

# ATHEISM 101

## An Atheist Addresses Religious Questions



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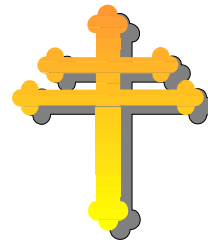
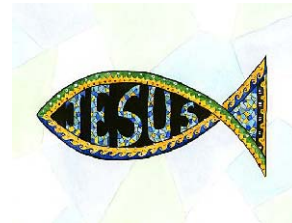
Most of today's religions are belief systems that were formed thousands of years ago by very ignorant, and superstitious, people during a time when there was no scientific method, no formal schooling and very little critical thought. Those people made up many elaborate stories to address the basic questions of "where did we come from?", "why are we here?" and "what is that big bright thing in the sky?". And every culture had their own unique stories.

A priesthood arose to take advantage of the willingness of people to believe in these explanations. They found that they could gain higher status, wealth and political control by perpetuating, and expounding on, these myths. They soon started demanding offerings and then sacrifices (sometimes human) to the gods of these stories. Before long they were actually killing, and otherwise silencing, the unbelievers. And this is still going on in many parts of the world today.

The time to leave religion behind is at hand. The human species is quite capable of dealing with the world without mysticism. We can use our rational minds to find the answers that we seek. Science is doing an excellent job of digging them out of nature.

Where answers are not to be had from nature itself, philosophy can step in. Religions only divide the human race and set us against each other. Moreover, they waste millions of man-hours and billions of dollars that otherwise could be used to improve the human condition.

That said.. let's get started! :)



**If faith is all that is necessary to believe in God and accept the Bible as true, doesn't that make all of the other religions true too? They only require "faith".**



Q. What exactly *IS* an atheist?

A. An atheist is a person who is without a belief in a god or gods.

However, if you look up "Atheist" in certain dictionaries, you might encounter phrases like "one who denies the existence of God" (implying that we are in denial of reality), "infidel", "non-believer", "immoral", "evil". Good examples of this can be found in the older versions of Webster's Dictionary. Webster was a Christian and obviously had an axe to grind against atheists.

Q. Don't you atheists worship SATAN?

A. No we don't. First of all, SATAN is part of the Judeo-Christian belief system. Further, atheists don't generally believe in ANY gods, devils, demons, angels, spirits, ghosts, witches, miracles, or just about anything supernatural.. Why would we worship something that we don't believe exists?

Q. Well then, prove that God does not exist.

A. It's not up to us. Carl Sagan once wrote: "Extraordinary claims, require extraordinary evidence". You are making the **extraordinary claim** that you know how the universe was created, that the universe was created by your personal God, that that God still exists, and is personally involved in every part of our lives. The burden of proof is on the one making the claims. You. We simply say we do not believe it.

Also, one could argue that it is hardly necessary to disprove something that has never been proven in the first place.

Q. How can you say that there is no GOD? I personally feel his "power" in church!

A. Well, I don't know exactly what you felt, but from the atheist standpoint we'd say you've experienced a mass induced psychosis. It is quite a commonly accepted psychological phenomenon. People in large groups can become emotionally charged rather easily. Also, you have to realize that church services are programmed to elicit that specific response from the audience! (Do some research on group dynamics and the psychology of mobs, lynchings, witch hunts, rock concerts, etc.)

Q. If you don't believe in God, then what is the point of living?

Why does living need to have a "point" at all? Do the "lilies of the field" need to have a point to live?

If you must have a "point", then decide on your own meaning of life. Can you think of **anything** more important to decide? It's much better to determine our own purpose, than to have some church do it *for* you based on their agenda!

## Q. Why don't you believe in God??

Well, why don't you believe in Zeus, Thor or Green People on Venus? Same reason. There's no evidence.

And before you say "What do you mean? You're evidence of God".. I'll have to point out the logical fallacy that you would be using:  
Presupposition

You pre-suppose the existence of a God, assign Him the power to create me, then say "How can you say there is no God, you're standing right there!"... Then I would say "See that car there? I made that car from toothpicks.. How can you doubt it.. There it is!" I have presupposed my ability to make cars out of toothpicks before I made the argument.

Also, there is actually reason to believe that a Christian God of your description (All Loving, All Knowing, All powerful) doesn't exist in this universe. If He did, why would He allow innocent children to get cancer? Why would He send hurricanes and earthquakes kill so many people? Why would He allow people to fly planes into our skyscrapers and kill thousands of His "children"? And on and on and on.

Actually, citing the [Riddle of Epicures](#):

Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able?  
Then he is not omnipotent.

Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent.

Is he both able and willing? Then whence cometh evil?

Is he neither able nor willing? Then why call him God?

Therefore the All Knowing, All powerful, All loving God of your description is logically impossible.

If he allows children to get cancer, and allows tsunamis and hurricanes to kill thousands. If he allows bad men to rape women. If he even allows evil to exist in the world, then:

1) he can't be all loving

or 2) he can't know about it

or 3) he's not powerful enough to stop it.

You can have 2 out of three, but not all three.

When looking at the world through the eyes of a rationalist/atheist, the world makes perfect sense. Some people, good and bad, will die in natural disasters. Little children will get cancer as a certain percentage of the population. There's no malice, and no "mysterious plan".

Also, if you will re-read your bible (you're planning to anyway, right?) with critical mind, you'll notice that the God of the Bible actually is:

**Extremely Violent and Cruel**

**Jealous**

**Murderous**

**Impetuous**

**Peevish**

**Possessive**

**Threatening**

**Irrational**

**Misogynistic**

**Irresponsible**

(a human emotion) when we're simply "following the plan" that he laid down in the first place!

What this boils down to is that God was really created by men, and the bible authored by men, not the other way around. Do the actions of your God actually make sense to you? Or does he really seem to act like a spoiled 8 year old?



Richard Dawkins calls God "the most unpleasant character in all of fiction".

And ALL of these are human traits! And every Christian apologist that I've ever heard, constantly says that "God is so far above humans, that we could never understand his motives.".. Well, reading the bible, you're supposed to understand his motives! That's where the supposed lessons come from!

- Not only that, but in the Bible, God directly ordered 2,017,956 People Killed.
- Not counting 65 entire cities.
- Not counting those that died from the His various Plagues.
- And not counting the entire population of the world in the Flood.

Heck, the only people Satan killed was Job's kids, and that was only after God told him he could.

And he's constantly surprised by the actions of Humans. How can he be all knowing, be surprised by anything we do, and get angry

**Q. But EVERYONE believes in God, why don't you?**

A. Well, actually everybody doesn't believe in God. About 10% of Americans (that's 30 Million people as of the 2000 census) say they don't believe in a god. There are about twice as many Atheists in America as Jews. Also, most people around the world believe in different gods. Yours in only one of 1,000+ deities that people believe in.

Also, there are whole "religions" without a Supreme Being: [Buddhism](#), [Confucism](#), [Taoism](#), etc. And many, whole countries without pervasive religions: China, Japan, and the Scandinavian countries.



Q. You should believe, millions of believers can't be wrong!  
Q. Why don't you just have faith?

A. Sure they can. How many people believe in Astrology, Numerology, Psychics, and magic? People are easily duped, and especially so in large numbers. Also, your "believers" can't even agree on what they *DO* believe. The sectarian violence taking place in IRAQ is between devout Moslems. They all follow Mohammed, and Allah, but disagree on the details. Disagree so strongly, that they are willing to kill each other.

J. H. Johnson writes: "[Some] 433,000,000 Muslims believe that the Koran was brought by an angel from heaven; 335,000,000 Hindus believe one of their gods, Siva, has six arms; 153,000,000 Buddhists believe they will be reincarnated; 904,000,000 Christians believe a god made the world in six days, Joshua stopped the sun by yelling at it, and Jesus was born of a virgin and nullified natural laws to perform miracles. "

Why should we believe any of these fantastic tales, brought to us from 2000-3000 years ago by ignorant, superstitious people?

A. Uh Yeah. Faith is nothing more that voluntary gullibility.

"Faith is what your preacher says you must have so that you'll believe all the other stuff he wants to tell you." - Unknown

"A faith that cannot survive collision with the truth is not worth many regrets." - Arthur C Clarke, science fiction writer (1917- )

"Faith is believing what you know ain't so." - Mark Twain, American writer (1917- )

"A casual stroll through the lunatic asylum shows that faith does not prove anything." - Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche

If you insist that "everyone has faith in something", then I'll admit that my faith lies in the human ability to deal with the real world using human reason and compassion. I have faith that we are not born as flawed sinners; we are born whole, with brains capable of dealing with life's challenges unassisted by mythology and supernatural belief systems.

**"Sin" is a concept that is sold to you by your religion. Would you buy a bandage from a man who cuts you in order to sell you a bandage?**

**- Dan Barker, Former Evangelist**

Dr. Charlie Web writes in his article "[Think For Yourself](#)":

*"Faith" is nothing more than thought control. Blind faith is legalized slavery. Faith tells us never to question the evidence for truth. But should we care about the truth? Absolutely! Because if we don't know what reality is, how can we ever expect to know how to deal with reality?*

*To find the truth we simply need to think for ourselves and examine the evidence. Evidence is everything.*

*All the world's evidence tells us that whoever wrote the Bible and whoever wrote the Koran knew absolutely nothing about geography, geology, astronomy, biology, or evolution. They thought their world was flat! They shared the profound ignorance of their time, and yet we are told to have "faith" that these primitive people knew more than we do. Only blind faith could swallow such a yarn."*

Ask yourself, honestly, what basis do you have for believing that the Bible is the true word of a God?

Also, if faith is all that is necessary to believe in God and accept the Bible as true, doesn't that make all of the other religions true too? They also only require "faith".

*"To rule by fettering the mind through fear of punishment in another world, is just as base as to use force."* Hypatia (c. 370-415 CE)

Q. Why don't you believe in God anyway? If He's not real you haven't lost anything. But if He is real, you get to go to heaven..

You are basically talking about [Pascal's wager](#). There are several reasons this doesn't work. The main answering points are:

1. Few, if any, atheists disbelieve in deities out of choice. It's not as if we know that a god is really there but somehow we stubbornly refuse to believe in it. We are truly convinced that He is simply.. not.. there...

2. Which God? And how do you know which God to believe in? What if you're wrong? World-wide, people believe in over 1000 Gods. And in America alone, Christianity has over 1000 sects. They can't all be right. What are the chances that YOU just happened to be born into, or adopted, the RIGHT Sect/Denomination/Religion?

3. If God really exists, He is not stupid. He would know that I don't believe, and that I'd just be trying to get a free ride into Heaven by SAYING that I believe.

4. You couldn't just "believe in God", you would also have to believe in the whole religious package. In Christianity that would mean also believing in angels, demons, Satan, heaven, hell, saints, sin, resurrection, prophets, miracles, cherubim, etc. etc. etc.

5. AND If there is no God, you **have** lost something by worshipping Him. You have wasted a good portion of your life performing various devotional rituals, attending church, praying, reading scripture and discussing your deity with His other followers. Not to mention giving your hard-earned money to the church, wasting your intelligence on theological endeavors and boring the hell out of people who really don't want to hear your "Good News".\*

Also, Believing when you actually don't, you would have lost a great deal of self-respect by being intellectually dishonest with yourself for your whole life.

(These answers were drawn from [Adrian Barnett's site](#). Go there for more information.)

\* Speaking of Good News... In order for a Christian to spread the "Good News", they must first spread the Bad News: That all of the people of the world are born sinners, bound to spend an eternity Hell. Christians conveniently forget that part.

**"Stating that a believer is happier than a skeptic is no more to the point than the fact that a drunken man is happier than a sober one. "**

**- George Bernard Shaw**

**Q. Well what DO you believe?**

A. We DO believe in Human Dignity! We're NOT born "dirty sinners". We are born as earth's most intelligent and adaptive creatures. We have the ability to overcome adversity without help from mysticism, superstition and "invisible friends".

We believe in treating our fellow man as we would like to be treated; which is a Humanist Idea, thousands of years older than Christianity.

We believe that Humans are fully capable of deciding our own "purpose" in life.

We believe that the "comfort" that religion theoretically offers is more than off-set by the amount of pain, death and suffering it has caused throughout history.

And we believe that religion has hindered the advancement of human knowledge more than any other single cause, and is still doing so today.

We believe that HUMANISM is a much better source for ethics than bronze-age dogma. Heck, just about anybody could make a better set of Commandments than GOD did. Here is one set, drawn from EthicalAtheist.com

1. Thou SHALT NOT believe all thee art told.
2. Thou SHALT constantly seek knowledge and truth.
3. Thou SHALT educate thy fellow man in the Laws of Science.

4. Thou SHALT NOT forget the atrocities committed in the name of god.
5. Thou SHALT leave valuable contributions for future generations.
6. Thou SHALT live in peace with thy fellow man.
7. Thou SHALT live this one life thy have to its fullest.
8. Thou SHALT follow a Personal Code of Ethics.
9. Thou SHALT maintain a strict separation between Church and State.
10. Thou SHALT support ye who follow these commandments.

And I believe in a future that allows humans to be free of the blinders superstition and religion. Free to use their minds to question the universe around them unafraid of the wrath of an invisible, omnipresent Judge. (Or His even more present, and judgmental, human representatives.)

But mostly I believe that the world actually HAS a future. Unlike the Christian who envisions a very short future indeed; where the "King of Creation" is coming next week, or next year, to loose horrible demons and monsters and plagues and disease upon the world, before totally destroying it. (See [Revelations](#))

## Q. But you must be forgiven for your sins!

A. What if I told you that there is no such thing as a sin?

"Sin" is a concept that is sold to you by your religion. Would you buy a bandage from a person who comes up to you and cuts you in order to sell you a bandage?

Paraphrasing Dan Barker in his excellent book: "Losing Faith in Faith": "Religion tries to sell you a cure for a problem of it's own making."



## Q. What do you do if you feel that you've really wronged another person or done something bad? You can't go to Jesus for forgiveness.

A. That's right we can't, so we either have to get forgiveness from the person we've wronged or live with it. If you think about it, it makes us think a lot harder about doing something before we do it. The religious person can just go on and do it, knowing that he can easily be forgiven by his church, Jesus, etc. He doesn't even have to ask forgiveness from the person he's wronged.

Did you know that Hitler was a Christian (a Catholic)? And since he probably asked for forgiveness in his last hours, he should be in heaven right now. Right? And Anne Frank's only "sin" was that she was Jewish. So to Christians, she should be in hell now, along with Albert Schweitzer (a non-believer). Right?

## Q. How can you not believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ?

A. Well, rationally considered, it is a *pretty* outlandish claim. Nobody in the history of the world has ever done it. And outside of the bible, there is no mention of Jesus' resurrection anywhere in the historical documents. NOR is there a mention of any of the *other* supposed "resurrections" that took place on the same day: According to Matthew chapter 27:52-53 "And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." You would think that *someone* outside of the Bible would have written about that.

Carrying this a bit further, let's look at the logic of Jesus's death.

- 1) God is angry at us for disobeying Him in the Garden of Eden, and condemns us all.
- 2) He sends His son to die on earth to appease himself.
- 3) Then He forgives only those who believe in His son, the rest are still condemned.

Or as Julia Sweeney puts it:

"Why would a God create people so imperfect? And then blame them for his own imperfections? Then send his own son to be murdered by those imperfect people, to make up for how imperfect those people were? And how imperfect they were inevitably going to be? I mean, what a crazy idea."

Why didn't He just forgive us outright? Why did he condemn His son to all that suffering and torment at the hands of the people he's planning to forgive just so He wouldn't send us all to hell!?

And if your Catholic, it gets even stranger! God and Jesus are the same person.. So in essence, He sent Himself to be tortured and crucified to appease Himself!

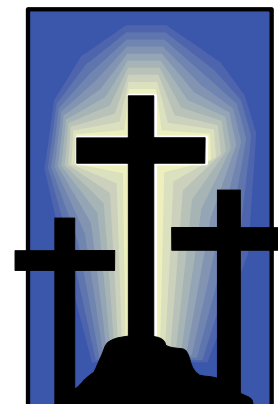
Look at it another way.

- 1) God's mad at us for eating the apple.
- 2) God sends His son to earth to be killed by us (He had to know it was going to happen!).
- 3) We kill Him.
- 4) God's not mad at us any more.

Does that make any sense?

I mean he subjected His own son to torture and a painful death, just to make a loophole IN HIS OWN LAW so that he could forgive us.

Again... Why not just forgive us? What kind of father would have his son tortured and crucified, when he had the power to prevent it?



### Q. Don't you wish that you could go to Heaven?

A. Sure.. We'd love to believe that Heaven was real and that we could live forever. But there has never been anyone who has ever come back and said it was there. There is no evidence whatsoever of life continuing after death. (The Bible doesn't count, since it was written by very superstitious people who believed that demons cause illness, the earth is flat, the sun travels around the earth, etc., etc.)

Also, if Heaven is to be total happiness, forever, then how can you be totally happy if you know that one or more of your loved one's are in Hell? (Or if anyone is in Hell?) And if God removes your memories of those loved ones so that you can be happy, is He not altering the thing that is "You". If He alters you very much, you cease to be the "You" that you were.

Also, are babies still babies in Heaven forever? Do retarded people become smart? How smart? If Jesus says that riches are to be frowned upon, why are the streets made of Gold, and the Heavenly Gates Pearl? Every religion/sect has a different "Heaven", how do we know which is the correct heaven? Indeed, how do we know ANYTHING about heaven? Even the bible is extremely sketchy in this respect.

Doesn't it make more sense that the ancient church would just make up Heaven and Hell to keep it's followers in line? After all, Hell is the ultimate threat and Heaven the ultimate Bribe.



Anyway, according to the Bible, the prospects of you going to Heaven are pretty slim too:

Revelation 7:4 says that only 144,000 people will be going to heaven, and those will be "of the children of Israel."

Revelation 14:3-4 says that "These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins."

So unless your a Jewish man, and a Virgin, sorry.

### Q. Don't you believe in an immortal soul?

A. No. Your personality is basically an organic and chemical structure and resides mostly in the frontal lobes of your brain. Many studies have been done to show that the application of certain chemicals and/or surgery can change the way your personality behaves. A simple surgical procedure known as a lobotomy, for example, will erase your personality altogether. How can a soul (i.e. your personality) exist when it has no physical brain to reside in?

**Q. Don't you believe God created man in the Garden of Eden?**

A. No. Anthropology, Paleontology, Biology and Genetic Research all point to evolution being the correct theory for the arrival of man on earth. They also point to the fact that [man originated in Africa](#), and then traveled to Europe, Asia and the rest of the world.

(For more information about Evolution and the science behind it, visit [Mark I. Vuletic's pages](#))

The ONLY proponent of Creationism is religion. And different religions have different creation stories. You figure it out.

And it doesn't make any sense!

Let's go into this a little farther using the Judeo/Christianity creation story as an example: God tells Adam and Eve (And I'm quoting the Almighty Himself here) "**thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.**" (Genesis 2:17)

1. They eat from it and they do not die. Doesn't that mean that God lied?

2. How can they know what "to die" even means? Nothing has ever died anywhere in their experience.

3. How do they even know what "wrong" is, if it takes eating from the Tree of Knowledge to know the difference between right and wrong!?

4. If God knows everything that will ever happen, then when he made the Garden of Eden, and placed the Tree of Knowledge in the very center of it, and told them not to eat from it, and allowed Satan there to tempt them; He knew at that time that they would! (Remember they were not sinners yet, and like children.) Yet he acted surprised, he acted angry, and punished them and all of their descendants for the rest of time. It sounds to any reasonable ear like he was just laying a trap for humanity.

5. Also, God knows everything! He must have known that all this was going to happen. Why did he even go through the exercise of creating Man anyway, if he knew it was going to fail?

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# EVOLUTION:

**FOR:** Genetics  
Paleontology  
Biology  
Anthropology  
Embryology  
Biochemistry  
Biogeography  
Comparative-  
Physiology

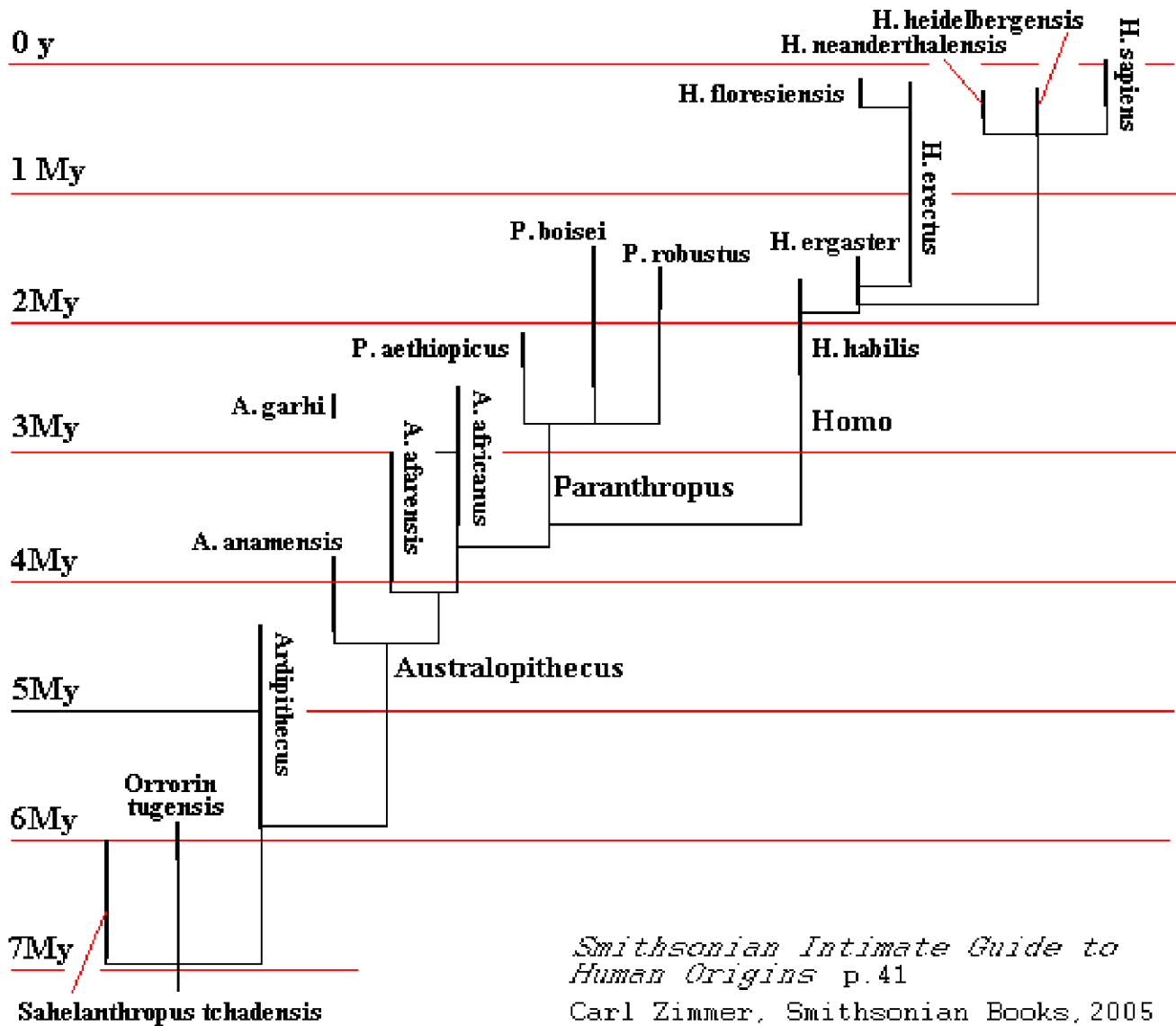
**AGAINST:** Religion

Q. If we came from monkeys, why are there still monkeys around?

A. We didn't come from Monkeys. Monkeys and Humans came from a common ancestor that lived several million years ago. A few Million years ago there were actually 4 or 5 distinct humanoid variations sharing the planet. Heck, the Neanderthals were still around only 30,000 years ago!

Why don't you try studying a little Anthropology if you really want to learn more about it? Do you really think the people 2000 to 5000 years ago knew more about human origins that we do now?

Below is a chart showing the actual ascent of Man as Anthropology understands it today. The My means Millions of years ago.



"The universe was created by an all-powerful all-knowing being who came down to us in the form of a cosmic Jewish Zombie who was his own father who can make you live forever if you symbolically eat his flesh and telepathically tell him you accept him as your master, so he can remove an evil force from your soul that is present in humanity because a rib-woman was convinced by a talking snake to eat from a magical tree." - Every Christian (from bartcop.com)

Q. Well then, where do you think the universe came from?

A. I don't know. Nobody does. Not even your preacher. Besides, saying that "God did it" really explains nothing. You're in essence saying that an unseen, unknowable being created it in a way that we could never understand. You might as well say it was "magic", or fairies!

Also, when you say "God created the universe." it begs the question "Who/what created God?" and then "Who/what created that entity?"

Here's the problem... People *do* have questions about the universe: Where did it come from? Where did WE come from? Do we have a purpose?

These questions are very basic human questions, and it would be wonderful if the answers were easy to come by, and easy to understand. However, they are anything BUT basic or easy to answer. To arrive at any kind of respectable/defendable answer you would have to study Anthropology, Biology, Physics and/or Philosophy just to begin with! We have long since passed the point where the layman can do more than can scratch the surface of all of these diverse fields. The answers are very hard to arrive at. But religion makes it easy! Just study one book and get some help from your preacher! "God created the Universe.", "We're here because he put us here." "Our purpose is to serve Him (and the church)".

These answers are easy, but 1) they're really not answers because we don't know how He did it, or where He came from, or what His purpose was for putting us here. 2) When we follow religion, we are not following the SAME religion. And it's very divisive. It causes elitism, intolerance, and war. These are paths we can no longer afford to take. Humanity is too interlinked, and the world is too small (and nuclear weapons too abundant) for us to continue down this path.

The difference between Scientific and Religious answers is the way they go about getting these answers.

David W. Key, director of Baptist Studies at the Candler School of Theology at Emory, put it this way: "*The real underlying issue is that fundamentalism [...] is incompatible with higher education,*" Professor Key said. "*In fundamentalism, you have all the truths. In education, you're searching for truths.*"

Science looks at the universe and tries to figure it out, working from the data to the answer. Religion works backwards. It teaches us that it's answers are "Revelations from God" (or at least "inspired by God"), and tries to find data in the universe that supports **them**; ignoring or denying evidence that contradicts it. Therein lies the problem.

In the past, Religion has denied that the world is round, that the sun is the center of the solar system, and that illness can be caused by microscopic organisms.

Religion currently is denying Evolution. This at a time when every major accredited institution of higher-education in the world accepts it.

[Galileo Galilei](#) was imprisoned, and [Giordano Bruno](#) killed, for espousing their scientific discoveries during a time when religion contradicted their findings.

By the way.. the Catholic Church is after a kinder image now I guess. On it's web-site: [The Myth of the Spanish Inquisition](#). They say it wasn't *Millions* of heretics they killed, but only 3,000 to 5,000. Of course this does not even touch on the number of people who where maimed and tortured, and/or dispossessed of their lands/properties during the 350 years that it endured. (1481-1834). (www.reference.com)

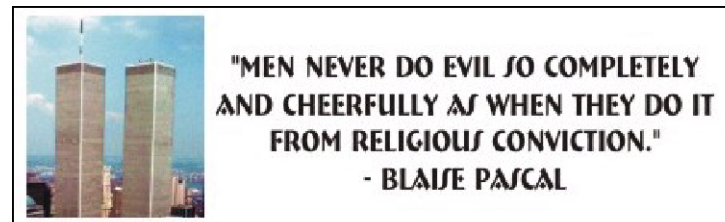
So what do you do? Take some time and learn about the world around you! I, personally, enjoy the study of these different fields. The internet has put all of the sciences at our finger-tips. You would be surprised how accessible, and understandable, the information is nowadays, if you will only take the time to ASK the questions, and use your brain.

"Learning is lifelong." and fun! Just open your mind and start!

**Q. Doesn't being an Atheist "cheapen" life?**

A. Actually religion cheapens life. Being an Atheist makes life more precious. Since there is no after-life, you must come to terms with the fact that this is the ONLY life you'll get. If an atheist throws himself in front of a bus in order to save a child, that action is much more meaningful than if a Christian did the same thing. The Christian thinks they'll just go to heaven and live there!

Look at the 9/11/2001 massacre in New York and Washington D.C. Those religious (Muslim) people thought that their actions would hasten and ensure their entry into eternal bliss, but what they actually did was throw away the only life they had in an act of "faith".



**Q. But surely you must concede that there are some things that science can't explain.**

A. Of course. It has always been that way, and probably always will be. But just because we don't know something, doesn't mean some supernatural intelligent being is responsible. Carl Sagan called this human tendency to attribute to God that which we do not know as putting "God in the gaps". Atheists are quite content to say that they simply don't know yet and rely on the scientific method to find the answers.

Q. How can you trust Science since it's always changing what it says?

A. That is simply the way science works. You conduct tests on nature and gather results. Then you re-test the results with updated knowledge and techniques that improve over time. Sometimes we do get it wrong, but we're the first to admit it when it happens and continue on with our investigations. The Church also follows scientific findings, but with about a 100-500 year lag! In the meantime, they persecute the scientific community as heretics.

Also, the Scientific Method, which is responsible for modern medicine, space flight, and just about every modern convenience you take for granted today, would come to a grinding halt if scientists today started saying, "Oh, God did it", and stopped searching for further answers. This actually was the thought process dominant for 1000 years of scientific stagnation and religious oppression called the Dark and Middle Ages.

And don't forget that the Church changes too. The Catholic Church just recently did away with "Limbo", which it created hundreds of years ago to explain where babies went when they died.

Q. Christian morals are founded on the Bible! How can you say you're a moral person and not believe in the Bible?

A. First of all human morals pre-date the bible by thousands of years, they weren't invented with the Ten Commandments. It has always been against human values to be dishonest, to kill or harm your fellow man or steal his possessions. All societies, ancient and modern, have been founded on these principals, they had to be, else they would not have long endured.

Also, even strong Catholics and Christians cannot agree among themselves on specific issues of morality like abortion, birth control, homosexuality, women's rights, etc. Not too long ago the Bible was used to justify slavery and deny women's rights. And the Bible is still being used to justify killing doctors who work in women's health clinics.

**Tom Paine**, in his "The Age of Reason", wrote one of the most scathing attacks on the Bible to date.

To quote one passage: *"Whenever we read the obscene stories, the voluptuous debaucheries, the cruel and tortuous executions, the unrelenting vindictiveness with which more than half the Bible is filled, it would be more consistent that we call it the word of a demon than the word of God. It is a history of wickedness that has served to corrupt and brutalize humankind; and, for my part, I sincerely detest it, as I detest everything that is cruel."*



Isaac Asimov, says in the Canadian Atheists Newsletter, 1994

*"Imagine the people who believe such things and who are not ashamed to ignore, totally, all the patient findings of thinking minds through all the centuries since the Bible was written. And it is these ignorant people, the most uneducated, the most unimaginative, the most unthinking among us, who would make themselves the guides and leaders of us all; who would force their feeble and childish beliefs on us; who would invade our schools and libraries and homes. I personally resent it bitterly."*

Even Hellen Keller felt that the bible was extremely cruel and inhumane:



**"There is so much in the bible against which every insinct of my being rebels, so much so that I regret the necessity which has compelled me to read it through from beginning to end. I do not think that the knowledge I have gained of its history and sources compensates me for the unpleasant details it has forced upon my attention."**

**-Helen Keller, American lecturer**

**Q. Well SURELY you believe that America was founded on Christianity?**

A. When religious leaders portray the American Founding Fathers as universally Christian, they are being downright dishonest. There were some Christians to be sure but many, perhaps most of the Founding Fathers, were Deists. They believed that God may have created the Universe, but he either died or went away after that.

For example:

- **Thomas Jefferson** once wrote that *"All religions are alike; founded on fables and myths."* He was also a staunch supporter of the separation of church and state: *"History, I believe, furnishes no example of a priest-ridden people maintaining a free civil government."*

- **Benjamin Franklin** wrote in his "Poor Richards Almanac" that *"Lighthouses ware more helpful than churches"* and *"The way to see by faith is to shut the eye of reason."*

- **James Madison** said, *"During almost fifteen centuries has the legal establishment of Christianity been on trial. What has been its fruits? More or less, in all places, pride and indolence in the clergy; ignorance and servility in the laity; in both, superstition, bigotry, and persecution."*

- Even **George Washington** was a lukewarm supporter of religion at best, putting his support behind human reason and education: *"There is nothing which can better deserve our patronage than the promotion of science and literature. Knowledge is in every country the surest basis of public happiness."*

Also, the original Pledge of Allegiance didn't contain the words "under god". The congress voted to include that in 1954 during the McCarthy era. The purpose was to distinguish the U.S. from the "godless communists", and in doing so, clearly violated the constitutionally established separation of church and state. McCarthy was later revealed as a zealous opportunist, liar, and fraud. One must ask: Why is his legacy still recited daily in our nation's schools?

If you want to see what a constitution would look like if it was REALLY dedicated to GOD.. Then just do a search for, and read, the Iranian Constitution.

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*"I have faith, I believe this in my heart and nothing you can say or do can shake my faith." That's just a long- winded religious way to say, "shut up," or another two words that the FCC likes less. But all obscenity is less insulting than, "How I was brought up and my imaginary friend means more to me than anything you can ever say or do." So, believing there is no God lets me be proven wrong and that's always fun. It means I'm learning something." -*

**Penn Jillette** (of Penn & Teller)

## Q. What have you got against religion?

A. Well, to begin with, it's divisive. It splits all of humanity in to warring factions.

Religious beliefs were the cause of and/or the justification for:

- The Spanish Inquisition
- The Crusades
- The Divine Rights of Kings
- Witch Trials in Europe and America
- The perpetuation of Slavery
- The Dehumanization of other religion's believers (and non-believers)
- The Subjugation of Women
- The Refusal of some parents to give medical treatment to their children, relying instead on payers and faith-healers
- The decades of violence between Jews and Moslems in the Middle East
- The decades of violence between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland
- Capital Crimes against Women's Health Centers
- The 9-11 tragedy (a true faith-based act) and the subsequent War on Terror
- The Suppression of Science, and indeed the suppression of reason itself. \*

\* ("Thinking" is frowned upon even from the beginning.. The "Original sin" itself comes from Man eating from the "Tree of Knowledge".)

Do a Web-Search for "Religious Atrocities"

Religion teaches us that the earth is put here for our disposal. We can use it up, or trash it, and it's Ok. Besides, Jesus in coming back shortly to put an end to it anyway, right?

Religion teaches us that we are all born tainted with sin; impure and dirty. We must spend our entire lives trying to "make up for" the sins of the first humans.

When religious leaders answer all of our questions for us, we lose our own natural curiosity. It atrophies, and we are left acting as automatons, going through our routine activities like robots.

Religion stymies the wonder of Nature. It's not nature that is wonderful when we give the Great Father all the credit for creating it in all its wonder.

Further, religion teaches us that certain areas of Nature are off-limits. For example:

- **Stem-cell research**, which has great potential for reducing human suffering and disease, has been de-funded by the Federal Government.
- **The Creation of the Universe**. No less a personage than • [the Pope has told us that we should not study the Big Bang](#), because it should be left in the domain of God
- **Evolution**: The study of the descent of man, would be outlawed if we gave the religious-right half a chance. Every year sees new law suits being introduced in an attempt to get the teaching of evolution banned from our schools.

Also, it redirects hundreds of billions dollars and man-hours away from more productive pursuits.

Religion is directly responsible for the bilking of billions of dollars from the old and infirm.

Religion teaches that morality is rigid and unchanging, rather than subject to changing circumstances.

It's "supernatural" foundation keeps millions, if not billions, of people in educational and cultural stagnation.

If societies believe that they can find the answers to all of life's questions in their holy books, why study anything else?

People pray rather than seek legitimate medical attention for illnesses for themselves and their children. Christian Science "Practitioners", are actually paid by insurance companies to pray for the recovery of the sick and infirm under their care, as opposed to actually giving them even minimal medical treatment.

Most religions tell you that your life on earth is infinitesimally small compared to that which awaits you in heaven. So why even bother trying to do anything but praise God while here on earth?

It's can't be conducive to good mental health to have an All-Powerful "Judge of Right and Wrong" watching your every move and reading your every thought, ready to cast you into Hell forever for the slightest infraction. You could easily see where this could lead directly to paranoia. Indeed, does this not define paranoia?

In War, religion teaches us that there is no reason to try to quickly end it. After all, God is on our side, and all the fallen soldiers are going to heaven anyway since they are fighting in a Holy cause.

And finally, if we accept Religion's version of human history, we are denying our own true history, the actual human story. Homo Sapiens have endured for a 150,000 years, not 6,000. We have survived global catastrophes (ex: The [Toba Caldera Eruption](#), the [Yellowstone Eruption](#), and an [Ice Age](#)), and have battled the Neanderthal for human supremacy of the planet. We have fought the mighty Mammoth, the Mastodon, and the Saber-Tooth tiger. And, in spite of this, and in spite of being constantly plagued by superstition and religion, we have managed to develop Reason and the Scientific Method to a finely honed tool for examining, and explaining, the universe around us.

## Q. So why did you write these pages?

A. There are really three reasons:

1) To give the atheist perspective. Many religious leaders are engaged in constant disinformation campaigns aimed at painting atheists as immoral, dissolute, god-haters (if not outright Satan worshippers). Most religious leaders know that it's a lie, but say it anyway. How many times have I heard Christians confide that it is OK to tell a lie as long as it brings more people to Christ. (We're talking about breaking a commandment here! But it's apparently OK as long as the end justifies the means.)

2) As a resource for people to be just beginning to doubt the veracity of their religion. I only wish there had been such a resource when I was beginning to question the church. The journey from faith to reason could have been a much quicker, less painful, one for me.

3) To get people to think just a little bit. Many people just go day-to-day believing that whatever their religious leader tells them, that whatever happens is just "God's Will" and that there is no other way to think about the world and the universe. THINK! The universe is just as gorgeous, just as wondrous! And without an all-powerful, judgmental God watching your every move and monitoring your every thought, I would say that it is even more so. :)

## Further Atheist &

## Freethought Resources

<http://www.juliasweeney.com/>

<http://www.atheism101.com>

<http://www.skepticity.com/>

<http://www.americanatheist.org/>

<http://www.infidels.org/infidels/index.html>

<http://www.meetup.com/search/?keywords=Atheists>

<http://www.ffrf.org/>

<http://www.infidels.org/index.shtml>

[http://www.geocities.com/atheist\\_anon/index.htm](http://www.geocities.com/atheist_anon/index.htm)

<http://richarddawkins.net/>

[http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/robert\\_ingersoll/](http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/robert_ingersoll/)

<http://www.evilbible.com/>

<http://www.thebricktestament.com/>

<http://members.aol.com/ckbloomfld/>

<http://www.digitalfreethought.com/freethought.htm>

<http://www.biblicalnonsense.com/>

<http://www.theocracywatch.org/>

<http://www.rationalresponders.com/>

<http://www.seesharppress.com/20reasons.html>

<http://exchristian.net/>

**and don't forget to go to YouTube and do a search for:**

Atheism

Richard Dawkins

Steven Pinker

Christopher Hitchens

Sam Harris