

Does It Matter if God Exists? The Problem of Atheism

Introduction

Atheism, skepticism, and secularism are becoming more visible in our society. Does atheism offer a superior alternative to Christianity?

- I. What if God did not exist?
 - a. No meaning
 - b. No purpose

“Whither is God?” he cried, “I shall tell you. We have killed him—you and I. All of us are his murderers. But how have we done this? How were we able to drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What did we do when we unchained this earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now?... Away from all suns? Are we not plunging continually? Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there any up or down left? Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breath of empty space? Has it not become colder? Is not night and more night coming on all the while? Must not lanterns be lit in the morning? Do we not hear anything yet of the noise of the gravediggers who are burying God?... God is dead.... And we have killed him. How shall we, the murderers of all murderers, comfort ourselves?” (Friedrich Nietzsche, “The Gay Science,” in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. W. Kaufmann (New York: Viking, 1954), 95.)

One of the reasons people do not live as though life is meaningless and purposeless is that they know better. They know that God exists, despite what they might claim.

II. People believe God does exist

a. Knowledge (Rom 1:21)

i. In order to trust our knowledge we must know that our cognitive faculties are working properly and designed to reach truth.

ii. Skepticism

iii. Naturalism

iv. Christianity

b. Morality (Rom 1:18ff; Rom 2:14-15)

i. Moral Argument

1. If God does not exist, objective moral values and duties do not exist

2. Objective moral values and duties do exist

3. Therefore, God exists.

ii. Though people try to deny it, they believe in objective morality

iii. Without God, there is no explanation for objective morality

c. Justice (Rom 1:31)

- i. We believe the world is broken, but we could not believe that unless our belief came from outside the world!
- ii. If God does not exist, then wrongs will not be righted.

III. Why people suppress their belief in God.

- a. They don't want to believe (Rom 1:21)

“I am talking about something much deeper—namely the fear of religion itself. I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself: I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn't just that I don't believe in God and, naturally, hope that I'm right in my belief. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that.” Thomas Nagel, *The Last Word* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 130.

- b. They hate God (Rom 8:7-8)

“But he had to die: he saw with eyes that saw everything; he saw man's depths and ultimate grounds, all his concealed disgrace and ugliness. His pity knew no shame: he crawled into my dirtiest nooks. This most curious, overobtrusive one had to die. He always saw me: on such a witness I wanted to have my revenge or not live myself. The god who saw everything, even man—this god had to die! Man cannot bear it that such a witness should live.” (Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Viking Press, 1975), p. 378-9.

- c. God offers an answer to this hatred—His love to create a new heart in us. (Rom 5:6-8)

Conclusion: Atheism offers nothing of value, and those who claim to believe it inevitably deny its implications in their lives. But the God of the Bible makes sense of the world. Further, He has revealed Himself to us, through creation, and through the Bible and Jesus Christ. This God loves you, and offers you a satisfaction for your longing by knowing Him.