

# *The Folly of Unbelief:*

## *Dogmatic Atheism*

### *Psalm 14*

By

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God's eternal power and divine nature have been clearly revealed to humanity since the creation of the world. Psalm 14 addresses either a denial of God's existence (dogmatic atheism) or an absence of God in our thoughts (practical atheism). We may not necessarily deny God's existence, but, at the same time, live our lives as if God does not exist. This chapter addresses the denial of God's existence. Chapter 5 will focus on the absence of God in our thoughts. We cannot state emphatically which interpretation to apply to David's statement—dogmatic or practical atheism.

Even though, in my judgment, the major thrust of Psalm 14 deals with practical atheism; nevertheless, it is essential to also comment on "dogmatic atheism" in order to expose the fallacies in this line of so-called reasoning or opinions. This chapter will address the negative—denial of God's existence. The next chapter will shine the spotlight on those who believe in God but act as if God does not exist. As we approach dogmatic atheism, we are conscious that unbelief is not a modern day phenomenon. David, who wrote over three thousand years ago, addressed the subject of atheism with bluntness: "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God'" (Psalm 14:1). Some Christian scholars believe that David is dealing with the question of God's existence (dogmatic atheism) and others believe that he is dealing with behavior that denies God in our daily lives (practical atheism). We should not rule out either form of atheism. The question of God's existence is one of the most important questions confronting us in the twenty-first Century.

## DOGMATIC ATHEISM

“Dogmatic atheism” denies the existence of God. Yet, even though men like Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, and Sam Harris profess not to believe in God,<sup>1</sup> they are still conscious of the concept of God, angels, spirits, altar, sacrifice, and so on. We cannot escape our consciousness of the word *God* in our vocabulary. We must pause and ask the question: where did these spiritual ideas come from? Since humanity only possesses five senses (seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, and smelling), we are at a loss as to where this view of God came from. How do we account for this universal belief in a supreme being? The only way for us to account for a perception of God is that God had to reveal Himself, which He did to Adam and Eve. This knowledge was then passed on from generation to generation.

### Five Senses

If we say that the awareness of God entered into the world through imagination, we can only respond that the imagination cannot create anything. In other words, the imagination can only combine and rearrange in new forms the images already derived through the five senses. For Dawkins, Hitchens, and Harris to disprove this statement about imagination, we would request them to imagine something for us in the sixth sense. One cannot imagine anything in the sixth sense since humanity does not possess a sixth sense. Within the five senses, we observe wisdom and design. We cannot reflect upon the five senses without a realization of intelligent design. If we are born without any one of these senses, we remain destitute of all ideas derivable through that particular sense. If we were deprived of all five senses, life would cease to exist. If humanity had been born with only four senses, it would be impossible to conceive of a fifth sense.

### Supernatural Revelation

It is just as absurd to expect one who is destitute of divine Revelation to have concepts of spiritual things. For one to have ideas not derivable through the senses is the same as to advocate that one can have all the ideas of color who does not have the sense of sight. Without supernatural Revelation, we can no more conceive of a world of spiritual things than a person

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<sup>1</sup>See Richard Dawkins, *The GOD Delusion* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006); Christopher Hitchens, *(God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything)* (New York: Twelve, Hachette Book Group USA, 2007); Sam Harris, *Letter to a Christian Nation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006); see the following authors who refute these atheists: Douglas Wilson, *The Deluded Atheist: A Response to Richard Dawkins' The God Delusion* (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision Press, 2008); Douglas Wilson, *Letter from a Christian Citizen: A Response to Letter to a Christian Nation* (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision Press, 2007); Douglas Wilson, *God Is: How Christianity Explains Everything: A Reply to Christopher Hitchens' God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision Press, 2008); Joel McDurmon, *The Return of the Village Atheist* (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision Press, 2007); David Robertson, *The Dawkins Letters: Challenging Atheist Myths* (Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 2007); John F. Haught, *God and the New Atheism: A Critical Response to Dawkins, Harris, and Hitchens* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000) .

born deaf can be moved by the harmony of sweet sounds. It would be just as rational to talk of seeing by the hand or hearing by the tongue as to talk of knowing God without communication, or announcement, from Him. We must distinguish historic facts related in the Bible from immediate and direct Revelation from God. It is in this regard that Thomas Paine (1737-1809) understood the true meaning of “revelation.” Even though he did not believe humanity had any revelation from God, nevertheless, he writes with insight about the implications of “revelation.” Listen to him as he pens the following words:

Revelation is a communication of something which the person to whom that thing is revealed did not know before. For If I have done a thing, or seen it done, it needs no revelation to tell me I have done it, or seen it, nor to enable me to tell it, or to write it. Revelation, therefore, cannot be applied to anything done upon earth, of which man himself is the actor or the witness; and consequently all the historical and anecdotal parts of the Bible, which is almost the whole of it, is not within the meaning and compass of the word *revelation*, and, therefore, is not the Word of God.<sup>2</sup> (Emphasis mine)

Even though Paine denied that the Bible is the Word of God, nevertheless, he correctly focused on the meaning of the word *revelation*. We can say that “revelation” is that intelligence that could never have been arrived at through the five senses. In other words, “revelation” must be supernatural. It is to this question of God’s existence (How did the concept of God enter into the world?) that Alexander Campbell confronted the editors of the New Harmony Gazette—a journal that espoused “dogmatic atheism.” Alexander Campbell (1788-1866) wrote with great insight as he dealt with the idea, or concept, of an Eternal First Cause:

#### A PROBLEM

To the Editors of the New Harmony Gazette

You think that reason cannot originate the idea of an Eternal First Cause, or that no man could acquire such an idea by the employment of his senses and reason—and you think correctly. You think also that the Bible is not a supernatural revelation—not a revelation from a Deity in any sense. These things premised, gentlemen, I present my problem in the form of a query again.

The Christian idea of an Eternal First Cause uncaused, or of a God, is now in the world, and has been for ages immemorial. You say it could not enter into the world by reason, and it did not enter by revelation. Now, as you are philosophers and historians, and have all the means of knowing, How (sic) did it come into the world?<sup>3</sup>

As we reflect upon the existence of God, we are also sensitive that this earthly life is limited. Even if we live to be seventy or eighty years old, life is soon cut off. The question of God’s existence matters. We cannot eliminate the reality of God from society. God revealed Himself to Adam and Eve, and, at the same time, placed within the first man and woman a

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<sup>2</sup>Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason* (Secaucus, N. J.: Citadel Press, 1974), 59. See R. Watson, *Reply to Paine; or, Apology for the Bible: in Letters to Thomas Paine* (New York: American Tract Society, 1796) for an excellent and exhaustive study of Paine’s book on *The Age of Reason*. Richard Watson (1737-1816) also examined David Hume’s denial of miracles, *Ibid.*, 200-212.

<sup>3</sup>Alexander Campbell, *The Evidences of Christianity: A Debate Between Robert Owen, of New Lanark, Scotland and Alexander Campbell, President of Bethany college, VA*—Held in Cincinnati, Ohio, in April 1829—(reprinted—Nashville: McQuiddy Printing Co., 1957), 123.

sense of eternity. Following the sin of Adam and Eve, God drove them from the Garden of Eden and, simultaneously, instructed them about sacrifice. Following the creation of Adam and Eve, there is in every man and woman born into this world a comprehension of God. Even in the most primitive people, there is a sense of a supreme being. There is a feeling in every person an awareness of eternity. God revealed Himself to Adam and Eve and placed within them, and everyone born thereafter, a sense of eternity, which one cannot escape. As we mature and observe the wonders of the world with all its beauty, the sense of eternity swells up, as it were, within every person. Solomon, David's son, set forth this concept when he penned the following words:

I have seen the burden God has laid on men. <sup>11</sup> He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. (Ecclesiastes 3:10-11)

### **Kingdom of Humanity versus Kingdom of Animals**

We cannot rid ourselves of this “driving force” anymore than an animal can eliminate its natural born instincts. The atheist or agnostic has no answers as to the origin of *Homo sapiens*, that is to say, human beings—male and female. Only the inspired Scriptures, given by the Holy Spirit, account for the beginning, or start, of humanity. A perusal of the literature of unbelievers reveals that they do not distinguish between the “animal kingdom” and the “kingdom of humanity”—all are one and the same to the atheists. Evolution is the common name assigned to justify such absurdities. Yes, skeptics who deny the existence of God and His supernatural Revelation also disavow, or repudiate, that men and women are privileged beings in this world. There is a confessed ignorance of atheists as they seek to account for the source of matter, the principle of motion in matter, the specific origin of the earth with its unique environment to sustain animal life, plant life, human life, and so on.

The unbeliever has to admit much ignorance and to believe more mysteries than believers. For the “dogmatic atheist,” unbelief is a far greater miracle than belief in the biblical account of creation for the Christian. The miracle of unbelief is that “nothing” created “something.” This mindset of unbelief is to swallow a camel and strain at a gnat, that is, the belief that God created the heavens and the earth. On planet earth, how do we account for both male and female in evolution? Did both evolve at the same time as infants or did they both evolve at the same time as full grown male and female? Were both male and female produced as coordinates with the existence of the earth as infants with no parents? If so, they could not have arrived to maturity. Do infants survive today without care? No! Experience teaches that the first pair must have been adults when they were first ushered into being. For us to deny the plain evidence concerning the survival of infants, we have to suppose, contrary to all experience, that the first pair (male and female) were not the same as the species known today, otherwise they would not have reached adulthood.

The age-old question is still around: which came first the chicken or the egg? We know that the chicken had to exist before the egg. If not, where did the egg come from? Did the acorn, or seed, exist before the tree? In the vegetable kingdom, there had first to be the plant before a seed could fall to the earth. Even in the animal kingdom, there first had to be the male

and female in its prime before there could be offspring. Nature cannot now produce a new genus, or classification, in the vegetable kingdom nor produce a new species, or variety, in the animal kingdom. By what rational evidence can it be shown or demonstrated that nature ever had such power? If the first male and female were infants, as stated above, they could not have reached maturity; they would have perished. We can only conclude that both must have been adults who were created with reason, the ability to speak, and knowledge without experience (fully mature at the time of creation).

### **Motion of Matter**

How do we account for the idea of God that is so universally known among the various races of the world? How do we account for the motion of matter? How do we account for the earth revolving around the sun. What brought about this action? Some planets have more than one moon—some revolving clockwise (in the same direction as the rotating hands of a clock) and others in the reverse (counterclockwise). How do we account for this phenomenon? What gives regularity to motion? Why do the planets choose to move in a uniform course, or order?

### **Five Senses: Its Origin**

How did the five senses come into existence? The five senses are essential for life. Even though some may be lacking in some of the five senses, they must depend upon others who possess these senses in order to survive. How do we account for the eye? How do we account for the sense of smell? How do we account for the sense of hearing? How do we account for the sense of taste? How do we account for the sense of feel? For us to believe that the five senses created themselves is utterly unthinkable by the powers of human reason. It is unthinkable that they should have issued fortuitously out of a lifeless, mindless, or self-created nebulosity. The idea that the five senses created themselves can only find a place in the minds of men and women where reason has been dethroned. I can state emphatically that “I am not credulous, or gullible, enough to be an unbeliever.”<sup>4</sup>

The atheist thinks that the five senses just came about through blind and mindless chance. Which is the greater miracle—blind chance or God? There is not one single instance of “blind laws” or “mindless chance” creating anything. Did the blind laws of nature produce the computer, the space craft, the dictionary, the watch, the automobile, the airplane, and so on? If not, why should individuals assert that which is contrary to all experience and observation. If the universe was so irregular at one time, what caused its regularity?

If the atheist or agnostic will reason from effect to cause, he or she will be confounded with an indissolubility of the following questions: (1) were the first man and woman infants or adults? or (2) was there an acorn or an oak first? If we deal with these questions, we must also deal with other questions. For example, did the first man and woman invent language themselves and then pass this on to their offspring? Or, was there a convention of men and

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<sup>4</sup>For an excellent treatise on why I am a Christian, see John Stott, *Why I Am A Christian* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2003). We should also consult Ravi Zacharias, *Recapture the Wonder* (Nashville: Integrity, 2003) for an excellent defense of God’s existence.

women co-existent who agreed upon names for every thing even before they could speak? It goes almost without saying that no one has ever spoken who was not first spoken to. Atheists are ignorant of the origin of language. Only those who believe in God can account for the origin of language.

### **Origin of Matter**

Atheists are also ignorant of the origin of matter. Who made me? Where did I come from? Where did memory come from? How does the brain store information? Without memory, life could not function. These are questions that confront the inquiring mind. The atheists and agnostics have no reason to believe themselves privileged beings in the scale of creation over any creature of the animal kingdom. According to their philosophy, a human is no better than a bee, a beaver, a dog, a cat, an elephant, an ant, and so on. Is this belief true according to our experience in life? For instance, do laboratories use live human beings to dissect, or separate into pieces, as they do animals? If not, why not? Again, how did the first couple know what to eat? This information had to come directly from special revelation—revelation from Deity. Once Adam and Eve received this kind of data, they were able to narrate the information received by divine revelation about the origin of things—creation of the universe, the creation of humanity, the creation of the animal kingdom, and the creation of the plant kingdom.

### **ADAM AND EVE**

We wonder how the first pair could remember the first time they saw the sun and, at the same time, not be able to know the Author of their existence who had dialogue with both. The Author of their existence revealed Himself to both. In the original state of the first man and the first woman, they were able to talk with their Creator. The human race, as is well known, is inferior to the animal kingdom in “instinctive powers.” On the other hand, men and women are governed by reason, not instinct, which, too, sets a gulf between humanity and the animal kingdom.

Remember, whatever the difficulties of Christian belief might be, the difficulties of unbelief are far greater. The rejection of Christian truth is more irrational than Christian belief in the supernatural. The atheistic idea concerning the origin of the universe and humanity is so nonsensical that we find it difficult to put it into words. We find it troublesome to accept that “reason” in human beings and “instinctive powers” in animals originated through the result of blind chance. To accept this kind of philosophy is to swallow a camel after straining out a gnat.<sup>5</sup>

### **Human Testimony**

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<sup>5</sup>For a fascinating study of the animal kingdom, see the three part DVDs, Jobe Martin, *Incredible Creatures That Defy Evolution* (Exploration Films. com, or call 1-800-964-0439). See also Jobe Martin, *The Evolution of a Creationist: The Bible and Evolutionary Theory* (Rockwall, Texas: Biblical Discipleship Publishers, 1994, 2002, 2004).

When the first man and the first woman opened their eyes, their reason and senses were at their meridian, or peak, strength. From Adam and Eve, testimony was passed on to each generation concerning the origin of the universe and the existence of God. The ability to rely upon testimony distinguishes and elevates humanity above the brute beast. It goes almost without saying that without testimony there could be no improvability in the world of humanity. Without testimony, both men and women would cease to be progressive beings. In the world of the atheist and the agnostic, we observe readiness or willingness to believe anything that is totally outside the bounds of reason. Christians are asked to swallow a camel (dogmatic atheism) instead of straining at a gnat (Christianity). Is it more reasonable to believe that God created something or that nothing created something?

## **THE REASONING MIND**

We, as Christians, should learn to reason and to think correctly in analyzing the Christian faith. The church lives in an age of skepticism, an age that denies the Genesis account of Creation and the denial of a Supreme Being. The words of Jesus are appropriate for citation today as it was in His day: “Why don’t you judge for yourselves what is right?” (Luke 12:57). This admonition applies to both believers and unbelievers alike. Peter, one of the Twelve, later reflected the words of Jesus when he wrote: “But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15). If the church today had applied this principle of rational thinking, there would not be so many unbelievers today. It goes almost without saying that right reason should precede belief itself.

We witness dialogue between believer and unbelievers on Mar’s Hill (Acts 17:16-34). There still needs to be exchange of ideas today. Millions today are unconvinced of the Deity of Christ and all that flows from belief in Him—supernatural Conception, Resurrection, and miracles. Thousands upon thousands of so-called Christians are also indifferent toward spiritual things, but this disregard is nothing but unbelief, whether we profess faith in God or not. How can the church deal with such mental inertia, or passivity, when it comes to the defense of the faith? If Christians wish to win men and women to Christ, they must enter into rational talk as to their belief in God and the Deity of Christ. Numerous individuals today are kept away from the church because of the chilling influences of modern doubt advanced in secular schools and universities. In today’s society, children are taught evolution in the first grade.

### **Evolution**

As believers, we affirm that unbelief is demonstrably unreasonable. When we read books by atheists who deny the creation account in the Book of Genesis, we cannot help but recall the words of Jesus to the religious leaders: “You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel” (Matthew 23:24). Many present-day scientists and teachers strain at a gnat, but, at the same time are willing to swallow a camel. Whatever the difficulties of Christian belief are, we are acutely aware that the difficulties of unbelief are still greater. If we reject Christianity because miracles seem incredible, we must stand in awe at the miracles that unbelief is

compelled to assert, which miracles, according to their assertions, are far more incredible. Refusal to accept belief in God and His creation commits us to even greater difficulties. It goes almost without saying that the rejection of Christian truth becomes correspondingly more irrational, or illogical.

Why should we reject the Incarnation brought about by miraculous Conception and the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead by God, and, at the same time, affirm the so-called miracle of the origin of the universe from an atheist's perspective—nothing created something? Should we reject Christianity because the supernatural in Christianity is burdened with difficulties to the so-called scientific mind? When we take away the supernatural in Christianity, what is left behind is no longer Christianity. If we advance the notion that the supernatural in Christianity is regarded as incredible, it is demonstrably more incredible without the supernatural intervention of Deity. Unbelief on the part of the atheist can only uphold its objections to Christian miracles by accepting an even greater and grosser miracle—nothing created something. There is absolutely no rationality to this system, a system of its own making.

### **Multitude of Atoms**

As we contemplate this universe, we are conscious that the present universe had a start, or beginning, somewhere. Something is here rather than nothing. Should we agree to the miracle of creation by a Creator or should we consent to the greater and all-embracing so-called miracle that some primordial nebulous allowed a multitude of atoms with their inherent forces and energies to create life as it is known today, that is to say, which atoms stood apart from one another and that were not evenly distributed to rearrange themselves in such a way that they were able to change the shapeless into the shapely, and the simple into the more and more complex until the highest complexity reached its full development of living matter? For us to find staggering difficulties with the biblical creation account and to accept that differentiated atoms created the world as is known today is truly to vault over a mountain and fall headlong over a straw.<sup>6</sup>

As stated above, many modern scientists and teachers strain at a gnat, but, at the same time are willing to swallow a camel. When we come to the universe, we cannot but wonder which is the greater miracle—belief in God or belief that nothing created something. Yes, the greater miracle is to believe that matter made itself, that is to say, nothing created something out of nothing. For us to postulate that atoms—all being exactly alike—proceeded to make themselves into different things, which are entirely different from each other, is incredible. How did atoms develop into carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen, and so on? Did the atoms endow themselves with all these potentialities? We wonder how these original atoms self-differentiated themselves to move into other forms of atoms. Did the atoms rearrange, or revamp, themselves through the function of mindless or unintelligent or brainless chance?

Since the world is made up of atoms, we cannot help but ask the question: did the atoms rework themselves by sheer force or energy through a self-created power, that is to say, through a mindless and senseless and aimless force? Did the unlike come out of the like? Did that which

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<sup>6</sup>For an in-depth study on the marvels of this planet, see A. Cressy Morrison, *Man Does Not Stand Alone* (Westwood, NJ: Fleming Revell Company, 1944), 13-30.

is shapely come out of the shapeless? Did the useful come out of the useless? Finally, did the living come out of the lifeless? Is this marvelous universe with all its beauty and with all its forms of life simply a product of blind chance? When we speak of the differentiation of atoms, we observe the vegetable and animal kingdoms—set apart atoms in observation. In this world, we perceive order in the arrangement of atoms. Was there no guidance in the arranging of atoms in the creation of the animal and the plant kingdom? Did the blind chance of atoms create men and women as well as all known living creatures on the face of the earth? Can we truthfully postulate, or speculate, that cells separated themselves into the human, vegetable, and animal kingdom without any outside guidance? For us to accept this philosophy of blind chance is to swallow a camel (evolution) after straining at a gnat (Christianity with its miracles).

The modern world concept of evolution is an unverifiable assumption of dogmatic beliefs. When we deny God and His creation, we indeed accept outrageous assumptions. In my judgment, “dogmatic atheism” is so nonsensical that we find it difficult to see how anyone could put it into words. It is a greater miracle for us to believe that those haphazard collisions of mindless atoms through aeons of time created male and female and the plant kingdom and the animal kingdom than to believe that an Eternal First Cause uncaused created the universe and all that is in it. For the evolutionist or atheist to cry out against biblical creation by Deity is to recall the words of Jesus: “You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye” (Matthew 7:5). The dogmatic atheist seeks to remove simple faith in God while he or she seeks to convince the believer to accept that which is incredible—blind-mindless chance.

## PSALM 14

David (reigned as king: 1010-970 BC) penned the following words about one who denies God’s existence or lives his or her life as if God does not exist. Pay attention to these words from Psalm 14:

The fool<sup>a</sup> says in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good. <sup>2</sup>The LORD looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. <sup>3</sup>All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one. (Psalm 14:1-3)

This psalm is about atheism. Whether we speak of dogmatic or practical atheism, we are conscious that both aspects of atheism are a vital option in the interpretation of this psalm, even though the latter is probably the correct view. How do we really and truly know that there is a God? Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ (two-thousand years after David) answers this heart-searching question in his Epistle to the Christians in Rome: “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse” (Romans 1:20). “His eternal power and divine nature” are sufficient evidence to prove to humanity that God exists.

God has made evidence for His existence so strong that “men are without excuse.” Pay attention once more to Paul as he draws attention to the existence of God: “The wrath of God is

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<sup>a</sup> The Hebrew words rendered *fool* in Psalms denote one who is morally deficient.

being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, <sup>19</sup> since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them” (1:18-19).<sup>7</sup> Sir Fred Hoyle (1915-2001), English astronomer, argued persuasively in his book *The Intelligent Universe* the naivety of advancing the notion that the universe originated by the random shuffling of molecules. In his rejection of the “idea of the primordial soup,” he referred to a popular lecture in which he accused many scientists of a “junkyard mentality.” He writes with keen insight as he demonstrates the utter impossibility of the “primordial soup” mentality:

In a popular lecture I once unflatteringly described the thinking of these scientists as a “junkyard mentality.” Since this reference became widely and not accurately quoted I will repeat it here. A junkyard contains all the bits and pieces of a Boeing 747, dismembered and in disarray. A whirlwind happens to blow through the yard. What is the chance that after its passage a fully assembled 747, ready to fly, will be found standing there? So small as to be negligible, even if a tornado were to blow through enough junkyards to fill the whole Universe.<sup>8</sup>

Prior to these comments, he labors the point:

No evidence for this huge jump in complexity has ever been found, nor in my opinion will it be. Nevertheless, many scientists have made this leap—from the formation of individual amino acids to the random formation of whole chains of amino acids like enzymes—in spite of the obviously huge odds against such an event having ever taken place on the Earth, and this quite unjustified conclusion has stuck.<sup>9</sup>

## Wonders of Creation

For Paul, God’s power and His existence are self-evident to any thinking person. William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad point out with justice about the wonders of God’s creation that we cannot rationally deny the existence of God:

Again, this position ignores the wonders of God in creation—the immensity of the universe, the amazingly precise movement of the planets, the marvelous suitability of the earth to sustain life, the intricate design of the human body, the fantastic complexity of the human brain and the extraordinary properties of water and soil. Take for instance the suitability of the earth to sustain life. Henry Bosch has pointed out the following instances of God’s careful and marvelous design:

The earth rotates on its axis at approximately 1000 miles per hour. If that had been 100 miles per hour, our days and nights would be ten times longer, and our planet would alternately burn and freeze. Under such circumstances vegetation could not live! If the earth were as small as the moon, the power of gravity would be too weak to retain sufficient atmosphere for man’s needs; but if it were as large as Jupiter, Saturn, or Uranus, extreme gravitation would make human movement almost impossible. If we were as near

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<sup>7</sup>For an excellent study on God, see Norman Geisler, “Tough Questions About God,” in Ravi Zacharias and Norman Geisler, General Editors, *Who Made God?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 23-48.

<sup>8</sup>Fred Hoyle, *The Intelligent Universe: A New View of Creation and Evolution* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1983), 18, 19.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 18.

to the sun as Venus, the heat would be unbearable; if we were as far away as Mars, we would experience snow and ice every night, even in the warmest regions. If the oceans were half their present dimensions, we would receive only one-fourth the rainfall we do now. If they were one-eighth larger, our annual precipitation would increase fourfold, and this earth would become a vast, uninhabitable swamp. Water solidifies at 32 degrees above zero [°F]. It would be disastrous if the oceans froze at that temperature, however, for then the amount of thawing in the Polar Regions would not balance out, and ice would accumulate throughout the centuries! To prevent such a catastrophe, the Lord put salt in the sea to alter its freezing point.<sup>10</sup>

## **The Human Brain**

The human brain also exhibits evidence that the brain did not simply happen through mindless chance. Ravi Zacharias (b. 1946), Canadian-American evangelical Christian apologist and evangelist, writes:

For example, a neurophysiologist studies the brain (just one intricate strand of study) with its billion long nerve cells, each of which, on the average, makes contact with 10,000 other cells under the control of chemical messengers. Even the brain of an octopus far exceeds in complexity any human artifact, and the human brain is immensely more complex. Charles Sherrington [1857-1952], in *Man on His Nature*, gave a picturesque description, seeing the brain as

An enchanted loom where millions of flashing shuttles weave a dissolving pattern, always a meaningful pattern though never an abiding one; a shifting harmony of sub-patterns.<sup>11</sup>

Again, the brain is evidence for a designer. The following is an excerpt from a journal written by the Shaklee Corporation under two subheadings:

### **Brain Power**

The human brain is the most amazing organ of the body. It is more complicated and more wonderful than any machine ever invented. It can facilitate and transform information into memories more efficiently than the world's fastest super computer. The brain weighs 3 to 3.5 pounds, is 75% water, and consists of over one trillion brain cells, or neurons, that continually reconfigure to form new memories and purge old ones. The brain performs so many important functions that although it only represents 2% of body weight, it demands about 20% of the body's blood flow every minute in order to receive the oxygen and nutrition it needs.

### **How the Brain Remembers**

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<sup>10</sup>William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995), Ps 14:1.

<sup>11</sup>Ravi Zacharias, *The Real Face of Atheism*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1990, 2004), 40. For the citation Ravi cites, Sir Charles Sherrington, *Man on His Nature* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1940, 1950), 184.

Memory is the process by which information and experiences can be stored, retained, and then recalled. Without memory, there can be no learning. Memory relies upon an intricate biochemical process involving neurons, extraordinary spider-like cells, which are the smallest anatomical units of the nervous system. Between each of the brain's neurons are spaces known as synapses. When incoming data stimulates a neuron, it triggers the release of chemical messengers called neurotransmitters which move through the synapses making connections with other neurons. The flow of information between neurons in the brain is the basis for all memory. The stronger the memory, the more synaptic connections are made, and the easier it is to recall the memory.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>“Brain Power boosters: Shaklee’s Optimum Memory Supplements,” this article does not list the author or the date, but it is found in *What’s New!*, published by Shaklee (food supplement company) in volume 25, Issue 5 under the caption “Brain Power Boosters” (I, Dallas Burdette, received this flyer on May 27, 2006).

## HOW DOES ONE KNOW THAT THERE IS A GOD?

Christian writer James Montgomery Boice (1938-2000) has penned some compelling words that need to be heard.

According to these verses [Romans 1:19-20], the revelation of God in nature is not hidden so that only a highly skilled scientist may find it. It is open and manifest to everyone. A child can see it. There is enough evidence of God in a snowflake, a finger print, a flower, a drop of water to lead any honest member of the human race to believe in God and worship him. Every single object in the world shouts “God” to humanity.<sup>13</sup>

Paul, one who had a direct encounter with the risen Christ,<sup>14</sup> went right to the heart of the matter when he exposed the belief that God has not given sufficient evidence to prove His existence. Listen to him as he goes right to the heart of the issue:

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,<sup>19</sup> since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.<sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. (Romans 1:18-20)

### Denial of Moral Law

Why do men and women deny God? Paul names the reason—they “suppress the truth by their wickedness.” The anatomy, or structure, of men and women is sufficient evidence for God’s creation. When we witness a demise of God, we also witness the extermination of moral law. An excellent example of the annihilation of moral law is found in the Hitler regime. Hitler (1889-1945) was influenced by Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) and applied his atheistic philosophy to its fullest. Ravi Zacharias relates a story about a plaque, or commemorative inscription, hung on a wall that describes the misery and wretchedness that Hitler released when his goal was realized—a life without God. The inscription reads:

I freed Germany from the stupid and degrading fallacies of conscience and morality.... We will train young people before whom the world will tremble. I want young people capable of violence—imperious, relentless and cruel.<sup>15</sup>

This sign hung on the wall in the death camps, located in Poland, of Auschwitz and Birkenau. Once more, Zacharias’ comments about Hitler and Nietzsche are well worth citing:

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<sup>13</sup>James Montgomery Boice, Vol., 1, Psalms 1—41, *Psalms, An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994, 1999), 115.

<sup>14</sup>See Dallas Burdette, “Paul’s Conversion: Apologetic for Christianity,” in Dallas Burdette, *Biblical Preaching and Teaching: Jesus and Our Responsibilities*, Volume 1 (Longwood: FL: Xulon Press, 2009), 92-120, for an in-depth study of Paul’s encounter with the Risen Christ.

<sup>15</sup>Ravi Zacharias, *Can Man Live without God* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1994), 23.

However, Sartre's [1905-1980] impact on people of the 1960s is small compared to Nietzsche's influence on Adolf Hitler. Hitler took Nietzsche's writings as his philosophical blueprint and provoked the bloodiest, most unnecessary, most disruptive war in history, changing irremediably the pattern of the world. Nietzsche's influence on Hitler is undeniable. In fact, historian William Shirer [1904-1993] has written that "Hitler often visited the Nietzsche museum in Weimar and publicized his veneration for the philosopher by posing for photographs of himself staring in rapture at the bust of the great man."<sup>16</sup>

The third man in Hitler's regime was Rudolph Hess (1894-1987). When he became commandant of Auschwitz, he had 2,500,000 executed or exterminated. In fact, in the summer of 1944, he exterminated 400,000 Hungarian Jews. Ravi Zacharias also states: "It was there that Rudolph Hess, the commandant, oversaw the obliteration of 12,000 people a day."<sup>17</sup> If we wish to see the real face of atheism, we should read Eugen Kogon's book, *The Theory and Practice of Hell*. Kogon spent six years in the concentration camp at Buchenwald. He gives a full and unexpurgated account of the activities of Hitler's dreaded S. S.<sup>18</sup> Yet again, Zacharias pinpoints the philosophy of Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980), French Existentialist and philosopher, and Nietzsche (1844-1900): "Just as Jean Paul Sartre saw no exit from this random existence, Nietzsche saw no entry from the outside into this hermetically sealed and vacuous life. Man was now left to find his own path, and light whatever lamps he chose."<sup>19</sup> Nietzsche set forth in clear terms the logical end of unbelief in his *The Madman*. The following, even though lengthy, is his full comments about God:

*The Madman.* Have you not heard of that madman who lit a lantern in the bright morning hours, ran to the market place, and cried incessantly, "I seek God! I seek God!" As many of those who do not believe in God were standing around just then, he provoked much laughter. Why, did he get lost? Said one. Did he lose his way like a child? Said another. Or is he hiding? Is he afraid of us? Has he gone on a voyage? Or emigrated? Thus they yelled and laughed. The madman jumped into their midst and pierced them with his glances.

"Whither is God" he cried. "I shall tell you. We have killed him—you and I. All of us are his murderers. But how have we done this? How were we able to drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What did we do when we unchained this earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving now? Away from all suns? Are we not plunging continually? Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there any up or down left? Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breath of empty space? Has it not become colder? Is not night and more night coming on all the while? Must not lanterns be lit in the morning? Do we not hear anything yet of the noise of the gravediggers who are burying God? Do we not smell anything yet of God's decomposition? Gods too decompose. God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we, the murderers of all murderers, comfort ourselves? What was holiest and most powerful of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives. Who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement,

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<sup>16</sup>Ravi Zacharias, *The Real Face of Atheism*, 62.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>For the full story, see Eugen Kogon, *The Theory and Practice of Hell: The German Concentration Camps and the System Behind Them* (New York: The Berkley Publishing Corporation, 1950). For more atrocities of the Nazi atheistic philosophy, see Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992, 1998). This book is filled with the philosophy of Nietzsche.

<sup>19</sup>Ravi Zacharias, *The Real Face of Atheism*, 27.

what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must not we ourselves become gods simply to seem worthy of it? There has never been a greater deed; and whoever will be born after us—for the sake of this deed he will be part of a higher history than all history hitherto.”

Here the madman fell silent and looked again at his listeners; and they too were silent and stared at him in astonishment. At last he threw his lantern on the ground, and it broke and went out. “I come too early,” he said then; “my time has not come yet. This tremendous event is still on its way, still wandering—it has not yet reached the ears of man. Lightning and thunder require time, the light of the stars requires time, deeds require time even after they are done, before they can be seen and heard. This deed is still more distant from them than the most distant stars—and yet they have done it themselves.”

It has been related further that on that same day the madman entered divers churches and there sang his *requiem aeternam deo*. Led out and called to account, he is said to have replied each time, “What are these churches now if they are not the tombs and sepulchers of God?”<sup>20</sup>

“Nietzsche’s emotionally charged description is not purely imaginative. He had grabbed reality by the throat, and wrestled with the postmortem firmness of a world that had lost its assumed Creator and Provider,” writes Zacharias.<sup>21</sup> Nietzsche concludes his book on *The Antichrist* with the following stinging words about Christianity:

I call Christianity the one great curse, the one great innermost corruption, the one great instinct of revenge, for which no means is poisonous, stealthy, subterranean, small enough—I call it the one immortal blemish of mankind.<sup>22</sup>

Once more, Nietzsche writes: “We have learned differently. We have become more modest in every way. We no longer derive man from ‘the spirit’ or ‘the deity’; we have placed him back among the animals.”<sup>23</sup> Hitler presented a copy of Nietzsche’s works to Benito Mussolini (1883-1945).<sup>24</sup> Over six million Jews died as a result of Nietzsche’s philosophy, which philosophy was adopted by both Hitler and Mussolini.

Twenty one years (1924) before Hitler’s death (1945), two boys (Richard Loeb and Nathan Leopold) put into practice the philosophy of Nietzsche by acting out a murder of a fourteen year old boy.<sup>25</sup> Clarence Darrow (1857-1938—sixty-seven years old at the time of his defense of the boys) defended these two boys and managed to convince the court not to give them the death penalty. In his defense before the court, Darrow said: “He [Nathan Leopold] became enamored of the philosophy of Nietzsche.”<sup>26</sup> As Darrow stood before the court, he argued:

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<sup>20</sup>Friedrich Nietzsche, “The Madman,” in Walter Kaufmann, *The Portable Nietzsche* (New York: The Viking Press, 1954, 1948, 1959), 95-96.

<sup>21</sup>Ravi Zacharias, *The Real Face of Atheism*, 29.

<sup>22</sup>Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Antichrist* in *The Portable Nietzsche*, 656.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, 580. For an excellent analysis of Nietzsche’s philosophy, see Ravi Zacharias, “Morticians of the Absolute” in *The Real Face of Atheism*, 19-33.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>25</sup>Elinor Lander Horwitz, “Leopold and Loeb” in *Capital Punishment, U.S.A.* (Philadelphia and New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1973), 91-114.

<sup>26</sup>Maureen McKernan, *The Amazing Crime and Trial of Leopold and Loeb* (New York: Signet Books, 1957), 208. Clarence Darrow and Walter Bacharach wrote the “Introduction” to this book.

Your honor, I have read almost everything that Nietzsche ever wrote. He was a man of a wonderful intellect; the most original philosopher of the last century. A man who probably has made a deeper imprint on philosophy than any other man within a hundred years, whether right or wrong. More books have been written about him than probably all the rest of the philosophers in a hundred years. More college professors have talked about him. In a way he has reached more people, and still he has been a philosopher of what we might call the intellectual cult. Nietzsche believed that some time the superman would be born, that evolution was working toward the superman

He wrote one book, *Beyond Good and Evil*, which was a criticism of all moral codes as the world understands them; a treatise holding that the intelligent man is beyond good and evil; that the laws for good and the laws for evil do not apply to those who approach the superman. He wrote on the will to power. He wrote some ten or fifteen volumes on his various philosophical ideas. Nathan Leopold is not the only boy who has read Nietzsche. He may be the only one who was influenced in the way that he was influenced.<sup>27</sup>

Both Leopold (1904-1971) and Loeb (1905-1936)<sup>28</sup> sought to commit the perfect crime, which crime became known as “The Crime of the Century.”<sup>29</sup> Leopold (age 19) and Loeb (age 18) were members of cultured and influential Chicago families as well as Robert Franks (age 14) whom they killed. Upon the arrest of Leopold, he confessed that he was an “advanced thinker and an atheist.”<sup>30</sup> We see the philosophy of Nietzsche in his remarks about the killing of young Franks as “an experiment.”<sup>31</sup> Elinor Horwitz explains his mindset as she examined the court files that he compared the killing of this young boy “to the way a scientist might pin an insect.”<sup>32</sup> Horwitz also writes: “Both boys seemed to believe that their intellectual superiority raised them above the rules which govern society.”<sup>33</sup> We cannot read this earth-shaking story without a consciousness that this story is a telling picture of a life without God. Steve Turner (1949-2009), English journalist, captures the very essence of a life without God. If we wish to see the stark reality of “chance” as the origin of the universe, we should read Steve Turner’s poem entitled *Chance*. Listen to him as he draws a frightening picture of “chance” in all its nakedness:

If chance be  
The Father of all flesh,  
Disaster is his rainbow in the sky  
And when you hear

State of emergency  
Sniper kills ten  
Troops on rampage  
Whites go looting  
Bomb blasts school

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Loeb, aged thirty, was killed by a fellow convict. See Ibid., 108.

<sup>29</sup>Elinor Lander Horwitz, “Leopold and Loeb” in *Capital Punishment, U.S.A.*, 92.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 99.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 101.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

It is but the sound of man worshipping his  
maker<sup>34</sup>

In concluding this study on the folly of unbelief (dogmatic atheism), it is appropriate to relate a story from James Montgomery Boice (1938-2000), Reformed theologian, concerning the fall of communism in the Soviet Union. He tells about Madalyn Murray O’Hair (1919-1985), the most famous of American atheists, who visited Russia in order to propagate her atheism. Boice relates the following scenario that occurred during the time that Bibles were being given away in Russia by the American Bible Society:

I once heard Dr. Joel Nederhood, a radio preacher of the Christian Reformed Church, tell of being in Moscow and attending a booksellers’ convention. The fascinating thing about this convention was that, in the age of *glasnost* (the openness in the last days of the Soviet Union), the American Bible Society was present and was giving away Bibles. A long line of people patiently waited to receive these Bibles, and, as Nederhood told it, the line stretched several hundred feet out into the display area, where it passed in front of a neglected booth manned by the seventy-year-old Madalyn Murray O’Hair, the most famous of American atheists, who sat there glowering [to look or stare with sullen annoyance or anger].

She must have been thinking, “What fools these Russians are to stand in line for Bibles. They should be buying books about atheism from me.” But it was she, not they, who was the fool. For they had tried atheism and had found it wanting. She had lived about as long as communists had ruled Russia, but she had learned nothing.<sup>35</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The primary objective of this chapter is to strengthen us in our understanding that God exists. Dogmatic atheism denies the existence of God. As a result of this kind of belief system, there is nothing to curb the evil propensities of humanity. Just a cursory reading of the newspapers as well as television reveals a world out of control. Belief in God makes a difference in how individuals respond to one another. This chapter explores the five senses, Divine Revelation, distinction between the kingdom of humanity and the animal kingdom, motion of matter, origin of matter, Adam and Eve, human testimony, evolution, atoms, and a reasoning mind. The next study examines “practical atheism.” It is not uncommon for Christians to live their lives in such a way that they deny God in their daily lives, even though they profess faith in God.

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<sup>34</sup> Steve Turner, *Up to Date: Poems 1968-1982*, “Chance” (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1976, 1980, 1982), 107.

<sup>35</sup> James Montgomery Boice, vol., 1, Psalms 1-41, *Psalms*, 118.