

1-10-10

Letter To An Atheist

I appreciate you sharing with me the reasons you are an atheist. Please allow me to comment briefly, and to share with you why I am a believer.

You mention the high profile preachers that have made millions of dollars deceiving and hustling poor people, as they build their empires. As a believer I also am troubled by these folks. Some are earnest in the beginning, but their growing popularity and riches cause them to think more highly of themselves than they ought. But their riches and deception are not proof that God does not exist. Furthermore there is a difference between having faith in God and the "religion business." The organized churches we see everywhere are different from the one true "church" which is invisible and which is comprised of all who believe. It is not necessary to "go to church" at all. Most organized churches do some good and teach some truth, but all they also teach many falsehoods because they do not understand what God has revealed in His written word; the Bible. These "churches of man" are led more by the traditions of men than by the truth God has revealed. They preach tithing, and sabbath observance, and creeds, and membership, and articles of religion, and mandatory church attendance ... when none of these is really commanded by God in the Bible. (Perhaps for Israel in times past; but not for the church in this present age.)

God calls we who believe to "be" the church; not to "go" to church. Even in the days of the apostle Paul, most believers abandoned him and turned away from the truth. We see this in Paul's later letters which are a part of the Biblical record; intended to show us that we should not look to the "religious majority" to find truth.

And so I apologize that the many believers you have encountered in your life have caused you to become an atheist. With their religiosity and their preaching of nonsensical doctrines (like eternal torment and multitudes of "holiness" requirements), they have distorted God's grace and have represented Him incorrectly, turning many away.

Don't blame the average churchgoer. Most people who attend church are misled by the "authorities" they have come to trust. But the failures of religion and the "churches of man" do not prove there is no God. This only proves that man is misrepresenting God and distorting truth. But this very point concerning man and religion is revealed to us in the Bible itself, so it should come as no surprise.

You also ask how God could create those who are deformed, or helpless, or insane, or criminals. You ask if God is responsible for wars and the shedding of innocent blood. Is He responsible for slavery, for torture, for earthquakes, pestilence and famine? Is He responsible for wild beasts that devour human beings, or for poisonous serpents? Is He responsible for viruses, or for the withholding of rain that destroys crops?

Yes these are challenging questions, but the existence of these things does not prove that there is no God. Perhaps they prove that we do not always understand God. We like to think that God should create us and place us in a world where we can do whatever we please, while He continually prevents any harm from coming to us. A selfish existence where we are given everything we ask for ... and in return we will believe in God.

Many of the evils you mention are failures of man, not of God. Yes He is our Creator, but what we do with our life is done with a certain degree of freedom God has given to us. Would we want it any other way? Would we prefer to be puppets on a string, with no will of our own? It is the will of man that has gotten us into many of the troubles you mention.

There are truly some things I cannot explain or understand. But they do not cause me to believe God does not exist. How could I believe that when I look at this world and universe? Did this all

happen by accident? If I find a watch lying on the ground ... the old fashioned kind with gears and springs all working in harmony ... do I not recognize there must have been a watchmaker to fashion it? Or is it possible that the watch just assembled itself by accident or random chance? Look at the human body. Is it not miraculous? Yes, there are examples of malformation or disease, but setting those aside for a moment is not the human body and so much of creation miraculous? Could all of this have simply "happened" by accident? No ... like the watch, I look at this creation and recognize there must have been a creator. My failure to understand some things such as malformation or disease or natural disasters does not cause me to lose sight of the fact that there is too much evidence in support of a Creator to be ignored.

Now as for the "failures" and calamities ... at least those not traced to the work of mankind ... I cannot explain these things. But I can tell you something that most within the churches of man do not recognize; because they have been deceived by their "authorities" ... God is in the process of leading all things to perfection. This is what the Bible tells us. It is not what most Bible teachers will say, but they have been misled by the traditions of men ... the orthodoxies and creeds and doctrinal errors that have crept in since the very first century of Christianity. Even our modern Bible translations are contaminated. But one who studies outside of the churches of man will see very clearly God's plan.

Yes, there is much inexplicable suffering in this life; but also much beauty and pleasure. But even if this life was filled with nothing but beauty, if this is all there is then all would be in vain. Even 100 years of life filled with beauty and pleasure, when coming to an end, would be loss. But God reveals to us that this life is not all that there is. He reveals His plan to one day reconcile all things and bring about perfection. The churches of man miss this perfection, as they have been led to believe God only blesses some (those who believe) while torturing forever and ever those who fail to believe. But this kind of teaching blasphemes God and causes many to disbelieve.

One day every one of creation will recognize God as God, will be given an incorruptible body, will be fully reconciled to God and to all others, and will live in perfection. We will be reunited with every loved one that has gone before us. Those who believe now, and those who do not, will ultimately be benefactors of God's love and grace. This is what the Bible tells us.

Yes there is much we do not now understand. But even with our many questions, God has revealed to us His marvelous plan to bring about this perfection. As I contemplate the wonders of creation as I now see it, and as I consider God's revealed plan for a grand reunion with our loved ones and the total and absolute perfection that lies ahead, I am a believer.

Thanks for allowing me to share my perspectives, and for taking the time to read and consider them.

[If you wish to comment, please write me at bob@GraceEvangel.org I will try to address all reasonable questions and comments in a subsequent blog. And please visit us at www.GraceEvangel.org]
