

# Why I am not an atheist

**W**hen I was a kid, I was an atheist. It is a long story as to why, but I remained that way till I was around 17 years old. I had a special dislike for Christians, and I remember mocking them. There was even one time I stood in my parents' front yard yelling, "I do not believe You exist!" while shaking my fist toward heaven in a gesture to God.

When I was a kid, I really wanted to be a scientist. Atheists do not believe in miracles or supernatural forces, as everything can be "explained" by science. By the time I was 12, I thought I had my life all planned out. But things did not turn out the way I had imagined they would.

## **SUPERNATURAL EXPERIENCES**

One day my brother, Allen, came home with an old book he claimed came from an elderly man who said he was a warlock (male witch). I did not believe in witches, ghosts, spirits, gods or a devil. To me the old book was a joke. But just for fun, I tried one of the ceremonies found within its pages.

When I performed the ceremony, nothing happened, so I laughed and

thought to myself, "What a joke." But shortly after that ceremony, very frightening things began to happen. I could not shake the feeling that there were forces at work that were not simply my imagination. Some of the things that happened could not be denied or explained away. My brother, too, started telling me about things that were happening to him since we had begun dabbling with the occult. We were both scared.

As a result of these prolonged harassments, I could no longer deny the existence of a spiritual dimension. I reasoned this way: "There are supernatural forces out there, good and bad, that are contending for the minds and souls of men." It was almost a Star Wars view of the supernatural. It suddenly occurred

**BY JEFF REICH**



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to me that if there are evil spirits, which I supposed were harassing us, then there also had to be good spirits, and even God.

So what does an atheist do when confronted by supernatural forces? My brother started exploring Christianity, but I was resistant to that. My quest took me in a different direction — Eastern Mysticism. After a year and a half of searching, I decided to study the Bible. And although I was resistant at first, I ended up becoming an Adventist (my testimony can be found on the DVD series entitled *Spiritual Journeys*, available from our office or online bookstore, or watch it on *Laymen Ministries* YouTube channel).

### THE 'NO GOD' DILEMMA

Some people are bent on trying to convince others that there is no God and that those who profess “Christian faith” (or any religion) are dumb, ignorant, and deny science. But one thing they can never take from me is my personal experience with God, nor even the supernatural affirmations He has given. I explained to someone recently that when my wife and I were first married, I was in between jobs. My wife was doing home health care for the elderly. We did not have the money to pay rent, and it was due at the end of the week. We prayed.

That same day there was a knock on the door. An elderly man named Harold Addy, whom my wife did home health care for, stood there. “I have something I want to give you,” he said with a smile as he handed us an envelope. “I was impressed you needed this,” he explained and then expressed how much he appreciated Christy taking time to visit with him when she cleaned his house.

The envelope had our rent money — right down to the penny. And no,

my wife had not mentioned the rent problem to him. This might seem like a simple coincidence, yet to us it was a miracle. It has been just one of hundreds of things God has done to say, “Yes, I am here” throughout the following years.

Don't let people rob you of what God has done for you. If they do remove Him from your life, what are they offering in His place?

### WHY AN ATHEIST?

There are many reasons why people choose to be an atheist as opposed to being a Christian. It could be something as simple as how one is raised and what influences a person is exposed to during the impressionable years. I can identify with both of these reasons. Sometimes it has to do with the desire to seem more intelligent than other people who put their trust in so-called “fairy tales.”

But I think there is a deeper core value at stake. If people acknowledge that there is a God, then they must admit that He is indeed the Creator and we are simply the created. This means we must subject ourselves to God and be accountable to Him and His standard of morality.

Without God, a person can hold to his or her own standard of right and wrong. Let's face it — many do not want to be told how to live their lives. They want to decide for themselves what is moral or not moral. However, history has shown repeatedly what happens when humanity throws out God and His foundation for morality.

Unfortunately, even religious people have, under the pretense of religion, set up their own standard of morality. But when people deviate from the principles found in God's

Commandments, His great standard for morality, the worst kinds of evil not only happen, but are justified by humanistic thinking.

## THE GOD OF YOUR WORLD

We all know that it is a fact the leading universities in America have professors bent on making “Christian” students into atheists. Many a student has been faced with the choice of either going along with the teacher or failing the class. But I would like to tell you one story that was a bit of a flip-flop from the norm.

On the first day of school, a college class gathered. The professor, a middle-aged man, got the attention of the whole class. He announced his name, and as part of his introduction, he also told the students that he was a Christian and that he wanted them to know this.

A cocky young student raised his hand. “Yes?” the teacher responded.

“I am an atheist,” the student defiantly stated, “and I just want to let everyone here know that.”

“Well that’s interesting,” the teacher replied. “I would like to ask you one question: How do you decide what is right or wrong? How do you determine what is moral?”

“I decide what is right and wrong. I am the god of my own world!” the student did not hesitate to answer.

“I just want to let you know that when classes are done today, I am going to find your car and smash out all the windows with a baseball bat!” the teacher said, very seriously.

“You can’t do that!” the student had a shocked look on his face.

“Sure I can,” the teacher explained, “I am the god of my own world, and I do not like you or your attitude, so that is what I am going to do!”

The students realized it was sarcasm, but the point was made. Once

we decide for ourselves that we are a god and that we decide what’s right and wrong, we revert back to our animal natures. We should never buy into the propaganda that humanity is basically good. The Bible says, “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:10).

Human nature is depraved, and if it were not for the Gospel of Christ, none of us would have one ounce of goodness. But “God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Romans 12:3). To every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. God has placed in all of us a measure of goodness, which contends against our depravity.

## TAKE-AND-MAKE RELIGION

As I stated earlier, some want nothing to do with God and religion. But what my atheist friends do not realize is that atheism *is* a religion. It is a “faith system” that puts its trust in science and humanistic philosophy, but more specifically, in oneself.

Atheists say there is no God, yet they set themselves up as a god. And they have their denominations as well. There is Secular Humanism, Environmentalism, Darwinism, and Materialism — to name a few.

I was once upgraded to First Class on a flight. Sitting next to me was a friendly Chinese math professor from a leading American university. On his lap was a copy of *The Humanist* magazine. We started chatting as I asked him about where he worked and what he taught. When he asked me what I do for work, I shared with him regarding *Laymen Ministries* and all the projects we have around the world. I briefly talked about our medical clinic in Vanuatu, schools in the Philippines for indigenous kids,

door-to-door workers in India, and health workers in Nepal.

What he then said to me, I will never forget: “Why is it that it is always ‘your people’ who do these kinds of things? Why can’t I get more of ‘my people’ to do these kinds of things?” I thought about that for a long time. The religion of Christ is about helping and caring for others, while the religion of Atheism is about self-serving. It is the difference between serving God and humanity or being god and serving ourselves.

These are two worldviews that are diametrically opposed to each other. And it is from these two worldviews that everything is interpreted — paleobiology, paleontology, biology, geology — science per se. Bias colors everything.

I chose God’s worldview years ago, as the other one had too many twists and turns. But more important than that, God has shown Himself time and time again. As I stop and look back at my life, what would have happened if I would have remained an atheist? Where would I be today? What good would I have done for others? Then I look at *Laymen Ministries* and praise God for His goodness, and how by Him we have been able to help so many people. And it is true for all of us. We all have influence and we all have purpose.

The basis of God’s worldview — His morality — is summed up in His Ten Commandments, honoring God and our fellow man. What a wonderful place this world would be if, from the heart, people would keep His commandments!