

Chapter One

WHO MADE GOD?

SOMEONE WITH dry wit once made me laugh when he mumbled, “Come in, boat number nine. Please come in, boat number nine. Boat number nine, can you hear me? Wait a minute—we don’t have a boat number nine! Boat number six—*are you in trouble?*”

It amazes me that people can have a belief in the existence of God, and yet not think for a minute that something is radically wrong in our world. They can smile while boat number six sits upside-down in the water, slowly sinking.

Let’s look at an average day on God’s fair earth. The day dawns to find that (according to UNICEF) 20,000 children have starved to death during the night. Another 20,000 children and many thousands of adults will die today of severe malnutrition. Nothing new there. Thousands of people will die after being bitten by poisonous snakes, spiders, or scorpions; attacked by sharks (84 unprovoked attacks worldwide in 2001); devoured by lions, tigers, and other man-eating killers; or infected with diseases from blood-sucking mosquitoes.

Perhaps today we will have a surprise volcanic eruption, or an earthquake that will crush families to death beneath the debris of their homes. Cancerous diseases will continue to take their toll and cause thousands to die in agony. Multitudes will perish from fatal ailments that have always plagued mankind, from asthma to typhoid to leprosy to heart disease. Today, human beings will be struck by lightning, drowned in

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floods, stung to death by killer bees, killed by hurricanes and tornadoes, and tormented by blight, pestilence, and infestations. They will be afflicted, devastated, and brought to ruin.

The fact is, there are only three alternatives to explain all this suffering:

1. There is no God, as evidenced by the chaos.
2. God is totally incompetent and can't control His creation (or won't, which makes Him a tyrant).
3. There is another explanation, one which the Bible gives for the state of the world.

Let's take a rational, logical look at the first of these three possibilities. It is the basis of a philosophy commonly called "atheism."

Faith Is for Wimps

From my own experience and from listening to many objections to Christianity, I have found that the subject of faith is often offensive to the nonbeliever. My own thinking was that faith was for the weak-minded, for little old ladies, and for those near death. Yet every belief we have about history, other countries, science, biology, etc., exists because of faith. You only believe as you do because you believed the person who told you the information. You don't *know* who discovered America. You simply have faith that what was told to you is indeed true. Neither do you *know* if General Custer died at the hands of Indians, or if Napoleon really existed.

We can't live without faith. Try it. Say to yourself, "Today, I refuse to exercise any faith at all." Then before you eat your corn flakes, go through every flake, scientifically testing it before you eat it. Refuse to trust that the manufacturers have obeyed health regulations and mixed the ingredients correctly. Do the same tests on the milk before you pour it on

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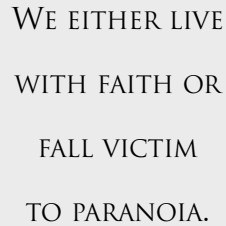
the corn flakes, in faith. You don't know that the milk processors have done their job and given you pure milk. They may have mixed in something that could be harmful to your health.

Don't trust the sugar producers either. God only knows what they did while they were processing the sugar. Then check the microscope and other tools used for your analysis. How can you really trust that the information you gather from them is reliable? Don't trust your weight to the chair at the breakfast table. Don't believe today's weather report or any news item until you actually go to the proper location and see for yourself if what they would have you believe is true. Even then you will have to trust your natural senses (which can't always be trusted).

Before you drink your coffee, don't trust that the cup is perfectly clean. Wash it out yourself. Don't use untested water, in faith. We really don't know what's in it nowadays; it may be contaminated. And be sure to analyze the

coffee. If you decide to take a taxi to work, you will have to trust your life to the vehicle and the taxi driver, and trust the other drivers to stay on their side of the road. You will have to trust elevators, stairways, airplanes, the post office, and banks. Believe me—we either live with faith or fall victim to paranoia.

If, then, faith so evidently surrounds us, why should it be so offensive? It is simply because faith is as essential to the spiritual realm as oxygen is to the natural realm. The professing atheist thinks that if he can get rid of any thought of faith, he can get rid of Christianity. In trying to do so, he saws through the branch he is sitting on. His own faith in



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the erroneous information he has makes him think he is atheistic in his beliefs.

Trump Card

I have found from experience that the popular atheist's question, "Who made God?" doesn't deserve to have a question mark. It is usually presented as a statement. The questioner is persuaded that such a question cannot be answered. A twinkle is usually seen in his eye as he tosses onto the table what he thinks is his trump card. He gambles his very soul on the belief that there is no higher card—that the question *cannot* be answered.

Actually, the explanation is very simple. For the answer, all I need is to be able to reason with you, and for you to be *reasonable*.

Does space have an end? If it does—if there is a brick wall at the end of space that reads "The End"—I want to know what's behind the brick wall. By faith we are forced to believe that no matter in which direction we set off, space will never end. It just goes on and on and on—forever. It has no beginning or end. It stresses the brain to think about such a state, but we have no choice but to accept that fact by faith.

God also has no beginning and no end. But with God, we have a little more information than we have with space. Time is a dimension that God has created and it is to this dimension that mankind is subjected. We have to wait for time to pass. We can't jump ahead even one second in time. We are enslaved in its power. It is because we are in time that reason demands a beginning and an end. It stresses the brain to think of any other dimension.

However, God is not subject to the dimension of time. He dwells in eternity. The Bible tells us that to God a day is

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the same as a thousand years (see 2 Peter 3:8). You can prove this for yourself by studying the prophecies of the Bible mentioned in a later chapter. God can flick through time as you and I flick through the pages of a history book. If you find this hard to believe, even when confronted with the evidence of biblical prophecies, you will find it to be true one day. The Scriptures tell us that God will eventually withdraw time, and we will then dwell in eternity.

The Christian is told that he *understands* “by faith.” For instance, if I have major surgery, I trust the surgeon even though I have no real understanding of how he is going to operate. I have to trust him or there will be no operation. I understand that he has the ability to make me well, so I have faith in him.

In the same manner, I trust God. Many have died at the hands of surgeons, but no one perishes in the hands of God. His ability is boundless and His promises are “an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast” (Hebrews 6:19). Doctors² and pilots will fail you, friends you trust will disappoint you, elevators will let you down, but the promises of Almighty God are utterly trustworthy. This may be hard for you to appreciate at this time, but I want to encourage you to have an open mind as we look closely at the subject of atheism.

The Atheist Test

I don't believe in atheists. This isn't because I haven't met people who claim the title, but because such a person cannot exist.

Let's imagine that you are a professing atheist. I will ask you two questions:

First, do you know the combined weight of all the sand on all the beaches of Hawaii? I think I can safely assume that you don't. This brings us to the second question: Do you

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know how many hairs are on the back of a fully grown male Tibetan yak? Probably not. Therefore, it is reasonable for me to conclude that there are some things you don't know. It is important to ask these questions because there are some people who think they know everything.

Let's say that you know an incredible one percent of all the knowledge in the universe. To know 100 percent, you would have to know absolutely everything. There wouldn't be

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a rock in the universe that you would not be intimately familiar with, or a grain of sand that you would not be aware of. You would know everything that has happened in history, from that which is common knowledge to the minor details of the secret love life of Napoleon's great-grandmother's black cat's fleas. You would know every hair of every head, and every thought of every heart. All history would be laid out before you, because you would be

omniscient (all-knowing).

Bear in mind that one of the greatest scientists who ever lived, Thomas Edison, said, "We do not know a millionth of one percent about anything." Let me repeat: Let's say that you have an incredible *one percent* of all the knowledge in the universe. Would it be possible, in the ninety-nine percent of the knowledge that you haven't yet come across, that there might be ample evidence to prove the existence of God? If you are reasonable, you will be forced to admit that it is possible. Somewhere, in the vast knowledge you haven't yet discovered, there could be enough evidence to prove that God does exist.

Let's look at the same thought from another angle. If I

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were to make an absolute statement such as, “There is no gold in China,” what is needed for that statement to be proven true? I need absolute or total knowledge. I need to know that there is no gold in any rock, in any river, in the ground, in any store, in any ring, or in any filling in any mouth in China. If there is one speck of gold in China, then my statement is false and I have no basis for it. I need absolute knowledge before I can make an absolute statement. Conversely, for me to say, “There *is* gold in China,” does not require that I have all knowledge. I just need to have seen a speck of gold in the country, and the statement is then true.

To say categorically, “There is no God,” is to make an absolute statement. For the statement to be true, I must know for certain that there is no God in the entire universe. No human being has all knowledge. Therefore, none of us is able to truthfully make this assertion.

If you insist upon disbelief in God, what you must say is, “Having the limited knowledge I have at present, I *believe* that there is no God.” Owing to a lack of knowledge on your part, you don’t *know* if God exists. So, in the strict sense of the word, you cannot be an atheist. The only true qualifier for the title is the One who has absolute knowledge, and why on earth would God want to deny His own existence?

The professing atheist is what is commonly known as an “agnostic”—one who claims to not know if God exists, or “one who professes ignorance.” The Bible tells us that this ignorance is willful: “The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts” (Psalm 10:4). It’s not that a person *can’t* find God, but that he *won’t*. It has been rightly said that the “atheist” can’t find God for the same reason a thief can’t find a policeman. He knows that if he admits there is a God, he is admitting that he is ultimately responsible to Him. This is not a pleasant thought

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for some.

It is said that Mussolini (the Italian dictator) once stood on a pinnacle and cried, “God, if you are there, strike me dead!” When God didn’t immediately bow to his dictates, Mussolini then concluded that there was no God. However, his prayer *was* answered some time later.