predictions and the miraculous spring water support the Marian apparitions to be authentic.

#### 3.4.4 E<sub>4</sub>: Incorruptible Corpses

Incorruptible corpses (Chong, 2022; Grunge 2022) refer to the dead bodies of individuals who are usually saints of the Catholic church or East Orthodox church. Such saints are obviously related to the belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God because they may be the bishop or Pope of the East Orthodox/Catholic church preaching the Gospel. These corpses can usually be still viewed today after dying hundreds of years ago. While many bodies of them are still in existence, a few may have decomposed and only left with bones. A concern about incorruptible corpses as miracles is that it was found that certain soil condition may favour the corpse not to decompose. Since there are many incorruptible corpses, it is unlikely that the soil conditions of all the corpses favour incorruptibility. Again, as long as there are some cases (may be one or two) of incorruptibility without the right soil condition for incorruptibility, some of the incorruptible corpses would be rightly considered as miracles. Therefore, we can assign a high subjective probability,  $p(M_4|E_4)$ , in that case.

Table 4 shows some examples of incorruptible corpses at different times. Wikipedia (2022a) has identified over 20 cases of incorruptible corpses and the interested reader can view the related web pages for details. Most of these bodies are not completely incorruptible instead they decay much slower than naturally (in terms of tens or hundreds of years while being exhumed). Also, the church may apply wax to the bodies to make it decay slower. It should be said that most of these cases the wax was not applied immediately after the death of the individuals. For some cases like Bernadette, wax was applied when the body was exhumed after 20-30 years of burial. Therefore, the slow decay was not due to the application of wax alone.

A notable case of incorruptible corpse is Saint Francis Xavier (Brocokey, 2015; Matthew, 2015). In 1552, the corpse was declared incorruptible (Gupta, 2010) by his religious brothers about three months after his burial in December 1552 on the Shangchuan island off the coast of southern China. The body was shipped to Goa in India. A series of medical examinations was carried out over the years (1554, 1614, 1782, 1859 and 1952). In 1614, Xavier’s body was returned to the autopsy table, as part of his formal canonization proceedings (1610-1622). In this case, his right arm was amputated (CBS News, 2018) because his right arm was used by

Xavier conferring many baptisms when he was alive. According to Gupta (2010) about the amputation around 100 years after Xavier’s death, there was “evidence of blood flowing in abundance” and some attested “the blood that stained the iron blade that was used to cut his arm off”. The incorruptibility of the corpse was established and the arm was sent to the Vatican. Nowadays, the body of Saint Francis Xavier is still in Goa and there is procession of the body as viewed in YouTube on the Internet.

There were doubts about the genuineness of the sacred body of Saint Francis Xavier in 1792 after the suppression of the Jesuits in India. The claim at the time was that the Jesuits shifted the real body of Saint Francis Xavier to Portugal and the body was a dead priest who replaced him in Goa. Another recent controversy in 1900s was that the sacred body of Saint Francis Xavier was lost at sea during its transit to Goa and was replaced by the body of Buddhist Monk Thhotgamuwe Sr Rahula Thera. Also, some speculated that Saint Francis Xavier was at Sri Lanka but according to records, he was not there and did not die there. There were also records of the transit of the dead body from China to Goa. Also, Dr Cosme Saraiva who personally knew Saint Francis Xavier examined his body and certified under oath that he medically checked all parts of the body and found it fresh without being embalmed with any artificial means. The body was examined in 1614 and afterwards, which suggests that the body was of European origin rather than Asian origin. Also, the body cannot be an old monk who died at the age of 83 in 1791 before the Portuguese arrive in India in 1498. Therefore, the body is believed to be the sacred relic of Saint Francis Xavier (for details see Ferrao, 2014). My subjective probability,  $p(M_4|E_4)$ , is 0.7 or  $p(\text{not } M_4|E_4)$  is 0.3. For a more recent case of incorruptible corpse, see the Wikipedia page of Carlo Acutis.

Year	Person Name	Place	Country
1272	Saint Zita San Frediano	Lucca, Tuscany	Italy
1457	Saint Rita	Cascia, Umbria	Italy
...	...	...	...
1552	Saint Francis Xavier*	Goa	India
1876	Saint Catherine Labouré	Paris	France

Table 4: Examples of incorruptible corpses at different times. The table does not contain all the examples. There were over 20 incorruptible corpses in the past, some of which belong to Roman Catholic church and some to East Orthodox church (Wikipedia, 2022a). The place and country refer to the city and country that the corpses can be viewed. The example with an asterisk is a highly probable miracle that deserves further reading.

### 3.4.5 E<sub>5</sub>: Weeping Statues

Weeping statues (History, 2021) are statues that have been claimed to shed tears or to be weeping by supernatural means. The tears reported may appear as blood, oil or scented liquids. While there are a number of claims of weeping statues (see Table 5), many of them are treated as hoaxes because sceptics think that it is relatively easy to fake weeping statues.

A notable example of weeping statues is the statue associated with claims of Marian apparition of Our Lady of Akita in Japan (Dubeau, 2021). The case stands out because the entire nation of Japan was able to view the statue of the Virgin Mary shed tears on Japanese national television (Schroedel and Schroedel, 2006).



Another notable example is the weeping statue of Cochabamba in Bolivia since 1995. A lawyer, Ron Tesoriero, (Reason To Believe, 2023) has documented and filmed the weeping statue while it bleeds as well. The documentary is sold on a DVD by Ron Tesoriero. It also includes his interviews with witnesses who saw the weepings and bleedings when they began. Mike Willesee who was a sceptic journalist filmed a documentary including this weeping and bleeding statue in 7News (Willesee, 2017), which also includes documenting the Eucharistic miracle investigation. Later, Mike Willesee was reconverted to the Catholic faith before he died. Since there are televised show and documentary film about weeping statues, our subjective belief,  $p(M_5|E_5)$ , is 0.55 which is larger than no preference of belief and disbelief.

Year	Place	Country	Remarks
1953	Syracuse, Sicily	Italy	Human tears approved by local bishops
1973	Akita*	Japan	Weeping statue of the Virgin Mary
...	...	...	...
2002	Rockingham	Australia	Wept scented tears, apparitions, accepted
2018	Hobbs, New Mexico	USA	Weeping tears of Sacred Chrism. Under investigation

Table 5: Examples of weeping statues at different times and some still under investigation. The table does not contain all the examples. See Wikipedia (2022b) for a list of examples. The example with an asterisk is a highly probable miracle that deserves further reading.

### 3.4.6 E<sub>6</sub>: Stigmata

Stigmata are signs of bodily wounds, scars and pain in places corresponding to the crucifixion wounds of Jesus Christ (e.g., hands, wrists and feet). These signs may appear for a certain time and gone afterwards. Saint Francis of Assisi is perhaps the first one to have recorded to have stigmata. The first biographer of Saint Francis, Thomas of Celano reports the event in his 1230 First Life of Saint Francis as:

“His wrists and feet seemed to be pierced by nails, with the heads of the nails appearing on his wrists and on the upper sides of his feet, the points appearing on the other side. The marks were round on the palm of each hand but elongated on the other side, and small pieces of flesh jutting out from the rest took on the appearance of the nail-ends, bent and driven back. In the same way the marks of nails were impressed on his feet and projected beyond the rest of the flesh. Moreover, his right side had a large wound as if it had been pierced with a spear, and it often bled so that his tunic and trousers were soaked with his sacred blood” (Thomas of Celano, 1230)

Hartung concluded in 1935 after studying the records of Saint Francis physical ailments and symptoms that Saint Francis has an eye ailment known as trachoma and quartan malaria. Another medical hypothesis was suggested in 1987 explaining the wounds and claimed that Saint Francis may have contracted leprosy.

Another example of stigmata is Saint Padre Pio of Pietrelcina. For over 50 years, he reported stigmata which came and gone and they were studied by several 20<sup>th</sup>-century physicians. The

observations were reported as inexplicable and the wounds did not get infected. Since these wounds come and go, it is unlikely that these wounds are due to leprosy or trachoma and quartan malaria.

A more recent event (Vojinovic, 2019) is the filming of the stigmata by Fox News TV in 1999. The journalist who examined the case was Mike Willesee again. Initially, they were expecting the stigmata to appear on some predicted date. Due to some conversation with Jesus Christ by the victim, Catalina Rivas, she told the TV crew that the stigmata would appear at a later date. Fox TV has to wait and later on the prophesised date, the stigmata appeared. This was filmed on Fox TV and it is available in the Internet. The stigmata of Catalina Rivas was also reported in the book called “Reason to believe” and the documentary “a Plea to Humanity” made available by the lawyer, Ron Tesoriero (Reason To Believe, 2023). One reason why this may be considered as a miracle is that after the stigmata appeared on the prophesised date, the wounds of Catalina Rivas were recovered the next day. While we believe that the documentary is filmed without any intentional forgery, we do not have strong believe that the stigmata is real although better than no preference of belief and disbelief, so our subjective probability,  $p(M_6|E_6)$  is 0.55.

Year	Person Name	Place	Country
1226	Saint Francis of Assisi	Assisi	Italy
1926	Mariam Thresia Chiramel	Puthenchira	India
...	...	...	...
1968	Saint Padre Pio	Pietrelcina	Italy
1999	Catalina Rivas*	Cochabamba	Bolivia

Table 6: Examples of people with stigmata reported at different times. The table does not contain all the examples. The year is the year of death of the individual and not necessary the first time the stigmata appeared. The example with an asterisk is a probable miracle that deserves further viewing because the video is available in the Internet at <https://pinterest.com/pin/346425396337688003/> and a follow up video in Reason to Believe (2023).

### 3.4.7 E7: Liquify Blood

Saint Januarius was Bishop of Benvento. He died because of his religious belief and he was a saint of both the Catholic church and the Eastern orthodox church. It was alleged that he died during the Great Persecution which ended with Diocletian’s retirement in 305. He was a patron saint of Naples. The faithful there gathers threes a year in Naples Cathedral to witness the liquefaction of blood (My World, 2022) that is thought to be a sample of his blood in a sealed glass ampoule. It was thought that a woman named Eusebia saved his blood after the saint’s death. The first certain date that the blood melt is in 1389 and over the years the blood has solidified and melted a number of times. The feast of Saint Januarius is celebrated on 19 September in the calendar of the Catholic church and on 21 April for the Eastern church. Three days in a year people assemble to witness the event for the liquification of blood in Naples Cathedral on 19 September, on 16 December and on the Saturday before the first Sunday of

May. In some cases, the blood is said to spontaneously liquefy at certain times, such as papal visits.

Scientific investigations of the blood were carried out. One of them is a spectroscopic analysis performed in 1902 by Gennaro Sperindeo who claimed that the spectrum was consistent with haemoglobin. Another investigation in 1989 has a similar conclusion. However, the reliability of these investigations has been questioned. Nonetheless, while clotted blood can be liquefied by stirring, the resulting suspension cannot be solidified or clot again. It should be noted that the blood has been witnessed to liquify once, twice and thrice times a year. For some years, the blood did not liquify such as 2016 and 2017, and the liquification does not just happen in summer.

Year	Visitor Name	Place	Remark
1389	Unknown	Naples	First liquefied blood reported
1848	Pope Pius IX	Naples	Liquefied blood
...	...	...	...
2015	Pope Francis	Naples	Half liquefied blood
2022	Unknown	Naples	Liquefied blood

Table 7: Liquification of blood of Saint Januarius over the centuries.

The blood of Saint Januarius is not the only blood that can solidify and melt over time. The ampulla of Saint Lawrence (or Saint Lorenzo) blood can also solidify and melt over time. The blood is preserved in the blessed Virgin Mary's church and the relic consists of blood mixed with fat, cinders and a fragment of skin. Dr Clinio Silvestri (1849-1900) studied the relic for about 30 years. During the phase of liquefaction, it is easier to observe the various elements that constitute it. Typically, the blood liquifies on the 10 August, the feast day of Saint Lawrence. According to Fr Italo Cardarilli, the phenomenon has been taking place since 1600s and the church housed the relic from 1177. We showed here that while the evidence supporting liquefaction of blood as a miracle is plausible, we do not have strong feelings for the evidence, so the subjective probability,  $p(M_7|E_7)$ , is only 0.55 which is only slightly higher than no preference of belief and disbelief.

### 3.4.8 E<sub>8</sub>: Miraculous Cures

There are many cures mentioned in the Bible, especially by Jesus Christ. However, for most of us nowadays, we would have a questioning attitude towards these miraculous cures as they happened some two thousands years ago, recorded by those who want us to believe. Are there any miraculous cures after the Bible was compiled and yet related to Christian beliefs?

One notable positive case is the miraculous cures (60 Minutes, 2023) by drinking spring water at Lourdes over the years from 1858 when Bernadette Soubirous was experiencing Marian apparitions. Bernadette Soubirous was told to dig the ground near or at the grotto by the blessed Virgin Mary on 25 February 1858. The next day clear water flowed and became the spring water that has since reported miraculous cures at Lourdes.

An international medical committee is set up to examine the cures that are inexplicable by current scientific knowledge. To be recognised as medically unexplained by the international medical committee, the followings must be established:

- The diagnosis before cure must be confirmed beyond doubt;
- The diagnosis must be considered incurable by current means;
- The cure must be associated with a visit to Lourdes;
- The cure must be immediate;
- The cure must be complete;
- The cure must be permanent.

It is clear that many cures after drinking the spring water will not be counted as some of the Lourdes visitors have taken medication before the visit and the cure may be attributed to the medication instead of the spring water. Since 2018 (from 1858), the committee has recognized 70 inexplicable cures by the spring water at Lourdes out of about 7,500 reported unexplained healings. For the recognized inexplicable cures, the cures cannot be due to medication or self-immune systems because the cures must be immediate, complete and permanent. These recognized cures are then passed on to the church to decide whether they are miraculous cures.

Year	Patient Name	Diagnosis	Remark
1958	Bross, L.	Tuberculosis with multiple fistulae	Alive and well in 1983
1959	Fournier, Y.	Post-traumatic syndrome of Leriche	Alive and well in 1983
...	...	...	...
1976	Micheli, V.	Sarcoma of pelvis	Alive and well in 1983
1978	Perrin, S.	Recurring organic hemiplegia	Alive and well in 1983

Table 8: Selected cases passed by the International Medical Committee of Lourdes (CMIL) and recognized by the church as miraculous cures. For a more complete list of (13) cases, see Dowling (1984).

Even after the detailed process of deciding the cures are inexplicable or miraculous, sceptics are still concerned whether the rate of recognized inexplicable cures is the same as the base rate of inexplicable cures in other places. The sceptics called this the base rate fallacy because the rate of inexplicable cures in other places should be lower than that at Lourdes after drinking the spring water. As statistics are generally unavailable for the inexplicable cures in other places, no one could be certain that the rate at Lourdes is higher or not. Even if it is higher, the sceptics can attribute the higher rate due to variation so that a statistical test is needed. Even if the statistical test is positive, the sceptics may attribute this to other factors or delay their decision to accept because there may be unknown factors in contributing to the higher rate at Lourdes. Having said that, instead of looking at the rate because the medical committee has already dismissed many cases, we feel certain that some of the cures are inexplicable at Lourdes and they may be considered as miraculous. Since to show the existence of miraculous cures only require a single instance instead of repeated results, we can feel certain that there are miraculous cures at Lourdes. To substantiate this, all the instantaneous, complete, permanent cures at Lourdes are after the patients experienced the Lourdes spring water. We can set up a

null hypothesis that the cures at Lourdes are by chance so that the probability that the patient was cured before experiencing the Lourdes water is the same as the probability that the patient was cured after experiencing the Lourdes water given that the patient was cured at Lourdes, which is 0.5. Now, there are 70 cures at Lourdes that are deemed miraculous. So, the probability that all the patients were cured after experiencing the Lourdes water would be 0.5 to the power 70 which is much smaller than 0.05. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis that the cures at Lourdes were by chance. It is possible that what is operating here is a placebo effect causing the patients to be cured. However, placebo effects usually improve the health of the patients rather than having an instantaneous, complete, permanent cure as required by the medical committee at Lourdes. Therefore, the placebo effects are ruled out. Also, the base rate argument is based on showing that the base rate is lower than the cure rate and that requires to show that the universal statement that FOR ALL cases, the base rate is X%. However, we are not interested in showing for ALL cases but only SOME case(s) that there are miraculous cures. So, the base rate argument is not very relevant to what we want to show. Given these considerations, our subjective probability,  $p(M_8|E_8)$ , that Jesus Christ is the Son of God given the evidence of the miraculous cures is not low, say 0.7. Note that there are other Marian apparitions that involve finding spring water that can cure miraculously but these cases are not as well documented as those at Lourdes. So, they are not mentioned in here.

#### 3.4.9 E<sub>9</sub>: Bible

In the New Testament, many of the disciples provide testimony of Jesus Christ who has performed many miracles (for example raising people from the dead, giving sight to blind people, etc). These miracles are described in the Gospels of Mark, Luke, Matthew and John. These miracles attested that Jesus Christ has supernatural power so that it is not difficult to believe that he is the Son of God. However, one may have low probabilities,  $p(H_1|e_{9,j})$  for some  $j$  corresponding to those mentioned miracles in the Bible, because there is no other evidence to support them which happened two thousands of years ago.

As Jesus Christ is concerned that he is the Messiah, he did many things according to the Scripture. The Gospels also try to point out that Jesus Christ fulfilled many prophecies (Warner and Wallace, 2023) that the Old Testament has made, so that it qualifies Jesus Christ as the Messiah. Because these prophecies were made before Jesus Christ, it was not clear whether the prophecies were accurately written down in the Old Testament so that it was not clear that debates over whether the prophecies were fulfilled were meaningful. Even though if not all prophecies were as predicted, some would make us lean toward believing that Jesus Christ is the Messiah.

After the resurrection, the disciples held firm belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God as in Acts, Romans, etc. of the New Testament (InspiringPhilosophy, 2024). This is in sharp contrast to the disciples before the death of Jesus Christ. It is not clear whether during the days after Jesus Christ was resurrected, Jesus Christ spent time explaining to the disciples about God's message so they become convinced. It is also not clear whether the disciples felt more confident after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, because the Holy spirit dwelled in the disciples and gave them supernatural power, strengthening their faith. Also, it is not known whether the firm belief of the disciples is strengthened by Paul who was a Pharisee knowing all the details of the Old Testament. It might be a combination of these factors that have encouraged the disciples to be

bolder in their faith. They are also not restrained any more to tell God's message after the resurrection because before Jesus Christ death, Jesus Christ explicitly forbade the disciples to call Him the Messiah or Son of God. In Acts and Romans, as Paul went to preach the Gentiles in Rome, it would make more sense to call Jesus Christ as the Son of God instead of the Messiah which is only meaningful in the Jewish community. Therefore, we see that Son of God is being mentioned more in the Acts, Romans, etc. than in the Gospels. These disciples stand as our witness of the Gospel and that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Such firm beliefs are rare unless they have very strong conviction. In fact, for some Apostles, like St Peter and St Paul, they have to die for their beliefs.

Paul's conversion is an extraordinary example of witness to God's message. Paul was blinded by Jesus Christ when Paul was on the way to Damascus to persecute the Christians. At Damascus, Paul's blindness was healed by a Christian, and Paul was converted from a persecuting Pharisee to a Christian. Such sudden change in beliefs is rare unless there is again strong conviction. This shows that Jesus Christ, after the resurrection, has supernatural power which fits the description that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Therefore, Paul's conversion suggests that there was a miracle that implicated Jesus Christ is the Son of God. For this case, we may have a higher probability say  $p(M_9|e_{9,j}) = 0.7$  for  $j$  denoting Paul's conversion.

Surprisingly, I found the New Testament to be believable. So, my subjective probability,  $p(\text{not } M_9|E_9)$  is 0.3.

### 3.5 Summary and Discussion

There are other miracles which happened but they are not mentioned here. For example, there was a car accident and there was a mysterious voice (Landau, 2015) leading to discover a child in the accident, who was saved. Another example of miracle is that there are divine dictations (Tesoriero, 2016). Still, another example is that the Holy Spirit told a man (Lightle et al., 1983) to go to Soviet Union in the 1970s to free Jews there and let them go back to Israel. Since it is hard to find direct traceable evidence to support these miracles, they are not included here. Nevertheless, the reader can find out whether these miracles are believable by themselves, or to discover other miracles reported in the news or Internet. If the reader wants to assign subjective probabilities to these miracles, the reader needs to put these miracles into different types or classes or groups. Determine which miracle in the type is most likely and assign a subjective probability to the miracle type. Then, use these probabilities to calculate the probability of accepting  $H_1$  based on the different types of evidence (i.e.,  $p(H_1|E_1, E_2, \dots, E_n)$ ). Let us assume that we do not consider these other types of evidence from now on.

The logical formulation in Section 3.1.1 shows that if we have multiple evidence implicating a hypothesis, then this is logically equivalent to disjoining the implications that the individual evidence implicating the hypothesis. Logically, if any one of these implications is true, then the hypothesis is taken to be true. Therefore, we only need to show that if we categorically believe in one piece of evidence that implicate the miracles, then the hypothesis is taken to be true. For example, if we believe that the image formation on the Shroud of Turin implicates a miracle is true, then this suggests that the hypothesis that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is true. There is no need to examine other implications. Another example is the Eucharistic miracles. If these pieces of evidence for the Eucharistic miracles implicate these miracles (e.g., see

[Reason To Believe, 2023]), then we would state that the hypothesis that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is true. For Marian apparitions, the foretold miracle of the sun was witnessed by over 70,000 people so that this may implicate that the miracle was true. Also, the tilma left after the Marian apparition at Guadalupe provides strong evidence (e.g., see [GabiAfterHours, 2022]) that there was a miracle. These implicate that the hypothesis that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is true. An example of strong evidence for incorruptible corpse is the corpse of St. Francis Xavier. The corpse is in India in the tropical area so that it is unlikely that the soil condition would preserve the corpse, and the corpse is in frequent parades. The incorruptible corpse of St. Francis Xavier is the strong evidence to support that there is a miracle and the hypothesis that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is true. An example of weeping statue is Our Lady of Akita in which the wooden blessed virgin Mary statue was filmed to shed tears on camera. This provides strong evidence of a miracle suggesting that the hypothesis that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is true. An example of stigmata with strong evidence is the filmed documentary of Catalina Rivas by Fox News (Vojinovic, 2019). While one may doubt the stigmata appeared, it was the recovery of the stigmata wounds that convinced the journalist, Mike Willesee, that it was a miracle (Reason to Believe, 2023). Such strong evidence suggests that the hypothesis that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is true. Another example is the liquify blood of Saint Januarius. The festivals for the liquefaction of blood take place annually. If you do not believe, you can visit Naples to participate in those festivals for the liquefaction of blood to witness such events. Yet another example of miraculous cure is the one reported in 60 minutes (2023). It was reported that over 300 physicians were consulted to finally decide that the case cannot be explained by natural means, and that the patient heard an inner voice that led her to be cured given that she was diagnosed not to have any mental illness. Such strong evidence supports the hypothesis that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Finally, if you believe the testimony in Acts of the Bible about Paul's conversion to Christianity and that many followers were willing to die for their beliefs, then this is strong evidence that makes you categorically believe the hypothesis that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. You can also verify now in 2023 that a 3D image of the blessed virgin Mary mysteriously appears in a church in Alta Gracia, by visiting the church there. People have claimed that there is no rational explanation for the 3D image (EWTN, 2023) so one can consider it as a miracle which points to the existence of the Christian God and that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. If given all these strong pieces of evidence, none of them convince you to categorically believe in the hypothesis that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, then we need to proceed to assign subjective probabilities to these strong cases as follows using my assignment as an example.

Table 9 shows the subjective probabilities that I have assigned to H1 and deduced H0 based on the individual miracle types which I have looked into for the evidence to support those miracles that I think are more probable. Similarly, the reader should look into the evidence before assigning these subjective probabilities for himself/herself because my description of the evidence is very sketchy. The evidence that you can go into may include specific dates on which miracles have happened and sometime with specific time as well as locations, photographs, chemical analysis, etc. Therefore, you should not assign the probabilities based on your reaction to my sketch of the evidence.

i	Type	Strong Supporting Aspect or Case	Verbal Scale of $p(M_i E_i)$	$p(M_i E_i)$	$p(\text{not } M_i E_i)$
1	Shroud of Turin	Image Formation	Not so confident	0.65	0.35
2	Eucharistic Miracles	1996 Independent Monitoring	Reasonably confident	0.7	0.3
3	Marian Apparitions	Fatima Miracle of the Sun	Reasonably confident	0.7	0.3
4	Incorruptible Corpse	St. Francis Xavier's case	Reasonably confident	0.7	0.3
5	Weeping Statue	Live Televised Show	Leaning towards miracle happened	0.55	0.45
6	Stigmata	Documentary Film	Leaning towards miracle happened	0.55	0.45
7	Liquify Blood	Spectroscopic Analysis	Leaning towards miracle happened	0.55	0.45
8	Miracle Cures	Lourdes Medical Committee	Reasonably confident	0.7	0.3
9	Bible	Paul's Conversion and Death	Reasonably confident	0.7	0.3

Table 9: My subjective probabilities assigned to  $M_i$  and the determined probabilities of not  $M_i$ , based on the individual evidence types. Note that when we are reasonably confident that the miracle happened or the testimony is true, we assigned the lowest probability in that interval, so we are being very cautious. One can consider that  $p(M_i|E_i)$  is a lower bound of my subjective probability.

Using the subjective probabilities in Table 9, we can determine  $p(H_0|E_1, \dots, E_9)$  as follows. First, we multiply all the subjective probabilities of the individual types together and we obtain  $7.75 \times 10^{-5}$ . Next, we raise  $p(H_0) = 0.667$  to the power 8 (i.e.,  $9 - 1$ ) in order to obtain 0.0392. Based on equation (3),  $p(H_0|E_1, \dots, E_9)$  is  $7.75 \times 10^{-5}$  divided by 0.0392, which is 0.00198. Since  $p(H_0|E_1, \dots, E_9) = 0.00198 < 0.05$ , we reject the null hypothesis that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God and accept  $H_1$  instead (i.e., we accept that Jesus Christ is the Son of God). This methodology allows us to decide without categorically judging whether individual miracles or miracle types to be true or not. Such categorical decision is very hard to reach in practice even if we seek for the evidence extensively. Obviously, the reader may reach another conclusion if (s)he assigned his/her subjective probabilities that are different from mine. However, we urge the reader again to investigate the evidence of each miracle type before assigning the subjective probabilities based on my sketch of the evidence, which is highly inadequate.

The 95% confidence level is established as a convention for accepting/rejecting hypothesis in scientific studies and statistics because the hypothesis testing is for universal statements which should be true all the time. Our case with existential statements is different from scientific studies because the payoff of the outcomes is lopsided (i.e., the Pascal Wager mentioned in Section 1). That is if we believe in Christianity we have an infinite payoff whereas if we do not believe in Christianity there is a finite payoff. Since there is such a heavy weight to believe in Christianity, we do not mind to take more risk in believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Therefore, instead of having 5% that we are wrong if we believe in Jesus Christ is the Son of God, we are willing to have 10% of higher to be wrong depending on the relative importance



or weighting of the payoff. Since one of the outcome has infinite payoff, it would be absurd to assign 100% that we accept we might be wrong in believing Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Instead, we should assign 50% that we accept we might be wrong because that would represent that we do not know whether to believe or not to believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Therefore, if our probability,  $p(H1|E_1, \dots, E_9)$ , is larger than 0.5 (i.e., 50%) then we are sincerely believing more that the likelihood of Jesus Christ is the Son of God so that it would form an upper bound of the risk that we take that we might be wrong (i.e., we settle for a 50% confidence level). Similarly, if we consider the lower bound of the prior probability,  $p(H0)$ , we would assign 0.5 to  $p(H0)$  because  $p(H0)$  represents the likelihood of asking someone whether (s)he believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God assuming that (s)he has not heard of Jesus Christ. Now,  $p(H0)$  cannot be less than 0.5 because that would represent people believing in Jesus Christ is the Son of God even though they never heard of Jesus Christ. If we recompute our probability,  $p(H1|E_1, \dots, E_9)$ , using  $p(H0) = 0.5$ , we have  $p(H0|E_1, \dots, E_9) = 0.01984$  which is less than 0.5, taking into account of the payoff. So, we would accept the alternative hypothesis,  $H1$ , that Jesus Christ is the Son of God with a 50% confidence level. Note that in this case, if we do not know whether to believe in each of the miracle or Bible (i.e.,  $p(H0|E_i) = 0.5$  for all  $i$  between 1 and 9 inclusive), then  $p(H0|E_1, \dots, E_9) = 0.5$  for  $p(H0) = 0.5$ .

A careful reader may have spotted that the Marian apparitions to Bernadette, the incorruptible corpse of Bernadette and the miraculous cures at Lourdes are related events instead of being independent. However, one has to observe that for each category of evidence of miracles, we only take the miracle that is the most convincing, assigning the highest subjective probability, ignoring other miracles of the same category. For the Marian apparition category, we selected the Fatima miracle of the Sun and ignored the Marian apparitions to Bernadette. For the incorruptible corpse category, we selected the case of Saint Francis Xavier instead of Saint Bernadette. Only in the miraculous cures category, we selected those miraculous cures at Lourdes. Therefore, we can consider them as independent categories so that it is legitimate to multiply the probabilities together.

We also show in Table 10 how the miracles are related to Jesus Christ or indirectly to Him via the Blessed Virgin Mary. Specifically, we show how the evidence of the miracles is related to Jesus Christ and what are some of the religious messages suggested by the miracles, relating to Jesus Christ. Note that the table does not have an exhaustive list of associations between the miracles and Jesus Christ. Rather, it is only indicative of some that we have identified so that the miracles are attributed to Jesus Christ rather than supernatural events relating to other religions. We do not deny that there are supernatural events for other religions but the Christian God claimed to be almighty who created the heavens and earth, so there are reasons to believe that the Christian God is the most powerful.

i	Type	Evidence relating miracles to Jesus Christ	Religious message relating to Jesus Christ
1	Shroud of Turin	AB Blood Type; Correspondence of the geometric points of Jesus Christ face on the Sudarium with those on the Shroud; Moving images of crucified person relating to the resurrection of Jesus Christ after crucifixion	The horrific suffering of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ
2	Eucharistic Miracles	AB Blood Type; Happens after the host is consecrated; Happens in or after the Eucharist	In the New Testament, Jesus Christ said that the bread is His Body and the wine is His Blood
3	Marian Apparitions	Tilma of the Blessed Virgin Mary who is the Mother of Jesus Christ; The miracle of the sun was under the control of the figure of the apparition who identified herself as the Blessed Virgin Mary	The seer was asked to build a church relating to Jesus Christ or the Blessed Virgin Mary; The seers were told by the figure of the apparition that she was the Blessed Virgin Mary
4	Incorruptible Corpse	Corpse of Saints of the Church relating to Jesus Christ	The Saints were awarded holy death by Jesus Christ or the Blessed Virgin Mary
5	Weeping Statue	AB Blood Type; Tears or Blood from statues of the Blessed Virgin Mary or Jesus Christ	Expressing suffering and sadness to those who do not believe in Jesus Christ
6	Stigmata	Wounds similar to those descriptions of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ	Communicating the pain and anxiety of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ
7	Liquify Blood	Saints relating to the Church and therefore Jesus Christ	Recurring miracles of the Saints to remind us about their suffering as they were killed because of their beliefs in Jesus Christ
8	Miraculous Cures	Visit to Lourdes, drinking holy spring water relating to the Blessed Virgin Mary; Testimony of Personal Spiritual Experience;	Expressing Jesus Christ compassion to human suffering by curing people
9	Bible	Testimony of Vision of Jesus Christ	Preventing Saul from Persecuting Christians who believed in Jesus Christ

Table 10: Relating evidence and religious messages to Jesus Christ or indirectly to Him via the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Apart from evidence of miracles, there are other arguments (e.g., Meyer, 2021; The Carpenter's Desk, 2023; Premier Unbelievable?, 2020) for believing in Christianity. First, central to the belief in Christianity is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Therefore, experts (e.g., McGrew and McGrew, 2009) have tried to come up with an argument based on probability that the resurrection as a miracle really happened. Next, there are the arguments for the existence of God (as well as the non-existence of God; see Wikipedia, 2023b). One argument is called the kalam cosmological argument. The argument states that whatever begins to exist, has a cause of its existence, and the universe began to exist. Therefore, the universe has a cause which is identified as God who always exists and does not require a cause. Another argument is the intelligent design. It claims that some features of the universe and some living things like cells are so complex that they are best explained by an intelligence cause (i.e., God) instead of the process of natural selection. Yet another argument is based on fine tuning using the current Big Bang theory. This argument suggests the existence of God because the (cosmological) constants are so finely tuned ( $10^{-40}$ ) to permit life to come into existence. There are other arguments (see [Philosophy Vibe, 2020] about Thomas Aquinas five ways of proving God's existence) based on contingency, ontological aspect, moral and personal experience for the existence of God that we do not have space to investigate. Once the existence of God is established, next we need arguments for the Christian God. This may involve a survey of various religions, and we need to come to the conclusion that the Christian God is favoured. Reasonable Faith website has more details about various arguments for Christianity that the reader may explore. Note that these arguments may be involved and the reader should not just take the summary that we provide and decide whether to believe in God or not. The reader is suggested to visit the Reasonable Faith website to find out the details about these arguments and then decide to believe in God or not. Don't decide to believe based on the sign post (i.e., our summary here) but go to the desired place and find out before making a decision to believe or not. Few people believed because they are convinced by what Jesus Christ said in the Bible. These people have great faith. It would be useful to learn about our arguments and evidence when they face people who doubt them. Therefore, our arguments here are not just for those who are uncertain, but also for those who feel certain about their beliefs but they need to have some arguments or evidence to support them.

You may feel you are being encouraged to belief. So, you need to find evidence against this belief. For example, archaeologists (Timeline, 2018) have found a tomb that possibly have accommodated the remains of the family of Jesus of Nazareth. The ossuaries include those with inscriptions of the Son of Joseph, Jesus, Mary, Matthew, Jose, Magdalene and James. While some of these names inscribed on the ossuaries were quite common in Jesus's time, their combination occurring together is small. Also, there was some sign of early Christianity inscribed above the entrance of the tomb. However, there is some evidence that this is not the tomb of Jesus of Nazareth because it includes an ossuary for Judas with an inscription that he is the son of Jesus. This evidence may suggest that the tomb could have been a set up to refute the Gospel being preached and the ossuary of Judas may contain his bones, but the other ossuaries may not contain the family of Jesus. It could also be that Christian followers used the names of the leaders in Christianity, and their bones are stored in the tomb instead. Many theories can be speculated to discount the tomb possibly accommodated the bones of Jesus of Nazareth. Therefore, the archaeological finding is not conclusive (Top Box TV, 2020), which

cannot explain why we have miracles happening during the resurrection and after the Bible was compiled as well if Jesus of Nazareth was just a human being and not the Son of God.

According to Damper, some may object that miracles are done for some people so that they have an advantage to believe in Christianity without the need of faith. This would create a situation that God is unfair as God favours some to experience miracles. However, we should not think that people experiencing miracles will automatically believe in Christianity as there are no guarantees so that faith in the form of trust is still needed. Also, God may produce miracles for people to experience if they are already believers or that they will believe in the future so that the free will of these people are not affected. For example, the Eucharistic miracles are carried out in churches because the priests usually have to say the right words of the consecration for such miracles to happen. Since such miracles are done in churches, most people experiencing the miracle are believers. For Christianity, not only God can produce a miracle, the blessed Virgin Mary and other Saints may also produce miracles. Since these miracles are not directly produced by God, there may not be an issue about fairness of experiencing miracles. As a result, miracles by the blessed Virgin Mary may be experienced by more people of different persuasions like muslims, atheists, communists, etc as well as children. If you have similar objection to God being fair about producing miracles for people to experience, please do not rebell against God now by not believing in Christianity. Instead, you should believe in Christianity if you find it to be true, and you can ask God to explain after you have joyful eternal life.

In science we have 95% confidence level in testing the hypothesis is true, so we expect most of the time the hypothesis or universal statement is true. However, when it comes to testing our existential statement, do we expect that it will be true 95% of the time using a 95% confidence level? The answer is yes because any one case will imply the existential statement is true. However, we may experience many cases that the existential statement is false. Moreover, our probability is a conditional probability that the hypothesis is true given the evidence of the miracle is found. Most of the time, we do not have the evidence available so the conditional probability is unknown. When we have the evidence, then we will know what the conditional probability is. Also, the (prior) probability of getting the evidence of miracles is very small, so that most of time we cannot verify our hypothesis. Having said that we are confident that the hypothesis that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is true because based on the existing evidence that we got already, we have within the 95% confidence level. If we want to repeat the experiment, we need to gather another set of evidence to verify our hypothesis and we may have to wait for a long time to collect the evidence. However, if in one case, the evidence collected suggest to you categorically that the hypothesis is true, then the evidence collection can terminate and proclaim the hypothesis is true since we are dealing with verifying an existential statement. For example, there is a 3D image of the blessed Virgin Mary at Alta Gracia (EWTN, 2023), which is regarded as a miracle. As far as I understand right up to now, the 3D image can still be viewed. Therefore, you can verify this miracle by going to Alta Gracia and perform experiment to see if the 3D image is the result of a miracle. If you are satisfied that the 3D image is a miracle, then you can decide categorically that a miracle happened and the hypothesis that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is true. Then, your search for more evidence to verify can terminate. If you cannot categorically decide that the hypothesis is true, then technically you can perform sequential sampling to get to the 95% confidence level of assurance so that you can decide earlier for the verification of the hypothesis, instead of

collecting all the evidence sufficient for another experiment. Also, some youtube videos try to throw questions on the miracles that we have presented. However, the presenter (like Kevin Nontradicath whom you can search for in youtube) hand picked some common or strong evidence that he believed and show that such evidence is questionable and doubts the existence of the miracles. However, according to the methodology that we have discussed in here, to show that the existence of the miracle is false, we need to show that ALL evidence is unbelievable or questionable unlike universal statements in science.

Some may object that we used subjective probabilities to make our decision to believe or not because subjective probabilities are assigned so one is uncertain whether they are accurate or not. However, when people are provided with the context (or evidence), the assignment of probabilities are more accurate and we have a verbal scale to help the reader to assign their subjective probabilities. Also, we are guiding people to assign a lower bound of their probabilities instead of their actual probabilities so that they can be more certain about these lower bound probabilities. Nevertheless, another way is to find objective probabilities based on frequency of occurrences to help us decide. One example is counting occurrences of words, letters, vowels or consonants in the Bible. In this case, we are interested in data from the King James version of the Bible.

Recall that Jesus Christ said that He is Alpha and Omega meaning He is the beginning and the end. If we look at the first sentence of the first book (i.e., Genesis) and the last sentence of the last book (i.e., Revelation), our first observation is that there are 17 vowels and 27 consonants in both sentences with exactly 44 letters in each sentence. Now, one “7” and two “7s” combined together to make up “777” which represents the Holy Trinity because God created the world in 7 days so that 7 represents completion and perfection like God. The second observation is that the first word in the first sentence of the first book is “In” and the last word in the first sentence of the first book is “earth” so that there are 7 letters. Likewise, the first word in the last sentence of the last book is “The” and the last word in the last sentence of the last book is “Amen” so that there are again 7 letters. The third observation is that the last word in the last sentence of the last book (i.e., Amen) occurred 77 times with capitalization in the Bible. The fourth observation is the “In” and “Amen” occurred 777 times! The fifth observation is that the first and last words in the first sentence of the first book (i.e., “In” and “earth”) and the first and last words in the last sentence of the last book (i.e., “The” and “Amen”) occurred 77,777 times in the Bible. The sixth observation is that “God” and “Jesus” occurred 343 times in Genesis and Revelation, which is 7 times 7 times 7 occurrences. If we suppose the probability that each observation occurs randomly by chance is 0.5, then all six observations with those patterns has a probability of 0.0156 which is less than 0.05. So, we reject the null hypothesis that these observations occur by chance. We have obviously used a very rough model since the probabilities are much smaller than 0.5 and there may be failure of attempts to find the right combination of conditions to discover these observations. For example, if we run 20 trials and 6 times succeeded plus the fifth observation of 77,777 occurrences has a probability of 0.1 (which should be even smaller) instead of 0.5, then the combined probability is 0.0074 (i.e.,  ${}^{20}C_6 \frac{1}{2}^{19} \times 0.1$ ) which is still less than 0.05 so that we reject the null hypothesis (similar conclusion can be drawn if the number trials is 8, 10, 12 and 14 while keeping others the same). Therefore, the rough model provides us with some help to believe or to seek further like exploring Truth is Christ (2023c) by viewing the video about these observations and more (Truth is Christ, 2023a; 2023b; 2024). Not that a recent observation called the Elton anomaly

counts the total number of words/numbers in the entire (King James) Bible and it was found to be seven to the power of seven (i.e., 823,543).

Assuming that we have established that we believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, we can proceed to develop our theology. We suggest that we develop our theology similar to how science organizes its knowledge because we want to (i) identify the salient knowledge about God, which has widespread applicability, (ii) see how the knowledge is directly supported from evidence, and (iii) see how the knowledge is applied in practice. Therefore, we arrange our theology in terms of theory, model, experiment and physical situation as in (historical) science similar to organizing scientific knowledge in information retrieval (Luk, 2022a). The theory has a set of principles which are the salient knowledge of the domain. These principles are applied in the model and in the experiment so that they are connected with the theory. The model may then be applied to the experiment which interact with the physical situation. The application of the model may involve the prediction/retrodiction of material or quantities that are found in the experiment. These materials or quantities are then verified with those in the physical situation. In this way, the knowledge in theology has physical manifestations, and the evidence in the physical situation can support the knowledge in the theory of the theology.

#### 4. A Theory of Our Theology: Scientia Theology

In this section, we sketch an initial theory (Luk, 2022b) of scientia theology, which consists of the aim, definitions, assumptions and principles. This is done because we want to believe in God like a science which has theory, model and experiments. This is because we want to rely on our belief just like the science that we rely on everyday. In our theory, the first definition is about theology, and it is defined as:

Definition of Theology: A body of knowledge about God.

This definition will be used in the aim of scientia theology. That is why it is defined first. Here, it is believed that God exists and it is assumed that we have carried out the hypothesis testing (as in Section 3 and also see Luk, 2021) that Jesus Christ is the Son of God with an affirmative result. Otherwise, others (e.g., Damper, 2022) may consider that our study is not open minded. Next, scientific knowledge refers to the knowledge that is organized into theories, models, and experiments that are related to the physical situations (Luk 2010; 2017). Based on these, we can define the aim of scientia theology, following the aim of scientific study of Luk (2017):

Aim of scientia theology: is (i) to produce good quality, objective, general, testable and complete scientific knowledge of theology, and (ii) to monitor and apply such knowledge.

The reason why the aim of scientia theology is based on the aim of scientific study is because we treat scientia theology as a kind of (historical) scientific study (about God). Since scientia theology is a kind of scientific study (King, 1991), the assumptions and principles raised in scientific study by Luk (2017) are also applicable to scientia theology. Note that the aim sets the direction that we should approach in our study and it does not mean that we are certain to be able to attain the aim of scientific study. For example, we strive to have complete scientific knowledge of theology but it may be not possible to have such complete knowledge.

Our domain-specific assumption of scientia theology is:

Assumption of Understanding: We can understand God to some extent.

If we cannot understand God, then there is no need to establish a scientific study of God. Also, God will not need to reveal Himself if we cannot understand God. Since God does reveal Himself, God knows that we can understand Him up to some limit, so this reinforces our assumption here.

Next, we formulate a first principle about the nature of God:

Principle of God: God is eternal, almighty, holy, most high, just, loving, etc. as in the attributes of God (Supported by the Bible, Shroud of Turin, Eucharistic Miracles, Marian Apparitions, etc.)

This principle tries to spell out the distinguishing attributes of God (Swinburne, 1993; Wierenga, 2003; Peterson et al., 2012; Wilson, 2021; DrCraigVideos, 2024). Due to the author's limited knowledge, not all the distinguishing attributes are listed here but only the prominent ones that we are going to refer to later (see Table 11 for some attributes with citations from the Bible). There is also a need to define some of these words which we have left out for those who

will establish scientia theology. For example, a definition of what is holy is needed. We assume here that we know what this means. These attributes that we refer to should be known to be supported in some way by evidence or testimonies or observations (in this case at least from the Bible) so that these attributes are not invented by the author. This principle is supported by Shroud of Turin (e.g., STERA, 2021; McAvoy, 2021 and Calatayud, 2022), Eucharistic Miracles (e.g., Tesoriero, 2021 and Serafini, 2021) and Marian Apparitions (e.g., Wikipedia, 2021 and Dalleur, 2021) because God is almighty, who can perform miracles that break the laws or principles of this natural world. The attribute of the “most high” is also a very telling attribute supported by the incident of a fortune-telling spirit possessing a slave girl in the New Testament (Acts 16), saying that the disciples were sent by the “most high” God. This suggests that there are other spiritual beings or gods, so that there may be spirits or gods for other religions but these gods are not the “most high” God that is referred to by the Bible (another interpretation is that the “most high” God refers to the “most high” Greek or Pagan God which troubled Paul and Silas). Finally, this principle is a first principle because other principles are dependent on it, and it does not depend on other principles. It is a first principle also because it indicates that God is eternal, so that if the universe has a beginning, then God is the first cause, and if God is eternal, then God is not created.

Divine Attribute	Short Description	Bible References
Unity	God is one	Epheisan 4:6; Deuteronomy 6:4; James 2:19.
Goodness	Perfectly good, morally good (righteousness)	John 17:25; Psalm 119:137; Matthew 5:45.
Omnipotence	Almighty with unlimited power	Genesis 17:1; Job 42:2; Luke 1:37; Matthew 19:26.
Omniscience	Knowing all things	Romans 11:33-36; Hebrews 4:13; Psalm 147:4; Acts 15:18; Jeremiah 38:17-20; Matthew 11:21; Revelation 22:13.
Omnipresence	Present everywhere	Psalm 139:7-11; Jeremiah 23:23-24; 1 Kings 8:27.
Simplicity	Is absolutely one in his being or essence	Romans 1:20; John 4:24; Psalm 139:7-10.
Eternity	Does not have a beginning nor an end	Psalm 90:1-2; Genesis 21:33; Isaiah 57:15.
Aseity	Self-existence	Genesis 1:1; John 1:3; Exodus 3:14; Acts 17:25-28.
Immutability	(His essence, attributes, purposes, promises, etc. are) unchangeable	Psalm 102:27; Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8; James 1:17.
Personhood	Have emotions like jealousy, love, anger (wrath) and wants a relationship with us	Romans 11:33; Psalm 45:7; Deuteronomy 29:20; Hebrews 11:6; Ezekiel 18:23; Romans 12:2.
Holy	Without sin	Isaiah 6:3; John 17:11; Peter 1:1,15; Revelation 4:8.

Table 11: Some attributes of God with descriptions and citations from the Bible.



When describing God using these attributes, there are some problems that arise. For example, the problem of evil may arise when God is omnipotent, omniscient and omnibenevolent. This problem states that if God is supremely good and is able to eradicate evil with all His knowledge, then He will prevent evil and such suffering. The question is why do we observe there to be so much evil in our lives? Christians have believed that it is more important to give free will to human beings than to eliminate suffering (of evil doing). It is by giving us free will that we are held responsible for our own actions, and that it shows that God loves us and God want us to love Him out of our free will, instead of requiring us to just follow his commands like a slave. Also, if evils are eradicated, then we will not be put under test by God as we have the original sin condition to be discussed, and we have knowledge of good and evil because Adam and Eve have eaten the forbidden fruit, so some people may be prone to do evil. In general, these problems about why there are evil deeds if God is good, all knowing and all powerful are not insurmountable, and describing God based on attributes are only an approximation with limitations as God is not bounded by the limitations of language.

The next principle (Webster, 2009) may be considered by some as a mystery:

Principle of Holy Trinity: The Holy Trinity is God who is not just united spiritually among the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, but who love each other, and the Son is Jesus Christ who has a body, a soul and God spirit. (Supported by the Bible and Marian apparition) (Follows from the Principle of God being loving)

The mystery is hopefully made clearer by not saying that the Holy Trinity consists of three persons because a person may be confused with the notion that he contains the spirit, a soul and a body, whereas the Father and the Holy spirit are just spirit. Note that when we talk about the body of Jesus Christ before the incarnation, His body is a spiritual body. This terminology comes from Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:40-53. I guess that Paul heard the descriptions of the appearances of Christ to the disciples after the resurrection where the body of Christ could appear in a locked room like a spirit and yet could be materialized into physical flesh so that the disciples can touch and feel. Therefore, Christ before the incarnation is likely to have a body like that after the resurrection. We also have some indication that part of Christ's spiritual body can be materialized into flesh in some Eucharistic miracles. After incarnation and before the resurrection, most likely Jesus Christ takes on a physical body which cannot change into spirit as He desired, so He is said to be made man. Since Christ can become a spirit with a spiritual body (or can materialize into flesh) before incarnation and after resurrection, then it can be viewed that God is spirit as the Holy Trinity is united spiritually.

Having said that God is one, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are like persons who have emotions and feelings, which are distinct between them. That is being part of the personhood attributes of God and why they are regarded as three persons. Therefore, it is meaningful to establish a relationship between us and God. For example, when God performed a miracle for us but we deny it, God may feel offended. While we do not have direct response from God about his feelings and emotions, we can project or expect what His emotions or feelings are if we treat God as if though He is a person always helping us while being almighty. If we understand the attributes of God better, then we may be able to expect how God feels which is important to establish a relationship with Him. For example, if we pray the same prayer every night, will God get bored or God thinks that the content of the prayers is very important to you

and you really want God to help you so that God may grant your wishes in your prayers? The expected feelings and emotions of God grow through practice and it usually happens after you believe in God.

As to whether the Holy Trinity is considered as an appropriate conception of God, in Our Lady of Fatima, “our blessed mother told the children to devote themselves to the Holy Trinity” (Magis Center, 2022). If the Holy Trinity was not a correct conception, then our blessed mother (i.e. the blessed Virgin Mary) would have pointed this out instead of asking devotion to the Holy Trinity. Apart from asking for devotion to the Holy Trinity, angels also repeated the prayers mentioning the Holy Trinity (De Marchi, 1956). Again, if there was something wrong with the conception of Holy Trinity, the angels would have said something about it.

Why does God choose Jesus Christ, a human being (who is also divine), to be the Son of God? Why not choose a spirit or an angel to be the Son of God? I speculate that if God wants to create a spiritual Son, it would become the Holy Spirit, which God has already done. However, since both God: the Father and the Holy Spirit are both spirit, we do not use the terminology of a son to describe them. Also, it is not known whether the Father and the Holy Spirit was one before so it may not be apt to describe the Holy Spirit as the son. Also, the Father (and the Holy Spirit?) has identified Jesus Christ as the Son of God, so there is no point to call Holy Spirit as the Son as well. God has to choose a being who is not just a spirit as the Son because there is Holy Spirit already. The being happened to take the form of a human being with hands and legs. And, the being has a soul as well as a spirit to make him a full human. The Son of God has to incarnate to become human because He will inherit the position to judge mankind. Why? This is because if the Father judges mankind, then some may argue that the Father is a spirit and therefore does not have the predicament of human beings and therefore not really suitable to judge human beings as the Father did not suffer like human beings. However, if the Son of God is also a human being, then He is suitable to be our judge as He has experienced our predicaments and He went through the ordeals of being human. Note that the ability of human being to incorporate the spirit is important because God is spirit. This enables God to implant the Holy Spirit or God Spirit to human beings. It happened that Jesus Christ was the one with the God spirit so He inherited the wealth of God. The other saints are with the Holy Spirit, and perhaps when we are in heaven, all our spirits are Holy Spirit so that we all inherit some form of God and become the children of God. Therefore, angels may not feel demeaning to serve us even though we are not powerful.

The following principle is related to our assumption of understanding:

Principle of Revelation: God reveals Himself to Mankind directly or indirectly in general. (Supported by the Bible, Shroud of Turin, Eucharistic Miracles, Marian Apparitions, etc.) (Based on the Assumption of Understanding and Follows from the Principle of God being loving and just)

God knows that we can understand Him up to some limit, so He is willing to reveal Himself to us. God reveals Himself to us because He loves us, as well as being just to us so that this principle is dependent on the Principle of God. This is supported by Shroud of Turin, Eucharistic Miracles, Marian Apparitions, etc., as these reveal about Himself being a loving and just God. Also, the Bible shows that God reveals Himself progressively so that we have a fuller understanding of Him.

The next principle is due to human failings:

Principle of Original Sin: The disobedient behaviour of God's command by Adam and Eve by eating the fruit from the knowledge tree of good and evil, which led to the original sin condition of human birth, separating God and us from our birth. (Supported by the Bible and Marian Apparition) (Follows from God being loving and just)

God loves us, so He gives us free will similar to God who has free will. However, Adam's and Eve's free will was limited to not eating the fruit of the knowledge tree of good and evil. This serves as a test of their free will to follow God's command. The disobedient behaviour of God's command by Adam and Eve led to the original sin condition that we are separated from God at birth. That is why we are not with God and why we may question His existence. However, why would God test the free will of Adam and Eve? This is because God wants to demonstrate that God loves Adam and Eve and that entails giving them free will. To show that Adam and Eve have free will, God tells them it is up to them not to eat the fruit of the knowledge tree of good and evil. If they do because of their free will, then God will punish them. Otherwise, God will keep on loving them. Again, to love with free will, God did not appear often to Adam and Eve so they can live in the absence of God. Otherwise, if God is always present to them, they will not dare to eat the fruit of the knowledge tree.

Apart from the Bible, this principle is supported by a Marian apparition. Our Lady of Lourdes had claimed that she was the immaculate conception thereby identifying herself as the blessed Virgin Mary and that she does not have original sin. It follows that others like us have original sin (condition) lending support to this principle since we are not the immaculate conception. The Blessed virgin Mary has repeated this claim in other Marian apparitions (like Our Lady of Gietrzwald) so this message is sent clearly to us.

According to the story of the original sin, there was Satan, and why was he on earth? According to Revelation 12:7-9 and Jude 6, Satan was an angel who was responsible for leading a group of fellow angels in rejecting God's authority. As a result, they were removed from heaven and "thrown down" to earth (Isaiah 14:15; Ezekiel 28:16-18; Revelation 12:9), where they have now given themselves to making war against God's people (Revelation 12:17). Satan is considered as a spirit which got into a serpent to tempt Eve to eat the fruit of the knowledge tree. However, one may wonder why did Satan reject God? It was through pride and envy (Milton, 1817). Satan envied Jesus Christ (Revard, 1973) because He was given or inherited a kingdom by/from God: the Father. Given Satan's revolt against God, why was Satan not banished to hell but on earth instead (Hanretty, 2022)? We know that Satan is not in heaven. However, since Satan is a spirit, he can be in multiple places at once. He may have been banished to hell but he can influence (or roam) on earth. Why is this so? I speculate that this is because earth is a place where there can be evil (as well as good), so Satan can find a way on earth (Job:1,7; Peter 1:5,8) even though simultaneously he is banished in hell (I guess as I don't know the answer to everything). Also, since Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the knowledge tree of good and evil, evil like Satan can reach us, so we become aware of evil.

Another related question is why God created Adam and Eve if God knows that they fail to remain in the Garden of Eden. I speculate that God wants to give mankind the Holy Spirit to guide their behaviour. However, God does not want to do this without any reasons as this may create concern about righteousness and fairness with other spirits or angels. Also, it is not

known whether mankind without the Holy Spirit can be sinless or not until Adam and Eve failed. While they were banished from the Garden of Eden, the greater gift from God is that He sends the Holy Spirit to dwell in man who believed in the core faith and strive to be sinless, because mankind cannot be without sin by themselves. He sends the Holy Spirit as requested by Jesus Christ, the Son of God (John:16, 5-7). Why would God: the Father do that? Because the Son of God inherits his authority and the Son of God requested it. God lovingly and willingly do that to help mankind so that they became the children of God and spend the eternity in a loving relationship with God.

This leads us to other questions like why Adam and Eve are created on earth and not in heaven and why earth is created if there is heaven already? I speculate that originally there were only spirits and Jesus Christ is an exception with a (spiritual) body among the spirits. Note that spiritual body is according to Paul's terminology (1 Corinthians 15:40-53) where the spiritual body is imperishable, immortal, etc. Nowadays, one might prefer a term like supernatural body. Anyway, we just refer to it as a body. The spirits reside in heaven, and Jesus Christ also resides in heaven. Unlike other spirits, Jesus Christ has a body. Originally, God wants to create human beings like Jesus Christ so that the heaven is populated with spiritual beings and the material world is populated with material beings under the rule of human being. Therefore, God created a material world for the material men to live instead of heaven (i.e., the creation story in Genesis). This material world will be under the influence of the spirits. This means both good spirits and evil spirits because God wants to show that mankind will be corrupted if mankind has free will, and God wants to send the Holy Spirit to mankind. Unlike Satan who is corrupted and cannot be saved, corrupted mankind can be saved if they repent their sins because Jesus Christ will save them. In this way, heaven will be populated by both spirits and mankind. Why is there no salvation plan for Satan or the demons? This is because they do not have a body to incorporate the Holy Spirit and the evil spirits will not repent.

So far, we have assumed that Jesus Christ as the Son of God takes the form of body, soul and spirit in unity even before his birth. However, many Christians think or teach that before His birth, He only has the spirit and without a body. The explanation is that if he had a body before his birth, then he would have deposed his body and taken a new one on earth. However, we can understand that before birth, Christ (spiritual) body was reduced or materialized to a strand of DNAs (may be with only half the double helix) or a foetus in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, which later developed into a baby. Therefore, the body was not disposed but continued to be part of Jesus Christ before, during and after His incarnation.

If Jesus Christ only was spirit without (spiritual) body before His birth, then we encounter the following problems. First, when Adam was conceived, the Trinity at that time was not a Triune being as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are all spirits. This means that it is unlike a human being. So, we need to find other ways to explain how Adam is formed based on the image of God. One can explain this in terms of similarity of function where man rules like God rules as well. Second, if Jesus Christ consisted of spirits alone, then it is uncertain why God would make a material world because the entirety of heaven is just filled with spirits without materiality. It can be argued that God created the material world to see if human beings can be sinless. However, since Jesus Christ is only spirit, why would he incarnate to be one of us since his being then is a spirit and not a human being? Then, one argues that Jesus Christ has a (spiritual) body which has the form of a physical human body. That is why He incarnates to become human flesh. Third, Satan was jealous of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. If Jesus Christ

is just a spirit like Satan, then Satan may not feel demeaned to bow to Jesus Christ. However, Jesus Christ is thought to be a mere human being instead of spirit, so Satan may feel uncomfortable to be lower than Jesus Christ. Also, Satan may envy Jesus Christ to have a spiritual body but Satan is only spirit. Fourth, in some passages of the Old Testament, the Lord appears to take some form of body like Genesis 3:8 and Genesis 18:1-13. If Jesus Christ consists of only spirit, then we have to argue that those passages are only describing the Lord figuratively instead of meaning that He has a body. If Jesus Christ has a spiritual body which can be materialized (at will), then those passages may suggest that Jesus Christ had a real body then.

As Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the knowledge tree of good and evil, we become aware of good and evil. As evil usually means that it is easier or more expedient to do things, we have a tendency to sin:

Principle of Human Sinful Tendency: Human beings are prone to evil even though they have a good conscience because evil may be a convenient, effort-saving or expedient way of doing things. (Supported by the Bible)  
(Follows from the Principle of Original Sin)

Therefore, this principle is dependent on the Principle of Original Sin. However, God loves us and God is holy, so to be able to live with God together, we need to be able to wash away our sins. However, we are unable to stay away from sins by ourselves. Through out the ages, God tried to rescue us from our sins since the original sin. Initially, God has covenants with individuals like Noah and Abraham. However, this fails to continue the covenants through their descendants who sinned. So, God tried to have a covenant with a nation or a group of people by providing laws that try to restrain the people to stay out of sin. However, humans are unable to do so. That is why the Messiah is sent to rescue us and hence the following principle:

Principle of Salvation: Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Messiah, who died on the cross for the redemption of our sin, who was buried, and who was resurrected on the third day after death. (Supported by the Bible, Shroud of Turin and Sudarium of Oviedo) (Follows from the Principle of God being loving, the Principle of Original Sin and the Principle of Human Sinful Tendency)

This principle is supported by the Shroud of Turin and Sudarium of Oviedo which identified the congruence points with the head image on the Shroud of Turin. The shroud also suggests that the image formed is a moving image indicating that the man in the shroud was alive rather than dead. This supports the idea that there was a resurrection and that the Shroud of Turin once wrapped Jesus Christ. This principle is also very important because believing in it opens the gate to Heaven (Principle of Heaven) (John 1:12; John 3:16, John 18:36; Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9-10,13; Ephesians 2:8-9):

Principle of Heaven: There is a place called Heaven in which people who receive eternal life from God, live there joyfully (with God). (Supported by the Bible and Marian Apparitions) (Follows from the Principle of God being loving)

Apart from the Bible, some Marian apparitions have “taken” children to visit Heaven as in the Marian apparitions at Medjugorje (Pandarakalam, 2013; Armitage, 2017). Testimonies from

these children tell us that in Heaven the souls may be singing hymns, glorifying God. These can serve as independent evidence that there is such a place as Heaven. Since God lives in heaven, we are required to be sinless if we get there. However, some may consider that it is very hard to maintain to be sinless in Heaven based on our knowledge of ourselves during our mortal life. However, when we get to Heaven, I speculate that the fruit of the knowledge tree of good and evil will not affect us anymore so that evil cannot reach us (unless we generate evil thoughts by ourselves). Also, we may have the holy spirit to guide us in Heaven to make the right decisions. Note that we may not directly get to Heaven even after death even if we believed in the Principle of Salvation, because we may be sinful during our mortal life. So, to wash away our sin after death (as God is just) and to shape our soul so that it is suitable to live in Heaven, (principle of) Purgatory is necessary:

Principle of Purgatory: As there are (mortal) sinners after accepting God, there is a place called Purgatory to remedy their sins and shape their souls appropriately for living in Heaven. (Supported by the Bible and Marian Apparitions) (Follows from the Principle of God being just and the Principle of Human Sinful Tendency)

Again, some Marian apparitions have “taken” some children to visit Purgatory (as in Marian apparitions at Medjugorje [Pandarakalam, 2013]). The testimonies from these children serve as independent evidence there is such a place. The Bible (Isaiah 4:4; Maccabees 12:41-45; Matthews 5:25-26; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; Catholic Answers, 2015) also mentions purification of sins or some place like purgatory where those alive may pray for the dead. There are also other testimonies (I miss Christendom, 2022) about purgatory and some suspected souls from purgatory (Uniquely Mary, 2023).

There are those who do not believe in God and they may end up in Hell:

Principle of Hell: As there are people who reject God according to their free will, there is a place called Hell for them. (Supported by the Bible and Marian Apparitions) (Follows from the Principle of God being just, the Principle of Original Sin and the Principle of Human Sinful Tendency)

Again, some Marian apparitions have “taken” some children to visit Hell for example in Our Lady of Fatima (GabiAfterHours, 2020). The testimonies from these children serve as independent evidence there is such a place. Note that for some Christians, hell may be just a place where we are separate from God. If this is the case, then those condemned including spirits or fallen angels are in hell. Since Satan, devils and fallen angels do not like human beings (McDowell, 2023c) and hell is based on whoever is more powerful will rule, hell will not be a nice place for human souls to live in their afterlife. The more powerful Satan, devils and fallen angels may enslave or torture human souls in hell.

Note that many near-death experiences (NDEs) have a positive impact on the perception of death for those experienced them. While we can become certain that there is an afterlife, we are not certain that our afterlife will be as wonderful as many of those NDEs suggest. This is because if we do not believe in the core faith of Christianity and assuming that Christianity is true, then we are supposed to be banished to hell instead of the wonderful NDEs. So, why are so many NDEs so positive about our afterlife? First, God knows that we are not going to die even if we experience NDEs, so God will not banish us to hell immediately when experiencing

NDEs. As a result, some experiencing NDEs may think there is no God, no hell, etc. (Next Level Soul, 2022). Second, spirits like Satan, daemons, etc. may want us to believe that there is no hell in our afterlife so that we do not need to fear death anymore and we may not believe in hell anymore. In this way, we may not believe in Christianity anymore so that we will be banished to hell after we die. Therefore, we should be careful not to think that afterlife is all wonderful after we experienced NDEs. In fact, Satan, daemons, etc. may trick us in other ways concerning the supernaturals. For example, they may pretend they are spirits who can relay messages to our dead relatives. For Chinese, they may pretend to be some Chinese deities that require worship. They may pretend to be some powerful spirits that can enable human beings to have supernatural strength such as the Chinese boxers in their uprising in 1899-1901, if human beings invite these spirits to take over the human bodies (i.e., some kind of possessions). Therefore, we should not be fooled by these spirits or trust these spirits for our good.

As we have a sinful tendency and yet God loves us, God provides ways for us to wash away our sins during our lifetime when we have free will. The first one is Baptism:

Principle of Baptism: It is a ritual for washing away our sins by Baptism and committing ourselves to live a Christian life. (Supported by the Bible) (Follows from the Principle of God being loving, the Principle of Original Sin and the Principle of Human Sinful Tendency)

According to some (Pedro, 2018), Baptism can wash away our original sin (condition). It can also wash away our personal sin so that we can be free of sin. However, after Baptism we may still sin, therefore the second way to wash away our sins (after Baptism) is to partake the Eucharist:

Principle of Eucharist: For the redemption of sin after Baptism, taking the bread as the flesh of Christ and the wine as the blood of Christ to wash away our sin. (Supported by the Bible and Eucharistic Miracles) (Follows from the Principle of God being loving and the Principle of Human Sinful Tendency)

A theory behind the Eucharist is that we need to be in union with Jesus Christ's flesh and blood in order to wash away our sins because the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ are sinless, and because God endorsed that the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ to redeem our sins (as the Principle of Salvation has demonstrated). The Eucharistic miracles show that the bread does become the flesh and the wine does become the blood, so that these ascertain us about the union of our body with Jesus Christ's flesh and blood, and therefore the redemption of our sins. Also, as alluded earlier, Jesus Christ supernatural body can become spirit and the spirit can be materialized to become Jesus Christ's body. When we ingest the bread and wine, which became the flesh and blood, they can become the (Holy) spirit since it is the flesh and blood (i.e., part of the supernatural body) of Jesus Christ.

One can consider that Baptism and the Eucharist demonstrate that God loves us, so we formulate the following principle:

Principle of Love: God loves us, so we love God and each other. (Supported by the Bible) (Follows from the Principle of God being loving and the Principle of Salvation)

At this juncture, we need to clarify what does “love” mean. It does not mean the feelings or high emotions that we feel when we are attracted by someone. Instead, love means the will (e.g., an urge) for the good of other(s). Love is a will and not a feeling. Now, this principle is formulated so that we love God and each other as well as this is the highest commandment. However, why would God love us apart from the fact that God being loving? If loving us gives satisfaction to God, why would God have satisfaction to love us?

We have to understand that God is almighty. He can do anything. However, He is bounded by what He will not do because He has given his words. If He bounded Himself not to do certain things, but yet able to achieve them, then this gives satisfaction to Him just like people challenging themselves to do certain things as God has emotions and feelings just like us (note the personhood attribute of God). God does not derive any satisfaction if He controls us to love Him which He can do but He will not. Therefore, God loves us so He gives us free will to love Him as true love entails to giving free will to love. Hence, God is bounded by His promise to give us free will. Out of our free will, some will love Him and that will give Him great satisfaction because not all will love Him. To be able to have free will to love Him, we are left to ourselves. So, He does not always make contact with us. Since we are out of contact with God most of the time, we may not believe that He existed. If we do not believe that He existed, then we cannot love Him. Therefore, He needs to punish us who do not believe in Him. According to the core faith, we do not just believe that He existed but that Jesus Christ died for us to redeem our sins, buried and resurrected three days later. That is God will punish those who do not believe or recognize what Jesus Christ had done. Put this in other words, God will punish those who do not believe or recognize that God loves us in terms of what Jesus Christ did for us. If you do not believe or recognize what God did to love us, then how can we love God back? Therefore, God will punish those people because He is just. Now, we are reassured why God loves us because that would give great satisfaction to Him who is challenging Himself as well as the fact that God is loving. God also loves us because God: the Father loves God: the Son and we are the same (human) kind as the Son of God, so God loves us. To show that God: the Son loves us, He was crucified on the cross for our sins after extreme suffering. So, God loves us and in doing so He also has satisfaction.

Since God loves us, we have hope to get to Heaven so we formulate the following principle:

Principle of Hope: As there is salvation (or we believe in God before there is salvation), there is hope for joyful eternal life. (Supported by the Bible)  
(Follows from the Principle of God and the Principle of Salvation)

We have hope because God promised us to have joyful eternal life if we believe in the core faith or the Principle of Salvation (John 1:12; John 3:16, John 18:36; Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9-10,13; Ephesians 2:8-9). We can immediately go to heaven after death if we can be sinless and have the right frame of mind. We have hope to do that if we are baptised and if we partake the Eucharist, which wash away our sins, and that if we repent our sins so that we will not repeat our sins in Heaven, we may have the right frame of mind when we get to Heaven. Therefore, there is hope for us to get to Heaven (eventually).

Finally, we need faith in our belief even though we have evidence and reason because:

Principle of Faith: We need faith as God follows His best way of doing things rather than our wishes and we need faith to believe God is the greatest



or most high God, as well as being eternal. (Follows from the Principle of God being eternal, most high and loving)

It is not easy to demonstrate that God is the highest and God is eternal to finite-power humans. That is why we need faith to believe in these. Also, God does not perform miracles every five minutes to make us believe (like the train arriving every 5 minutes), so we need faith (trust) in God to maintain our beliefs.

We have a notion that these principles are complete in that they tell a (salvation) story or plan by God. First, God is magnificent (Principle of God) based on our knowledge of God's attributes which are revealed to different extent by God (Principle of Revelation). God creates human being like Himself with free will except for eating the fruit of the knowledge tree of good and evil. God creates human being because He loves them as they are like Him in the sense that a human being is a triune being like God (the Holy Trinity and human consists of body, soul and spirit according to the Bible in Thessalonians 5:23), and that Son of God is a human being (Principle of Holy Trinity) as well as being divine. However, Adam and Eve broke God's command by eating the fruit from the knowledge tree of good and evil (Principle of Original Sin), so we inherit the original sin condition as well as having a tendency to sin (Principle of Human Sinful Tendency) because we have knowledge of good and evil. To reconcile the situation in which God is separated from us, God needs us to be sinless in order for us to be able to live with God. Since we are unable to be sinless by ourselves, God reveals Himself to us (Principle of Revelation) and redeems our sins by salvation (Principle of Salvation) so that the gates of Heaven (Principle of Heaven) are open to us. However, since we sin, we must wash away our sins by Baptism (Principle of Baptism) and afterwards by partaking the Eucharist (Principle of Eucharist). As we may still have sin, after death we may not be able to go to Heaven (Principle of Heaven) directly but instead go to Purgatory (Principle of Purgatory). And, if we do not believe in God, we may end up in Hell after death (Principle of Hell). So, God shows us that He loves us (Principle of Love) and gives us hope (Principle of Hope), but we need to have faith (Principle of Faith) in order to overcome all the obstacles to get to Heaven to be with God. By relating these principles to the salvation plan by God, the significance of these principles is highlighted and valued even though these principles may originate from the Bible (for centuries).

The theory that we have presented here is only a sketch. However, it provides the basics that we need to believe in the Bible expanding from our core faith. We do not need to believe in exactly how the world has come into being according to the Bible, but we need to believe that we have the original sin (condition) because we have a principle for it. This principle is not dreamt up by me. It was from the Bible (i.e., the Old Testament) and it is a kind of confirmed by the blessed Virgin Mary who declared that she was the Immaculate Conception (without origin sin) in various Marian apparitions. After that, most of the principles in the theory are based on the New Testament even though some of them can be traced back to the Old Testament. One of the reason why we avoid the Old Testament is that God mentioned in the Old Testament is not very pleasant to mankind. One reason is that God was very angry with mankind at that time before salvation as human beings are unable to stay away from sins. The other reason is that God is telling us He is almighty, which requires faith (according to the Principle of Faith), and that He can destroy us and everything if He wanted to. However, He did not because He loves us. During and after salvation, God becomes more loving to mankind as Jesus Christ would or had redeem(ed) our sins by dying on the cross, which has diminished

the anger of God to mankind. The focus has changed from (avoiding to) punishing us in the Old Testament to saving us from the New Testament.

## 5. Models of Scientia Theology

These are descriptions of the historical events (e.g., exodus; see [Kennedy, 2020; McDowell, 2022b]). Stories in the Bible are regarded as descriptions and therefore possible models of the historical events. Such descriptions may be pieced together to form a more rigorous model of the actual historical event that occurred. As there are many events in the Bible, we will look at just two events for illustration, related to the Principle of Salvation.

The Principle of Salvation is related to the crucifixion event and the resurrection event. In the four Gospels, they have different accounts of the crucifixion. To piece them together as a logical model, one aspect is the ordering of sayings by Jesus Christ when he was on the cross. Table 12 shows the temporal order of sayings by Jesus Christ on the cross. So, the logical model can be a harmonization of the descriptions in the Gospels instead of selecting one description as the logical model and falsifying which model should be taken away as in historical science. Also, during the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, some of the Gospel (e.g., Matthew) claim that the earth went dark and there was an earthquake. Lee Strobel (1998) quoted Yamauchi, who quoted scholar Paul Maier that:

“This phenomenon, evidently, was visible in Rome, Athens, and other Mediterranean cities. According to Tertullian... it was a ‘cosmic’ or ‘world event’. Phlegon, a Greek author from Caria writing a chronology soon after 137 A.D., reported that in the fourth year of the 202<sup>nd</sup> Olympiad (i.e., 33 A.D.) there was ‘the greatest eclipse of the sun’ and that ‘it became night in the sixth hour of the day [i.e., noon] so that stars even appeared in the heavens. There was a great earthquake in Bithynia, and many things were overturned in Nicaea.’ Yamauchi concluded, ‘So there is, as Paul Maier points out, nonbiblical attestation of the darkness that occurred at the time of Jesus’s crucifixion.’ (Strobel, 1998)

From the historical science point of view, this event is consistent with the darkness that came over as reported by the three Gospels so that this corroboration gives credit to the three Gospels account even though some Gospel accounts did not mention the darkness nor the earthquake.

The shroud of Turin can be used to implicate two events if it is believed to be the shroud that was wrapped around Jesus Christ when He was dead. The image of the shroud implicated that the person has been crucified, and that a miracle happened as required by a resurrection event. The miracle involves Jesus Christ who was radiant with ultra-violet light, imprinting an impression of Himself on the shroud as the shroud was tanned (or discoloured) and not painted nor burnt. The power of the ultra-violet light (Di Lazzro et al., 2010) is estimated to be beyond current technology, and that is why it is considered a miracle (note that there are other hypotheses like particle radiation). The shroud of Turin corroborates with Scripture that Jesus Christ was raised when the miracle happened as the image of the person on the shroud does not have any folding or creases.

Sayings of Jesus Christ on the cross	John Gospel	Luke Gospel	Mark Gospel	Matthew Gospel
Father, forgive they; for they know not what they do.		23:34		
Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.		23:43		
Woman, behold thy son! And behold thy mother!	19:26-27			
Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani			15:34	27:46
I thirst.	19:28			
It is finished.	19:30			
Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.		23:46		

Table 12: The temporal ordering of sayings by Jesus Christ on the cross (adapted from Wikipedia).

Figure 4 shows how the knowledge elements are organized for the events related to the Principle of Salvation which is supported by the crucifixion event model and the resurrection event model. Both event models are harmonizations of the four Gospels accounts of crucifixion and the resurrection which is only implicated by the empty tomb discovery event. The crucifixion event model is consistent with the crucifixion observations in the experiment knowledge element. Specifically, the darkness event is supported by descriptions in Mark's Gospel, Luke's Gospel and Matthew's Gospel, as well as by Phlegon's chronology. The Earthquake event is supported by the observation in Matthew's Gospel and Phlegon's chronology. The shroud of Turin (e.g., Fernández-Capo, 2015; Fazio, 2019) also lends its support to the observation of crucifixion. For the resurrection observation, this is only implicated by the occurrence of a miracle registered in the shroud of Turin which depicted a "moved" image. Since the (stroboscopic) image registered moved fingers, this suggests that if the shroud of Turin wrapped the body of Jesus Christ, then He was alive (Calatayud, 2022) after the crucifixion, implicating there was a resurrection event. Also, observations lend support to the Scripture which predicted that Jesus Christ's body would be raised for there are no creases or folding in the image. This is consistent with the image on the shroud of Turin.

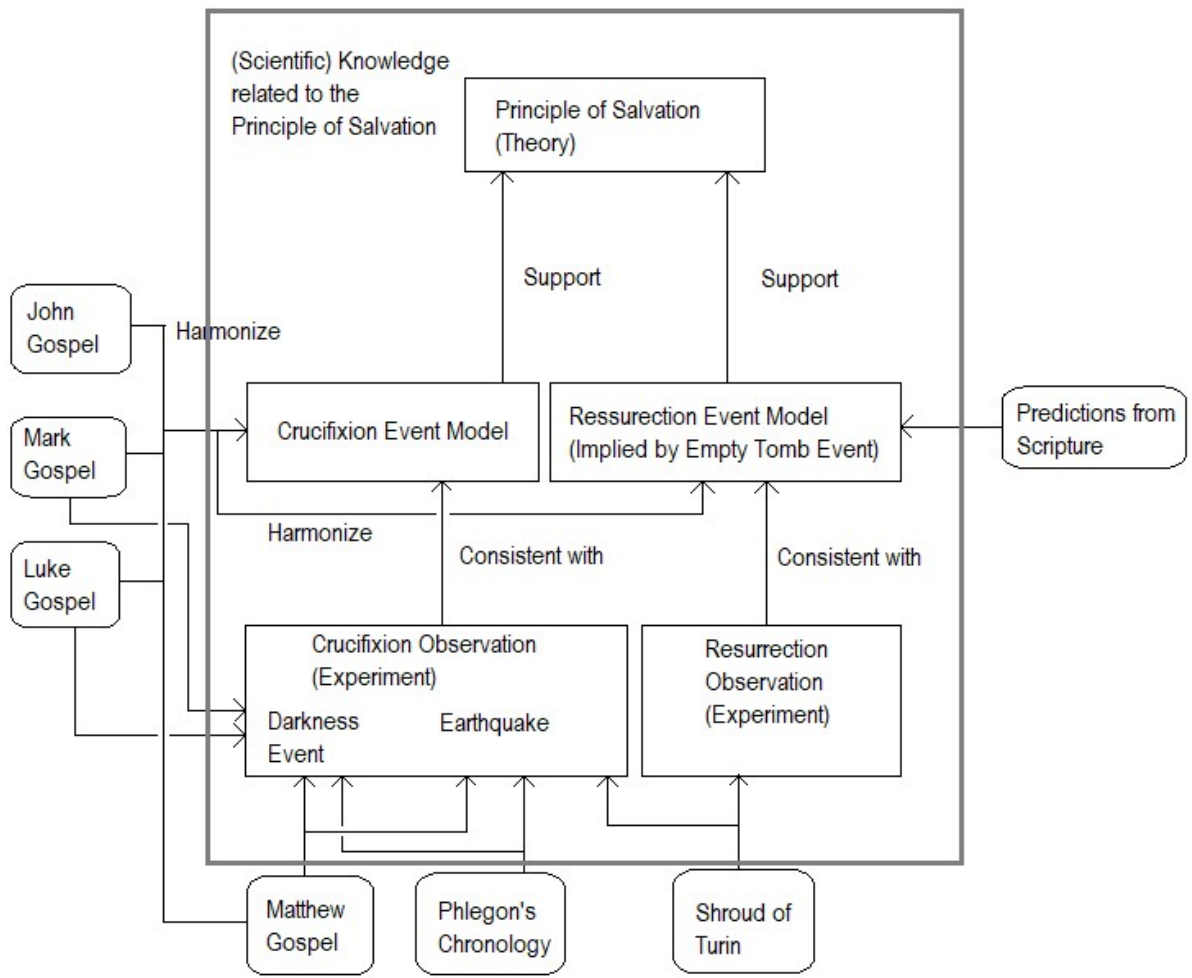


Figure 4: The framework of (scientific) knowledge related to the Principle of Salvation as adapted from Figure 3. Note that the Gospels, Phlegon’s chronology, shroud of Turin and predictions from Scripture are evidence in the physical situation realm.

Apart from evidence supporting the models which support the principles, the principles can also be applied to the models (Figure 3). In the Old Testament, perhaps a common application of principles is the Principle of Human Sin Tendency (e.g., in Judges 19 of the Old Testament) because of sinful acts. In the New Testament, specifically Acts 10, the Principle of Baptism is applied as the Gentiles, Cornelius, was baptised. The Principle of Love is also applied in Acts 10 because God loves the Gentiles as well as Jews, so the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit as well.

## 6. Experiments of Scientia Theology

These are experiments done in archaeology (Kennedy, 2020; Kennedy, 2022; McDowell, 2022a; McDowell, 2022b; McDowell, 2023a; Top Box TV, 2022), laboratories (Willesee, 2017; Reason To Believe, 2023), etc. to show that the historical events happened or to discover facts about the historical events. These can also be observations from the Bible, which are considered to be part of the experiment. As there are many events, we have selected those related to the Principle of Eucharist which is related to the last supper historical event. The three Gospels and Corinthians I in the New Testament provide an account of the last supper event. We need to harmonize what Jesus Christ said in the last supper as the sayings differ (see Table 13). These sayings can be harmonized by identifying the main points common to the sayings. The first common point is “This is my body” where this refers to the bread. The second common point is “This is my blood” where this refers to the wine. The third common point is “This is God’s new covenant for the forgiveness of sins”. The final point is “Do this in remembrance of me”. These four common points are considered to be the content of the last supper event model when Jesus Christ spoke.

New Testament	Jesus Christ Sayings for the Last Supper
Matthew Gospel	“Take eat: this is my body” “Drink ye all of you. For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”
Mark Gospel	“Take: this is my body” “This is my blood, God’s new covenant, poured out for many people.”
Luke Gospel	“This is my body, given for you. Eat it in my memory” “This cup is the new covenant written in my blood, blood poured out for you.”
Corinthians I	“This is my body, broken for you. Do this to remember me.” “This is my blood, my new covenant with you. Each time you drink this cup, remember me.

Table 13: Sayings by Jesus Christ in the last supper.

Figure 5 shows the (scientific) knowledge related to the Principle of Eucharist which is supported by the last supper event model. In turn, this model is supported by the Eucharistic miracles (Serafini, 2021) at Lanciano and at Argentina, separately. As the wine turned into blood as what Jesus Christ said, the blood type is used to test whether the Eucharistic miracles are consistent with each other. The blood type was found to be AB which is the same blood type found in both miracles, as well as the shroud of Turin and the sudarium of Oviedo. Therefore, this corroborates with each other. For the miracles, the flesh found was also subject to observation using a microscope. It was found that the flesh is human cardiac muscle tissue for both miracles so that they corroborate with each other. The flesh found was transformed from the Eucharist bread which supports the last supper event model. The microscopic observations and blood tests are done based on modern technology. They represent using modern equipment in experiments to investigate the last supper event model instead of just observations by the naked eyes. One can consider that the experimental results found for the Eucharistic miracle at Lanciano in the 1970s can be used to predict the flesh type and blood type found for the Eucharistic miracle at Argentina at 1990s so that the last supper event model has predictive capability. There are other Eucharistic miracles for examples in Poland (Jacyna-Onyszkiewicz et al., 2018) and Mexico (Serafini, 2021) which further corroborate the blood type and the flesh found even though they are not detailed here.

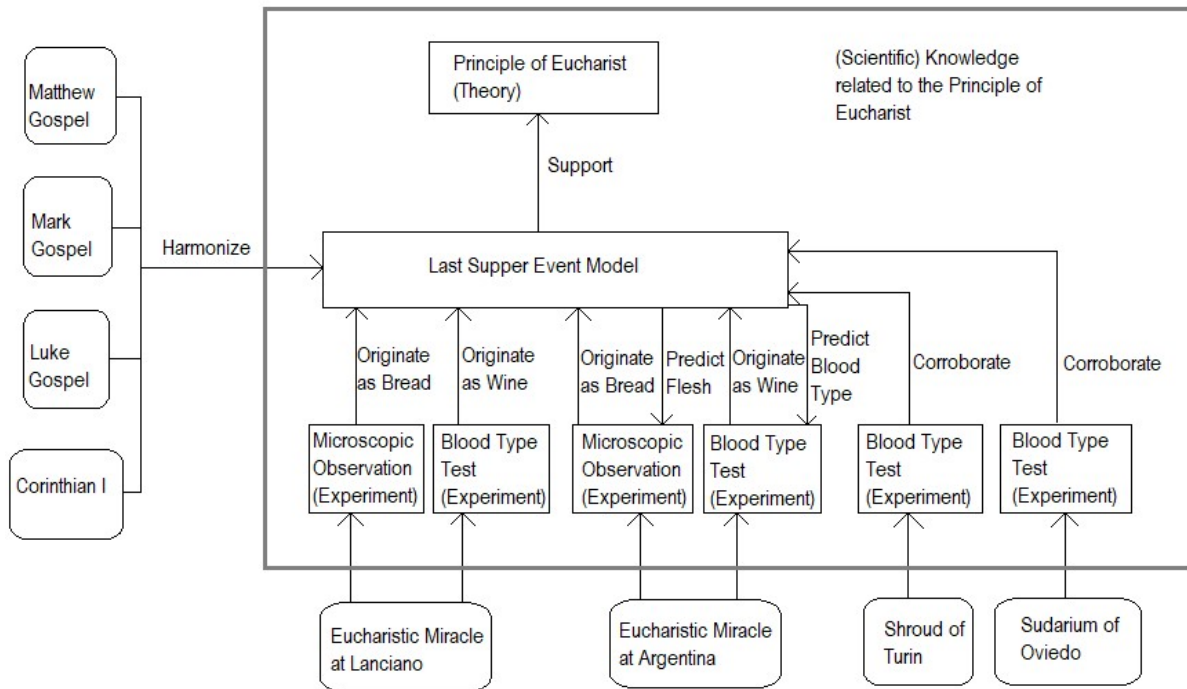


Figure 5: The framework of (scientific) knowledge related to the Principle of Eucharist as adapted from Figure 3.

It might be argued that the principle of Eucharist may require the bread and wine to be turned into Jesus Christ’s flesh and blood respectively every time the Eucharist is performed. However, for most of the Eucharist performed, the bread and wine did not turn into Jesus Christ’s flesh and blood, respectively. One answer to this is that the Principle of Eucharist says that the bread is treated as the body or flesh of Jesus Christ and the wine is treated as the blood of Jesus Christ instead of requiring that they are (when they are being taken). Another answer is that if the Eucharist is performed correctly and we ingested the bread and wine appropriately, then the bread and wine may turn into the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ inside our bodies. Since we do not make observations of the bread and wine in our bodies, we just do not know whether the bread and wine turned into the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ every time an appropriate Eucharist is performed. Therefore, there is no evidence to suggest that the ingested bread and wine did not turn into the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. On the contrary, there is evidence, like the Eucharistic miracles, that the bread and wine after performing the Eucharist turned into flesh and blood (of Jesus Christ). Hence, the Principle of Eucharist still holds.

## 7. Physical Situations of Scientia Theology

Reality is considered to be the aggregate of all physical situations experienced by observers over various times. In science, physical situations are posited in certain spacetime for an observer to make observations. Then, we generalize this experience to other physical situations. In science, it is often assumed that physical situations remain as they are (i.e., the uniformity assumption), operating according to physical laws given that no one is interfering. However, when it comes to theology, that depends on whether God would intervene in the physical situations where the physical laws may be broken. If there is a warranted belief in the existence of God, then physical situations may allow miracles to happen. In the case that we do not know whether God exists, miracles can still happen as that might implicate that God exists. Only in the case that we believe only physical laws operate and we do not believe in the existence of any spiritual beings (capable of breaking the physical laws), then we believe in methodological naturalism. So, are there any genuine miracles or are there any warranted beliefs that God exists?

Some examined miracles are the Eucharistic miracles that happened in 1992, 1994 and 1996 in Argentina because some of these miracles are documented in recent times (e.g., Tesoriero, 2007). The Eucharistic miracles (e.g., Cruz, 1991) involve bread turning into human flesh and wine turning into human blood. In recent times, the flesh was examined under a microscope and it was identified as human cardiac tissue, and the blood type was identified as type AB (e.g., Tesoriero, 2021). In Poland, a Eucharistic miracle (Krzywosz, 2016) also happened and this time, the flesh grew out of the consecrated host (i.e., bread), sticking together, leaving little doubt that there was a miracle. Given these findings, our position is that miracles can happen and they implicate that God exist, and therefore that is why we need theology to understand more fully about God. In general, the decision to accept whether or not Jesus Christ is the Son of God can be done by following a scientifically accepted methodology according to Section 3 (Luk, 2021). Note that we are not requiring Eucharistic miracles to happen at will like in experimental science to claim that miracles exist. Instead, we only require a single occurrence of a miracle to show the existence of miracles (e.g., Willesee, 2017) implicating the existence of God, demonstrating methodological naturalism does not hold (which requires no miracles can ever happen).

Note that we have already argued the existence of spiritual life based on near-death experience (NDE). What we mean by physical reality may be broadened as the number of dimensions that we live in may be beyond four according to some theory in Physics like string theory. Therefore, it is possible that spiritual beings exist in the higher dimensions so that they can be independent from us and can interact with us if desired. It remains whether science can be developed to interact with the higher dimensions from our own dimensions. It is also possible that spiritual beings may exist outside the dimensions that we live in instead of in the higher dimensions of our reality. In this case, science needs to find reliable methods to interact with those other dimensions so that we can carry out experiments to substantiate what we know in our own dimensions. It remains to be seen whether reliable methods exist to interact with the higher dimensions or the other dimensions as we explore science that may come into contact with spiritual beings. If such reliable methods exist, then our reality may include both the higher or other dimensions, so that the reality that we deal with may be enlarged, and the physical situations may include higher or other dimensions.



Rewinding spacetime to the beginning of the universe, the Old Testament did write that the universe (or the known world) has a beginning but God does not. However, the Old Testament did not indicate that the universe began with a massive inflation/explosion like the Big Bang model. Note that it is possible to interpret the Bible to have two Big Bangs, one after the other, like the one in the Conformal Cyclic Cosmology (Penrose, 2006) where there might be evidence before the current Big Bang (Gurzadyan and Penrose, 2013), since one interpretation of the Genesis is that Adam and Eve were created in one universe and they fell into another universe. Therefore, the cosmological model of the origin of the universe can be more complicated. It can be anticipated that at the time the Old Testament was written (specifically Genesis), the Holy Spirit might be doing some “babytalk” about the beginning of the universe to the Bible writers as they might find it difficult to understand. This raises a question whether we can interpret the description of creation in Genesis literally or just as an allegory that conveys the message that creation was the work of God. Therefore, we will restrain from interpreting the Old Testament too literally to avoid arguments.

We are not neutral on whether God created Heaven and Earth because that was written in the Bible, specially the Old Testament, and because there was at least one Marian apparition (GabiAfterHours, 2022) that claimed the Heaven and Earth are created by God. Since we require God to be the greatest, most powerful spirit or being, the creation of Heaven and Earth is an indication of God’s great power. That is why in the Apostle creed, it includes the statement that God created Heaven and Earth to indicate that we are dealing with the most powerful God. Why do we have to deal with the most powerful God? If that is not the case, then the more powerful God may not like the less powerful one in which we believed so that believing in the less powerful one may lead us astray. If we believe in God creating Heaven, Earth and everything else, then we are all His creatures (including some spirits) and the nature will be the universe that is created by God. One may wonder would there be any biological evolution. The answer can be yes and no. It is possible that all the creatures are created and they do not evolve into other creatures. So, there is no macroscopic evolution from one species to another as this was not observed. Scientists have studied this (The Carpenter’s Desk, 2023) where they randomly mutate the amino acid sequence to see if new proteins can be developed (by man-made evolution). However, they found that after random mutations, the protein quickly cannot function properly, and therefore biological evolution based on random mutation is unlikely. Also, some has reservation about the evolution theory because there are unexplained events like the Cambrian explosion. The evolution theory cannot explain the origins of life and the diversity of life as well. Nevertheless, some scientists think that biological evolution is still possible when the genes are mutated under special conditions. Suppose this is true. Does this refute that we are creations of God? Again, it is possible that biological evolution took place on this earth and God allows the creatures to evolve on this earth until it is suitable for human to inhabit the earth. Then, the humanoid on this earth may be wiped out, and Adam and Eve after their fall arrived on this earth from the other earth (i.e., Eden) in another universe. In this case, humanoid on this earth may have similar genetic makeup as Adam and Eve, so that scientists cannot tell the difference between genes of humanoids and that of Adam and Eve. If that is the case, then scientists can find evidence to support biological evolution now and yet we are descendants of Adam and Eve.

## 8. Practice

Assuming that you want to be a Christian, you may consider how to practice your faith. My previous experience is that if you do not know why you want to be a Christian and why you believe, then your faith would be shaky. Given you have faith and you know why, how do you actually behave and what do you do then?

The first hurdle is that do we believe and act wholeheartedly that Jesus Christ is the Son of God with all its implications, or do we reserve our beliefs to the possibility that there is a relatively small probability that our beliefs are wrong. This is because our methodology to decide allows for a non-zero probability that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God. However, we cannot halfheartedly believe in Jesus Christ is the Son of God since our probability is nearer to one. The way out is to believe wholeheartedly that Jesus Christ is the Son of God but we are willing to take the risk with a small probability that we are wrong. This is similar to our treatment with beliefs in science everyday.

As alluded in Section 3.5, we may have to wait for a long time for a miracle to substantiate our Christian belief, and it is possible that we may not experience any miracle even after we died. Therefore, we need to have faith in God despite there are no miracles happening to us. Fortunately, present day technology enables us to know quickly if there are miracles happening in other places so that we may go there to experience the miracles or we may obtain reports of evidence of miracles to substantiate our Christian beliefs. Even without the experience of miracles, if you accepted the hypothesis H1 based on the past miracles, then you can explore the evidence of these miracles to help your trust (or faith) in God. You can also request God for miracles to happen even though this is unlikely to happen in our everyday life. Even though miracles happen, for most of us we still need faith (which requires your will to believe), and we might periodically refresh our faith by examining evidence of miracles or attend sermons.

Do you want to be baptised and go to the church? According to our theory, you need to be baptised and go to church to partake the Eucharist so that you can wash away your sins. However, you can not do that if you just believe in the core faith. That would mean that your sins are not washed away. After you died, you would go to Purgatory because you believe in the core faith so that eventually you get to Heaven, but you are sinful and you do not have the right frame of mind to get to Heaven. Purgatory is divided into different levels from being mildly punishing to severely punishing. Also, the time to experience the pain is felt to be longer than the time that we feel when we are alive as some soul experienced Purgatory remind us. If you want to minimize your time in Purgatory and better if not ever get into Purgatory, you need to be baptised and partake the Eucharist. That means you have to go to the church.

Assuming that you go to church trying your best to avoid Purgatory, which church or denomination should we go to? If you are a protestant, you may not even believe that there is such a place like Purgatory as in Catholicism (see [Marshall, 2023] for differences between Catholics and Protestants). However, we are reminded that there are pieces of evidence to support that there is Purgatory and that is why we have a principle of Purgatory in our theory. Some protestants (e.g., cessationists) also do not believe in miracles in relatively recent times. They (e.g., John Calvin) consider that after the death of the last Apostle, there are no more miracles. So, the miracles that we have mentioned in this manuscript would all be dismissed. Since there are no (Eucharistic) miracles for some protestants, they also do not believe in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. They may believe that the consecrated host may serve

to remind us of Christ or serve as symbols of Christ. Some protestants also believe that the blessed Virgin Mary is an ordinary woman and they do not believe in any of the Marian apparitions. Therefore, they do not consider Mary was immaculately conceived and has no sin. Some protestants do not believe in the intercession by Saints because any veneration of the Saints is considered to be idolatry. So, what do protestants believe in? Protestants believe in the justification by faith (Romans 1:17) alone and once for all. It is not known what will happen if we sin after justification although some protestants believe that if we repent our sins, we will be justified by the grace of God. Protestants believe in sola scriptura so that they believe everything according to the Bible. In our belief, we may find that the Bible may be in conflict with some current scientific understanding. Also, sola scriptura may be based on the interpretation of the word God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16) in the passive voice but the original Greek word could be in active voice meaning God-breathing or live-giving or God-inspiring even though we believe in certain parts of the Bible is God-breathed like when Jesus Christ said in the last supper that “This is my body” as there are Eucharistic miracles. Therefore, we believe in the core faith to avoid conflict so we may not believe the entire Bible completely unlike (some) protestants. Therefore, the beliefs and disbeliefs of protestants may not fit with ours very well. Having said that, we believe that protestants will go to Heaven eventually, because of the justification by faith. However, we do not know whether the sins of protestants are forgiven by God or not, so we do not know how severely they will be punished in Purgatory. Although protestants do not have miracles, they have private revelations or religious experiences so that God may respond to them personally. Note that there is nothing to stop you to be a protestant even if you believe in miracles or the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist (which may not be able to wash away your sin in a protestant church although this is not certain since Jesus Christ new covenant did not guarantee that not receiving the Eucharist as the body and blood of Christ means not washing away our sins). An important criterion to be a protestant is sola scriptura. While we may not subscribe to this whole heartedly, we can believe this for most parts of the Bible so that we do not come into conflict most of the time with protestants. You can be a protestant based on our methodology to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

The other major denomination is the Catholic church which recognizes the miracles that we mentioned in this manuscript. However, the Catholic church has some doctrines and dogmas that have been announced, and we need to see whether these are in conflict with our beliefs. First, the Catholic church has four dogmas for the blessed Virgin Mary. The first dogma is that the blessed Virgin Mary is the Mother of (Incarnate) God. This means that you have to believe in Jesus Christ as God and therefore the Holy Trinity. Since we have a principle of Holy Trinity in our theory, we can accept this dogma without much trouble. The second dogma is that the blessed Virgin Mary is immaculately conceived. According to various Marian apparitions, the blessed Virgin Mary identified herself as the immaculate conception. Therefore, we can accept the second dogma. The third dogma is that the blessed Virgin Mary is a perpetual virgin. Scriptural evidence suggests that the blessed Virgin Mary did not have any more children because (i) the brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ are actually relatives of Jesus Christ, who were children of the “other” Mary (Mary of Cleoptra), and (ii) before Jesus Christ died on the cross, He asked John to take care of His mother, Mary, since He has no immediate brothers and sisters. Therefore, there is no evidence to suggest that the blessed Virgin Mary was not a virgin according to Scripture. So, we can believe this dogma. The last dogma is the Assumption of Mary which means the blessed Virgin Mary was taken to Heaven possibly without suffering

death. This is consistent with the second dogma because if the blessed Virgin Mary does not have the original sin (condition), then she need not die. Also, there is no mention of the blessed Virgin Mary's remains even though she is the mother of Jesus Christ. If she had died, then the apostles or their followers will keep track of the death of the blessed Virgin Mary, but there was none. Therefore, we can believe in the fourth dogma. Second, the Catholic church believes in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. This is not difficult given that there are Eucharistic miracles that show the consecrated host may turn into flesh and blood. Since the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist is believed, the left over of the consecrated host after the Eucharist needs to be treated with care because such host is thought to be the flesh of Jesus Christ. That is why in the Fourth Lateran Council, a decree is announced to lock up the consecrated host to avoid others accessing it or do anything with it that might insult God. Third, the Catholic church has different levels of veneration of the Saints and believes that the Saints can intercede for us. This is not idolatry as long as the Holy spirits are with the Saints when we venerate them because basically we are venerating the Holy spirits.

Apart from doctrines and dogma, the Catholic church has a magisterium which has the authority to provide the interpretation of the word of God in any written form or in the form of Tradition. At present, I don't know if any my understanding is in contradiction to the understanding taught by the magisterium yet. So, there does not appear to be any objection to the magisterium to interpret the word of God. Apart from the magisterium, we have to believe in the infallibility of the Pope. Now, the infallibility of the Pope does not mean that he does not sin, nor cannot sin. It does not mean that the Pope is impeccable. It means that the Pope will provide the right teachings of Christ. The Pope does not claim infallibility all the time but only when he is speaking *ex cathedra* (on Peter's chair). If you dispute this, then perhaps the Catholic church is not the one that you would go to. As for me, I am not going to dispute that as my understanding of the word of God is very limited.

If you go to the Catholic church (or other churches), you may be required to believe in the Apostle Creed or Nicene Creed. Would that create a problem? Table 14 shows the Apostle Creed and our response according to our beliefs. We are not sure whether Jesus Christ has descended into hell or not. If you want to be a Catholic, there are no evidence against this belief. According to the Bible, statements 6 and 7 can be believed. If you follow the catholic church, then believing statement 9 is not a problem. Consequently, there are no strong objections of the Apostle Creed statements based on our beliefs.

	Apostle Creed Statements	Believe	Comment
1	I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth,	Partially	According to the attributes of God, we believe that God is Almighty. We do not dispute that God the Father is the maker of heaven and earth (according to the Old Testament).
2	and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord	Yes	This is in our core faith.
3	who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary,	Yes	This is implied by our core faith.
4	who suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried,	Yes	This is in our core faith although we did not specifically identified Pontius Pilate.
5	descended into hell, rose again from the dead on the third day,	Partially	According to our core faith, Jesus Christ rose again after three days but we are not sure whether He descended into hell or not although we may not dispute this.
6	ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty,	Depends	We do not know about this but according to the Bible, this is the case.
7	who will come again to judge the living and the dead.	Depends	We do not know about this but according to the Bible, this is the case.
8	I believe in the Holy Spirit,	Yes	If we believe in the Holy Trinity, then this will entail us to believe in the Holy Spirit.
9	the holy catholic church, the communion of saints,	Depends	This depends on whether you go to the catholic church
10	the forgiveness of sins,	Yes	This is in the core faith.
11	the resurrection of the body,	Yes	This is in the core faith.
12	and the life everlasting. Amen	Yes	We have argued this based on near-death experience.

Table 14: Apostle Creed and our response.

Another creed is the Nicene creed. Here, we just highlight two potential problems with our understanding. First, the Nicene creed indicates that the Son of God is consubstantial with the Father who is spirit. Our response is that the Son of God has a spiritual body before the incarnation and after the resurrection, which can be completely spirit so that He is consubstantial with the Father then. Second, the Nicene creed indicates that the Son of God was made man. Our response is that the spiritual body of the Son of God could be materialized into some foetus body or DNA strand in the womb of Mary, and the materialized body remained physical and could not change to spiritual anymore by the Holy spirit until the resurrection, after which the body of Son of God became a spiritual body again. In summary, we do not have any problems with the Nicene creed.

Another sticky issue is about the inerrancy of the Bible (Ehrman, 2022). This has a long history and argument that we cannot do justice to lay down a summary of it. For Catholics, at one time, the inerrancy of the Bible is thought to be required. However, the second Vatican council (1962-65) gathered the world bishops to update Catholic's teaching and practice for a number

of topics including inerrancy. While the first draft was conservative about inerrancy, 62% of the assembled bishops after a week's debate rejected the draft on Revelation. The last draft was approved by a vote of 2000+ against 27. On 18 November 1965, the draft became the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, known as *Dei verbum*, which has a sentence on inerrancy that is now in Chapter III (English translation) as follows:

“... Therefore since everything asserted by the inspired authors or sacred writers must be held to be asserted by the Holy Spirit, it follows that the books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching solidly, faithfully and without error that truth which God wanted put into sacred writings for the sake of our salvation.” (Pope Paul VI, 1965)

The focus of the phrase is “for the sake of our salvation” which is confided to be inerrant. According to this Dogma, we do not need to believe in every part of the Bible since (a) not everything is asserted in the Bible, (b) the consequence of the sentence (which is called the implication) focuses us on the sake of salvation, and (c) since “everything asserted by the inspired authors or sacred writers must be held to be asserted by the Holy Spirit” is put in the premise of an implication. If the premise is false, the consequence (i.e. “it follows that...”) can still be true for the implication (i.e., the whole sentence) to be true according to logic. If it is argued that “everything asserted by...” is an explanation, then it can be argued that that reason can be the wrong reason for the consequence to be true so that the reason is true or not cannot be established by asserting the sentence. The context of the previous paragraph indicates that the Scripture is writing inspired by the Holy spirit. It indicates that the books of Scripture are all sacred and canonical, but it did not say which part or all parts was/were asserted. Even if the premise is regarded as true because of the asserted context in the previous paragraph, then the consequence is true for the implication to be true, in which case “that truth” would be those God wanted to put into sacred writings for the sake of our salvation. In general, it should go without saying that the Bible is profitable to the teaching on how we live our lives, how we preach the message of Jesus Christ, etc. However, we need to get the salvation message right.

It should be said that the Catholic church is perhaps the oldest and has a long Tradition. It was set up at a time when there was no printing and a lot of people are illiterate. Therefore, a lot of people have to rely on the priests, bishops, etc. to provide a glimpse of some understanding of God through stories in the Bible. Nowadays, the Bible is readily available (in many languages) and basic education has allowed many people to be literate. However, to understand the stories in the Bible with its historical context and theological issue, a priest or bishop is still needed to decipher the text in the Bible. Therefore, going to church is still a valuable learning experience. Note that going to church is not just a learning experience, we have to worship and therefore please God who has done so much for us (because we keep praying and asking for help). That is why in some church proceedings it began with singing songs of praise to God first. Then, followed by a prayer to ask for God's forgiveness and help. Next, sing another song of praise to God after receiving our prayer in order to please God and thank Him for receiving our prayer. Then, a lesson from the Bible is preached followed by the Eucharist so that our sins are forgiven. Finally, a song is sung to thank God. There are other denominations (e.g. East Orthodox church, Anglican church or Coptic church [Redeemed Zoomer, 2023]), and I do not know enough to tell you each of them. Please explore them yourself.

One issue is that if you are a Muslim and you consider to worship the same God as the Jews since Islam is an Abrahamic religion, would there be a need to convert to Christianity? The key question is whether God regards Islam and Christianity the same. How can we know this? In 700+ AD, the Muslims were attacking Spain. The king of Spain was dead in the battle leaving 300 or so soldiers left in the mountains to uphold a Christian regime. The Muslims led an army of much larger size to conquer the remaining Spain soldiers. The blessed virgin Mary came to Covadonga to rescue the Spain soldiers and defeated the Muslims. If God regarded both Islam and Christianity to be recognized by God, then the blessed virgin Mary may not be able to perform miracles to help the Spain soldiers. This instance suggests that Islam is not recognized by the Christian God. Also, none of the Marian apparitions mentioned Muhammad as the last prophet, and some Muslim scholars think that Jesus Christ did not die on the cross contradicting the New Testament. Finally, Muslims believes the Jesus Christ is only a human being who is a prophet instead of being divine. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that Islam is recognized by the Christian God.

Assuming that you want to get baptised, what is the best time for it? This is a tricky question because it depends on the kind of risk that you are willing to take. The apparent safest strategy is to get baptised as early as possible so that you can wash away your sins as well as partaking the Eucharist. If you follow the Catholic church, then some mortal sins cannot be washed away by taking the Eucharist. Instead, you may need to confess to a priest (in the Sacrament of Reconciliation) in order to receive God's forgiveness of mortal sin. If you do not want to make confessions (because you committed too many mortal sins), then you may consider to be baptised after the point that you are certain you will not commit mortal sins. However, there is a risk that you may die before you are baptised, in which case you might go to hell. To avoid this, you should believe in the core faith first so that you have justification by faith before baptism. However, you cannot avoid Purgatory if you died before baptism since your sins are not washed away. To avoid severe punishment in Purgatory, you should avoid to sin so you need to practice a Christian life even though you are not baptised. In the end, whether you are baptised or not, you need to practice a Christian life and the advantage of getting baptised is that there are mechanisms available to wash away your sins so that you will not suffer severe punishment in Purgatory. If you do not know what are the mortal sins and venial sins, then you should investigate these before you become baptised. So far, we have assumed the justification by faith is true. To be on the safe side, note that the justification by faith (Romans 1:17) comes from Saint Paul and not from Jesus Christ (although Christians have quoted other parts of the Bible about justification by faith). When Jesus Christ was talking to a Pharisee, Nicodemus, He said that "Very truly I tell you no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit." (John 3:5). By this saying, one may interpret that Jesus Christ requires us to be baptised to be saved because He said "born of water and the Spirit". So, after you died and you see Jesus Christ, He said that you may be banished to hell because you were not baptised. You may rebut that you were justified by faith. However, Jesus Christ may indicate that this was just what Paul said not what He said. Then, you might be in trouble. Therefore, to be safe, it would be better to be baptised. If you died before baptism, then you might be banished to hell. However, if you lived a Christian life before baptism and converted in your mind, then you can tell Jesus Christ that He said "very truly I tell you, no one see the kingdom of God unless they are born again." (John 3:3) You can claim that you have converted and tried your best to live a Christian life before baptism, please allow you to the kingdom of God. Hopefully, He let you see the kingdom of God and banish you to Purgatory so that eventually

you can get to Heaven. As to whether you can win an argument against Jesus Christ, I leave that to you to think about it. At least, if you met the devil trying to get you to hell, you can avoid this.

What does the practice of Christian life entail? Does it mean we go to church every Sunday partaking the Eucharist? What happen if we are not baptised? Since God is holy, we are required to repent our sins. So, we need to pray to God for the forgiveness of our sins since we may not be baptised. You may pray to ask for help from God. Before you pray for forgiveness or ask for help, it is better to praise and thank God first so that you please God (because God's attributes include personhood) and recognize what God has done for you. In front of God, you need to humble yourself as God is almighty whereas you are just a mortal human. To make you feel you are really humble, just compare yourself with the attributes of God and observe the differences between you and God, and probably you may conclude that we cannot compare with God. We may also need to be humble to others as we are all sinners. In addition, Jesus Christ has taken intensive, extensive suffering (Fradd, 2023) and there is nothing that we can boast about our suffering to overcome challenges.

We need to be honest to God. Why? This is because God knows everything. There is no point for you to hide anything from God. God knows you inside out and probably better than yourself as God has foreknowledge. You may have to face all the things that you come up with your mind. However, you might experience problems with controlling your mind. For example, during prayers when you want to focus on what you want to pray, other unwanted thoughts may come up in your mind and it is hard to control them. Sometimes, if you are fearful of certain outcomes, the unwanted thoughts may pop up in your mind. Sometimes, your unwanted thoughts may be reactions to what you have prayed. So, you may have to calm yourself down to avoid these unwanted thoughts coming up. While you may not mean your unwanted thoughts, they may be causing problems with your communication with God who may think that you are disrespectful. Hence, you may have to train yourself to free all the unwanted thoughts first before you pray. If you are honest with God, then you probably have to seek His forgiveness at some point since you may have undesirable thoughts or behaviour.

Apart from being humble and honest to God, do we have to be pious and why? Being pious is about living out your life according to what you believe. Therefore, if you believe in Jesus Christ being the Son of God and all the related implications, then this life is only transient and you would give all your properties to the poor and live out a life that is like Christ. Obviously, I am not as pious as that, and I have to say that I can only try to live out a life that is not too materialistic. I will donate a small amount of money to the needy but on a regular basis instead of a big amount in one go. I will try to love other people although I cannot say I love everybody. I may pray but I cannot say that I pray feverously everyday and to repent every sin that I make since I may not be able to recognize all my sins. However, being pious may achieve something that is very hard to obtain, and that is the recognition by God to provide some religious experience to you so that your faith can be strengthened. The religious experience may be in the form of giving a tranquil heart and mind that is so peaceful and serene that you feel this comes from some external source but you yet feel it from inside (because I had a similar experience although I do not claim that I am pious). So, God recognizes people who are pious and may reward them. However, there is a difference between knowing to be pious and being pious. You may know that it is important to be pious but you do not live out your life according to your beliefs. Therefore, God may not recognize your knowledge and may not reward you



with a special religious experience, unlike a person being pious (possibly without knowing why). That is why some may emphasize in conversion faith over cognitive faith (Sorensen, 2018) because conversion faith is about being pious whereas cognitive faith may not result in action that follows from your beliefs. However, we believe that both cognitive faith and conversion faith are important because we need to know why in order to defend our beliefs, as well as being faithful or pious. In summary, being pious is very difficult because it affects all our behaviour and even the quick decisions that we make (that we have no time to find out all the implications from our beliefs), and all we can hope for is that we strive to be pious.

How can we cultivate piety? We need to know our beliefs, work out their implications, use these beliefs and implications to cultivate our feelings, instincts and love. For example, since we always sin, we keep asking God for forgiveness. Don't we feel shameful that we keep asking God to forgive us. Also, while we ask for forgiveness, we also ask God to help us. Don't we feel uneasy to ask God for help? Also, we may repent our sin but yet we may sin again with exactly the same kind of sin. All these point to is that we are not really worthy to God, and we are cultivating a feeling of unworthiness. Even though we are not worthy, God still helps us, still forgives us and still saves us. Therefore, what do you feel about God? Why I ask these questions is because we need to have a personal (loving) relationship with God because of the principle of love and the personhood attribute of God that requires us to have some feelings about God. In turn, God has feelings about us. How can we know about these, and that is based on our knowledge of God and how He would react to our pleads, our actions, our beliefs, etc. Therefore, if we do not know God to some extent, it would be difficult to reason or to empathize His feelings about us. You may think that this projected feelings may be wrong, but as long as these feelings humble us and make us pious, then they can guide us to better ourselves. We will not know for sure, but you will know when you meet God after you died. Alternatively, if you are pious and love God enough (assuming that you are baptised, repenting all your sins and partaking the Eucharist), the Holy spirit may dwell in you, and you may experience voices or visions (Insight856, 2015) guiding you in your life (although I do not have such experience yet).

You can also cultivate your feelings, instincts and love by analyzing stories in the Bible that would reflect on your knowledge and feelings about God as well as His actions and feelings. For example, we know that Jesus Christ was crowned with thorns and thistles before He was put on the cross. If the shroud of Turin is authentic, then this crown has thorns and thistles (Fradd, 2023) like a hat that would penetrate to the skull, and you can feel the suffering of Jesus Christ for us. This would help us to be humble and stay pious by considering the love of Christ for us. The thorns and thistles were symbolic of sin and punishment according to the Old Testament (Genesis 3:18). When Jesus Christ wore the crown of thorns and thistles, it is symbolic that Jesus Christ has taken our sins away and wore them on His head. Similarly, in Genesis (22:13), it is symbolic that a ram was caught in a thicket with thorns which symbolize sin where the ram is sacrificed instead of Abraham's son, Isaac. In fact, hands are lay on the head of the sacrificed animal to make atonement for us (e.g., Leviticus 1:4). Similarly, Jesus Christ worn the crown or hat with thorns and thistles on His head symbolizing his atonement for our sins as He sacrifices Himself. Because of his great love for us, we should love God in return and cultivate a loving relationship with God and other people. As indicated, this is easy to say than do, so it is a long journey for us to practice.

God governs by dictatorship (CosmicSkeptic, 2023) as well as asking comments and opinions from others. Dictatorship has a negative connotation in human society because a human dictator cannot make the right decisions all the time and the human dictator may be amoral. However, God is a benevolent dictator who makes the right decision every time, knows everything and is morally perfect (and cannot be corrupted that is why God is holy). The dictatorship is the most efficient form of governance. God is not limited to spacetime, who can be at different places and at different time simultaneously. For human, it is better not to have a dictatorship because human makes mistakes and therefore a council with more people to deliberate the issues would be safer. Hence, a democracy may be more suitable for human governance instead of referencing or copying the governance of God. To reduce risk, the representation in the democracy needs to be diverse so that different perspectives of the society can be heard and thereby reducing the risk of omitting important considerations in discussions, for examples when formulating policies or laws. For God, no risks need to be considered because God knows everything. God also attends the need of each individual instead of by a group of people so that the individual needs of each person are satisfied by God if He wishes to. Hence, God does not need to formulate policies or laws for people from time to time. Therefore, God's governance and human governance are different.

Can we rely and depend on God for governance? Since God is holy and never sins, the governance of God is based on truth. Since God is almighty, God is the best foundation to rely and depend on. We know that God will benevolently use His power because He is morally perfect. Therefore, we are assured that He will be just and will keep His promises. Otherwise, He will not be holy. He said that He loves us so that it is His will for our well beings, which includes trying to get us to Heaven instead of Hell. While God is almighty, God is restricted by His own words in order to keep His promises, so this is why God rarely speaks which may limit His own power. God has also foreknowledge but that does not mean that we do not have free will. For us to rely and depend on God is our free choice even though God knows whether we do rely or depend on Him. For us not to have free will, it requires us not to have any options to choose and that our decision is dictated by some action of God. However, since God let us decide by ourselves, we have free will. We can observe that since many people actually do not believe in God, they have chosen by their free will to reject God. Hence, there are free will even though God has foreknowledge, and it is up to us whether to rely and depend on God. However, we are not saying that we solely rely and depend on God. For example, if you have illness, it is not necessary that you just pray to get better in order to demonstrate that you solely rely and depend on God. You can see the medical doctor and take medicine as well as praying to get better so that you do not just rely and depend on God because God may not intervene every time we make a request. However, does that mean we cannot rely and depend on God? We rely and depend on God spiritually. We live our lives like others but additionally we pray for God's help that we rely and depend on even though there is no guarantee.

## 9. Conclusion

We have shown how to be more certain about beliefs in Christianity by hypothesis testing similar to how scientific knowledge becomes certain. Unlike scientific knowledge which is required to work every time, our beliefs in Christianity are only required to be sure once in order to demonstrate for example the existence of God, etc. as the beliefs are about the existential statements instead of universal statements in science. However, since it is very difficult to be sure certainly even for once, we used subjective probabilities to help us to make the decision with certain amount of risk expressed in terms of probability. In this way, we can wholeheartedly believe in Christianity with a certain amount of risk we take that we are wrong. As a result, we can discuss how to wholeheartedly believe in Christianity, which is difficult to practice. In the end, we try our best to be pious. If we are rewarded by God with some unique religious experience, this can strengthen our faith or beliefs further. Instead of just being pious, knowing why we are pious and why do we believe in Christianity are important to defend and practice our faith.

If you believe in Christianity, we hope you would not stop reading the Bible or attending church after reading this manuscript. To be pious, you need to understand the everyday decisions people make in relation to your beliefs in Christianity as well as implications. In everyday life, you may not have the time to think through the issues to make the decisions, and you may not even be aware of a decision is needed. Therefore, you need to develop or cultivate an instinct, feeling or love to be pious. Reading and analyzing stories in the Bible as well as attending church services may be able to help us to do that. Hence, we do not think that believing in Christianity should stop at what we covered here. It should only be a beginning in a long journey of practice. You may further investigate to build up your theology more fully as well.

If you have not decided, instead of relying on our information which is rather sketchy, you are encouraged to investigate yourself about whether to believe in Christianity or not. In this way, you may be able to estimate your subjective probabilities more accurately, leading to a more accurate probability for hypothesis testing. Even if you decide to believe in Christianity, you decide for yourself which denomination you would like to join. It may not be a surprise that you believe in Christianity but you are not baptised. However, I hope you would believe in the core faith so that you can eventually get to Heaven. If you still do not believe in Christianity, then I hope that I am wrong about my belief in Christianity as the punishment for not believing is very severe. Personally, I do not mind after death that there is nothing, as long as we do not need to suffer any further that would be acceptable to me. However, since I believe in Christianity, God only provides two choices: either you believe or not; we cannot disappear into nothing. While Pascal wager is not a good argument to believe, it reminds us to believe is a rational choice given the infinite payoff. If you still do not believe, at least I hope you would investigate this further like the kalam cosmological argument and the particularism of Christianity (see Reasonable Faith website) before any final decision is made.

Some may like Richard Carrier (2011) rejecting the Christian faith because of his four conclusive reasons: God's silence, God's inaction, the lack of evidence and the universe looks like a Godless universe. First, God is not silent to everybody. He picks certain people to communicate, and probably you need to believe in Him (full of faith) and become a Christian in order for the Holy Spirit to dwell in you. Many people (e.g., Roy Schoeman [Jewish Catholic, 2015]) have indicated that God does communicate with them and sometimes convert them to

believers. Second, God's inaction is not true. Apart from Jesus Christ incarnation, there have been many miracles that we have indicated in here (Section 3). However, God need to pick on those which show that they were God's actions that brought about those miracles so that no correlating factors can be discovered. Third, the lack of evidence is also not true. There are plenty of evidence left behind depending on whether you believe so like Shroud of Turin but some may feel that the evidence is not conclusive. This is partly to be blamed by us (human) who are responsible for the collection of evidence and its preservation. Fourth, the universe looks like a Godless universe because God wants us to decide based on our free will whether to believe Him. If the universe all points to the fact that there is a Christian God, then we may claim that we are forced to believe in the Christian God and it is not due to our free will to choose. Then, people can blame God that they are created and that they are not responsible for their actions in the world since they do not have free will. Therefore, the four reasons that Richard Carrier stated are not very strong reasons not to believe.

Some may not believe because they think the Christian God punishes people too severely (so they think that the Christian God is unlikely to be true). For example, some may consider the death punishment for transgressing the rule of God is too harsh like Adam and Eve. However, if Christianity is true, then God can make this punishment at his own will. We do not have a say as to whether this punishment is appropriate. You can ask God why this punishment is appropriate. However, if you do not believe in the Christian God and yet He is real, then you might be banished to hell. There is not much point to disagree with Him, since if God is real, He makes the rule and punishment. Asking Him whether the punishment is appropriate cannot save you and probably God will be able to give you the answer since God is almighty, morally perfect and has complete knowledge. Therefore, you probably cannot argue not to be punished by God if He is real, and it is better to believe now then to argue with God (about morality). Therefore, please do not assess whether God is real by your reaction to some moral issue of God (like dealing with the problem of evil) or His punishment. Use our methodology to decide whether to believe in God that has less subjective influence instead of your reaction (to moral issues). For example, if someone is a villain before converting to Christianity, does that mean the villain is forgiven and (s)he can live in eternity without any punishment. This may make some to feel that God is unfair (morally), so this may deter people from believing. However, since God is morally perfect, let us leave it to God to decide instead of rebelling against God, who may banish us to hell if we rebell against Him. Ask God about these moral issues after you have joyful eternal life.

Some people do not believe in God or the core faith in Christianity because they think that if they have a good conscience and never sin in human standard, then they are alright as there is the final Judgement day according to the Bible. However, if people do not believe in God or the core faith even though they have heard of Jesus Christ, then they have sinned (e.g., John 16:8) in the eye of God and they may be condemned (e.g., John 3:18 and Mark 16:16). Therefore, they are considered to be sinners according to God and therefore they may be banished to hell. Why should sin be judged by God instead of man? The reason is that after death, if we are going to live with God in heaven, God needs to see us as sinless since God is holy and just. Therefore, if we are sinful in the eye of God but sinless according to human standard, we still cannot live in heaven and that is why we may be banished to hell (if we do not believe but keep a good conscience). For those who lived before Jesus Christ or never heard of Jesus Christ, they may be judged differently perhaps of their conscience. This may sound

intimidating but it is better than giving a false sense of security that you can live like an atheist and yet can go to heaven. For example, some church organization teaches that we have to interpret the Bible according to the salvation plan. Since Jesus Christ said that He comes to save the world and not to condemn the world (John 3:17), this organization thinks that it is alright to not believe in God, and people may go to heaven if they have a good conscience. However, in John 3:17, Jesus Christ was saying the purpose of his first coming is to save the world, but his second coming will be to judge the world so that some people will be condemned. Specifically in John 3:18, Jesus Christ said that those who do not believe will be condemned (probably in the second coming). This church organization may explain that Jesus Christ has given a clear criterion (Matthew 25:32-46) to decide who gets to heaven and who gets to hell by observing whether they help (or love) others or not using goats and sheep as metaphors for those who get to hell and heaven, respectively, in His second coming. However, we are not sure if Jesus Christ referred His followers as goats and sheep, and those that do not believe may be considered as monsters who are neither goats nor sheep. In this case, the monsters may be condemned and sent to hell in His second coming. Therefore, this church organization may be giving a false sense of security to those who want to live free from the restraints of religion and yet want to go to heaven.

Some may not believe because they may argue that God is spirit and does not know the suffering and problems of being a human. Since God is all powerful and all knowing, He can avoid all the sins while we being mortal humans are obviously unable to do that. However, we have to remember that Jesus Christ has become human and was able to abstain from sin. So, He is the best judge of our wrong doings since He had experienced our problems and inabilities. Therefore, there is not much excuse that we can put forward if He is the judge.

Lastly, I should mention that I am not a baptized Christian yet at the point of writing this manuscript and I do not profess the faith of Christianity. If you believe, then there is the risk that some of my writings can be a heresy to some church. If you do not believe, then there is the risk that you have not encountered some definitive source that may convince you. Therefore, what I mentioned here needs you to investigate further (e.g. see videos listed in Appendix A) closer to the source of information instead of relying on what I have written here as some (Messiah 2030, 2023a and 2023b; RockIslandBooks, 2023) may prophesize that the second coming of Jesus Christ is soon.

## Appendix A: Highlighted Videos

In the following, we compiled a list of (cited) videos that you may explore from disbelief to believe, as well as (uncited) videos on debates/interviews and investigations/reports about miracles:

1. [Disbelieve] Richard Dawkins – The God Delusion – Full Documentary, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IzZh2wstj88>
2. [Disbelieve] Bart and the Bible: What made Bart Ehrman change his view on biblical inerrancy? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8EVuuadoeY>
3. [Disbelieve] When you realize the Gospels are mythology based on Greek epics – Dr. Dennis MacDonald, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOAJzuXdr1E>
4. [Disbelieve] Jesus was a Buddhist monk: BBC documentary, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l5rn5ZL9eWQ>
5. [Disbelieve] How can near-death experiences be explained? DW documentary, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ulsB4G3mB6o>
6. [Disbelieve] Have archaeologists found the real tomb of Jesus? Jesus lost tomb. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qyrrdoqspdg>
7. [Believe] Lost tomb of Jesus scam – unearthed – the Talpiot tomb, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yTyV0iyVMp0>
8. [Believe] Are near-death experiences real? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5KhtRnbl8ZE>
9. [Believe] Is there life after death? Fifty years of research at UVA, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0AtTM9hgCDw>
10. [Believe] How science supports belief in the spiritual world with Father Robert Spitzer, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2nXh2JpZLf4>
11. [Believe] How Christianity is different from every religion, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Ii46kW12Zo>
12. [Believe] Meyer on theistic evolution, the multiverse, fine-tuning & the God hypothesis, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YItRWKjA8TE>
13. [Believe] Is Jesus historical? What do the Romans say about Him? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A41Tm5FDKns>
14. [Believe] Is there any evidence for Jesus outside the Bible? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RebKd23Aaho>
15. [Believe] The archaeological evidence for Jesus: a conversation with Dr. Titus Kennedy, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXN6E3MeMbk>
16. [Believe] Do the dead sea scrolls mention Jesus? – mysteries of the Bible unlocked – the dead sea scrolls, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rzw9roeAKJo>
17. [Believe] This boy puts Bible skeptics to shame, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XbOG2yexXGs>
18. [Believe] Odds that Bible prophecies are fake & inaccurate, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UI8LzNBTqco>
19. [Believe] Is Jesus Predicted in the Old Testament? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZI-w0qZBxU>
20. [Believe] “Noah’s flood is not a myth!” Geologists confirm, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hCqJOGHeKnE>

21. [Believe] Jesus in India, Tibet and Persia – an account missing from the Bible, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TEvomvO8cb0>
22. [Believe] Evidence for the Resurrection (Dr. William Lane Craig), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z8lkuuhVkJOI>
23. [Believe] Jesus crucifixion evidence and revelations – secrets of Christianity 103 – nails of the cross, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1gSGPg3UQg>
24. [Believe] A historian explains the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kWSG5okmUr8&t=1166s>
25. [Believe] NT Wright responds to Richard Carrier on women and the resurrection, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TyyR5S4IMgg>
26. [Believe] Is the shroud of Turin real? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAQQhBnCVQs>
27. [Believe] New evidence for the shroud of Turin with Father Andrew Dalton, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HABuG-oVq1Q>
28. [Believe] The truth about the Shroud of Turin with Father Robert Spitzer, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xxiR37eUt8>
29. [Believe] Biggest shroud of Turin discovery ever made, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DNMmj67Ywhc>
30. [Believe] Is the shroud of Turin authentic? | Barrie Schwartz, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X0LmBeo08ZM>
31. [Believe] I didn't know this about the shroud of Jesus w/Dr. Lavie, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6Jxy4LxL7w>
32. [Believe] The Sudarium of Oviedo | mysterious cloth linked to Jesus's burial, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNy65pKZS34>
33. [Believe] The Sudarium of Oviedo w/Dr. Brian Janeway, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2IMtY1\\_28k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2IMtY1_28k)
34. [Believe] The latest scientific evidence of God – Father Robert Spitzer at the Napa Institute Summer Conference, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KvghlgtwnE>
35. [Believe] John Lennox on What is Truth? | Practical Wisdom Podcast, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NgqFhkLFfSE>
36. [Believe] The resurrection of Jesus (the historical evidence), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0iDNLxmWVM>
37. [Believe] Why we know the New Testament Gospels were written early, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CUVjg888m0&t=24s>
38. [Believe] Five reasons you can trust your Bible, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvOsR1-YHTQ>
39. [Believe] Joe Rogan confronted by historical evidence for Jesus' resurrection, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JW2T8a5Ob9w>
40. [Believe] Evidence for Jesus resurrection from a historian, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XXfeUqk4IeU>
41. [Miracle] Scientists investigate signs of Jesus Christ. 7NEWS Spotlight (Documentary) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWmdXqIhjSs>
42. [Miracle] Eucharistic miracle of Buenos Aires. Bread to living human heart. Science challenges atheism, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jimAT0bXhZM>

43. [Miracle] The greatest Marian apparition of all time: documentary of our lady of Zeitoun, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RmSrM9eKUHk&t=329s>
44. [Miracle] Our Lady of Guadalupe, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KEhJwCsDDsc>
45. [Miracle] 15 Amazing facts about the Image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5PXwygxHjs>
46. [Miracle] Guadalupe the miracle and the message (2015) documentary exclusive TV, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ldi8qxf4nFo>
47. [Miracle] Miracle Rock – Our Lady of Las Lajas, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WxoOPdo4x1c>
48. [Miracle] Akita and the Fatima secret. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TaOyEWot93M>
49. [Miracle] Sanctuary of our lady of Lourdes: investigating medically unexplained cures, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EaG7mesmdH4>
50. [Miracle] Our lady of Warraq appears to cheering crowd: indisputable video evidence of miraculous apparition! [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8C4\\_1lpCIIE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8C4_1lpCIIE)
51. [Miracle] St Francis Xavier incorruptible body exposition, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMMmeyGwnT0>
52. [Miracle] The incorrupt saints | fact or fiction? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40UZLnldplo>
53. [Miracle] The bizarre truth about the saints who don't decay, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Vof68JiPLw>
54. [Miracle] 11 incorrupted bodies of saints of the Catholic church, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKQmrAu33Sk>
55. [Miracle] The proof is out there: supernatural statue cries real tears (season 1), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEsIvpkwLg0>
56. [Miracle] Stigmata Cataline Rivas from Bolivia (FoxTV), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OO-YF3v3OmU>
57. [Miracle] The miracle of the liquifying of the blood of St. Januarius, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c4tioziTmKo>
58. [Miracle] 5 Miracles which prove the catholic church is the one true church, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wfX69gvGNrw>
59. [Miracle] Incredible apparition! The statue of the Virgin Mary is not present, but every one can see her, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jz51URYDN-Q>
60. [Miracle] The Miracle Hunter, <https://www.miraclehunter.com>
61. [Miracle] Cessationist: a critical evaluation of this documentary, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V0EXiv5TFDo>
62. [Believe] BBC documentary on Medjugorje – pilgrims, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RnDrFpQYVII>
63. [Believe] Virgin Mary appears to Harvard Professor Part 1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1vnoKr3htss>
64. [Believe] The real reason why Jewish People reject Jesus as the messiah, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XspdYlpifkc>
65. [Believe] Exorcisms: the world's leading psychiatric authority speaks out, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZfunNURoO2w>



66. [Believe] 10 differences between Catholics and Protestants, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VrZQHs7oCFY>
67. [Believe] All Christian denominations explained in 12 minutes, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzLS4O7YaUg>
68. [Believe?] Is God a dictator? Analysing Christopher Hitches, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t7LJBj6Jc-Q>
69. [Debate] Richard Dawkins vs John Lennox: The God Delusion Debate, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zF5bPI92-5o&t=12s>
70. [Debate] Bart Ehrman vs Mike Licona (Are the Gospels historically reliable? 2018) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qP7RrCfDkO4>
71. [Debate] Does God exist? William Lane Craig vs. Christopher Hitchens – Full Debate [HD], <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0tYm41hb48o>
72. [Debate] The God debate II: Harris vs. Craig, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yqaHXKLRKzg&t=506s>
73. [Debate] Debate: Does God exist? Matt Dillahunty vs. Michael Egnor, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yahf0t5mK5g>
74. [Debate] Epic Debate: Does God exist? | Dr. Michael Shermer vs. Dr. David Wood, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xKd2Ht5Bs-k>
75. [Debate] Thomas Aquinas' 5 ways (proving God's existence) debate, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8IrXoU1NKLg>
76. [Debate] Lawrence Krauss -VS- William Lane Craig – Has science buried God. Science Debate, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2t2OucOhU-M>
77. [Interview] Richard Dawkins VS Islam – FULL Interview and Q&A – Richard Dawkins on Islam, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQ-Y5NWWV9kc>
78. [Debate] Why is God hidden? Cosmic skeptic & Lukas Ruegger at Oxford University with Max Baker-Hytch, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9nc0YT-WTnQ>
79. [Debate] Bart Ehrman & Robert Price debate | did Jesus exist, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GzjYmpwbHEA>
80. [Interview] Where sceptics fail | Alex O'Connor, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Ms\\_m3kPpsw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Ms_m3kPpsw)
81. [Prophecy] Messiah 2030 ~ The Prophetic Messianic Timeline – Part 1, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4AG\\_nJNcTjM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4AG_nJNcTjM)
82. [Prophecy] Messiah 2030 ~ The Prophetic Messianic Timeline – Part 2, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AwsjrcUtNhU>
83. [Prophecy] Messiah 2030 ~ The Prophetic Messianic Timeline – Part 3 of 3 (Part 4 in Production), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SdcBodrOKA0>
84. [Prophecy] 2023 End-Times Prophecy (70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel revealed), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aw2p06bgyKg>

## Appendix B: Appreciating Exorcism

To appreciate exorcism, we need to raise a number of questions. First, why is there evil? If there is no evil, then there is no exorcism. Initially, God created Heaven and Earth as well as all the creatures, and these are thought to be good (Genesis 1:31). So, there was no evil. However, one of the angels, Lucifer, was so proud (Ezekiel 28:17) of himself that he wanted others to give him honours and glory like God. This self-generated pride was Lucifer's sin and evil came into being then before Adam and Eve. Lucifer led a rebellion against God and was struck down on Earth (Ezekiel 28:18) to become Satan. Lucifer was able to turn to evil because God gave him free will since God wants him to love God out of his free will.

Second, if God is all loving, all powerful and all knowing, why does God permit evil to exist? This is the classical problem of evil. We have visited this problem before. By and large, evil is permitted because we are given free will so that we are responsible for the action that we take. If evil is not permitted by God, then nobody is doing any evil because God will intervene and eliminate the evil when it is forming, and no one will need to be responsible for their evil acts.

Third, why would evil spirits attack people? The evil spirits that we talk about including devils, demons and Satan. They hate God and since people are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), the evil spirits hate us as well. Therefore, even for some people who do not believe in God, they are not considered as allies of the evil spirits because we bare the image of God. Also, some who are involved in Satanic practices may worship Satan. Yet, they may be attacked by evil spirits because they are the image of God. Since we are created in the image of God, the evil spirits may want to disfigure us when we are possessed so that the image of God looks terrible as these evil spirits hate God.

Fourth, why do the evil spirits come in groups? Evil spirits like demons, devils, etc usually claim to come in groups with lots of them. This makes them appear very strong and invincible. However, we do not know whether the evil spirits lie or not. So, we are uncertain whether it is just an evil spirit or there are many evil spirits involved. The exorcism needs to ensure to expel all the evil spirits from a person, and this may take some time.

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