



## What I Would Say to an Atheist Part 1

### Do You Think God Exists?

I have plenty of people I love and to whom I am very close who no longer think God exists. Because I cannot recall a time in my life when this was the case for me, I find it quite strange to consider. There are plenty of reasons why there is an atheist movement in our society today and each person has his or her own reason for coming to this conclusion. In the short amount of time available to me today, I cannot hope to discuss this fully. Nor do I think I have the one, definitive response that will turn the tide of atheistic leanings. I have watched numerous debates on video of atheists and Christians pushing their views. I have been saddened often by the projected demeanor of many of the believers and I hope I do not fall into this trap. Often, it seemed like a contest of wits, and too frequently it felt like the Christian was playing to the crowd and gloated a bit too much when he made a point that had zing to it, punch to it. The atheists in these debates were very skilled and always had a counterpunch and to me, some of the Christian debaters did not exhibit the sort of love or compassion that should have been the driving force behind discussing matters so critical...of life and death, purpose, value, and eternity. As I dive into this topic, I pray I do not try to win points...rather that I walk with the humility one who has been saved by grace ought to possess.

I think the initial point of any such discussion must begin where it all starts. The Bible enters here. The first verse in Genesis is well-known. **In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.** (Genesis 1:1 NIV) So here we have before us the primary issue. Was it God at the beginning who made the universe or was it some natural, unknown, and unexplained process that put it together? Let us make something clear. The term that is used to tell what God did is an English translation of a technical Hebrew verb. It is "Bara" and means to create, to shape. The form of the verb found here is something only God does, create. He is the solitary creator, the only one who does anything like what is found in Genesis 1. Here what is described is making something out of nothing, having no building blocks to put it together. Bara, or create, in this opening statement of the Bible insists that before there was anything else, a universe, molecules or even atoms, before there was a single bit of a particle with which to start, God put together the universe.

Here is the primary issue when it comes to atheism. This initial declaration in the Bible insists there are two facts before us. The first is God. God exists, He is real, and He is present. The second fact is that God put together everything that we call the universe. He did not have building blocks for its construction, no atoms or molecules to start. These two facts are not seen as fact by atheists. To be certain, they are at the heart of the issue. An atheist says there is no God. As a result, the atheist also insists that the universe is not God created, started or at all impacted by God. The Bible proclaims that God is, and He made everything.

John, Jesus' Apostle makes nearly an identical statement although He is more explicit. **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.** (John 1:1-3 NIV) God made everything. We are not going to address the concerns of evolution, the time component to the Biblical account or Noah's flood today. We are going to just for now deal with the Bible's insistence that God started the entire universe...put it together. It seems to me, that is the primary issue. Either God exists and made this universe, or He does not, and it is just the result of random unintelligent chance.

What has astounded me in my discussions with atheists and after watching many debates is that no atheist ever has a bit of proof that God does not exist. It is assumed by nearly all atheists that it is the person who believes in God who must prove God's existence rather than the atheist who must show He does not. Of course many atheists have plenty of issues with the God depicted in the Bible. They have all sorts of problems with how He is described, what He commands and how He provides salvation. Yet, they never have a bit of proof that He is not alive. That of course is the easy way out...they never have to show they are right; they simply need, according to their own rules, to shoot holes in the various pictures of God they find. Be that as it may, they also never answer this question. How does matter and energy spring out of nothing?

When asked this question, the response is always the same. "I do not know but science will some day figure it out." It is the classic example of the black box. When there is no solution, the science of the gaps is postulated. Science has the answer. Science is the solution. It is frightening sometimes how much faith many put into science. Science will figure out hatred. Science will end crime. Science will eliminate broken hearts and death. I remember watching a movie that described an earth ruled by aliens who used the water to fuel their technology. The aliens cloned two humans, a male and a female, into thousands of each. These clones were then placed at various parts around the world to do the bidding of their alien masters. This was the scientific answer to death. When a clone dies, bring out the next and you have replaced the previous one. In this way death is irrelevant. But of course it is not true. Each clone was an individual human, each one had dreams and loves and purpose. Not to the aliens, however. Life was corporate rather than individual...a totality rather than one and another one. Death was not a concern...unless it was the alien life. Then it became precious, and death was still death.

Let us now turn to the issue at hand. Matter and energy must come from somewhere. It has a source every time. It does not spring out of nothing. When I say nothing, I mean nothing. You cannot have atoms and energy materialize out of absolutely nothing. There is no science for that...no justification for it. Take away all matter...not an electron, not a proton, not a bit of energy and no space whatsoever. How does an atom spring out of that? How does it show up with nothing to make it, no substance to have it based? What atheists want you to believe is that what is not possible at all somehow happens. A miracle. Only a mind outside the material world, outside of atoms and energy and even space can produce something as magnificent as matter, as energy. It had to come from somewhere, so what generated it?

We have a real problem here for the atheist. The very first bit of matter, the very first spark of energy, whether it was the beginning of multi-verse number ten trillion or this universe as the only one had to begin with something generating it. Either it was God...or matter is eternal. It can not be neither. I am reminded of the passage in Isaiah where the prophet laughs at the pagan worshippers who made idols out of trees. **Half of the wood he burns in the fire; over it he prepares his meal, he roasts his meat and eats his fill. He also warms himself and says, "Ah! I am warm; I see the fire." From the rest he makes a god, his idol; he bows down to it and worships.** (Isaiah 44:16-17 NIV) Who would ever expect intelligence and creativity and insight to spring out of a lifeless piece of wood? It was of course too incredible to believe! The same is true for matter jumping out of nothing or even more insane, lifeless, mindless matter developing a universe.

There you have the issue. It is either God, who is infinitely wise and powerful, who has no beginning or end, not bound by space or resources creating this amazing, brilliant, magnificent universe we call home, or it is just some bit of mindless, lifeless matter that is eternal and did it all. It seems to me, if something has to be eternal and put all this together, it is most likely to have been God. It is of course the Bible that insists that God is love and that love is the foundation of why He put us all together. That makes sense to me. If it is faith in something eternal...God or some speck of mindless, loveless matter, I choose God every time. It seems reasonable. **And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.** (1 John 4:16 NIV) That is the choice...the love of a real God who has no beginning or the nothingness of eternal lifeless matter as the source of who we are and where we live.