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For geologists and geochemists like myself, the planet is a vast laboratory.

Much of the planet's evolution can be linked to 'plate tectonics' with seven large plates moving on its surface. This model explains such diverse evidence as continental drift, the distribution of earthquakes and sequences in the fossil record. There was significant opposition by some leading geologists when it was first proposed, yet the evidence for the model is overwhelming, and underpins much of our geological thinking today.

In the same way that I have faith in the evidence for plate tectonics I also have faith that Jesus Christ, God's son, has made it possible for me to be friends with God forever. But what does the biblical evidence about Jesus demand in terms of a model? And what and why do I believe?

At the end of the famous Sermon on the Mount, Matthew records the response of those who were listening to Jesus:

"When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law." (Matthew 7:28-29).

I can relate to that crowd. It's not just Jesus's teaching that appeals to me, but also extraordinary events and miracles that reveal his nature and support his claims to be the Messiah promised by the prophets of the Old Testament. These prophets predicted that the Messiah

would one day save people from their sin. Jesus fulfilled these expectations in convincing ways. For example, the prophet Isaiah (chapter 53) paints a detailed picture of Jesus's suffering on the cross.

Jesus's explanation for his death is that it was a 'ransom' or payment for sin. He says that he is 'the way, the truth and the life' and that we must trust in him for forgiveness.

Nothing in science beats a predictive model that's subsequently confirmed by new evidence. My decision to follow Christ was evolutionary, not revolutionary. I found the evidence in the Bible about Jesus to be compelling proof of his nature as God. This includes his words, his actions, his resurrection from the dead and his appearing before many witnesses.

Jesus says this:

"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die." (John 11:25)

This is the core of Christianity. Not church traditions but a simple set of propositions in the Bible. It's why I believe.

(NB For a fuller account go to WhyIBelieve.org.au)