

## CHAPTER XI

# The Atheist and Agnostic

Often a person is an atheist or skeptic because he has observed the many inconsistencies in the various Christian denominations.

Things like the dark ages, the “holy” wars of the Crusades, the superstition and anti-intellectual climate that have surrounded much of Christendom, the critical attitudes of pseudo-pious people who consider themselves Christians, have all played a part in abetting skepticism and unbelief.

Therefore, when you witness to a skeptical person, you will often find that you can agree with many things he is unhappy about in the organized religions he is rejecting.

It is important to be kind, courteous, and in every way maintain high standards as you deal with skeptics, because naturally they will be looking for any reason they can find to uphold their disregard for Christianity. Let them see that a person who has really accepted Christ as his Saviour is NOT a hypocrite but is a person who is sincerely trying to live a life that is honest before God and man . . . not, of course, to be saved, but because he is saved.

## GOD

“The fool said in his heart, there is no God” (Psalm 14:1). More people will fit into the category of an agnostic than that of an atheist. While the atheist has convinced himself that there is no God, the agnostic doesn’t know if there is a God and doesn’t know if anyone can really know there is a God. Many college students today wonder about the existence and reality of a personal God.

These people need to see that we don’t believe in God just because our parents do, our church does, or because it is “nice” to believe in God, but because we are convinced God is real, alive, and vitally interested in us.

### Below are reasons we believe in God:

**1. Creation requires a Creator.** The owner of a wrist watch knows there was a creator of that wrist watch. Intelligence, thought, and effort were required to make the watch.

Our magnificent bodies, our complex world, our immense, orderly universe, are all evidences of a Creator. It took intelligence, thought, and effort to make us and the world we find ourselves in.

There are LAWS governing our universe—laws of gravity, motion, seasons, tides, wind circuits, etc. These laws presuppose a LawGIVER. Our universe has design and had to have a Designer.

**2. The Bible had to be written by God.** Further in this chapter we shall mention reasons why we know the Bible is the Word of God. It is impossible for the Bible to have been written by man alone. The very fact that the Bible is written as it is proves that there had to have been a higher intelligence guiding the writers. Because we know there is a God, we can see the logic and reasonableness of God’s writing the Bible. But conversely, because we know the Bible, we can prove there is a God who wrote it.

**3. A person who doesn’t believe in God will have to face the problem of trying to substantiate a negative.** This particular negative would be impossible to prove. Here is why.

How can a person prove there is no God? Has this person been everywhere within and without the universe? If there is somewhere he has not been, God might be there. Does this person know everything? If there is something he does not know, that something might be God.

**4. Thousands of Christians testify that they know God, that they talk to God, and He hears**

**their prayers and proves it by ANSWERING their prayers.**

Usually the person who is atheistic or agnostic also tends to feel that he is scientific. To such a person you might point out that no true scientist would reject the testimony of thousands of people that a certain Person exists, has the highest form of intelligence and personality, and loves people tremendously. Certainly, such marvelous claims compel the HONEST skeptic to make a thorough investigation into the matter and not to come to any hasty conclusion that there is no God.

It has been said that when it comes to God and the Bible, an honest skeptic will not be a skeptic very long because after investigation into the matter he will no longer be a skeptic.

To those who don't believe in God or who think God is dead, let me say, "My God is alive! Sorry about yours!"

## **THE BIBLE**

If a person says he doesn't believe the Bible, tell him the gospel before proving the Bible is God's Word. Maybe he doesn't believe the Bible because he doesn't understand the plan of salvation and thinks he will be sent to hell because of his bad life. If this is the case, you probably could lead him to the Lord without ever having to go into why you know the Bible is the Word of God.

### **Reasons for Believing the Bible**

**1. The men who wrote the Bible testify that God gave them the words to write.** "The word that came to Jeremiah FROM THE LORD, saying, Thus speaketh THE LORD GOD of Israel, WRITE thee all the words that I HAVE SPOKEN UNTO THEE IN A BOOK.... And these are the words that the Lord spake . . ." (Jer. 30:1, 2, 4).

"The WORD OF THE LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest . . ." (Ezekiel 1:3).

If the men who wrote the Bible hadn't been inspired of God, they certainly would have recanted under the great persecution they received. Men are not willing to die for something which they know to be untrue.

**2. John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist denomination, said something like this:** The Bible was written either by—

- (a) good men,
- (b) bad men, or
- (c) God.

(a) If good men wrote the Bible and then claimed it was written by the inspiration of God, they would be liars, and liars are not good men. They would be deceivers, and good men don't purposely deceive people.

(b) If bad men wrote the Bible, they would be condemning themselves because the Bible condemns sin. Bad men tend to justify themselves, but the Bible never justifies sin. Bad men couldn't have written the Bible because the Bible is a good book.

(c) Since neither good men nor bad men wrote the Bible, the only person left is God. God wrote the Bible, and it is a MASTERPIECE OF HIS HANDIWORK!

**3. The Bible contains true prophecy . . .** history written before it happens! . . . and so much of it that this is one of the biggest proofs that the Bible was written by God, who knows the future (and not by man, who doesn't know the future). Below are verses telling us how to tell the difference between false and true prophecy.

Deut. 18:21, 22, "And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath NOT spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the Name of the Lord, if the thing FOLLOW NOT, NOR

COME TO PASS, that is the thing which the Lord hath NOT spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.”

Ezek. 12:25, “For I am the Lord: I will speak, and the word that I shall speak SHALL COME TO PASS”

Jer. 23:25-32, “I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy LIES in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? Yea, they are prophets of the DECEIT OF THEIR OWN HEART, which think to cause My people to forget My Name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbor, as their fathers have forgotten My Name for Baal.

“The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath My Word, let him speak My Word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Is not My Word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets saith the Lord, that steal My Words everyone from his neighbor. “Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues, and say, HE saith. Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause My people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I SENT THEM NOT, nor commanded them: therefore, they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord.”

Isaiah 46:9, 10, “Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the END from the BEGINNING, and from ancient times the things that are NOT YET DONE, saying, My counsel SHALL STAND, and I WILL DO all My pleasure.”

John 14:29, “And now I have told you BEFORE it come to pass, that WHEN IT IS COME TO PASS, ye might believe.”

Isaiah 48: 3-5, “I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I SHEWED THEM: I DID THEM suddenly, and THEY CAME TO PASS. Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass, I have even FROM THE BEGINNING declared it to thee; BEFORE IT CAME TO PASS, I shewed it thee; lest thou shouldst say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them.”

Isaiah 41: 22, 23 , “Let them bring forth, and shew us what SHALL HAPPEN: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things FOR TO COME. Shew the things that are TO COME HEREAFTER, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together.”

EVERYTHING that the Bible said would happen up to this point HAS HAPPENED! History itself has already proven the Bible to be the Word of God.

**4. The Bible gives a pre-written history of the Jewish nation.** “Their Egyptian bondage, their conquest of Canaan, the outcome of all their wars, the division of the kingdom after the reign of Solomon, the Babylonian captivity, the partial restoration of Palestine with the rebuilding of the Temple, the destruction of Jerusalem, the world-wide dispersion, all are predicted. (See Gen. 15 :13-16; Exodus, chapters 1-12; I Kings 11:30-33; Jer. 25:1-14; Daniel 9:24 27, etc.)” (57 Reasons Why We Know the Bible Is the Word of God, by Meldau, Twelfth Printing, page nine).

**5. What God has left out of the Bible**—the false theories and superstitions of the day—is just as much an indication of the inspiration of the Bible as what God has included in it.

For instance, Job 26:7 says, “He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.” We know today that “gravity,” a law of nature, keeps the earth suspended in space. But the people in 1500 B.C., when this statement was made, certainly didn’t understand anything about gravity, and they had MANY THEORIES of what kept the earth in space. Poor Job must have had a struggle within himself, knowing that to put down a statement that says the earth was “hung upon nothing” would certainly make him the object of ridicule by his friends.

The Hindus said the earth was on the back of an elephant, which in turn was standing on a turtle . . . and that the turtle was swimming in a “cosmic sea”!

The Egyptians postulated that the earth was resting on top of five posts. They also thought the earth was flat (while the Bible says it is round, Isa. 40:22).

The Greeks' story was that a man named "Atlas" carried the earth on his back . . . all by himself!

What kept these myths and theories (so prevalent at the time Job wrote that the earth was hung upon nothing) out of the Bible? It was the fact that Job was writing under the inspiration of God that kept these erroneous theories out. God gave Job the courage to write as God led him. Job was faithful to the Lord even in the time of trouble (Job 1: 20-22), and God used Job in a great way.

We pray you will be faithful to the Lord and have the courage to GIVE OUT from the Bible the same, clear message God has PUT INTO it! If you ever want to be used of God in a great way, you must be faithful in giving out His message.

#### **6. After studying:**

- (1) the plan of salvation,
- (2) its necessity,
- (3) its results in one's life now, and
- (4) its results in one's life in the hereafter, it surely seems to be more the way God would do things, than the way MAN would do things. The whole concept of redemption is foreign to the thinking of natural man (ICor. 1:18).

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways HIGHER than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8, 9).

**7. Consider with me the fact that the Bible is a compilation of 66 separate books**, written over a period of 16 centuries, with 40 different men doing the writing, many of whom (obviously) were not contemporary and had no way of comparing what they were writing with the others. And yet these writings, so uniquely penned, fit together to form ONE BIBLE, which has ONE CENTRAL THEME, and in which ALL STATEMENTS agree perfectly without contradiction. This certainly is evidence that ONE MIND was the "logos," the Planner, the Thinker, the Designer, and the Author of these Holy pages.

Suppose you were in a journalism class of 40 students and your instructor had each person in the class write an essay which would include one or more of each of the following categories:

poetry	science	history	romance	philosophy	theology	angels
prayer	discipline	law	morals	man	God	
death	heaven	hell	prophecy, etc.			

Do you think if you took the finished papers and put them together, you would have one, unified, uncontradictory story, with a central purpose developed throughout . . . not to say anything of its being a literary MASTERPIECE and able to satisfy the needs and longings of the human hearts of every century and of every class and culture of people?

**8. The Bible tells of God's Holy Spirit, and how man can receive His Holy Spirit to live within him.** The Holy Spirit empowers believers to live the right kind of life. This is a miracle of God, and it really works. Christians DO have God's power in their lives. Millions of lives have been miraculously changed, and people give testimony that it was through God's Holy Spirit that the change was effected.

If the Bible were not the Word of God, then just because the Bible says there is a "Holy Spirit" and that He will indwell believers and give them power, would not make it so.

Infidels do not claim to have power to live the right kind of life because they don't believe the Bible is the Word of God. No other book, system of theology, or philosophy can give its followers the POWER to CHANGE THEIR LIVES!

**9. The Bible is scientifically accurate.** While the Bible is not a book primarily concerned with science, where it does deal with science, it is completely accurate. Consider the following statements

which are NOW known, but which were certainly not the opinion of such scientists as there might have been at the time they were written.

Job 26:7—Empty place in the North

Job 26:7—Earth hung upon nothing

Isa. 40:22—The earth is round

Prov. 8:27—The waters are round

Jer. 10:12—Einstein’s theory,  $E=MC^2$

Joel 2:5—Describes airplanes and jets

Ezek. 38:9 and Jer. 4:13—More about airplanes

Zech. 14:12—Effects of atomic radiation

Job 38:7—The stars “sing,” have a vocal quality

Isa. 50:3—The heavens are black

Job 28:25—Air has weight

Job 25:5—The moon doesn’t have its own light

Jer. 33 :22—The stars cannot be numbered

Eccl. 1 :6—The wind travels in circuits

Jer. 5:22—The ocean doesn’t overflow

Job 28:5—The earth has fire inside

Jer. 6:22—The earth has sides (not flat like a plate)

Job 38:31—Earth rotates around the axle star

Lev. 17: 11—Life of the flesh is in the blood

I Cor. 15:39—All flesh is not the same flesh (Parke Davis pharmaceutical house discovered the “antihuman precipitin” test which establishes the identity of different kinds of flesh— whether it be human, dog, cat, buzzard, etc.)

**10. The Bible gives a detailed picture of the promised Messiah in the Old Testament, many of the prophecies given hundreds of years before His birth.** Thirty-three of these were fulfilled in one day! (See Chapter 12 on “The Jew” for a partial list of these prophecies.)

“Suppose,” says Dr. Olinthus Gregory, “that there were only 50 prophecies in the Old Testament (instead of 333) concerning the first advent of Christ, giving details of the coming Messiah and all meet in the person of Jesus . . . the probability of chance fulfillment as calculated by mathematicians according to the theory of probabilities is less than one in 1,125,000,000,000,000. Now add only two more elements to these 50 prophecies, and fix the TIME and the PLACE at which they must happen and the immense improbability that they will take place by chance exceeds all the power of numbers to express . . .” (Messiah in Both Testaments, by Meldau, page eight).

**11. The Dead Sea Scrolls**—Some critics, desperately seeking some loopholes in prophecy (because they KNOW fulfilled prophecy is a DEFINITE PROOF that the Bible could not have been written by man, because of man’s inability to constantly predict the future with a consistent degree of accuracy), used to say that books like Isaiah, Daniel, Micah, etc., were not really written before the New Testament but were merely recording history. Well, at least these infidels credit Christ with having FULFILLED the prophecies, anyway!

But the Dead Sea Scrolls, which are a collection of manuscripts found in the Dead Sea area, contain many of the writings of the ancient Essenes, and among them are found every book in the Old Testament except Esther, in whole or in part. Authorities agree (and it is now known throughout the literate world) that the books in the Old Testament were truly written long before the time of Christ, and

thus they completely substantiate the prophecies as being 100% authentic. PRAISE THE LORD!

**12. The Bible has stood the acid test of ENDURANCE!** For nineteen centuries infidels have had their opportunities to demonstrate any error in the Word of God. The believers of the Bible have received constant ridicule and persecution, and yet the Bible still stands TRIED AND TRUE, and its message is still saving souls and giving strength and power to its followers.

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