

Is God Real?

Resource Links from Dr. Brian Anderson
Senior Pastor, CrossRoads Fellowship church, Jackson MO

Introduction: Is God Real?

Sometimes Christian people can appear naive to the skeptical world. It might appear that we believe because we were taught to believe in Jesus as children, or because we have a emotional needs or fears, and faith in Christ makes us feel better. It might appear that we have believed without any real evidence; that faith is a blind leap into the unknowable Unknown.

For 2,000 years Christians have responded with a discipline that has come to be known as Apologetics. It's not what it sounds like; it's not an apology. It is literally "To speak in defense." Apologetics is the rational, scientific, philosophical and personal defense of the Christian faith. This document is a list of apologetic resources that will help any of us with questions about the truth of the Christian faith.

This document is for all of us. It is for the atheist whose mind is open, and would appreciate hearing from some of Christianity's best scientific, critical and rational thinkers.

It is for the agnostic who is seeking the truth.

It is for the believer who is plagued by doubts.

It is for the believer whose friends ask these questions.

It is for the believer who celebrates the truth wherever it is found.

All of us.

This is not an EASY approach to this issue. An easy approach would be for our staff to read all these books, listen to the videos and study the websites and digest it all for you, delivering a simple "Here's the answer" blog or video. That's not a bad approach. Many sermons and Bible studies do exactly that, but neither is that always the best approach.

This approach does not do the work for you. You'll have to go to the websites or read the books or watch the videos to benefit from this document. If you need help understanding what you find, please contact us and we'll be glad to help. This document is intended to provide Christian answers to the issues raised, not necessarily the other side of the argument. It is easy enough to find those viewpoints with a simple internet search. If this document is helpful, which we will gauge by the number of downloads and shares, we will try to keep it updated.

But before we begin to look at answers, we have a vitally important question: Why doesn't God show himself? Why does he hide who he is and require us to search, weigh and decide what we believe?

Why Does God Hide?

This question is at the heart of the entire process of discovering the truth about God. Why doesn't God just reveal himself to us in an undeniable way? My answer is: Freedom.

I believe that we are on this earth to freely choose what kind of people we will be, and that the most important decision we make is what we believe. It is a seminal decision that determines who we are and how we will live. If this is the case, then it makes perfect sense for God to protect our freedom by not overplaying his hand! If he parted the seas for us every day, everyone would believe, and none of us would be Believers! If the choice to believe is crucial to the development of the personhood of each individual, then their freedom must be protected, which means God will not normally overwhelm our freedom with evidence that cannot be denied.

But protecting our freedom to choose does not mean he must not provide any evidence that he is real, he simply refuses to overwhelm us with undeniability. This means that in order to protect our freedom there will always be evidence for and against faith.

Don't expect undeniable, overwhelming evidence for faith. It truly would not be "faith" if it were as undeniable as $1 + 1 + 1 = 3$. Expect to hear plausible evidence on both sides of any question. Expect to find respected leaders in each field of study on both sides of each question. Know that every person I list as a resource here has his or her critics, many of whom are unkind and condescending. Expect, that when all is said and done, you will have to make a choice between two or more answers, all of which may seem perfectly plausible to you or to those you respect. Your choice then may say much more about who you are and who you choose to be than anything else.

Be careful of preconceived biases! There are entire branches of science devoted to how biases influence scientific conclusions! If that is true for scientists and scientific method, imagine how powerful biases are to the rest of us who may not have been trained to resist them!

Examine the evidence, weigh the pros and cons, check your biases and choose what you believe. It may change you forever.

Resource: "Why?," by Dr Brian Anderson, PhD, Senior Pastor, CrossRoads Church, Jackson, MO. Available upon request by email to office@jacksoncrossroads.com

God bless you Seeker on your journey towards Him!

Topics

Each person or organization I'll list below will cover many of these topics.

Creation	Scientists, philosophers and Christians are all faced with a prime question: Why is there something rather than nothing? Christians believe that God is the Creator. What evidence do we offer in support of our belief in a Creator?
Origin of Life	Evolution used to offer a purely natural explanation for the origins of life on earth. The theory has been called into question, not just by Christians who believe that God is the origin of life, but also by secular scientists. If science offers no plausible explanation, does that not strengthen the claim of biblical Christians that God is the most plausible explanation?

Bible	Biblical Christians rely on the Bible for more than inspiration, it is also their authority for their worldview. But if the Bible has been corrupted by the church or by accidents of transmission, then it's authority is deeply compromised. These resources look at the reliability of the Bible.
Bible Questions	If the Bible contradicts itself, then why would we trust it? These resources deal with answering apparent contradictions and inconsistencies in the Bible.
Jesus	The central claim of historic Christianity is all about Jesus. That he is the eternal Son of God, the third person of the Trinity, who came to earth, lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins and was raised the third day. These resources deal with questions about the person, divinity and uniqueness of Jesus.
Miracles	Are the miracles in the Bible real? Does the fulfillment of prophecies give legitimate evidence for faith in a supernatural God?

Apologetics Resources

Resource	Topics	
Book: <i>The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict</i> by Josh McDowell	All Topics	Updated, thorough text that gives exhaustive quotes and resources. This book covers almost all the topics in this document; the accuracy of the Bible, evidence for a Creator, the statistical odds that biblical prophecies would come true, arguments for the resurrection and many more. The church has a copy if you need to borrow it.
Hugh Ross www.reasons.org <i>The Creator and the Cosmos</i> and many more	Creation Origins of Life	Hugh Ross is an astronomer, and this book is a fairly easy to read overview of the arguments for a Creator. He has many more books on this topic and a website.
Norman Geisler	Creation Origins of Life Bible Bible Questions Jesus Miracles	Geisler is a seminary professor and noted author. He has several books and videos. Andy Cutrell recommends <i>I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist</i> by Norman Geisler https://www.audible.com/pd/Religion-Spirituality/I-Dont-Have-Enough-Faith-to-be-an-Atheist-Audiobook/B0036KODQI?source_code=GO1GB907OSH060513&qclid=CjwKCAjwhcjVBRBHEiwAoDe5x41u-ulhzGdyT4KFxX-sT-OPVOSNJfPpLfn-F6EM_Dk45OCz3QUWehoCwqIQAvD_BwE
Lee Strobel <i>The Case for a Creator</i> by Lee Strobel <i>The Case for Christ</i> Etc.	Creation Origins of Life Bible Bible Questions Jesus Miracles	Strobel is a former atheist and newspaper editor. He has books and videos on almost all the topics we discuss in this document. This documentary presents scientific evidence for God as the Creator of the Universe, the Creator of life on earth and much more. This is an easy to understand documentary that gives an excellent overview and introduces you to some excellent authors and scientists. Strobel also had a movie that did well in theaters, <i>The Case for Christ</i> . It is the story of his journey, and was well done.

		He has many books, videos and other resources on these topics.
<i>CARM</i> <i>Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry</i> https://carm.org/	All Topics	Recommended by Donnie Shaw. A website dedicated to apologetics.
<i>Got Questions</i> https://www.gotquestions.org/	All Biblical Topics	Also recommended by Donnie Shaw, a site that deals with apparent inconsistencies or biblical questions.
<i>Michael Denton</i> <i>Evolution: A Theory in Crisis</i> by Michael Denton, 1985 <i>Evolution: Still a Theory in Crisis</i>	Origins of Life	I've read the 1985 version and found it fascinating. Denton shows that the origin of life is still profoundly a mystery. I've not read the updated version.
<i>Ben Stuart</i> <i>Has the Bible Been Corrupted?</i> A video by Ben Stuart https://vimeo.com/10699390		Recommended by Donnie Shaw, a video from Ben Stuart, Texas A&M campus minister.
Ravi Zacharias <i>Jesus Among Other Gods: The Absolute Claims of the Christian Message</i> Book by Ravi Zacharias	All Topics	This is just one sample among Ravi Zacharias' books. Ravi's sermons, books and videos are all over the internet. He is intelligent, passionate and very interesting to listen to. He debates atheists, critiques culture and engages skeptics with grace.
Apologetics Group	All Topics	There is a group of believers from different churches who meet and discuss these topics. If you are interested, please contact our office.

These are just a few resources. There are hundreds more, some are excellent, others ... not so much. Don't believe everything you read or hear, pro or con! Not even from me.

God Bless.

Pastor Brian Anderson

April 2018