

God's NOT Dead

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Psalm 14:1 (NKJV) “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none who does good.”

From the beginning of time, men have believed in the existence of a supreme being usually referred to as “God”. The Bible never attempts to prove the existence of God. It only affirms the reality of His existence: “In the beginning God...” (Genesis 1:1)

In 1859 Charles Darwin published his work *On the Origins of the Species* laying out his theory of evolution with what he regarded as compelling evidence. By 1870 the scientific community and much of the general public embraced his theory as a fact, thus eliminating the need for a Creator. Seizing upon the growing sentiment of the scientific community and the general public, German philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900) began to formulate his “death of God” philosophy. The phrase “God is dead” first appeared in his 1882 work “The Gay (Joyous) Science”. It is also found in his 1883 work “Thus Spoke Zarathustra”. In this work a character known as “The Madman” asserts: “God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. Yet his shadow still looms. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to cleanse ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it?”

Nietzsche believed that God was no longer relevant in light of human progress. In his enlightenment, man no longer needed the “myth” of God to explain this world’s mysteries. He surmised that God had died in the hearts and minds of modern men. Through a significant shift away from faith toward science and rationalism, he boldly announced that God had died through human indifference. God’s “death” marked the end of the value and objectivity of truth and the long-established standards of morality and purpose. Nietzsche embraced the realities of the present world over any idea of a world beyond. Nietzsche’s “death of God” philosophy greatly influenced the late twentieth-century and early twenty-first century thinkers. He is regarded as a champion for the atheist cause.

Nietzsche’s “death of God” philosophy gained substantial traction in the twenty-first century. In 1961 Gabriel Vahanian wrote his book *The Death of God* that proposed that modern secular culture had lost all sense of the sacred and that God was simply a cultural relic from the past whose memory still loomed in the back of people’s minds but that He had little or no influence on their daily lives. As a result of the growing atheism caused by the “death of God” movement Time Magazine in its April 8, 1966 edition posed the question on its cover “Is God Dead?” The reaction by theists (those who believe in the existence of God) to the death of God question was considerable. As a result, in its December 26, 1969 edition, Time Magazine posed the question on its cover, “Is God Coming Back to Life?”

So the question must be asked, “Is God dead? Did science and the enlightened human intellect really eliminate the necessity of God? Did modern philosophy kill the “myth” of God? Is God really “dead”? Consider the ramifications if God is dead. If God is dead then there is no supreme being to which humans are accountable, there are no moral standards of right and wrong, there is no such thing as sin, there is no life beyond the grave, there is no eternal judgment—no heaven and no hell, there is no ultimate justice, there is no meaning and purpose to life except what men give it. People are the victims of random chance and the survival of the fittest.

If God is dead, then there is no resurrection and no existence beyond the grave. In 1 Corinthians 15:13-32, Paul sets forth the following ominous conclusions if there is no resurrection. If there is no resurrection then Jesus is dead. If Jesus is dead, then preaching the Gospel is useless and the faith of those who have believed is in vain. If Jesus is dead then the apostles who bore witness to His resurrection were liars and false witnesses. If Jesus is dead, then believers are still in their sins and those believers who have already died have perished. If Jesus is dead, then the believer's hope of resurrection and eternal life ends when he or she dies. The Christian life is nothing more than a futile, miserable, and wasted life of dedication, self-denial, and senseless suffering and persecution. If God is dead and Jesus is not alive, then the existential motto of "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die" is the only sensible way to live. Unfortunately, the "God is dead" mindset has infiltrated almost every aspect of Western culture. The consequences have been far reaching and enormous.

In Psalm 24:1 King David said: *"The fool has said in his heart there is no God."* Insisting that God does not exist is called "atheism." The Greek word for "atheism" is *atheos* that comes from the Greek prefix "a" (negative—"without") and "theos" (God). An atheist does not say, "I don't think God exists" or "I don't believe in God" but rather they affirm without possibility of error the non-existence of God, "God does not exist". This is an illogical negative absolute because to say this requires unlimited knowledge. It is like saying, "There is no such thing as a purple planet with yellow stripes anywhere in the universe." The only way to say this with any credibility is with infinite and absolute knowledge of the universe. Thus to affirm the negative absolute "God does not exist" is proud, self-defeating, and foolish because there is no human being who possesses an infinite knowledge of the universe, much less infinite knowledge of the spiritual realm.

From a human perspective, there is enough intellectual material available for both atheists and theists to make their case. Atheism refuses to consider that God cannot be discovered in a test tube or explained in a philosophy class. The God of the Bible is Spirit who transcends human logic, science, and reason. God declares, *"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.'*" (Isaiah 55:8-9 NKJV) God cannot be known through human wisdom: *"Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe."* (1 Corinthians 1:20-21 NKJV)

Atheism is not the product of logic, science, or reasoning since no one can prove or disprove the existence of God through scientific methods. Atheism is not an issue of the mind but of the heart—the fool has said in his HEART that there is no God. Atheism is the stubborn position of a heart of unbelief. Add to this the "New Atheism" which is "a social and political movement in favour of atheism and secularism promoted by a collection of modern atheist writers who have advocated the view that 'religion should not simply be tolerated but should be countered, criticized, and exposed by rational argument wherever its influence arises.'"¹ The zealous adherence of atheists to this radical system of belief has caused atheism itself to be regarded by the courts as a religion.² It is a belief system that refuses to consider the evidence that God has provided for His existence. It takes more faith to believe God does not exist than it does to believe God does exist. After reviewing the evidence, someone once said, "I don't have enough faith to be an atheist!" God is only dead in the hearts of foolish men. God is only "dead" in the hearts of spiritually "dead" men.

¹ Hooper, Simon. "The rise of the New Atheists". CNN. Retrieved 2010-03-16. (Wikipedia, "New Atheism")

² On August 19, 2005 the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that Wisconsin prison officials violated an inmate's rights because they did not treat atheism as a religion: "Atheism is [the inmates] religion, and the group that he wanted to start was religious in nature even though it expressly rejects a belief in a supreme being." The Supreme Court has said that religion need not be based upon a belief in the existence of a supreme being. In the 1961 case of *Torcaso v. Watkins*, the court described "secular humanism" as a religion. (www.wnd.com/2005/08/31895)

Since men cannot prove or disprove the existence of God through science or logic, are they doomed to the conclusion of “agnosticism” (“without knowledge”) that says “If there is a God, then there is not enough evidence to know for sure”? Not at all. First, God has left men sufficient witness of His existence through all that He has made. The wonders of the universe and nature testify to the existence of an Intelligent Designer or Creator: *“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge.”* (Psalm 19:1-2 NKJV) The evidence that God has provided in creation for His existence is sufficient enough to render the atheist or agnostic position inexcusable: *“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.”* (Romans 1:20 NKJV)

Second, God has left men sufficient witness of His existence through the testimony of their own human conscience: *“for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them)”* (Romans 2:14-15 NKJV) God has written His moral law on the human heart so that each man’s conscience testifies to them of right and wrong and convicts them as guilty when they violate that standard. If men deny God by ignoring the testimony of their conscience, it is because they love their sin and hate the light of God. (John 3:18-21)

Third, God has left men sufficient witness of His existence through the goodness He has shown to all who deserve His wrath: *“Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.”* (Acts 14:17 NKJV) Jesus says of His heavenly Father, *“for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.”* (Matthew 5:45) God shows His goodness to fallen men in a fallen world so that they might repent and return to Him: *“Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?”* (Romans 2:4 NKJV)

Fourth, God has left us sufficient witness of His existence and nature through the testimony of Scripture. Psalm 19:7–9 (NKJV) declares: *“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.”* The true, invisible, and transcendent God is unknowable except through His own self-disclosure. He has chosen to reveal Himself to men through Holy Scripture. The Bible tells us who the true and living God is, what He is like, and how He wants to be worshiped. The Bible testifies to the existence of God.

Fifth, God has left men sufficient witness of His existence through His Son Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is God in human flesh. Jesus Christ came in human flesh to reveal the invisible God to the fallen human race. The writer of Hebrews declares that Jesus is the *“brightness of His glory and the express image of His person.”* (Hebrews 1:3) When Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father, Jesus replied, *“Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’”* (John 14:9 NKJV)

Add to these evidences the testimony of Christ’s apostles, dramatic alterations in circumstances known as “miracles”, the transformation of an evil human heart through faith in Christ, the survival of Israel and the Church over the centuries, and the countless lives that have been transformed through faith in Christ. Obviously, it takes more faith to be an atheist than to be a Christian. That is why the Psalmist declares the atheist position as the madness of a fool.

No human can prove or disprove God’s existence. God does not give proof of His existence but He does give sufficient evidence to believe that He exists. God has placed that evidence before every human being. Each individual must choose to either believe the evidence or to walk away. A person can know that God exists if they *want to know* that He exists. It is not an issue of the mind but of

the heart. God wants men to believe in Him so that they might know Him. In considering the evidence, I hope you too will affirm this conclusion—"God's NOT dead!"

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