

634 Why Do You Believe in God?

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God's Answers to Life's Questions

The first words in the Bible are: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Is there really a God? Did He really create us? People have discussed whether there is a God since the beginning of time. For many people that question is answered. Yes, there is a God! Others, however, have a hard time working it all out in their minds. They wonder how anyone can believe in a God whom they have never seen or heard. They figure that unless they can see Him or hear His voice, that He is just a figment of our imagination. But there are many real things, which we cannot see or feel. The fact is that God has not left himself without a witness. We can believe in God when we realize all the great things He has done for us and has done in our universe.

When I have gone hunting, I look for deer tracks. I may not see the deer, but I know that there are deer in the area because of the tracks. In the same way, while we may not see God, we can know He exists by the tracks or evidence He has left us. In Psalm 19:1-2 David says, "The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge." Anyone who has stood outside at night and watched the moon and the stars realizes the beauty and precision of this world. Each 24 hours the earth rotates on its axis; each 28 days the moon revolves around the earth; and each 365 ¼ days the earth revolves around the sun. Our solar system contains eight planets and Pluto, 54 moons, and thousands of comets, asteroids and meteors. God keeps it all in such precise motion, that men can land on the moon and return as they did in 1969. Isaiah said, "Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these stars, the one who leads forth their host by number, he calls them all by name; because of the greatness of his might and the strength of his power not one of them is missing" (Isa. 40:26). God cares for the whole universe, and he takes care of us. God promised Noah, "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Gen. 8:22). God has kept that promise for thousands of years with faithfulness and precision. Not only can scientists predict the movement of every body in our universe, but the farmers can also know when to plant their seeds. Not only can we predict the seasons, but we also know when and what clothes to buy.

The problem has never been that God has failed to leave us a witness, but that man hasn't always paid attention to that witness. Paul said in Romans 1:18-23, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures." Part of the reason so many people doubt the true God is because they have been led to believe in what is falsely called God. In ancient times, those gods were idols, the work of men's hands. Today, there are still false gods proposed by religious men who ignore the God of the Bible. Only a Supreme Being could make a universe and sustain it. Only an all-wise God could plan and keep the universe running so precisely.

Another deer track of God's existence is the human body itself. It is such a complicated and well-designed creation that no rational person can honestly sustain the view that it happened by accident. In each of the 60 trillion cells in your body is an amazing and complicated DNA molecule, a code which is detailed with billions of bits of information about you. If you have ever watched CSI, you realize that you as a person can be distinguished from all the other six billion living people by just one cell of your body. Your finger prints are unlike any person who has ever lived. Your dental design is also unique to you along with eye patterns and many other things. Your body is very detailed, and every cell cries out that you were designed not an accident. David said in Psalm 139:14-15, "I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth." The phrase, "depths of the earth," is actually an idiom referring to a woman's womb. The psalmist is actually describing the development of the human body.

Could it be an accident that you have eyes to see, ears to hear, a nose to smell, and a tongue to taste? Could it be an accident that your hand was so designed with four fingers and a thumb, so that you can grasp things and do a multitude of tasks? Could it be an accident that your legs have feet at the bottom designed for walking and running? Next time you watch a running back catch the ball and dodge tacklers to make that first down, tell me that all his natural talents and skills are just an accident. Is it an accident that your skin can measure heat and cold, can sense pressure, and can feel pain? Did you know that your skin has millions of these sensors? How did they get there? It seems far more reasonable to believe God designed them than to suggest they came by accident. God is able to take the 206 bones and more than 600 muscles and put them together to make you able to move, to walk, to hug, to bend, to work, to lift, to climb, to dig, to sit, to lie down, to rise up, and to run. Your lungs take in oxygen to strengthen and nourish you and breathe out carbon dioxide to keep you healthy. Your heart beats 100,000 times per day to bring that oxygen and nourishment to every cell in your body, while it takes to the disposal organs things you don't need. Each day the heart pumps as much as 1800 gallons through a pipeline of arteries and veins (if laid end to end) that would stretch between 60,000 and 100,000 miles. It feeds every cell and completes its cycle every 20 seconds for a lifetime. Amazing—your body is truly amazing! No engineering genius ever invented a pump to equal the human heart. The water pipeline of my city and yours was designed by planners. We all admit that. Why cannot we also not admit that the blood pipelines within our bodies are also designed by a supreme designer—God?

A third deer track that points to God is the personality of people. You have a mind, a spirit, or a soul. You make plans, make decisions, and follow your dreams. You are not a robot or a machine that simply does what it is told. You have freewill and can choose what you want and decide to do. A tree is alive, but a tree cannot make decisions. There is something in you as a living being that other living things do not possess. You have freewill. You also have a conscience, which sometimes rebukes you and sometimes applauds your actions. We are all free moral beings. We have a moral nature that affects us all our lives. We have a sense of right and wrong that controls our own lives and helps us make decisions about the behavior of others. The only thing that can really give us a reason for our ability to choose and our moral nature is that we were made or created by a person who possessed those characteristics. It is pretty hard to get moral character out of an accident or out of a rock. Morality is a spiritual matter and

must come from a spiritual source. Even people who never heard of the Ten Commandments know it is wrong to steal, to murder, to commit adultery, and to bear false witness. They know it, because God has given us this moral sense. Even the person who hasn't darkened a church door in decades has drawn some moral boundaries he/she won't cross.

Because you are a moral person, you also have to deal with your own sinful behavior. Inside of you there is that conscience of yours. Your conscience is like a whole jury room. It is the prosecutor and the defender, the judge and the jury, the witnesses and the defendant. David spoke of the guilt he faced after he sinned in Psalm 32:3-4, "When I kept silent *about my sin*, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was drained away *as with the fever heat of summer*." David saw the need to confess his sins to God. David "said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD'; And You [God] forgave the guilt of my sin." Life without God is not really possible. Even the most hardened atheist can hardly get beyond the notion of God. He may deny there is a God, but he cannot get away from the longing for him. Augustine in the opening paragraph of his great book, *The Confessions*, said, "You awaken us to delight in Your praise; for You made us for Yourself, and our heart is restless until it finds rest in You." Could it be, my friend, that one of the reasons you are so confused and unfulfilled in life is that you don't have a close relationship with the God who made you? If you dismiss God, if you ignore God, or if you deny there is a God, you are left with emptiness and futility. If you throw God out of your life, you throw out the one who created you and gives you purpose.

Man is forever asking the most important questions of life. Who am I? Where did I come from? Why am I here? What will happen to me? I suspect, my friend that you have asked just such questions. Now, for the sake of discussion, let's suppose there is no God. Who are you? Why, you are an accident, a freak of nature. Where did you come from? You honestly can't say, because you don't know. You may suppose that you came from the primordial soup and are the natural result of evolutionary change, but so what? What makes you of any value more than a rock or a snake or a hummingbird? Why are you here? That's the stumper. You have no reason for life; there is no scheme of things in a godless world. If there is no God, then trying to find a rational reason for existence is impossible. We are only accidents in a meaningless world. And when we ask, "What will happen to me," there is no answer. If God does not exist, the time will come when I will not exist. I came from nothing and will return there. We are all like Augustine and have little hope to find rest in our souls until we find rest in God.

If, however, there is a God, what a difference that makes! We know who we are as human beings, because we were created in the image of God. The twenty-four elders who sang praise to God in Revelation 4:11 said, "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created." We are God's creatures, made in His image. We are not accidents or freaks of nature. We are not the pathetic joke of the universe, cursed with knowing our lives are

meaningless. Rather, we have a Father in Heaven, who calls us His children. We have a Father who loves and cares for us and is preparing a place for us. So when we ask, "Why am I here?" I have an answer. I am here because God willed me to be. I am not an accident; God made me intentionally. And if I ask the question, "Where am I going?" I have an answer. The Lord Jesus is preparing a place for me. He promised in John 14:1-3, "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also." God wants me to live in His house as His child forever and ever. He will one day give me a new body, not like the body I now have. This body is an eternal one; it cannot die or get sick. It will have no blemishes. The place He is preparing for me is a place of utter joy and peace. There will be no wars there, no hatred, no divisions, no sin, and no corruption. God will wipe away every tear from our eyes, and we will live with people from every nation and family and tribe. Heaven, that's the goal of every person who knows and loves God! My friend, do you?

Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. Unfortunately some people reject God, ignore Him, forget Him, or neglect Him. They live life on their own terms and act as if they had no responsibility before the God of Heaven. What should God do with people who have no need or use for Him, who live their lives in rebellion to Him? God wants to be their friend and their God, but they have no room for Him in their hearts. God knocks, but they don't answer. What does God do? There comes a time that God quits knocking, because He knows they won't answer the door. Jesus said in Revelation 3:20 to some lukewarm Christians, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me." He would love to come into your life too. God loves you, and He wants to be loved by you. He wants to be close to your heart. He won't break the door down. He won't twist your arm. He will patiently wait. But there comes a time, when even the patience of God wears out, because you have so ignored him. The only thing He can do is leave you alone, to give you up, because that's what you told Him you wanted. If you are not willing to live with God in your life, then you will live alone without God. You may be physically alive, but you'll be spiritually empty and dead. I hope you won't choose that alternative. There is no future in saying no to God.

To open the door to the Lord, believe in Him with all your heart and soul, repent of every sin, confess the name of Jesus Christ, and be baptized in water for the forgiveness of your sins. In baptism, He'll wash you clean from every sin in the blood of Jesus. He'll cause you to be born again as His child, free from sin, and a part of his kingdom the church. You'll have His love, His grace, His blessing, and His promises. Baptism is the beginning of life with God, a life that begins on earth but continues forever in heaven. There will be a place for you in heaven, because you've chosen to live your life for Him and to serve Him always. My friend, you will never regret doing the right thing. Do what is right today!

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