

# Introduction

Dealing with Trouble and Controversy

Attacks on Christianity, the Bible, and God

Three Claims made by an Atheist

Evidence Explained

Examination of evidence for and against these three claims

## Introductory Story

Arrogant "Succession" Scottish actor, atheist, and socialist Brian Cox says Religion is stupid, the Bible is the Worst Book in the World man created God. The best church in the world is the theater. He attacked the living God.

**Text:** Prep for Text: 2 Kings 18:19-25 The king of Assyria had carried away Israel because they disobeyed the voice of the Lord and transgressed his covenant. The king then sent three messengers to Jerusalem to deliver a message to Hezekiah. The king of Assyria questioned where Hezekiah's confidence and trust was. He told Hezekiah mere words are not as strong as military skill and strength which I have. If you are trusting in Egypt, the Pharaoh is completely unreliable. If you are trusting in the Lord, isn't he the one who was insulted by Hezekiah? Didn't Hezekiah tear down his shrines and altars and make everyone in Judah and Jerusalem worship only at the altar in Jerusalem? The king of Assyria then tried to strike a bargain because Judah's army was so tiny. The Lord has given us direction to invade your land and he told us to attack and destroy it.

[2Ki 19:1-4 KJV] 1 And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard [it], that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. 2 And he sent Eliakim, which [was] over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz. 3 And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day [is] a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and [there is] not strength to bring forth. 4 It may be the LORD thy God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God; and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up [thy] prayer for the remnant that are left.

## What Can you Do?

[1Pe 3:15 KJV] 15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and [be] ready always to [give] an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

[Heb 11:6 KJV] 6 But without faith [it is] impossible to please [him]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and [that] he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Satan uses people like Brian Cox, Richard Dawkins and others to attack our faith. Lee Strobel Example

## Dealing with Controversy

Let's examine three statements stemming from Cox's podcast.

1. **People do destructive things in the name of their religion.** People are stupid for not realizing religion caused the Holocaust, War at Ukraine, and the war with Israel and Gaza. Religion has sold humans a false story about reality and contributed to their own "stupidity."
2. **The Bible is propaganda and mythology.** Cox criticized the Bible as "one of the worst books ever." He argues "propaganda" from the religious text has contributed to a "patriarchal" society. "It is not the truth, it's a mythology," he continued. "We've created that idea of God, and we've created it as a control issue, and it's also a patriarchal issue."
3. **God does not exist.** "It's people dealing with... those false gods we create for ourselves and the notion of the word God anyway, is a conceit. It's a terrible conceit that we don't really acknowledge."

## Two types of evidence in the courtroom

**Direct Evidence** – Evidence that can prove something all by itself. If a witness sees a person committing a crime and can recognize the person in a lineup this is direct evidence. One piece of direct evidence can convict a person if the witness is reliable.

**Circumstantial or Indirect Evidence** – This evidence doesn't prove something on its own but points in the right direction by proving something related to the question at hand. If a witness sees a person with a mask committing a crime they can offer circumstantial evidence, this evidence can lead to a conviction when all the evidence fits together and leads to a reasonable conclusion the person is guilty. Andy Stanley put circumstantial evidence into perspective. My high school science teacher once told me that much of Genesis is false. But since my high school science teacher did not prove he was God by rising from the dead, I'm going to believe Jesus instead." Wise move.

### Witness Testimony

Witness's background

Father died at age of 8 and mother had a history of nervous breakdowns. His three sisters raised him. He is now 77 years old.

Education: Left secondary school at the age of 15 and began his acting career. He began his training at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art at the age of 17. Graduated in 1965. An accomplished Shakespearean actor. Starred in Braveheart in 1995. His acting career spanned over 60 years acting in a wide range of Broadway, film, and TV movies. No wonder Theatre is his religion.

## People do destructive things in the name of their religion.

Circumstantial evidence was offered. All religions of the world are put in one category by Cox who says, My paraphrase, "People are stupid for not realizing religion caused the Holocaust, War at Ukraine, and the war with Israel and Gaza. Religion has sold humans a false story about reality and contributed to their own "stupidity."

**Circumstantial Evidence Evaluated:** While people do destructive things in the name of religion, support for this claim does not come from Hitler, Putin, or Hamas. Hitler caused the Holocaust not religion. Putin wants Ukraine to belong to Russia, not in the name of religion, and the war with Israel and Hamas started over a horrible attack by Hamas on October 7<sup>th</sup> 2023 caused by ongoing land possession disputes and hate.

According to the Encyclopedia of Wars, out of all 1,763 known/recorded historical conflicts, 121, or 6.87%, had religion as their primary cause. Matthew White's The Great Big Book of Horrible Things gives religion as the primary cause of 11 of the world's 100 deadliest atrocities.

## **Christian Circumstantial Evidence for things done in the name of Christianity:**

[1Jo 4:20 KJV] 20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

[1Jo 5:2 KJV] 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

[Mat 5:43-44 KJV] 43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

[Mat 15:7-9 NLT] 7 You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote, 8 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. 9 Their worship is a farce, for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God.'"

**Do these verses sound destructive?**

## **Is Christianity a manmade religion?**

[Act 26:23 KJV] 23 That Christ should suffer, [and] that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

[1Co 12:28 KJV] 28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

## **Jesus started Christianity**

[Jhn 3:8, 17-18 KJV] 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. ... 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

[Heb 2:3 KJV] 3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard [him];

[Col 1:16-19 KJV] 16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether [they be] thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all [things] he might have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased [the Father] that in him should all fulness dwell;

## **The Bible is propaganda and mythology.**

Cox criticized the Bible as "one of the worst books ever." He argues "propaganda" from the religious text has contributed to a "patriarchal" society. "It is not the truth, it's a mythology," and he says we created a controlling God with our religion.

**Propaganda:** information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote or publicize a particular political cause or point of view.

**Myth:** an unfounded or false notion, an allegorical narrative (Allegory means, the expression by means of symbolic fictional figures and actions of truths or generalizations about human existence.), a person or thing having only an imaginary or unverifiable existence.

**Circumstantial Evidence:** Cox: He summarizes the content as propaganda but his evidence seems to be primarily that it has contributed to a patriarchal society using Eve coming from Adam's rib as support. His claim that the Bible is mythology is supported by this evidence. Humans created the idea of God and we've created it as a control issue. He also referred back to the Bible contributing to a patriarchal society.

**My views:** The Old Testament tells the history of a man (Abraham) and a nation full of flaws and problems. Adam and Eve broke a commandment of God and suffered consequences. A curse came upon the earth. Cain killed Abel out of Jealousy. Abraham and Sarah tried to help God's promise come to them. King David was a man after God's own heart yet the Bible records his adultery, murder, and disobedience to God. God is portrayed as a loving creator who keeps promises and is totally in charge of the Universe, but he is also a God of judgment and will judge humanity. David suffered consequences for his actions but he still remained king. When God takes action, his ways are far above our ways. Evaluating content through a human lens misrepresents God's perspective. Example: God told Saul to completely destroy the Amalekites for laying in wait for Israel when they came out of Egypt.

## God said,

[Exo 17:14 KJV] 14 And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this [for] a memorial in a book, and rehearse [it] in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. Over 300 years later, Saul was given the order from God.

[1Sa 15:2-3 KJV] 2 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember [that] which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid [wait] for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. 3 Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

## Power of the New Testament Evidence

The New Testament has caused several atheists to believe in God when they looked at the evidence contained in the books. Dr. Simon Greenleaf, Lee Strobel, and J Warner Wallace are examples.

Historical reliability: tells embarrassing stories most people would not want printed, promotes women, gives reliable circumstantial evidence that Jesus resurrected from the dead.

The writers had no motive to gain money, power, or fame from writing the books.

[Mat 24:35 KJV] 35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

[Jhn 12:48 KJV] 48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

## God does not exist.

Most major religions fall into one of three religious world views

Theism, pantheism, and atheism.

Theist believes in a personal God who created the universe but is not part of the universe. Much like a painter created the painting but is not part of the painting. Christians, Jews, and Muslims are examples.

Pantheist believes in an impersonal God that is literally the universe. He is the painting. Buddhism and Hinduism are examples.

Atheists do not believe any kind of God exists. They believe the painting exists but nobody painted it. One push these days from Atheists is Christians and Atheists have lots in common. An atheist believes in one less God than Christians.

## **Believing in a living God Makes the Most Sense**

The Grand Canyon is a product of Natural Causes (Erosion). Erosion has been reproduced and observed and will happen in the future.

The presidential faces on Mount Rushmore did not come about by natural causes. They cannot be reproduced through natural causes. They appear to be a product of Intelligent Design.

Naturalists believe the world came into being through Natural causes. Science requires observation. No human was present at the beginning of life. No one has ever been able to produce a one cell ameba having DNA that contains ordered data that could fill 1,000 encyclopedia volumes nor has anyone saw or produced reasonable evidence natural causes create something from nothing.

Creationists conclude the big bang had to have a big banger who is an intelligent designer. The single cell ameba has an intelligent designer. To conclude the universe has an intelligent designer based on observations of intelligent designs such as DNA and the order of the universe makes sense.

[Gen 1:1 KJV] 1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

[Job 26:7 NLT] 7 God stretches the northern sky over empty space and hangs the earth on nothing.

[Col 1:15-17 NLT] 15 Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, 16 for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see--such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. 17 He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together.

I believe these Scriptures because they make sense to me.

**There is enough reliable circumstantial evidence to prove God exists and believe the Bible is the Word of God. These are reasonable conclusions after examining the evidence.**

No matter how much evidence is supplied, a person will not believe or accept what they are not willing to believe or accept.

[Jhn 1:11-13 NLT] 11 He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. 12 But to all who **believed** him and **accepted** him, **he gave the right to become children of God**. 13 They are reborn--not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.