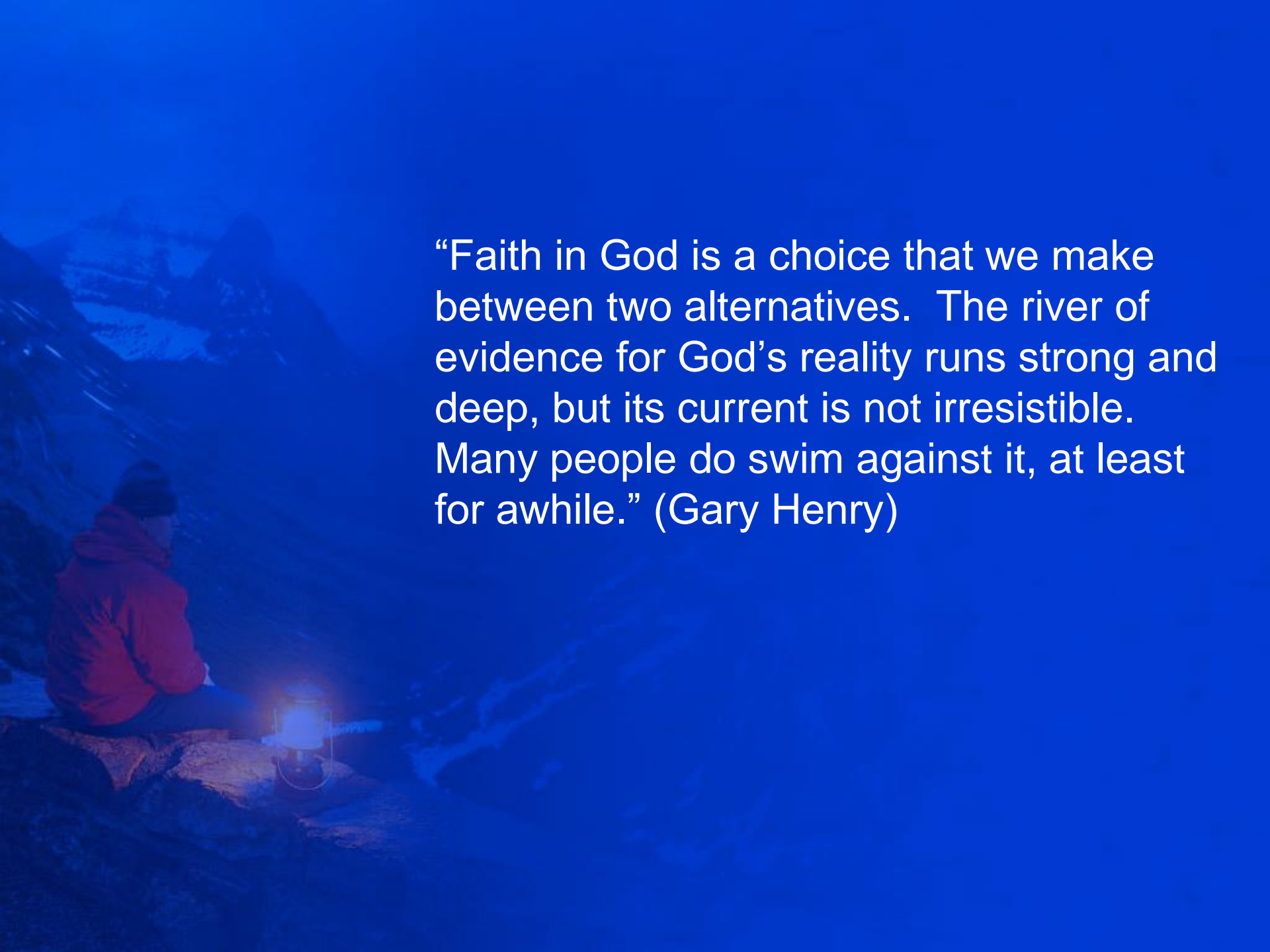


A person wearing a red jacket and a dark hat is sitting on a rocky ledge at night. A lantern is lit on the ledge next to them, casting a warm glow. In the background, a large, snow-capped mountain peak is visible against a dark blue sky. The entire scene is bathed in a deep blue light.

Christian Evidences

Lesson 2:

Evidences for the Existence
of God

A person wearing a red jacket is sitting on a rock in a dark, blue-tinted environment. A lantern is lit on the rock in front of them, casting a warm glow. The background shows a mountain range under a dark sky. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

“Faith in God is a choice that we make between two alternatives. The river of evidence for God’s reality runs strong and deep, but its current is not irresistible. Many people do swim against it, at least for awhile.” (Gary Henry)

Introduction

- The Law of the Excluded Middle:
 - A thing either is, or it is not
 - God either does, or does not exist – no middle ground
- Can the existence of God be proven?
 - God's existence cannot be scientifically demonstrated
 - However, abundant evidence is available to prove conclusively that God exists
 - As we'll see in our study, science is the friend of faith

“Science without religion is lame; religion without science is blind.” (Albert Einstein)

Introduction

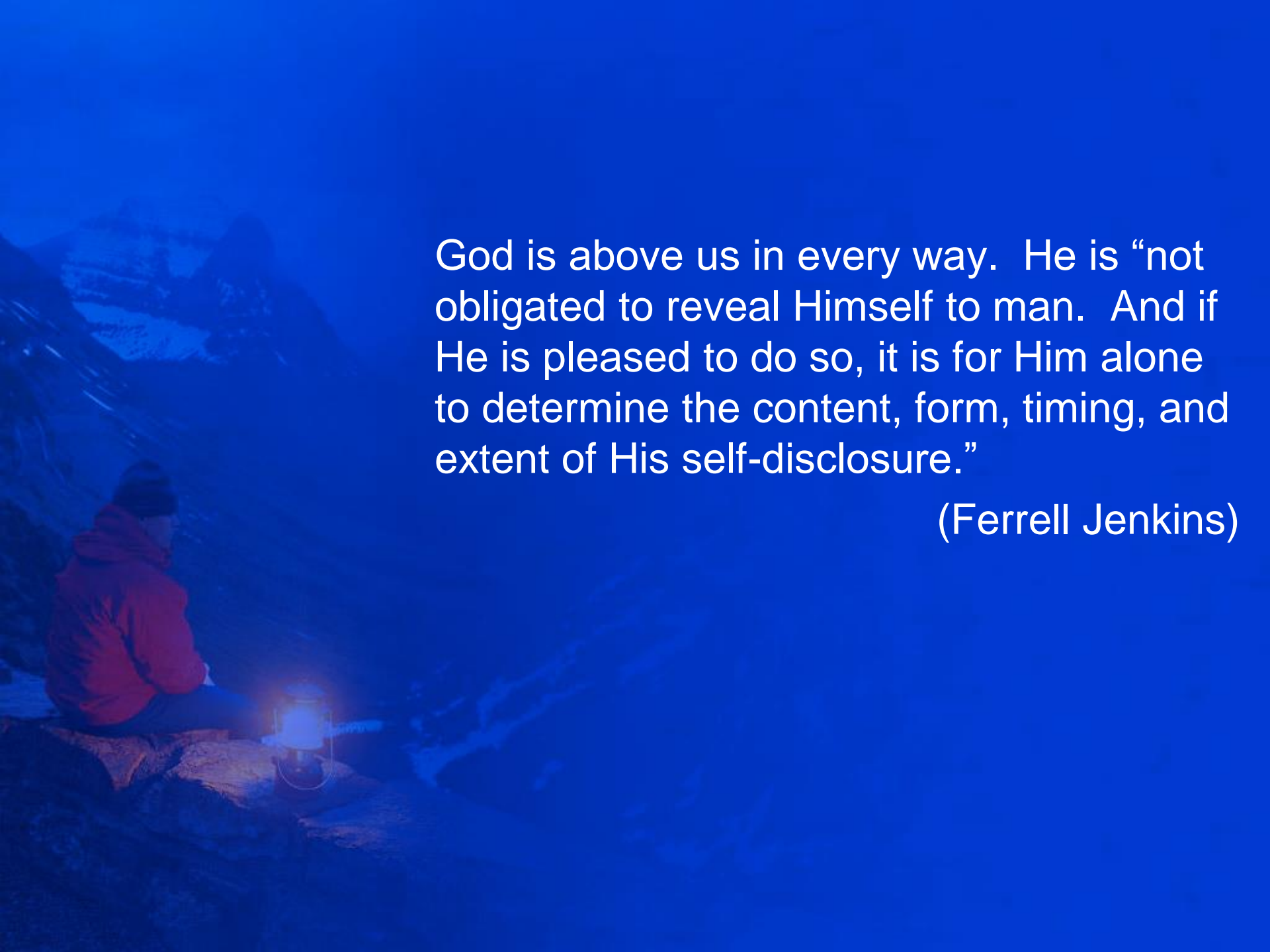
- Can the existence of God be proven?
 - A *prima facie* case: adequate evidence is available to establish the presumption of a fact, which, unless such can be refuted, legally stands as a fact
 - With God: a vast body of evidence makes an impregnable case for His existence

Revelation

- Is it possible to know God?
- What do Job 11:7 and Isa. 55:8-9 say about our ability to know God?
 - Man cannot find God on his own. God is unknowable apart from Revelation.
 - “This does not make the idea of God irrational and the fact of God unreal. God is and must be His own proof. Our knowledge of God will never get off the ground until we appreciate His otherness, His Godness.” (Robert Horn)
 - At the same time, God is personal.

Revelation

- So, when it comes to a person, what might we do to seek to know him?
 - We might do so by observation of action, habits, etc. We might test their IQ, or assess them psychologically. Still, we fail to know the individual as a person.
- How can a person be known? What does this mean: “a person is known as he chooses to be known”?
 - One is known by his deeds and words, and these are controlled by the person.
 - When you meet someone and want to get to know them, what kind of questions do you ask them?
- Divine revelation is necessary because God is personal.

A person wearing a red jacket is sitting on a rock in a dark, mountainous landscape at night. A lantern is lit on the rock in front of them, casting a warm glow. The background shows dark, jagged mountain peaks under a dark sky.

God is above us in every way. He is “not obligated to reveal Himself to man. And if He is pleased to do so, it is for Him alone to determine the content, form, timing, and extent of His self-disclosure.”

(Ferrell Jenkins)

Revelation

- Psa. 19:1-14. What are the two themes of this psalm? You might think of these as two means of revelation. What does each reveal about God?
 - God's world and God's word. Sky and Scripture psalm
 - God's world – reveals that God Is; the power and glory of God; God has set an order in place in this creation, and this reliable pattern attests to His existence and control
 - God's word – can learn of God's will for man; able to make us wise, convert us, instill respect, understand purity; realize God is just and will judge; warns us

Natural Revelation

- We can learn some information about God by observing that which is around us: this material universe.
- Paul's sermons (Acts 14:15-17; 17:22-31). What is revealed?
 - God exists.
 - He has left Himself witness – of His Goodness – the blessings that come from Him.
 - This so-called “unknown God to them” is the One Paul proclaims. It is He who made the world.
 - God is not limited to temples made by men's hands and really does not have to be served by the creatures' hands. Man is dependant on God. God is independent of man.
 - He provides – gives to all life, breath and all things.
 - Man should seek God.

Natural Revelation

- Paul writes that the invisible things about God can clearly be seen by observing things made (Rom. 1:18-23). What are these invisible things?
 - “His eternal power and Godhead”
 - That He Is
 - Omnipotence
 - Goodness
 - Providence
- Natural revelation may be the only appeal some will hear

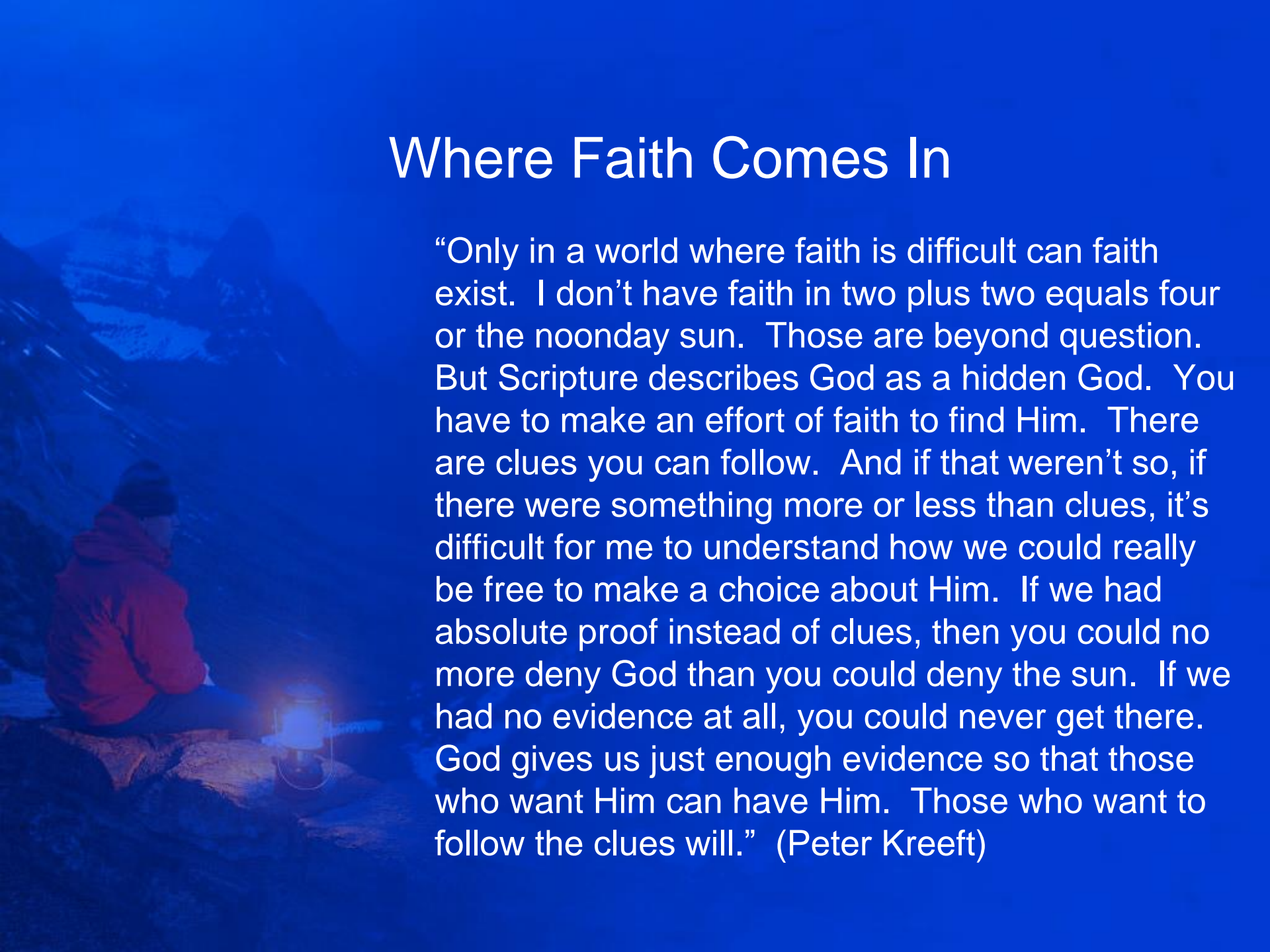
Special Revelation (Communication)

- Directly to man (Gen. 1:29-30; 2:16-17; 3:9-19)
- To the patriarchs
- Through prophets
- Culminated in the person of Jesus (Jn. 1:18; 14:7-9)
 - *“If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.” Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’” (Jn. 14:7-9)*
- Through the apostles
- To those with the gifts of prophecy
- To inspired writers

Special Revelation (Communication)

- Historical facts are important
 - It is important to study the Old Testament as well as the New. God spoke to Abraham, Moses, Israel, the prophets, etc. We can learn of God from His relationship with and revelation to them.
- God sent Jesus; He gave us the Scriptures. Why?
 - Because otherwise no man could ever have known God.
- Natural Revelation: that He Is, His power, His divinity
- Only through Special Revelation can we know:
 - God's will for mankind, and man's plight
 - The character of God; His love, mercy, justice, longsuffering, grace

Where Faith Comes In

A person wearing a red jacket is sitting on a rock in a dark, mountainous landscape at night. A lantern is lit on the rock in front of them, casting a warm glow. The background shows dark, jagged mountain peaks under a dark sky.

“Only in a world where faith is difficult can faith exist. I don’t have faith in two plus two equals four or the noonday sun. Those are beyond question. But Scripture describes God as a hidden God. You have to make an effort of faith to find Him. There are clues you can follow. And if that weren’t so, if there were something more or less than clues, it’s difficult for me to understand how we could really be free to make a choice about Him. If we had absolute proof instead of clues, then you could no more deny God than you could deny the sun. If we had no evidence at all, you could never get there. God gives us just enough evidence so that those who want Him can have Him. Those who want to follow the clues will.” (Peter Kreeft)

The Classical Proofs

- The Ontological Argument
 - We can think of one who is perfect
- The General Argument
 - Universal belief in God
- The Cosmological Argument
 - The cosmos is an effect produced by an adequate cause
- The Teleological Argument
 - Based on the evidence of design in the universe
- The Moral Argument
 - There is within man a moral nature
- The Esthetical Argument
 - The presence of beauty and sublimity in the universe

Cosmological Argument

- Define cosmos (also cosmology)
- cosmos - an orderly harmonious systematic universe
- cosmology
 - **1 a** : a branch of metaphysics that deals with the universe as an orderly system; **b** : a theory or doctrine describing the natural order of the universe;
 - **2** : a branch of astronomy that deals with the origin, structure, and space-time relationships of the universe; *also* : a theory dealing with these matters
- The universe (cosmos) is here and therefore must be explained in some fashion

Cosmological Argument

- The Universe exists and is real
- Atheists and agnostics not only acknowledge its existence, but admit that it is a grand effect (or result)
- If an entity cannot account for its own being, then it is said to be “contingent” because it is dependent upon something outside of itself to explain its existence
- Law of Cause and Effect:
 - “Every material effect must have an adequate and antecedent cause”
 - “Material” – anything composed of matter or energy.
 - “Adequate” – an effect is never superior to in quality, or greater than in quantity, the cause.
 - “Antecedent” – causes occur before the effect.

Cosmological Argument

- Is the law of cause and effect suggested in Heb. 3:4?
 - *“For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God.” (Heb. 3:4)*
 - Yes.
 - A house is an effect, and was built (caused) by someone – the builder.
 - In like manner: “All things” (the cosmos) is an effect, and was built (caused) by God
 - There must be an adequate and antecedent cause to explain the cosmos
- Even a child understands this ... they will pursue the cause of something with a series of questions

Cosmological Argument

- What caused the universe? Three possible answers:
 1. The Universe is eternal; it has always existed and will always exist
 2. The Universe is not eternal; rather, it created itself out of nothing;
 3. The Universe is not eternal, and did not create itself out of nothing; rather, it was created by something (or Someone) anterior, and superior, to itself.

Is The Universe Eternal?

- The first alternative was proposed years ago by several evolutionists – called the “Steady State Theory”
 - Suggested that at points in space, hydrogen was coming into existence from nothing
- This was eventually discounted and rejected because of the first law of thermodynamics:
 - neither matter nor energy may be created or destroyed in nature
- It also violated the second law of thermodynamics:
 - as energy is employed to perform work, it is transformed from a usable to a nonusable form (e.g. wood burns – becomes heat & ash)
- “The Universe is running down like a clock. If it is running down, there must have been a time when it was fully wound up.” (Robert Jastrow)
 - The Universe is “running down” because energy is becoming less available for use.

Did The Universe Create Itself Out of Nothing?

- Some have proposed this idea
- No known process whereby matter could fashion itself from nothing
- From nothing comes nothing
- In the 1980's, this became known as the “inflationary model”
 - The idea of the universe evolving from nothing was speculated
 - Even prominent scientists, such as Stephen Hawking, eventually dismissed this idea
- Which law of thermodynamics would this idea violate?
 - The first law – neither matter nor energy may be created or destroyed in nature

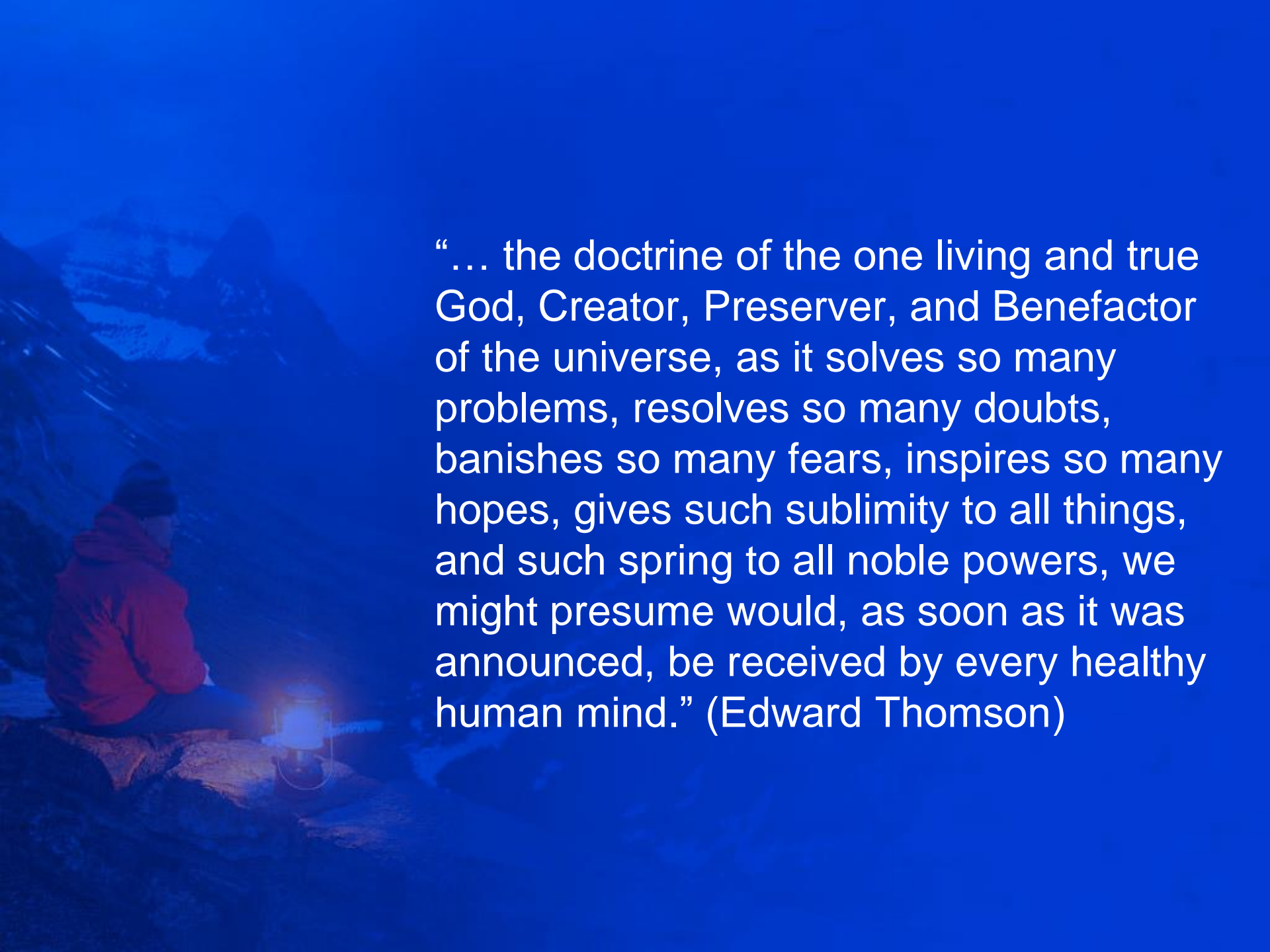
Was The Universe Created?

- Was it created by something (or Someone) anterior, and superior, to itself?
- This is the only remaining alternative
- The universe was created (caused) by:
 1. something that existed before it did
 2. something superior to it
 3. something of a different nature since the finite, dependent Universe of matter is unable to explain itself!

In order for something to exist now, something always had to exist.

- What was that something?
- Two choices
 - that which is mind
 - that which is material (matter or energy)
 - but the idea of the material being eternal has been dismissed
- The only conclusion?
 - “Mind” (or Spirit) is eternal. That Mind is identified and described in the Bible as God.
 - There Is a God!

“The fool has said in his heart, There is no God.” (Ps. 14:1)

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“... the doctrine of the one living and true God, Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor of the universe, as it solves so many problems, resolves so many doubts, banishes so many fears, inspires so many hopes, gives such sublimity to all things, and such spring to all noble powers, we might presume would, as soon as it was announced, be received by every healthy human mind.” (Edward Thomson)

Reference Material for further study

- Introduction to Christian Evidences, by Ferrell Jenkins
- The Case for Faith: A Journalist Investigates the Toughest Objections to Christianity, by Lee Strobel
- The Case for Christ: A Journalist's Personal Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus by Lee Strobel
- I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, by Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek
- Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution, by Michael J. Behe
- The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict, Josh McDowell
- Creation Compromises, Bert Thompson
- Out With Doubt, Kyle Butt
- Be Sure! A Study in Christian Evidences, Brad T. Bromling