

# THE TEN REASONS WHY THE CHRISTIAN "GOD" DOES NOT EXIST



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Christians have given me much more help than harm; on the whole, I think that religion helps to make them decent people who live relatively moral lives. They have produced music, literature, and architecture which are, at times, the wonder of the world. Nevertheless, I believe that their faith and all that springs from it is founded upon a monumental falsehood: "God" does not exist.

I can only imagine their "God" - as I would imagine a "unicorn" or a "werewolf" - according to common Christian descriptions. In the spirit of free inquiry, I dare Christians to ask themselves if the "God" they believe in really exists and to ask if he, she, or it is an intelligible, verifiable, and good "God" worthy of their devotion. If Christians worshipped the "unicorn", I would ask these Unicornians why they think horses have horns. Christians will become either better Christians or better philosophers if they dare to question his existence - if they do not accept "God" on blind faith. Christians may differ amongst themselves about the nature of religion, but they all boast a "God" far mightier than "Zeus" and nobler than "Krishna". Few would deny that "*God*" is an omniscient, omnipotent and omni-benevolent being. This deity (who must, for reasons I cannot grasp, be singular) created existence as we know it and sent Christ to earth to save humans from their sins. Does a "God" like this really exist?

## I "GOD" IS ABSURD.

1. "Santa Claus" may be ridiculously speedy, but his powers are not *logically impossible*. The Christian "God" cannot have infinite powers: he cannot be infinitely big, infinitely wise and infinitely muscular. He cannot make A and non-A equal at the same time and in the same respect. He cannot create a stone which, at the same time and in the same respect, is also a glass worry bead. He cannot create an asteroid too heavy to twirl about on his pinky. He has not the power or wisdom to get lost - even if men asked him to.
2. "God" is not impotent: this all-powerful being must be able to exercise his will and to act accordingly. If "God" is also omniscient, then he foresees the future - a future which must include his own activities. He must have known that he would die on the cross. If so, could he have chosen not to die? (A rational God might have faked the pain of crucifix-

ion lest he deprive Christians of the pity which inspires religious belief and fine art.) The Christian "God" *cannot be omniscient and all-powerful*: he does not have the power to act differently than he foresees.

3. "God" *could not, in all likelihood, have created the universe*. If "God" created the universe, then "God" was once the universe; Christians must explain how that "God" existed to create the universe. Perhaps another "God" created the "God" they seem to know? When Christians believe that a universe as wonderful as ours must have been designed and created, they ought to believe that another "God" created the "God" they find so wonderful; their minds ought to regress infinitely into polytheism. Why must these Christians insist that an unknowable being with impossible powers created the universe? They need not resort to dogma and polytechnics to grasp the raw, brute, incredible fact which every thought or action they take affirms: that existence exists.

## II "GOD" IS UNVERIFIABLE.

4. The Christian "God" is a *scientifically unverifiable construct*. Christians let scientists test the shroud of Turin, and scientists proved it to be fake. Let these Christians produce even one verifiable test of God's presence or his miracles; let them astonish and dismay skeptics with but one single shroud of evidence that skeptics can reproduce again and again under carefully controlled laboratory conditions. If people have any contact at all with a supernatural deity, then surely they must be able to demonstrate this contact. If they offer skeptics no reason to believe, no positive evidence, then the sceptic would be irrational to believe with them. If the burden of proof rested on the skeptic's shoulders, then we must also believe the bar fly who claims to have ridden a pink elephant. After all, can us skeptics prove that he did not ride the pink elephant! Something's wrong here.

5. The Christian "God" *cannot be affirmed by the evidence of history or anthropology*. Evidence that he existed is nearly as flimsy as that for Zeus, Baal, Godzilla, or Isis. Critical, historical, accounts of the unique character of Christ merely suggest that he was an extraordinary being - and a mighty pretentious one. Tylor and Spencer have shown how religious belief might have originated in dreams and ghosts; Robertson-Smith shows that Jewish monotheism arose from Arabic paganism. No historian or archaeologist has ever dug up evidence of a miracle; and how could they? They have discovered that Christianity relied upon state repression to defeat its competitors in the late Roman Empire; it relied upon efficient bureaucracy, indoctrination of the young and ignorant, and massive state intervention - as well as genuine faith - to keep its position in western civilization.

6. Christians *do not know their God well enough to know that he exists and that he is good*. If the father, the son, and the holy ghost are separate beings who hold meaningful conversations with each other, how can they be the same? Is this Catholic dogma tri-theism, bi-theism, mono-theism or 'none of the above'? When Catholics, like cannibals, eat bread which reputedly is the body of Christ, they eat their own absurdities. If some (one) "God" exists, how do Christians know it is the Christian "God" or that that "God" is good enough to worship? And if Christians do not know their God, then they should be scared lest they worship a devil in disguise.

## III "GOD" IS WICKED

7. God is *not good*. He is all-powerful; there is nothing he cannot do or take - not even the servile love he so mysteri-



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ously demands. He has the power, if his power be infinite, not just to make men pretend to love him, but even to make each and every one of them will their love of him. He has the power to make all men virtuous, but he does not: he plays a cruel game with men when he then punishes those who are not virtuous. What earthly sin is so black that its perpetrator deserves eternal punishment? "God" is sadistic. "God" punished Adam and Eve not because they hurt anyone, but because they were disloyal. He expelled all of humanity - each and every generation - from Eden because two people disobeyed his commands, because they ate fruit which might give them knowledge of good and evil, because they were the first scientists and moralists. If this story is merely a story, like so many other stories which reformed faiths must dismiss as stories, then it is a wicked story. Praise not the Lord: praise Adam and Eve.

8. The Christian "God" is *no God of love*. Why not? He lets babes and their mothers smother in volcanic ash, wither in cruel plagues, or starve in bug-ridden hovels. What moral lesson does he teach when he lets babes be born bereft of eyes, limbs or minds? Nature might perform such cruelties - because it has no will - but surely the benevolent God could not. Many Christians tell me that their "God" of love would not even open the Pearly gates to atheists who have lived good lives - that he would burn the faithless in hell merely because they refused to genuflect before him and ask for forgiveness. Either authoritarian rulers modelled themselves on Gods, or else the Gods were deftly moulded by authoritarian rulers.

9. The Christian "God" is an unfortunate survival of our ignorant, sometimes barbaric, past who *encourages good people to cower before him and abandon their rational faculties*. When Christians tell us to believe on faith as "Children of the Lord", they tell their flock of sheep to adopt the method which once made American Indians dance for rain. The preacher says "God" cannot be judged by human reason: he thereby shields "God" from reason and judgment. The man of faith fails fully to appreciate his own mental powers, widely integrative powers of inductive and deductive reason which discovered evolution and computers, which perform laser surgery and launch rockets to Mars. Why must "God" and his preachers degrade man's noblest quality? What could "God" gain when he humiliates men? Until "God" is properly psycho-analyzed, human beings have good reason to stand proud, tall, and erect before him, her, or it.

10. "God" is wicked; he *stands between mankind and morality*. A God who commands obedience and punishes disloyalty offers men no choice, no possible arena for morality except obedience. Might is not right! We need not fear God to treat each other decently. Christians know from experience that their agnostic neighbors are not moral beasts. Reason and evidence will eventually show men how to fulfil the purpose of their lives, how to live dutifully according to their nature and to foster happiness. If a more merciful "God" rewards such morality, then worship for him is comforting at best - but superfluous.

#### IV EXPLICATIONS FOR THE UNCONVERTED

Doubtlessly the religious will claim that their particular denomination does not subscribe to some of the dogmas above. Fair enough. If, however, their religion fails to answer even one of the reasons given, they should in all fairness become more skeptical. Perhaps they should read at least one book by a critic of religion? Start with George Smith's *Atheism: The Case Against God* (Nash Publishing, Los Angeles, 1974).

After all, so few of these people, bombarded by religious information, ever do read more than that one book and its many interpretations. Christians who differ about God's nature and his commandments should be even less certain that they know "God". If religion is everything to everyone, then it is nothing.

Christians do not learn religion from philosophy. Usually, parents or preachers grab them before they are old enough to ask embarrassing questions. Clearly Christianity is a cultural trait: Westerners rarely dream up Eastern, pagan or Roman Gods on their own without study of those alternatives. Christians encounter non-believers, but not cultured atheists; our respect for freedom of religion discourages anti-religious speech to counteract the pulpit, the television and the radio.

Questions like those I ask will make Christians uncomfortable - even hostile - yet spiritual unease may lead them to the truth. Often they will explain that they had a personal experience with "God" that negates all argument. They may say that human reason can not explain "God". They are afraid to ask delicate questions about their leader's character. If they find that "God" has the slightest moral blemish on his shirt, that single blemish rips God's shirt into bloody shreds. Christians, therefore, often retreat into the stockade of virtuous ignorance when questioned too closely about God's character.

Atheists merely waste their time when they speak to people who refuse to let evidence sway their judgment and rule their lives: no one can persuade the naive Christian who refuses to listen to evidence, who dogmatically believes something exists even if it is absurd and unproven. Atheists can only deny these people the respect of others and themselves: they can tell others to ignore their unsupported assertions as they would ignore swamis who claim to be reincarnated or African aborigines who slaughter chickens to determine luck. Atheists at their best can teach Christians how to live more joyously without God than many live with God.

Should Christians become inquisitive, they should seek out a competent biblical critic to show them how the Word of "God" contradicts itself, thumb through a biology text-book or visit a natural history museum for evolutionary science and hire an eye-doctor to show them that they are not blind to the orderly world which fills their senses. If they are really inquisitive, dangerously inquisitive, heretically inquisitive, they should read a philosopher like Ayn Rand to show them a bit about the ultimate nature of the universe and their rational faculties. They need not choose between theism and nihilism! Nor should they view atheism as an end in itself, a cause for yet another cult. Aristotle, Ayn Rand, Adam Smith, and Herbert Spencer have begun to delineate a decent morality, a secular morality of enlightened self-interest. It takes off where religion leaves off: from reality.

Religion itself will fail utterly when more and more smart boys pronounce its king naked, when they demonstrate publicly why religion is nonsense. Evangelicals probably can not win the battle between reason and faith. Science and philosophy have begun to engender a fresh new millennium which relies upon liberty of conscience. Already, our culture's leaders - its scientists and philosophers - mostly fail to take religion seriously. But the politicians could still repress the faithless with government. Already, heedlessly, they place their leader's name in the people's schoolrooms ("One nation under God ...") with little respect for liberty of conscience. The stakes are high: when people spurn archaic faith for modern reason, they grasp tools to build Heaven right here on Earth.