

A T H E I S M

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I. Introduction:

- ✘ The word 'atheism' comes from the negative 'a' which means 'no' and 'theos' which means 'god.' Hence, atheism in the most basic terms means 'no god.' It is the lack of belief in a god and/or the belief that there is no god.

II. Statistics

- ✘ A 2004 BBC poll showed the number of people in the US who don't believe in a God to be about **10%**
- ✘ A 2006 study by researchers at the University of Minnesota involving a poll of 2,000 households in the United States found atheists to be the most distrusted of minorities. Many of the respondents associated atheism with immorality, including criminal behavior, extreme materialism, and elitism.

III. Types of Atheism

1. The 1st is the lack of evidence to affirm God's existence.
2. The 2nd is that God existence is contrary to the evidence at hand.

- ✘ To simplify, one says there isn't enough evidence to decide and the other says there is evidence contrary to God's existence.

IV. Arguments from Atheists

- ✘ A typical argument posed atheists to show why God does not exist is as follows:
 - God is supposed to be all good and all powerful.
 - Evil and suffering exist in the world.
 - If God is all good he would not want evil and suffering to exist.
 - If He is all powerful then He is able to remove all evil and suffering.
 - Since evil and suffering exist, God does not exist.
- ✘ Two Responses to the Argument
 - ✘ In "Mere Christianity", C.S. Lewis' writes:
 - "As an atheist, my argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust?"

- ✘ God made everything perfect. This includes free-willed creatures. Free will is gave rise to evil, therefore, imperfection (evil) can arise from the perfect not directly, but indirectly, through **freedom**
 - God created the **fact** of freedom; man performs the **acts** of freedom.
 - God made evil possible; creatures make it actual

V. Basic Tenets of Atheism

- ✘ There is no God or devil.
- ✘ There is no supernatural realm.
- ✘ Miracles cannot occur.
- ✘ There is no such thing as sin as a violation of God's will.
- ✘ Generally, the universe is materialistic and measurable.
- ✘ Man is material.
- ✘ Generally, evolution is considered a scientific fact.
- ✘ Ethics and morals are relative

VI. The false gods of atheism.

- ✘ Man is a spiritual creature. Seeks something on which to focus in order to have meaning, purpose and identity. Samuel Butler (1912) - "the fight between the theist and the atheist is as to whether God shall be called God or shall have some other name."
- ✘ If man denies God, he inevitably constructs physical or mental "gods."
 - Jer. 2:28 - "gods which you made for yourself"
 - Gal. 4:8 - "those which by nature are not gods"
- ✘ The following is a list of false gods that man has constructed for himself:
 - **Humanism** - Man is the measure of things, the highest being; his own god. Gen. 3:5 - "you shall be like God." Man is god.
 - **Secularism** - from Latin saeculum = world. This world is all there is. Self-limiting. The world is god.
 - **Naturalism** - The natural order is the only order. Nature is god.
 - **Materialism** - acquisition of material goods is the ultimate goal. William James: "Truth is the cash value of an idea." Money or things is god.
 - **Intellectualism** - By logic and rational thought, man can figure everything out. Reason is god.
 - **Existentialism** - Everything is tested by human feelings. All is subjective. Emotions are god.
 - **Relativism** - There is no absolute. Everything is relative to your perspective. Personal viewpoint is god.
 - **Socialism** - The good of the whole is the highest good. Society is god.

- **Pluralism** - It doesn't matter what you believe or do. Tolerate everything. Diversity is god.
- **Hedonism** - Sensual pleasure is the highest good. If it feels good, it is good. "Eat, drink and be merry." Pleasure is god.

VII. The Fool Has Said . . .

- ✘ Atheists are naturally offended by the Bible's declaration that "the fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God'" (Ps. 14:1a; 53:1a).
- ✘ The meaning of this statement is not that atheists are stupid or lacking in intelligence, but that **the denial of God is evidence of the moral corruption in their thinking.**
- ✘ This statement is not aimed solely at atheists per se. The very next lines assert that "there is none who does good" and that they have all "become corrupt" (Ps. 14:1)
- ✘ The folly or foolishness of atheism, then, is ultimately turning away from the true and living God and following a path of our own choosing.

VIII. Atheism and Agnosticism.

- ✘ Agnostic is derived from two Greek words: a = no; gnosis = knowledge.
- ✘ Variations of agnosticism.
 - "I do not know if there is a God."
 - "Man cannot know if there is a God."
 - "I do not want to know if there is a God."
- ✘ Agnosticism is equivalent to ignorance. Acts 17:23 - "unknown god" –
 - "I even found an altar with this inscription: to the unknown god. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you"

IX. Differentiating between theism, deism and Christianity.

- ✘ Theist - "I believe there is a god" (maybe singular, personal, infinite)
- ✘ Deist - "God is out there, removed from man.
- ✘ Christian - "The Lord Jesus Christ is My God and My Savior (God)."

X. Practical Atheism.

- ✘ Characterized by those who live a lifestyle as if God does not exist. They ignore God. God is irrelevant to their lives. They do not communicate with God, seek the

direction of God, allow Jesus Christ to be Lord of their lives, recognize Christ as their life, or seek to allow the expression of His character in all situations (i.e. love, joy, peace, patience...). They are "practical atheists."

XI. Call to Action

- ⌘ Read widely; be credible.
- ⌘ Be firmly rooted in Biblical truth.
- ⌘ Sharpen your critical thinking and reasoning.
- ⌘ Understand where the atheist stands.
- ⌘ Understand the "standard" arguments for/against atheism.
- ⌘ Understand the "standard" arguments for/against theism.
- ⌘ Pray!

XII. Quotes about Atheism

- ✘ Atheists express their rage against God although in their view He does not exist. --C. S. Lewis
- ✘ The worst moment for the atheist is when he is really thankful, and has nobody to thank.--Dante Gabriel Rossetti
- ✘ A creature revolting against a creator is revolting against the source of his own powers--including even his power to revolt...It is like the scent of a flower trying to destroy the flower. --C.S. Lewis
- ✘ To sustain the belief that there is no God, atheism has to demonstrate infinite knowledge, which is tantamount to saying, "I have infinite knowledge that there is no being in existence with infinite knowledge" --Ravi Zacharias
- ✘ The turning point in our lives is when we stop seeking the God we want and start seeking the God who is. --- Patrick Morley
- ✘ I believe in God as I believe that the Sun has risen, not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else. --C. S. Lewis