

## Investigation into the existence of God and Jesus

There are theists who believe that there is a God. There are agnostics that claim to not know and are not interested. Finally, there are atheists that are firm in their belief that God does not exist.

Many atheists are strident in their belief and work diligently to eliminate belief in others. The strident atheist come across like: "The lady doth protest too much, methinks." from Shakespeare's Hamlet, Act III, scene II, where it is spoken by Queen Gertrude, Hamlet's mother. If a criminal is asked if he committed a crime he may say: "Wasn't me, it must have been someone else that looks like me, I was somewhere else, all of the money I have I came by honestly..." An innocent person would say: "No." In the case of the strident atheist it is not a question of not believing but one of not wanting God to exist. If you recognize your sin and are not willing to change making God not exist is a way to cope. The strident atheist is a good reason to believe that God exists. Their continued shouting that God doesn't exist shows that they do believe but do not want to believe.

Agnostics don't know and don't believe that they can find out. Here are some of their thoughts:

David Hume wrote: "If we take into our hands any volume, of divinity or school metaphysics for instance, does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the flames, for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion. Unless a statement is either a relation of ideas or a matter of fact, it is meaningless. Since statements about the knowledge of God are outside of these two categories, God is essentially unknowable."

The second foundational idea of Hume was that there are no necessary causes. We can never know for certain that something caused anything else. According to Hume, all sensations are unconnected, and any causal connection we make is in entirely in our minds. These connections are made only after we experience repeated conjunctions of events. Without the ability to understand the cause of the universe, we can never truly know anything about God.

Immanuel Kant. His philosophy was greatly influenced by Hume. Kant attempted to merge the ideas of rationalism and empiricism. Rationalism held that there is certain innate knowledge within everyone. On the contrary, empiricism maintained that we are born as blank slates, and all knowledge is gained by experience. Kant concluded by pulling together the merits of both sides. The content of knowledge came by experience (as the empiricists contended), but the structure or form of knowledge is developed in the mind (as the rationalists held).

This "solution" resulted in agnosticism for Kant. If one cannot know anything without experience through the senses, and if that sensed knowledge can only be structured in our minds by innate categories, then we can only know things as they are to us. We can never know reality as it actually is. Our reference point is always ourselves and not the things themselves. There is a

gap between appearance to us and reality. Kant's conclusion was agnosticism about reality and God.

Theists believe in God and provide support for their position: They have investigated the reasons for believing that God exists. These people have developed different ways to think about God's existence.

Stephen Charnock (1628-1680) believed that we all know and only turn away from the thought. He said:

"The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God. He regards him as little as if he had no being. He said in his heart, not with his tongue, nor in his head: he never firmly thought it, nor openly asserted it. Shame put a bar to the first, and natural reason to the second; yet, perhaps, he had sometimes some doubts whether there were a God or no. He wished there were not any, and sometimes hoped there were none at all. He could not raze out the notion of a Deity in his mind, but he neglected the fixing the sense of God in his heart and made it too much his business to deface and blot out those characters of God in his soul, which had been left under the ruins of original nature."

Blaise Pascal (1623 –1662) argues that a rational person should live as though God exists and seek to believe in God. If God does not actually exist, such a person will have only a finite loss (some pleasures, luxury, etc.), whereas they stand to receive infinite gains (as represented by eternity in Heaven) and avoid infinite losses (eternity in Hell). He also believed that persons who believe in God have a better life. Pascal was initially an atheist who converted to Christianity. He was a brilliant mathematician.

There are scientists that say God is not a good hypothesis. A hypothesis is an idea that a scientist has on how the world may work. God isn't a good hypothesis for a scientist when looking at natural phenomena. It would be a dead end. In studying how light behaves saying God does it is not helpful. God does everything. It is how God does it that the scientist attempts to discover.

St Thomas Aquinas:

Aquinas responds to the question of belief by offering the following five proofs:

1. The Argument from Motion: Our senses can perceive motion by seeing that things act on one another. Whatever moves is moved by something else. Consequently, there must be a First Mover that creates this chain reaction of motions. This is God. God sets all things in motion and gives them their potential.
2. The Argument from Efficient Cause: Because nothing can cause itself, everything must have a cause or something that creates an effect on another thing. Without a first cause, there would be no others. Therefore, the First Cause is God.
3. The Argument from Necessary Being: Because objects in the world come into existence and pass out of it, it is possible for those objects to exist or not exist at any particular time. However, nothing can come from nothing. This means something must exist at all times. This is God.

4. The Argument from Gradation: There are different degrees of goodness in different things. Following the “Great Chain of Being,” which states there is a gradual increase in complexity, created objects move from unformed inorganic matter to biologically complex organisms. Therefore, there must be a being of the highest form of good. This perfect being is God.

5. The Argument from Design: All things have an order or arrangement that leads them to a particular goal. Because the order of the universe cannot be the result of chance, design and purpose must be at work. This implies divine intelligence on the part of the designer. This is God.

There are many variations of this but all use the same there must be something to begin with argument. While this supports a god it doesn't say anything about God being personnel.

John Calvin was a theologian credited with belief in predestination. There are theologians that say we have free will so that can't be true. Of course, if God sees all of time both free will and predestination are both true. He has already seen the choices you will make. Watching someone do something is not the same as making someone do something. Here is what he said about God's existence:

“That there exists in the human mind and indeed by natural instinct, some sense of Deity, we hold to be beyond dispute, since God Himself, to prevent any man from pretending ignorance, has endued all men with some idea of His Godhead, the memory of which He constantly renews and occasionally enlarges, that all to a man being aware that there is a God, and that He is their Maker. ... There is no nation so barbarous, no race so brutish, as not to be imbued with the conviction that there is a God. ... A sense of Deity is inscribed on every heart.”

C. S. Lewis was an atheist that tried to prove God did not exist. When he failed to prove God and Jesus did not exist he became a Christian. Here is what he said:

"Conscience reveals to us a moral law whose source cannot be found in the natural world, thus pointing to a supernatural Lawgiver." Lewis argued that accepting the validity of human reason as a given must include accepting the validity of practical reason, which could not be valid without reference to a higher cosmic moral order which could not exist without a God to create and/or establish it.

Albert Einstein: When the solution is simple. God is answering.

Quantum Mechanics:

Quantum Mechanics describes the universe from the standpoint of the very small, very large and the very fast. It has been demonstrated that physical things can be in two places at the same time and that two particles can be linked so that measuring one will cause the other to change even if it is on the other side of the universe. Einstein didn't like this and believed that it could not be true. It has been shown true. Richard Feynman said about Quantum Mechanics: “I am going to tell you what nature behaves like. If you will simply admit that maybe she does behave like this, you will find her a delightful, entrancing thing. Do not keep saying to yourself, if you can possibly avoid it, but how can it be like that? because you will get down the drain, into a blind

alley from which nobody has yet escaped. Nobody knows how it can be like that.” Einstein believed in God but he did not believe in Quantum Mechanics

When we ask: How can God be like that? the questions lead to a similar dead end. God is like he is and shows himself as he does. Nobody knows why God is like he is. We can investigate how God is, but why he is doesn't lead anywhere. Belief in God is easier than believing in Quantum Mechanics.

The above reasons for God to exist are more than sufficient for someone open to believing in God. For the atheist who doesn't want God to exist nothing would be enough.

Science: We can think of science as an island. The interior of the island is what we have good reason to trust as true and can use in technology. On the shore are questions we ask but, do not have the answer. Out in the open sea are the things we don't even think to look for. The island is always growing, the shore is always growing but the sea is infinite. God is safe from science.

Most scientists in both the physical sciences and the social sciences believe God exists.

Just like the Bible says, there was a beginning. It was about 13.7 billion years ago. The relation of the four fundamental forces formed after the beginning. These forces are: the Strong Nuclear Force, the Weak Nuclear Force, Gravity and the Electromagnetic force. These must be perfect for Galaxies, Stars, Planets and Life to form.

There are two possibilities:

Nothing → something random and extremely improbable happened → Everything, including us

Nothing → God → Everything, including us

## **Jesus Existence.**

Jesus existed, His family was from Nazareth, He was baptized by John the Baptist. He did not travel far. He predicted the end of time where God would intervene in the world. He told parables. He did what were called signs and deeds that amazed the people at that time. He called the existing Jewish leadership vipers, hypocrites and other names. He was a threat to the religious powers at the time. He was taken by the religious leadership to Pontus Pilate who had him crucified. The sign on his cross said he was king of the Jews. He was put in a tomb. He was seen by his followers after his death. Based on his instructions, his followers met and were given the Spirit that allowed them to spread his message to Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Either Jesus is God or this was the biggest fraud ever. Claiming to be God may have been the thing that most upset the religious authorities.

I recommend that you do not believe me but do research in both the Christian literature and the secular literature and test what I have written, this way you can know what is true.

One thing is certain, Jesus called Jewish leaders hypocrites and insulted them. He wasn't crucified because he got along with the religious leaders of the day.

We do not have much from Roman documents. But what we do have fits the story of the New Testament. Flavius Josephus was a Jewish General Captured by the Romans. He then turned on his fellow Jews. As a reward the Romans gave him the job of writing the history of the Jews revolt and of the history of the Jews. His writings parallel the Old Testament and have in addition the period from the end of the Old Testament until the Jewish revolt about 66 AD. He was not a Christian and Jesus was not important to him or the Romans.

The full text is available at:

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2848/2848-h/2848-h.htm#link202HCH0005>

This is what Josephus says about Jesus:

Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.

This text has been copied by Christian Monks and may have been pumped up a bit. The basic story matches the New Testament. The pumping up may be the difference between this text and the Arabic version. There are subtle yet key differences between the Greek manuscripts and these texts. For instance, the Arabic version does not blame the Jews for the death of Jesus. The key phrase "at the suggestion of the principal men among us" reads instead "Pilate condemned him to be crucified". Instead of "he was Christ", the Syriac version has the phrase "he was

believed to be Christ". Drawing on these textual variations, scholars have suggested that these versions of the *Testimonium* more closely reflect what a non-Christian Jew might have written.<sup>[4]</sup>

The following is about a change of priests and only says little about Jesus and the Roman law which stated only a Roman court could sentence someone to death:

And now Cesar, upon hearing the death of Festus, sent Albinus into Judea, as procurator. But the king deprived Joseph of the high priesthood and bestowed the succession to that dignity on the son of Ananus, who was also himself called Ananus. Now the report goes that this eldest Ananus proved a most fortunate man; for he had five sons who had all performed the office of a high priest to God, and who had himself enjoyed that dignity a long time formerly, which had never happened to any other of our high priests. But this younger Ananus, who, as we have told you already, took the high priesthood, was a bold man in his temper, and very insolent; he was also of the sect of the Sadducees, who are very rigid in judging offenders, above all the rest of the Jews, as we have already observed; when, therefore, Ananus was of this disposition, he thought he had now a proper opportunity [to exercise his authority]. Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the Sanhedrim of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others, [or, some of his companions]; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned: but as for those who seemed the most equitable of the citizens, and such as were the most uneasy at the breach of the laws, they disliked what was done; they also sent to the king [Agrippa], desiring him to send to Ananus that he should act so no more, for that what he had already done was not to be justified; nay, some of them went also to meet Albinus, as he was upon his journey from Alexandria, and informed him that it was not lawful for Ananus to assemble a Sanhedrin without his consent. Whereupon Albinus complied with what they said, and wrote in anger to Ananus, and threatened that he would bring him to punishment for what he had done; on which king Agrippa took the high priesthood from him, when he had ruled but three months, and made Jesus, the son of Damneus, high priest.

Josephus also wrote about John the Baptist:

Now some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John, that was called the Baptist: for Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism; for that the washing [with water] would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away [or the remission] of some sins [only], but for the purification of the body; supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness. Now when [many] others came in crowds about him, for they were very greatly moved [or pleased] by hearing his words, Herod, who feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion, [for they seemed ready to do anything he should advise,] thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties, by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it would be too late. Accordingly, he was sent a prisoner, out of Herod's suspicious temper, to Macherus, the castle I before mentioned, and was there put to death. Now the Jews had an

opinion that the destruction of this army was sent as a punishment upon Herod, and a mark of God's displeasure to him.

A Roman historian called Cornelius Tacitus is one of the people who mentioned the death of Jesus and also wrote about the fire of Rome in 64. He mentions in his writings that Jesus died on the cross – just as is described in the Gospels – during the reign of Caesar Tiberius (14–37 A.D.) when Pontius Pilate (26–36 A.D.) was a judge. He also points out that the Christian faith spread to Rome from Judea – where it started. Tacitus was certainly not a Christian. Here is what he said:

“A popular belief is that Caesar Nero was the one who started the fire. To silence the rumor, he accused a sect called the Christians of this crime. They were commonly shunned because of their customs and services. The name had been given to them because of a certain Christ, whom the procurator Pontius Pilate condemned and nailed on the cross during the reign of Tiberius. This dangerous sect, whom I have described earlier, has not only been rooted in Judea from where it has come, but also in Rome where all frightening and shameful things gather and find their home.”

The next good reference to Jesus comes from Paul. Paul was writing about Christianity and about Jesus when the Apostles were still alive and people who had seen Jesus alive and after death were still alive. It was copied and disseminated during Paul's lifetime. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians challenged the Corinthians to check for themselves:

1 Corinthians 15:3 <sup>3</sup> For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance<sup>[a]</sup>: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup> and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. <sup>6</sup> After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup> Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, <sup>8</sup> and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

Fallen asleep is a euphemism for dead just like we say passed on not died.

The claim that you can't prove the bible by using the bible is not completely true. The Old Testament ends and nothing was added before Jesus was borne. It contains Christophanies. These are appearances of Jesus in the text or predictions of Jesus coming. Jesus said before Abraham I AM. I AM was what God told Moses to tell the people was God's name. Jesus saying this was one of the many things that got him in trouble.

Some people feel the Holy Spirit and are able to have a very personal relation with God. These people feel God's instruction directly. Others feel the Holy Spirit more abstractly. In her diary later in her life Mother Teresa complained that she was no longer getting answers from God. Just like any other skill, you may be able to have a close personal link to God or you may be like Mother Teresa and feel the Holy Spirit more abstractly. In either case it will guide you if you let it.