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Rejecting Moralism and Cynicism

ON FAITH - WASHINGTON POST - WILLIS ELLIOTT

"That will set the United States' position in this part of the world back fifty years!" I can still hear the despairing tone of an eminent scholar in the Athens Tennis Club as our conversation was interrupted by a waiter who announced that the American Marines had just stormed the beaches of Beirut. I agreed, but was wrong.

Forty-nine years later, it's clear that our preemptive strike prevented civil war in Lebanon, splitting apart Christian president & Sunni prime minister. Conclusion: Give me 49 years and I'll tell you whether any particular preemptive strike was a Good Idea. (Was our Army & Marine pull-out of Lebanon 25 years after our Marine invasion a Good Idea? I don't know. It's too soon to tell.)

On this week's question, I'm so ignorant as not even to know whether our preemptive war in Iraq was a good idea—so how would I know whether our staying in, or getting out, would be a good idea? But the question is not about strategic foreign-affairs decisions made and to be made by persons democratically empowered to make them. It's about the moral component in the decision-making process involving all our citizenry. The question is even narrower: Can we speak of "the moral position" on the "out of Iraq" question?

Cynics say we can't, moralists say we must. When they stand toe to toe, there's no space between them. The noise they make gets much media attention. But the **on-the-ground** reality is that the space between them is huge. It's occupied by ignorant people like me and most of the American citizenry.

Now, lest any reader think me cravenly modest in calling myself ignorant, I remind you that Socrates claimed to be the most ignorant man in Athens. We open our mouths not only so words can come out but also so food can come in; and if our minds eat junk food, junk ideas will come out.

As a Christian, I can't be *cynical*. Jesus, who didn't stay dead, forbids me to live without hope. Daily I pray and hope the best for the Iraqis and our relations with them. Nor, as a Christian, can I be *moralistic*. By eating a God-forbidden apricot, Adam and Eve became moralists, authorities on what's right and good and what's wrong and bad.

I press my case. Not only do I reject cynicism and moralism, two forms of folly. I consider cynics and moralists enemies of the humility without which our human hearts are not open to receive the food of wisdom, so that what comes out of our mouths will not be folly.

BY WILLIS E. ELLIOTT | JUNE 25, 2007; 10:59 AM ETSAVE & SHARE:

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Don't put God in a box. In other words, don't confine God to the reality that you can fully understand him with your simple minds. God is a Spirit. The Bible compares our thinking with cattle as compared to that of the Almighty God. It's even worse than that in reality. Consider the Lord has the hairs on your head numbered, not only you but everyone in the world. I know what you doubters are thinking, that's impossible right (common response anyways). That's because you can't understand how God does it and you won't believe in anything you can't understand. God is too great to understand and his ways are mysterious. We only know what God reveals to us about himself and that's why science has never brought us into a closer relationship with God. The Bible says God is invisible and undetectable. It also says that God is capable of hiding himself from whoever he wants and they will never find him. However the Bible says seek and ye shall find. Knock and the door shall be opened unto you. Wouldn't God be the single most important discovery of a person's life? I think yes God would be. How much effort have you spent on that endeavor. You can't bring yourself to spend that much effort on something you believe is a worthless cause. You'll be fortunate, lucky and blessed if God reveals himself to you anyways. Even then you're not able to fully grasp how great God is. Jesus is Lord.

POSTED BY: BEPATIENT | SEPTEMBER 22, 2007 12:48 PM
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My arm itches; I scratch it: From this I know more about reality than all your abstract arguments, none of which are ever proven. But the scratch is proof of the itch.

POSTED BY: JODEHO | JULY 23, 2007 11:55 AM
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David K., Interesting post. However, the evidence does not show that evolution is the "best guess". Therefore, theory. There are more and more changes in the evolutionary system than the English language. How many best guesses should one have to listen and rate before one comes to the conclusion that intelligent design made the universe? This I believe is and was God as Christians know it. The big bang as it was described to me at the University of Michigan (a very liberal and secular school I might add) is so much improbable, it's utterly

impossible. If the way the described it, we are in a closed system. This system is billions of years old, yet shows all signs of a young universe. This is not being close minded, however critical thinking is needed here. With that being said, think about the tadpole trait. That is not an evolutionistic trait. Neither are a lot of things observed in nature and science. Again, critical thinking. I accept all points of view, so how can I be close minded?

Now, I will say I believe the Bible to be true. All those points about places maybe existing, maybe not. I look at things I can say without doubt exist and are happening today. I am not sure if it was you, Emmanuel was a title, not to be a proper name. Example: 3000 years from now, someone might say wasd wasn't his name. You and I know it as a slang title, but would they? Emmanuel had a definition along with it, thus title fits the category.

If one does not accept this (creation) as a "possibility" wouldn't that make someone close minded instead? The argument will rage on until the Lord returns (of course, in your idea, won't) than it will be proven. If I die and rot, I really lost nothing because I won't be here to affirm your point. Also, with the other side, if I die and there's a God, I won't be able to affirm my point. Kind of a paradox, huh? I do get to be a Christian and have those beliefs, which I think make my life better for me and those who I come in contact with. In retrospect, I think I have found the answers I have been looking for and am not afraid or shallow when it comes to trying to prove a point.

As for the radio show, whenever you're feeling up to it, call and make your point. Until then, don't be critical of it unless you can go head to head.

As for being a computer program, please note the spelling error I found after I posted. Jeremiah is spelled wrong. Not typical of computer programs. Nice try at insulting me though.

POSTED BY: DAV | JULY 2, 2007 7:44 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

"...the evidence shows that evolution is not probable. Thus, there leaves the conclusion there must have been a creator."

Sorry, Dav, but your logic is still horribly flawed here. Concluding that "A" is wrong does not automatically mean that "B" is the answer. The answer could be C, D or E. You take a huge leap of faith to get to your creator, and you dismiss the possibility of other explanations out of hand, or do not even consider it (that another natural process could be the answer), simply because one "theory" doesn't work for you. For argument's sake, let's say that there is a better natural explanation for our existence than evolution that we have not yet discovered. It would be better to say that we do not know enough to answer this question. Instead, you decide that it must be a mysterious creator that exists outside of nature that we can't possibly understand, and can choose to defy his own laws to do what he pleases when he feels like it. Do you see the leap of faith there? Again, check the following link. Please.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/False_dichotomy

"To call me a bible thumpin' person when you don't know me is very arrogant..."

I never called you that, if you reread my post, you'll see that I said that your posts "read like" someone who is a bible-thumper. Your posts "imply" that kind of character.

Sorry, but the rest of your last post evolves (pardon the pun) into gibberish.

Here's somewhat of a thought experiment to consider:

Just like science, I can only make assumptions about you based on the available evidence (your posts). So far, they give the impression that I mentioned before (my hypothesis of a bible-thumper mentality). When other evidence comes flowing in (different posts, photos, audio, background info, etc) I can refine my opinion, make it more specific and come up with an explanation as to what kind of person you are that would probably be more well-rounded and true-to-life than what I said before. This is exactly how science works. It isn't "discrediting" itself, but correcting and refining itself.

OR... I can decide here and now that you're not a person at all, because I can't believe that a person would say such things. So... you must be a computer program. Yes, that's it. After further thought, I realize that, given what we know about the world today, the program must exist to interact with other posters to gather information to weed out terrorists for the CIA. I can then say that we should praise this program, for it exists to keep us happy and safe from the terrorists. People will mention this program with deep reverence and appreciation and are comforted by the thought that it exists for us. At the same time, a book gets published that states why we should appreciate and respect this program, and contains stories of it's wonderful contributions to society. Keep in mind that no one has ever really seen this program or read any of its code, so no one really knows how it works.

End of experiment.

Now, what allowed me to conclude that you are a computer program? Well, it was the fact that I couldn't believe or understand that a person would say such things. What was my belief grounded in? Well, in the end, nothing. However, my mind was put at ease with an explanation that allowed me to not worry myself with such unnerving thoughts.

Now suppose I came to you and told you that you are a computer program and why you exist. It wouldn't make sense to you at all. On the other hand, I could present you with your own posts, point out the details, and explain what about them makes me think that you are a bible thumper. You may not agree with my assessment, but you could understand what would lead me to come up with such an opinion. You could volunteer other information about yourself and I could make a better assessment that gets closer to the truth.

What all the above is trying to say, is that, we can only make assumptions about the world by what we observe. When our observations are comprehensive enough, we can then come up with explanations that tie our observations together and make complete sense, given what we know.

The Bible works as a stand-alone piece. If your knowledge of the Bible comes ONLY FROM the Bible, then it all makes sense. If you try to study the Bible IN CONTEXT to the world around it, its authority falls apart quickly. I.e. What about the other books that were considered, but did not make it into the Bible? What about the striking parallels between Roman Catholicism and traditional Roman religion? And

Roman religion with earlier Egyptian mythologies? What about the fact that ALL cultures have come up with their creation stories to explain a world they couldn't understand at the time?

Look, I think (and this is only my opinion) that you are a person looking for answers, but you are afraid of the uncertainty that comes with knowing what little we do. I think you find comfort in the Judeo-Christian stories, and whether or not it's true is secondary. I think you want to fill the voids by saying that God did it. This totally takes the pressure off, no?

I, on the other hand, am not afraid to say, "we don't know" when it comes to answering the big questions. I'm also ready to look at what evidence we DO have about how things work, and to try to explain the world, BASED ON WHAT WE KNOW.

The best evidence as to the diversity of life on earth points to evolutionary theory, whether you like it or not. Other evidence will come along that will slightly strengthen, weaken or alter the theory, but there is way too much evidence already that points to evolution to say that the real answer is something completely different. Our current knowledge points to a Big Bang. Our current knowledge does a good job of explaining physics, electromagnetism, etc. Science will never say something like "This is how it is and that's final" because it always welcomes the possibility of new discoveries that steer our knowledge closer to the truth. Only religions would be insecure enough to make such statements.

As well, there is no way we can devise a test to see if God exists. If God is supernatural or "beyond nature," then there's no way to gather evidence. People can "feel" God in their lives or "sense" his presence, but we can't possibly measure it. People just "believe" it. So, strictly speaking, there is no basis to believe that God or gods exist at all. But it's comforting and frees us up from concerning ourselves with these things.

These hardcore Christians such as your talkshow buddy actually FEAR the progress of science. They have taken comfort in the Bible and don't want their boat to be rocked. They'll demean science, vilify it, turn it into a devil's or atheist's plot, whatever it takes to keep doubt out of their lives. The uncertainty is too frightening for them, so their defense mechanism is to "know" that God did it.

Good luck in your search for answers, but don't give up and close off your mind so easily.

POSTED BY: DAVID K | JUNE 29, 2007 12:47 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

First, I never said I was all knowing. The only statement I made is that the evidence shows that evolution is not probable. Thus, there leaves the conclusion there must have been a creator. I believe that this is the Judeo-Christian God. So far this is the only one I have come up with in my readings and teachings that makes sense. I went to a very secular university. Now, to re-direct to the original post, if the Iraq war is moral or not, I (me) believe that this is written in Jeremaih. (To call me a bible thumpin' person when you don't know me is very arrogant. I do not attend church every week. So therefore I read and make my own conclusions from my own reasearch.) So I don't believe that the war is immoral, however divine punishment. Now, with my posts before these, written only to affirm and factualize my reasons for belief of that theroy (unproven, however an explanation.) I can also use the ever-changing use of theroy also. Now on the theroy definition, I summarized it as a basic definition only. The bottom line is theroy is an unproven law at its basic definition. I am not going to go into the complete wording of it, however if you make it basic instead of a bunch of complicating words and phrases, what do you have? Unproven law. Even the wording has the ever-changing later found out different change of theroy. Sounds like something unproven or changed to fit what it is for the reason. Thus, it can not be LAW. The physical science of law is pretty much improbable of change because is has been proven, therefore theroy is not is the wording, right? So, the only statement to base my theroy on what is happening in Iraq, is bibical. This of course is until proven otherwise.

POSTED BY: DAV | JUNE 28, 2007 7:16 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

NORRIE HOYT: Thank you for apologizing for your personal attack. How refreshing! How rare is repentance on a blog-trajectory!

As to why you found my panelist-reply "maddening" & "pointless," these may be CLUES:

1 You seem not to have noticed that my point is in the periodic position, namely, the final paragraph. The week's question was not focused on Iraq but on morality, & I addressed a moral virtue--namely, HUMILITY--essential to the wisdom of addressing all moral issues, not just in/out of Iraq. I identified two enemies of this wisdom, namely, cynicism and moralism. Most of the 90-to-date comments to my reply were written by this category of enemies of wisdom.

2 My answer was counter-intuitive, UNEXPECTED. Readers expected panelists to answer (as I said) the strategic question, namely, in/out of Iraq. I addressed a prior question. I surprised you, irritated you, didn't satisfy you.

3 With your Buddhist leaning (which you mention in your 4:52pm post today), you're probably absolutely against preemptive military strikes. In my first paragraph, I confessed that I was wrong to have been against the U.S. Marines 1958 invasion of Lebanon. Didn't that irritate you? But don't you agree that I was wrong?

4 Another suggested clue as to why you found my reply "maddening": you weren't ready for meditation (such as my reply called for) but for action: as you said, the "house is burning"!

5 I've saved this until last: I think my (Christian) religion irritates you. In your 4:56pm post, you say "Human life did appear because the constants are the way they are. But that does not allow us to infer the existence of an intending creator" (the "anthropic universe"). What, then, does it "allow" us to "infer"? You come up with an even more shocking leap of imagination--more shocking than my biblical belief in creation: "an infinite number of infinitely existing uncreated universes." Ya got me there: Your belief is more naive than mine.

Dear Dav -

As David K points out, you need to learn what words mean when used in a scientific context.

The word, "theory" is the obvious case in point. Websters offers this definition for the word theory when used in a scientific context:

"the analysis of a set of facts in their relation to one another; the general or abstract principles of a body of fact, a science, or an art ; a plausible or scientifically acceptable general principle or body of principles offered to explain phenomena "

To not understand that the same word can have different meanings in different uses or situations is ludicrous. When I write, "I can see your point," I am using the word "can" differently than I would be were I using it to describe a storage device made of tin. This isn't semantics or splitting hairs. It's important.

And, Dave correctly calls you on having different sets of standards when demanding proof from science as opposed to the "proofs" offered by religion. Indeed, when you make the jump of inserting "god" into .001% of not-yet-proven territory in any scientific endeavor, you are playing the god-of-the-gaps card. Sadly, god's gaps keep shrinking as science's land mass continues to expand.

Finally, Dave is also correct in pointing out that your "attacks" on science are the same laughable, half-truth pseudo-science crapola we see on this board every week (referencing the Second Law of Thermodynamics" is always a dead giveaway that you are spewing idiotic propaganda).

But, I want to help your education. Here's a start for you. Enjoy:

Five Major Misconceptions about Evolution
Copyright © 1995-1997 by Mark Isaak
[Last Update: October 1, 2003]

A large part of the reason why Creationist arguments against evolution can sound so persuasive is because they don't address evolution, but rather argue against a set of misunderstandings that people are right to consider ludicrous. The Creationists wrongly believe that their understanding of evolution is what the theory of evolution really says, and declare evolution banished. In fact, they haven't even addressed the topic of evolution. (The situation isn't helped by poor science education generally. Even most beginning college biology students don't understand the theory of evolution.)

The five propositions below seem to be the most common misconceptions based on a Creationist straw-man version of evolution. If you hear anyone making any of them, chances are excellent that they don't know enough about the real theory of evolution to make informed opinions about it.

Evolution has never been observed.

Evolution violates the 2nd law of thermodynamics.

There are no transitional fossils.

The theory of evolution says that life originated, and evolution proceeds, by random chance.

Evolution is only a theory; it hasn't been proved.

Explanations of why these statements are wrong are given below. They are brief and therefore somewhat simplified; consult the references at the end for more thorough explanations.

"Evolution has never been observed."

Biologists define evolution as a change in the gene pool of a population over time. One example is insects developing a resistance to pesticides over the period of a few years. Even most Creationists recognize that evolution at this level is a fact. What they don't appreciate is that this rate of evolution is all that is required to produce the diversity of all living things from a common ancestor.

The origin of new species by evolution has also been observed, both in the laboratory and in the wild. See, for example, (Weinberg, J.R., V.R. Starczak, and D. Jorg, 1992, "Evidence for rapid speciation following a founder event in the laboratory." *Evolution* 46: 1214-1220). The "Observed Instances of Speciation" FAQ in the talk.origins archives gives several additional examples.

Even without these direct observations, it would be wrong to say that evolution hasn't been observed. Evidence isn't limited to seeing something happen before your eyes. Evolution makes predictions about what we would expect to see in the fossil record, comparative anatomy, genetic sequences, geographical distribution of species, etc., and these predictions have been verified many times over. The number of observations supporting evolution is overwhelming.

What hasn't been observed is one animal abruptly changing into a radically different one, such as a frog changing into a cow. This is not a problem for evolution because evolution doesn't propose occurrences even remotely like that. In fact, if we ever observed a frog turn into a cow, it would be very strong evidence against evolution.

"Evolution violates the 2nd law of thermodynamics."

This shows more a misconception about thermodynamics than about evolution. The second law of thermodynamics says, "No process is possible in which the sole result is the transfer of energy from a cooler to a hotter body." [Atkins, 1984, The Second Law, pg. 25] Now you may be scratching your head wondering what this has to do with evolution. The confusion arises when the 2nd law is phrased in another equivalent way, "The entropy of a closed system cannot decrease." Entropy is an indication of unusable energy and often (but not always!) corresponds to intuitive notions of disorder or randomness. Creationists thus misinterpret the 2nd law to say that things invariably progress from order to disorder.

However, they neglect the fact that life is not a closed system. The sun provides more than enough energy to drive things. If a mature tomato plant can have more usable energy than the seed it grew from, why should anyone expect that the next generation of tomatoes can't have more usable energy still? Creationists sometimes try to get around this by claiming that the information carried by living things lets them create order. However, not only is life irrelevant to the 2nd law, but order from disorder is common in nonliving systems, too. Snowflakes, sand dunes, tornadoes, stalactites, graded river beds, and lightning are just a few examples of order coming from disorder in nature; none require an intelligent program to achieve that order. In any nontrivial system with lots of energy flowing through it, you are almost certain to find order arising somewhere in the system. If order from disorder is supposed to violate the 2nd law of thermodynamics, why is it ubiquitous in nature?

The thermodynamics argument against evolution displays a misconception about evolution as well as about thermodynamics, since a clear understanding of how evolution works should reveal major flaws in the argument. Evolution says that organisms reproduce with only small changes between generations (after their own kind, so to speak). For example, animals might have appendages which are longer or shorter, thicker or flatter, lighter or darker than their parents. Occasionally, a change might be on the order of having four or six fingers instead of five. Once the differences appear, the theory of evolution calls for differential reproductive success. For example, maybe the animals with longer appendages survive to have more offspring than short-appendaged ones. All of these processes can be observed today. They obviously don't violate any physical laws.

"There are no transitional fossils."

A transitional fossil is one that looks like it's from an organism intermediate between two lineages, meaning it has some characteristics of lineage A, some characteristics of lineage B, and probably some characteristics part way between the two. Transitional fossils can occur between groups of any taxonomic level, such as between species, between orders, etc. Ideally, the transitional fossil should be found stratigraphically between the first occurrence of the ancestral lineage and the first occurrence of the descendent lineage, but evolution also predicts the occurrence of some fossils with transitional morphology that occur after both lineages. There's nothing in the theory of evolution which says an intermediate form (or any organism, for that matter) can have only one line of descendents, or that the intermediate form itself has to go extinct when a line of descendents evolves.

To say there are no transitional fossils is simply false. Paleontology has progressed a bit since Origin of Species was published, uncovering thousands of transitional fossils, by both the temporally restrictive and the less restrictive definitions. The fossil record is still spotty and always will be; erosion and the rarity of conditions favorable to fossilization make that inevitable. Also, transitions may occur in a small population, in a small area, and/or in a relatively short amount of time; when any of these conditions hold, the chances of finding the transitional fossils goes down. Still, there are still many instances where excellent sequences of transitional fossils exist. Some notable examples are the transitions from reptile to mammal, from land animal to early whale, and from early ape to human. For many more examples, see the transitional fossils FAQ in the talk.origins archive, and see http://www.geo.ucalgary.ca/~macrae/talk_origins.html for sample images for some invertebrate groups.

The misconception about the lack of transitional fossils is perpetuated in part by a common way of thinking about categories. When people think about a category like "dog" or "ant," they often subconsciously believe that there is a well-defined boundary around the category, or that there is some eternal ideal form (for philosophers, the Platonic idea) which defines the category. This kind of thinking leads people to declare that Archaeopteryx is "100% bird," when it is clearly a mix of bird and reptile features (with more reptile than bird features, in fact). In truth, categories are man-made and artificial. Nature is not constrained to follow them, and it doesn't.

Some Creationists claim that the hypothesis of punctuated equilibrium was proposed (by Eldredge and Gould) to explain gaps in the fossil record. Actually, it was proposed to explain the relative rarity of transitional forms, not their total absence, and to explain why speciation appears to happen relatively quickly in some cases, gradually in others, and not at all during some periods for some species. In no way does it deny that transitional sequences exist. In fact, both Gould and Eldredge are outspoken opponents of Creationism.

"But paleontologists have discovered several superb examples of intermediary forms and sequences, more than enough to convince any fair-minded skeptic about the reality of life's physical genealogy." - Stephen Jay Gould, Natural History, May 1994

"The theory of evolution says that life originated, and evolution proceeds, by random chance."

There is probably no other statement which is a better indication that the arguer doesn't understand evolution. Chance certainly plays a large part in evolution, but this argument completely ignores the fundamental role of natural selection, and selection is the very opposite of chance. Chance, in the form of mutations, provides genetic variation, which is the raw material that natural selection has to work with. From there, natural selection sorts out certain variations. Those variations which give greater reproductive success to their possessors (and chance ensures that such beneficial mutations will be inevitable) are retained, and less successful variations are weeded out. When the environment changes, or when organisms move to a different environment, different variations are selected, leading eventually to different species. Harmful mutations usually die out quickly, so they don't interfere with the process of beneficial mutations accumulating.

Nor is abiogenesis (the origin of the first life) due purely to chance. Atoms and molecules arrange themselves not purely randomly, but according to their chemical properties. In the case of carbon atoms especially, this means complex molecules are sure to form spontaneously, and these complex molecules can influence each other to create even more complex molecules. Once a molecule forms that is approximately self-replicating, natural selection will guide the formation of ever more efficient replicators. The first self-replicating object didn't need to be as complex as a modern cell or even a strand of DNA. Some self-replicating molecules are not really all that complex (as organic molecules go).

Some people still argue that it is wildly improbable for a given self-replicating molecule to form at a given point (although they usually don't state the "givens," but leave them implicit in their calculations). This is true, but there were oceans of molecules working on the problem, and no one knows how many possible self-replicating molecules could have served as the first one. A calculation of the odds of abiogenesis is worthless unless it recognizes the immense range of starting materials that the first replicator might have formed from, the probably innumerable different forms that the first replicator might have taken, and the fact that much of the construction of the replicating molecule would have been non-random to start with.

(One should also note that the theory of evolution doesn't depend on how the first life began. The truth or falsity of any theory of abiogenesis wouldn't affect evolution in the least.)

"Evolution is only a theory; it hasn't been proved."

First, we should clarify what "evolution" means. Like so many other words, it has more than one meaning. Its strict biological definition is "a change in allele frequencies over time." By that definition, evolution is an indisputable fact. Most people seem to associate the word "evolution" mainly with common descent, the theory that all life arose from one common ancestor. Many people believe that there is enough evidence to call this a fact, too. However, common descent is still not the theory of evolution, but just a fraction of it (and a part of several quite different theories as well). The theory of evolution not only says that life evolved, it also includes mechanisms, like mutations, natural selection, and genetic drift, which go a long way towards explaining how life evolved.

Calling the theory of evolution "only a theory" is, strictly speaking, true, but the idea it tries to convey is completely wrong. The argument rests on a confusion between what "theory" means in informal usage and in a scientific context. A theory, in the scientific sense, is "a coherent group of general propositions used as principles of explanation for a class of phenomena" [Random House American College Dictionary]. The term does not imply tentativeness or lack of certainty. Generally speaking, scientific theories differ from scientific laws only in that laws can be expressed more tersely. Being a theory implies self-consistency, agreement with observations, and usefulness. (Creationism fails to be a theory mainly because of the last point; it makes few or no specific claims about what we would expect to find, so it can't be used for anything. When it does make falsifiable predictions, they prove to be false.)

Lack of proof isn't a weakness, either. On the contrary, claiming infallibility for one's conclusions is a sign of hubris. Nothing in the real world has ever been rigorously proved, or ever will be. Proof, in the mathematical sense, is possible only if you have the luxury of defining the universe you're operating in. In the real world, we must deal with levels of certainty based on observed evidence. The more and better evidence we have for something, the more certainty we assign to it; when there is enough evidence, we label the something a fact, even though it still isn't 100% certain.

What evolution has is what any good scientific claim has—evidence, and lots of it. Evolution is supported by a wide range of observations throughout the fields of genetics, anatomy, ecology, animal behavior, paleontology, and others. If you wish to challenge the theory of evolution, you must address that evidence. You must show that the evidence is either wrong or irrelevant or that it fits another theory better. Of course, to do this, you must know both the theory and the evidence.

Conclusion

These are not the only misconceptions about evolution by any means. Other common misunderstandings include how geological dating techniques work, implications to morality and religion, the meaning of "uniformitarianism," and many more. To address all these objections here would be impossible.

But consider: About a hundred years ago, scientists, who were then mostly creationists, looked at the world to figure out how God did things. These creationists came to the conclusions of an old earth and species originating by evolution. Since then, thousands of scientists have been studying evolution with increasingly more sophisticated tools. Many of these scientists have excellent understandings of the laws of thermodynamics, how fossil finds are interpreted, etc., and finding a better alternative to evolution would win them fame and fortune. Sometimes their work has changed our understanding of significant details of how evolution operates, but the theory of evolution still has essentially unanimous agreement from the people who work on it.

For what evolution means, how it works, and the evidence for it:

Colby, Chris. *faq-intro-to-biology: Introduction to Evolutionary Biology*
Mayr, Ernst. 1991. *One Long Argument*
Darwin, Charles. 1859. *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*
For issues and evidence of speciation:
Boxhorn, Joseph. *faq-speciation: Observed Instances of Speciation*
Weiner, Jonathan. 1994. *The Beak of the Finch: A Story of Evolution in Our Time*
For explanations of how randomness can lead to design:
Dawkins, Richard. 1986. *The Blind Watchmaker*
Bonner, John T. 1988. *The Evolution of Complexity by Means of Natural Selection*
Kauffman, Stuart A. 1993. *The Origins of Order: Self-Organization and Selection in Evolution* [very technical]
For a readable introduction to the 2nd law of thermodynamics:
Atkins, Peter W. 1984. *The Second Law*
For transitional fossils and the fossil record:
Colbert, Edwin H. 1991. *Evolution of the Vertebrates*, 4th ed.
Hunt, Kathleen. *faq-transitional: Transitional Fossils*
For responses to many Creationist claims:
Strahler, Arthur. 1987. *Science and Earth History*
Isaak, Mark (ed.) *An Index to Creationist Claims*

<http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/faq-misconceptions.html>

POSTED BY: MR. MARK | JUNE 26, 2007 5:12 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Okay, so 4 posts. The site was moving so slowly, I would cancel the posting only to now see that it was posted anyway. Sorry all. I don't mean to spam.

POSTED BY: DAVID K | JUNE 26, 2007 5:00 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Druvas,

In physics, the only "why" answers are "how" answers. If you don't know how, you don't know why.

The advocates for the "anthropic universe", which you promote, are logically confused. They say that because the physical constants of the universe are such that human life appeared, there must have been a divine intention to tune the constants so that human life resulted.

WRONG! Human life did appear because the constants are the way they are. But that does not allow us to infer the existence of an intending creator.

If the constants had been different, the universe would have been different, and might even have produced different forms of life or intelligence.

If, as seems likely, there are an infinitude of universes, one of that number would necessarily have been our universe with its constants and life forms.

So if you really want to find evidence for a creator, you'll have to go back to the drawing board.

For millenia, Buddhists (and me) have been perfectly content with the idea of an infinite number of infinitely existing uncreated universes.

POSTED BY: NORRIE HOYT | JUNE 26, 2007 4:56 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

All, I apologize for the double post, I didn't realize a delay existed. Now I know and can adjust accordingly (scientific thought at work, whattayaknow!)

POSTED BY: DAVID K | JUNE 26, 2007 4:49 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Dav,

What you have to say about science, evolution, and God reads so much a stereotype that I have a hard time believing that someone actually exists with as little intellectual curiosity about the world as your posts imply.

You are so wrong about what the term "theory" connotes as to be laughable. "Theory" does not mean "unproven law." The way science actually uses the term is to represent and explain a large body of related evidence/facts/observed phenomena. A theory is so well-established that it takes a real wallop to make it crumble. Individuals will argue the DETAILS of a theory (as they should), but no sane, rational person would or could, in good faith, dismiss the theory outright. The way you use the word "theory" equates it's meaning with that of a "hypothesis," "guess," or "hunch." This word has been misused and wrongly defined in this way for years by creationists with their theocratic agenda.

Have you ever read/heard/seen anything regarding evolution that did not get funnelled through a Christian-biased source? Have you read "Origin of Species?" Have you bothered to immerse yourself in today's research regarding evolutionary theory before trying to dispute it? I suspect the answer is no.

What is this foolishness about science "discrediting" itself? Science is, by definition a SELF-CORRECTING mechanism. As time has passed, science has taken pains to organize, categorize and explain the OBSERVABLE phenomena in the universe. Every now and then, something comes along that turns science on its head and forces it to correct itself. What ends up is a science that is stronger and more fortified by its own self-examination. This means that, as time goes by, there will be less and less to "discredit" science (as you put it).

Unlike religious BELIEF SYSTEMS, science attempts to explain what is actually observed as it makes more and more and more and more sense of what goes on around us. You and too many other Christians start with a book, and attempt to fit the workings of the world into it. Because it's comforting, no? Between science and Christianity, which of the two enterprises sounds more like folly?

You say that what you want is PROOF in what science tells you before you believe in it, but apparently the mountains of evidence for the evolutionary process just won't cut it, will it. The observed phenomena that points to a big bang doesn't persuade you either, right? The test upon test upon test that end up upholding science's understanding of the universe doesn't seem to be enough, I suspect.

You want PROOF, so where's the PROOF that God exists, that Jesus was divine, that Christianity is the one true religion? Where is the proof? So what if Jesus really existed. What makes him a messiah? The fact that a collection of books, put together by a HUMAN committee, long after Jesus died and was "mythologized", says so? Is that your proof? You say yourself that you choose to BELIEVE that

Goddidit because you don't trust science being 99.99% certain about what it speaks on, that's not enough for you. The only reason science never says it's 100% certain on anything is because it isn't as self-righteously arrogant as religions are to claim to know all the answers. What you choose to believe rests on FAR less "proof" than what any scientist has to say about the world around us, yet you choose to have an opinion that Goddidit. You base this on scant evidence of 2000 year-old writings (by HUMANS, fallible as ever), funneled through a religious institution that has it's own agenda.

Don't even get me started on your false dichotomy. "Since science can't explain it, Goddidit." That's essentially what you say. Read that sentence again, doesn't it sound foolish? Doesn't it sound like the mind of someone uninterested in getting to the real answer?

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/False_dichotomy

POSTED BY: DAVID K | JUNE 26, 2007 4:46 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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The time for old superstitions is passing. I suppose there are those who will fight this change to the end.

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[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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POSTED BY: DAVID K | JUNE 26, 2007 4:34 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

DAV, Mark Stenroos;

First, I want to add the caveat that I do believe that Jesus is the son of God and walked the Earth to take away Man's sin.

Second, I again state that I do not see any contradictions between Evolution and Creationism. The Bible does not go into explicit detail beyond the initial creation of the world and the initial beings put on it. I happen to not be a literalist when it comes to the Old Testament.

As for my astrophysicist comments, according to most of them, the universe has constructed itself in just the right way to allow for life to exist. The probability for an inconceivable amount of elements, molecules, and particles to arrange themselves in just the right way for us to be here having this conversation is far more inconceivable than the said quantity of elements, which thus leads one to conclude (and not haphazardly) that an intelligent creator is behind it all. One can argue on the points if that is a Christian God or something else, I just happen to believe that it is.

One of the reasons for "how" put forth by the scientific community is the uncaused-first cause theory. In other words, the universe just "is". I discount this notion as it is more of a cop-out than "God". At least saying "God" did it explains how (he waved is magic wand, or whatever). Another "how" is that there are an infinite number of universes and we just happen to live in the one that is configured the way we need it to survive. Again, a cop-out. This does not, in fact explain jack, it actually complicates the question (well, where did all those universes come from?)

In light of the fact that no theory that has yet been put forth by the scientific community is the least bit credible as to how and why the universe is here, I am left to conclude that, due to the enormity of the task of creating a universe, filling it with enough stuff to create trillions and trillions of stars (and several factors more in planets, as we are discovering), and causing all of that to explode outward in all directions from a point no larger than the grain of sand, that God MUST have done it. In saying that, I can even fathom and believe in the Big Bang, since we see observable evidence of such in the "red-shift" phenomenon. But the Big Bang theory is not the answer to the question of how or why.

POSTED BY: DRUVAS | JUNE 26, 2007 4:10 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

I would like to challenge all those who would like a one on one debate. Not with me, I did find a radio web site that on Fridays at 3 PM EDT has a free for all call in. Challenge this guy Bob at the eye witness account or physics and thermodynamics. Even your simple science statments if you'd like. Now, will you? Probably not, considering voices are different than typing. However, I will leave you with the web site and will be listening on Friday afternoon for you.
WMUZ.COM - Bring your A game if you have one.

This considering none of "us" are going one on one. Please remit any secular shows containing the same, and I'll respond by doing the same.

POSTED BY: DAV | JUNE 26, 2007 3:30 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

This post is directed at Mark.

First, science has a use in the every day to day living situation, if you want to cite it as such. There are varying degrees of science though. Physics is a science like the computer field, however they are distant cousins. Thermodynamics is closer to physics, considering it's a science dependent upon physics, still though, a long way from conducting electricity in its use today. However, aerodynamics is getting closer to the science of physics, still an infant in respect to the science that it would take to generate the big bang. Not like flying machines. Please note the above post for the abiogenesis science theory. Remember, theory is unproven law. I only ask that something is proved before I believe beyond a reasonable doubt. Otherwise, I will believe the most reasonable one. With the "all of a sudden" here it is, life forming on earth, God explains that. Where are the fossils beneath the fossils that we (humans) have already found. Yet, nothing below

them? Too long to go into mutation and it's bunk theory as well. I will say this, a tadpole loses its tail. Cells die in order for this to happen. This process does not need to happen for the tadpole to survive. How is this mutation as explained by neo-evolutionists?

POSTED BY: DAV | JUNE 26, 2007 3:14 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

First, I stated right now, until science can prove not theorize its every evolving stance on creation, God had to (in my opinion) create it. The laws (that's proven science) of physics were broken to make the universe. Make something out of nothing and I'll go along with that. Until then, no sorry abiogenesis is next to impossible now. Sort of like proving that God does really exist. Now, Josephus stated there must be something to Jesus as in a Messiah. He was writing for pagans in a paganistic style. Jew or not. He was there nonetheless to write for the history of the Roman Empire.

Either way, I'd like to address the creation.

Too all those simplistic science minded, I am not referring to technology.

If you have a rock, a pile of dirt and water (which is not alive contrary to belief) what will you have in say 3 billion years? Still the same thing. Water, dirt and rock. So in theory, there must be a "being" to break the laws that science holds so high. Then there is the problem of thermodynamics and its properties. Still haven't heard any law breaking the first two laws for that. I respect that you agree on the big bang or your greatest grandparents were monkeys or cells in the water. As for me, I like to think and believe there is a creator. Thinking that abiogenesis is possible and probable is more outrageous than thinking that God is real.

As for the eye witnesses, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are four of the thousands listed either in the bible or in other texts (secular of course).

POSTED BY: DAV | JUNE 26, 2007 3:03 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

MARK STENROOS

I compliment you on your excellent post, which I totally agree with, and I hope more people read it.

Pity about your first sentence though.

You probably lost DEV by putting her down the way you did. Without that first insulting comment, DEV might have read through the rest of your remarks and learned something.

POSTED BY: YO-YO | JUNE 26, 2007 1:51 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

There were "eyewitnesses" to the person on whom the fictional hero of the Gospels, Jesus is based. They did a fair job of recording it too. Unfortunately there are few who can read it and many who seem to be unable to "read" a picture. Me thinks they have a "vested interest" in not seeing, a lot of money involved, people's careers, respectability and more.

Is the morality issue really an issue in Iraq or just more a case of the sited refusing to look? I take it that some faith "faith is evidence".

What did Josephus use for his information?

POSTED BY: BGONE | JUNE 26, 2007 1:41 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Dear Dav -

Oops. I owe you an apology. It was Druvas who brought up the astrophysicists, not you. Mea culpa.

Druvas - my comments are redirected toward you.

Dav - you did write, "That too will evolve as science discredits itself again in the future."

Hmm. That's a strange statement coming from a person who absolutely DEPENDS on science to get through his day, from the gasoline he puts in his car to the computer he uses to post at On Faith.

Or, maybe your faith in science is such that you wake up every day fully expecting your computer to not work because the science behind your computer has once more "discredited itself," and the science that worked yesterday has suddenly ceased to work today. Or, maybe your view of computer science is that every increase in computer processing speed is a case of science "discrediting itself," rather than building on existing facts and theories.

BTW - watch out for airplanes falling from the sky. The science behind manned flight may be discredited any day now.

POSTED BY: MARK STENROOS | JUNE 26, 2007 1:38 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Dear Dav -

It's hard to communicate with you because you don't seem to comprehend simple ideas.

I said that Josephus was not a contemporary of Jesus. I say that because Josephus was born in 37CE. Most scholars put the death of Jesus at somewhere between 30-36CE. Ergo, Jesus died BEFORE Josephus was born. Josephus' FIRST writings (The Jewish War)

appear in 75 CE, or roughly 40 years AFTER the death of Jesus. By definition, Josephus wasn't a contemporary of Jesus, and he certainly wasn't an eyewitness to anything about Jesus.

You point out that Josephus LIVED in the first century. So what? That didn't make him a contemporary of Jesus, anymore than a person born today would be considered a contemporary of JFK. A person born in 99CE also "lived in the first century." Are you now going to suggest that such a person was an "eyewitness" to the life of Jesus?

You also have the annoying habit of screaming "I'm providing evidence and none of you atheists can refute it," when there are many posts in this thread doing just that, even providing links to debunk your myths.

You're not going to last long in this forum if you continue to offer "challenges" to people and then refuse to read their responses or even to acknowledge that they have responded.

You seem intent on positing arguments from ignorance. Making statements like, "Ask any astro-physicist and he/she will tell you that they have absolutely no credible explanation for why the universe exists, short of a divine being, which most reject because it is too simple of an explanation," is simplistic in it illogic as, 1) any astrophysicist will have at least a couple of credible explanations for HOW the universe exists. The question of WHY has nothing to do with natural processes of HOW. This is what we called a loaded question, and you've loaded it poorly. 2) Just because there's no concrete explanation (yet) for the beginning of the universe doesn't make "god" the only possible answer available, and 3) the existence of god to explain the beginnings of the universe is a SIMPLISTIC explanation, but it is far from a SIMPLE explanation. Indeed, positing the existence of a supernatural being as the creator of the universe is - on its face - a MUCH more complex explanation than is the Big Bang, because the Big Bang does not require an explanation that involves the supernatural whereas the hypothesis of a "created" universe goes beyond the realm of the natural for its basis and its explanation.

As far as "eyewitness" accounts of Jesus, there are none, and you should know that. A well-versed Xian can make his arguments for his faith without resorting to believing in the lie of eyewitnesses. By insisting that there were eyewitnesses and that they wrote about Jesus, you weaken your argument.

Try again.

POSTED BY: MARK STENROOS | JUNE 26, 2007 1:26 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

I inadvertently posted on Rev Anderson's thread and ask for your version of who or what perhaps Satan is. Could you favor us please? Where does Satan come from?

Thank you

POSTED BY: BGONE | JUNE 26, 2007 12:38 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Why I am citing things such as evolution and creationism? Why am I citing eye witness accounts to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ?

Simple. Those who say God is not real have no basis of fact other than their beliefs and what science tells them. So, if someone here states that God (the Christian-Judeo) is a myth, I state the facts that show that He is real by fact and not just faith. Whereas anyone on here can respond in any fashion. Usually, I see a lot of can't be real because this fictional character isn't. (see above responses) Or just a lack of wanting to believe also.

As for Darwin, if he were a minister, he has not fulfilled that position and no longer was a minister to profess such nonsense. As for the statement that evolution takes place now, maybe it does. However, that is not how creation came into being. Not at least the way science describes it now. That too will evolve as science discredits itself again in the future.

POSTED BY: DAV | JUNE 26, 2007 11:04 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

I am not sure why you people are arguing back and forth regarding evolution and creationism. I don't see how they are mutually exclusive. Ask any astro-physicist and he/she will tell you that they have absolutely no credible explanation for why the universe exists, short of a divine being, which most reject because it is too simple of an explanation (which of course violates Occams' Razor - "All things being equal, the simplest solution tends to be the best one."). With that being said, Christianity does not preclude the evolutionary process that is going on in front of us every day. With a little light studying, we can see that species are changing constantly, for example, sharks that have never previously had virgin births are suddenly doing so. There are plenty of other examples to go by, but I think you get the point. Not that I am a Catholic, but Pope John Paul even stated the official position of the Catholic church to be in agreement with this. Darwin himself was a theologian by university training (and a minister as well, I think???)

POSTED BY: DRUVAS | JUNE 26, 2007 10:06 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Cayambe, Philo, CA-USA,

I appreciate your thoughtful comment and agree with it. Your second paragraph captures perfectly the reasons for my annoyance on first reading Dr. Elliott's essay. I, too, find his writing opaque, though maybe it's my fault that I don't "get it".

Best wishes.

P.S.: I'm a HE.

POSTED BY: NORRIE HOYT | JUNE 26, 2007 10:00 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Dear Dr. Elliott,

Thank you for your response to my post.

When I wrote it I felt badly that I had undertaken to comment on your life and your pastorate, of which I knew nothing.

I stepped over my self-imposed line of not commenting on others' lives (as opposed to what they've written), and I'm sorry for that.

You may legitimately respond: "You felt badly but not badly enough to delete your comment". That's certainly true.

The reason I went ahead with the post, despite my qualms, was that your essay was somehow maddening to me. I can't articulate why that was so, but it was. I've now reread your essay and I'm still baffled. I think I still haven't gotten to your point - it was the seeming (to me) pointlessness of what you wrote that I found irritating.

Of course we often can't evaluate an action until long after it's happened. But like someone whose house is burning, we have to call the fire department right now, rather than waiting for the definitive analysis two years later in "The Journal of Firefighting" to find out what happened to our dwelling.

Best wishes.

POSTED BY: NORRIE HOYT | JUNE 26, 2007 9:37 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Of course Christians are counter-cultural. Christians work against the world system which is run primarily by atheists, if it were not, we wouldn't be taught such things as evolution as fact. In which case, evolution can't happen the way the present it. Now, that is the truth, distasteful as it may be. If Christians were part of the world system, they would not be censured for their beliefs. When they present something from a sect other than Christ believing, they are hailed as progressive. However, when they hold to their principles, they are called holy rollers (like that's a bad thing) or told to go away. More proof that if there is a God and a devil, they really exist.

POSTED BY: DAV | JUNE 26, 2007 9:11 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

The perspective of Christians has always been contrarian, counter-cultural...and continues to be. Truth is often distasteful. The eye-opener for me were the responses. Our culture is more deeply God-less than I thought. Thanks for the truth-telling. It's essential, regardless of the response!

POSTED BY: DOROTHEA E. SCHWEITZER | JUNE 26, 2007 9:01 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Ya Ya, D A V.

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | JUNE 26, 2007 7:39 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

To all who think that the bible is full of lies and unfulfilled prophecy, please tell me one that hasn't happened in the time that has been given yet. There are more to come also. It hasn't all been fulfilled. Let's go beyond the given.

Read Gen. 3:15, then read I Samuel 17:54 and then John 19:17.

First, God said to the serpent (Satan) I will put enmity between your seed and the woman's. Then David took the head of Goliath to Jerusalem. Now, why did David do this? The Jebusites were in control of Jerusalem then? Back to Gen 3:15 you (Satan, the world system) will bruise his heel and he will bruise your head. Goliath was the seed of sons of God mixing with daughters of men. HMMM? Interesting. Now, to John, why was the hill called Golgatha? Goliath of Gath maybe? Now, the two closest points were Jesus' heels and Goliath's skull (his head). Prophecy fulfilled!

As for Exodus being racist, typical response from non-believers. Why should it be racist? Where is the fact that would state something like that? Personal belief? If I vote conservative, am I racist? No, it just means I am conservative.

I also want to respond to the uneducated remark about Jocephus, he lived in the first century. Get your facts straight before writing something, Mr. Mark.

POSTED BY: DAV | JUNE 26, 2007 7:06 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

By Ahmed: from PostGlobol at Newsweek.

Almost all acts of Muslim mob violence have their instigation in sermons by iamams during the Friday prayers in the mosques or in the fatwas such as the one issued by Khomeini.

It is time that Muslim and non-Muslim governments bring these imams to trial and, if convicted, have them hanged or shot.

A few executions of the imams will put a permamnent stop to the root cause of Muslim violence.

If the imams are residing in Muslim countries and if the Muslim governments do not act against these imams, then the imams should be extradited to western countries and then tried.

June 26, 2007 6:25 AM

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | JUNE 26, 2007 7:00 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Well, sir, as far as I can tell, and as far as I'm concerned, you're a hapless shill, a twit, a tool, a parrot, a sock-puppet for faith-based foreign policy. Bush threw out a bunch of money to the churches, and most likely whatever institution you call 'home' sopped up some of that. So, you're now part of, more or less, a state-sponsored religious institution. That's right. You're partially on government welfare. How's that feel, to know that your institution is now financially reliant on an entity that could 'cut your funding' if you say something they don't like? So, instead of denouncing war like a true christian would, you're trying to whittle away at the people that stand in judgement against the war, on grounds of similar principles to those you might have once adhered to. Before you sold them. Ah, the sweet sweet smell of corruption...and religious institutions and their spokesmen who've jumped aboard the federal gravy train...

Let's review:

Thou shalt not kill.
Thou shalt not steal.
Thou shalt not bear false witness.

Any of this sound even vaguely familiar? These and other basic 'fundamental' principles and christian concepts can be found in a book called the Holy Bible, possibly the most widely referenced book in the entire world, certainly the longest in-print, and widely available. Pick up a copy today! LOLOL

POSTED BY: BERT | JUNE 26, 2007 6:43 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

ARBY writes:

Dav, the Bible is full of failed prophecies and proven falsehoods, from historical to scientific. It isn't "completely correct" just because you assert it is."

How right you are, Arby.

Here's a list of the false and non-prophecies of the NT:

<http://skepticsannotatedbible.com/proph/nt.html>

POSTED BY: MARK STENROOS | JUNE 26, 2007 2:32 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Wow, all these abstractions.

Is it moral to invade a country, kill hundreds of thousands of it's inhabitants, seize it's assets, destroy it's infrastructure, and set up a foreign controlled government because it's leader is a bad guy who "tried to kill my daddy"?

No.

POSTED BY: [BARUCH](#) | JUNE 26, 2007 2:32 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Dav writes:

"I was talking about the Egyptian slavery of the Jews."

Another racist myth of the Bible. There is absolutely NO evidence - archaeological or otherwise - that the Egyptians ever held the Jews as slaves.

Egypt was THE world power at the time of the OT. The entire Exodus story is a fabrication, a fabrication intended to elevate the Jews as the tiny, god-beloved people who conquered the mighty Egypt. It's also naked racism - the Egyptians never oppressed the Jews the way the Bible says they did. Total hokum.

Also a racist myth - the idea that the pyramids were built with slave labor, Jewish or otherwise. Watch any program on Egypt on either the History or Discovery channels and you'll learn that one, at least if it's not one of those error-ridden "Mysteries of the Bible" charades they run every other hour.

C'mon, Dav. There's reputable research out there! First step - discard the Bible as any kind of historic source. Then, go and see what science has revealed of those days. It's quite fascinating.

POSTED BY: MARK STENROOS | JUNE 26, 2007 2:23 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Rev. Elliot,

I agree with you. Norrie Hoyt supplied the worthy comment of the collection....right, it was a singular event.

You wrote, in response to Norrie:

Now, what "help to...pondering the question posed" do you think I intended to give you? If your answer is "None"--that is, I didn't intend to be of any help--please reconsider by asking yourself why I didn't tell you how or what to think about either the moral or the strategic question.

I think that he/she might wish that you would state your intentions instead of leaving it to he/she to read your mind. I must admit that I find your mind to opaque to be penetrated by me. If we take the question you pose to Norrie at the end of the paragraph above, once again you ask he/she to divine the mysterious workings of your mind. Why? Why don't you just answer the hypothetical question you posed? Is there some better authority on the matter?

The important questions are not whether getting in or getting out are "good" ideas. Good and bad in the usual senses of the terms depend upon future consequences as you have more elegantly pointed out. Still, ignorant or not, the citizenry must come to grips with such decisions as they present themselves so the "persons democratically empowered to make them" can know how to decide. Absent morality, absent cynicism, how would you have the citizenry decide such issues?

POSTED BY: CAYAMBE, PHILO, CA-USA | JUNE 26, 2007 1:28 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Bob,

I'm glad you have hope in a God of love, but if you're talking about the same God who was personified in the person of Jesus, than your hope should lead you to follow his teachings and to love your brothers, sisters, and enemies as he did. If you yourself truly had hope in God than you wouldn't give up on others, on the contrary, you would strive to make the Kingdom that Jesus spoke of, both a reality in your heart and a reality in the world around you. It's irrelevant whether or not violence will be eradicated. It is still a goal to strive after. If you have no hope in others, than you have no love for others, which is also contrary to Christ, who saw the light in prostitutes and the least of these. If you truly had hope in a God of love, than you would begin to love all of humanity that is made in his image.

But I agree we need to get over ourselves. All of us. And begin to care for others, not just use God as a trump card for our apathy or lack of empathy for I dunno, say the 600,000 or so who have died based on a decision which Mr. Elliott can not make a moral judgment about.

POSTED BY: DAVID | JUNE 26, 2007 12:22 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

What she ate is questionable. God threw her out of paradise anyhow so it must have given her a headache.

That's a true story. There were many reliable eyewitnesses, same ones that were there when God said, "let there be light."

Would religious leaders lie to you?

POSTED BY: BGGONE | JUNE 26, 2007 12:04 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

I would rather choose hope in the God of Love than the reality of utter human failure -- ruining the planet and life on it. There is nothing in our history to indicate that we will ever eradicate violence, greed, hatred, and selfishness. We're not that good. Get over yourselves.

POSTED BY: BOB | JUNE 25, 2007 11:43 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Someone once asked Zhou En-lai what the most important result of the French Revolution was. He replied - it was too soon to say for sure....

POSTED BY: PAUL | JUNE 25, 2007 11:06 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Dav, the Bible is full of failed prophecies and proven falsehoods, from historical to scientific. It isn't "completely correct" just because you assert it is.

POSTED BY: ARBY | JUNE 25, 2007 11:05 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

It sounds like Rev. Elliott has converted from Christianity to something like Buddhism, in which the power of individuals to better their own lives is surrendered to a meaningless quest for inner knowledge. Jesus, and his successor St. Paul, had no qualms about both recognizing evil and trying to do something about it. John Wesley and others like him then brought Christianity into the industrialized world, building on the foundations laid by Luther. If people like Elliott are unable to grapple with our problems today, I feel sorry for them, but please don't purport that their opinions represent the opinions of either traditional or evangelical Christians.

POSTED BY: GEORGE ROBERTSON | JUNE 25, 2007 10:44 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Good comment, Norrie Hoyt. While you didn't quite make it to my point, you came close--though my "attitude toward life" is far from the withdrawnness you assume. ("A passive bystander" is a laughably false description of my life-story!)

If you have read all the posts down to yours, you know that most of them qualify for one or the other of the folly-categories my essay repudiated, namely, cynicism and moralism.

Now, what "help to...pondering the question posed" do you think I intended to give you? If your answer is "None"--that is, I didn't intend to be of any help--please reconsider by asking yourself why I didn't tell you how or what to think about either the moral or the strategic question.

POSTED BY: WILLIS ELLIOTT | JUNE 25, 2007 10:12 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Believers in a specific religion are not MORAL in any sense of the word. They are simply following orders, given in the Bible, the Koran, or other authoritative scriptures. If they do not kill, it is not a MORAL decision, but simply following the order "thou shalt not kill". An atheist not killing (when the conditions permit escaping the law) makes a MORAL decision that it is MORALLY wrong to do so.

POSTED BY: JOSEPH | JUNE 25, 2007 10:02 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

I believe that's "fear him WHO can destroy..."

Why does Jesus always refer to BODY going to hell and never spirit? Souls are records of one's sins you know. Dr Rev Hagee will tell you that "if you die with a mortal sin on your soul you're going straight to hell." Jesus said Satan, the one who records sins on your soul is going to throw your soul straight in behind ya. You better watch out. You better not pout or Satan will get ya. Satan is God's right hand man that sorts out the sinners and destroys them both BODY and soul in fiery hell.

The Bible needs a lot of editing to conform to dogma.

POSTED BY: BGONE | JUNE 25, 2007 9:28 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Anonymous, you need to read the Dead Sea scrolls. There's a tale in them about a person who attempted to convince the Romans the Jew God was so powerful they couldn't possibly resist. He would do that with a phony crucifixion arranged by the high Rabbi. The two thieves were a part of the ruse and were selected for their strength.

The plan: They were not nailed to the cross, only tied. The Jesus figure would be administered knock-out drops while hanging on the cross to make him appear dead. As a matter of routine the crucified were taken down off their crosses at sunset and held in a hole-in-the-wall cave that was sealed with a large stone. The limp body of Jesus along with the two big guys would normally be put there over night or even over passover. While in the holding cell Jesus would recover and the two big guys push the stone away so they could escape, (leads to the notion that the body of Jesus was stolen) implying a supernatural, Jesus had risen from the dead scenario intended to sacre the Romans.

The plan failed: Jesus was given the KO drops in vinegar on a sponge and appeared to be dead. So far so good except a soldier made sure he was dead by lancing him. They looked at the two big guys and said they would escape so they broke both their legs.

The story has two endings. The one above and the one in the Gospels. The writings are shown to be 100BC[E] vintage. Which one do you suppose is correct if either?

Amenophis IV said a lot of things including calling upon her father in heaven, the sun to save her. Didn't work of course. She also threatened the high priest claiming that she would rise from the dead, (at an inopportune time for him).

The original Nicean creed said that Jesus "descended into hell." The pole through the gut was a condemnation to hell, Egyptian style. That's hell of the first type the condition of the dead body. The Egyptians presumed the pole would reappear in the next world, (on the nebol bridge) along with her regenerated body where the condemned would live another miserable 3 hours and on to the next world after that odd infinitum.

Jesus said "fear him that can destroy both BODY and soul in hell." Jesus wasn't kidding.

POSTED BY: BGONE | JUNE 25, 2007 9:20 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

SATAN LOVES HILLARY, OBAMA, AND EDWARDS!

POSTED BY: TOMSAIL | JUNE 25, 2007 9:17 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

SATAN LOVES HILLARY, OBAMA, AND EDWARDS!

POSTED BY: TOMSAIL | JUNE 25, 2007 9:17 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

The last anonymous post was mine.

POSTED BY: NORRIE HOYT | JUNE 25, 2007 9:00 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Rev. Mr. Elliott,

As a self-professed Person-Who-Knows-Nothing, how did you undertake to advise and help your parishioners over all those decades?

It seems to me that you have been only a passive bystander for your flock over all that time.

Your essay here is certainly of no help to us pondering the question posed.

Isn't there a serious moral question here about your attitude toward life and your own life?

Or do you find merit in modeling yourself after the lillies of the field who toil not, and do not spin, or think you are serving by only standing and waiting?

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | JUNE 25, 2007 8:55 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

I would love to hear the Rev. Elliott's opinion on the civil war and on African Americans.

I bet in his ignorant mind black people must still be slaves and the civil war was a morally upright war when viewed from the southern perspective!

Sadly the North won!

How reprehensible can that be!

Maybe we can get his opinion on Hispanics and the immigration problem with so many of them illegals living in paradise.

POSTED BY: IMRAN | JUNE 25, 2007 8:40 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Well, some interesting, however, simple responses since I last checked.

First, when humpty dumpty makes creation, I will listen to that bible of egg men creating creation. Since, there is no record of such, that is a simple debate from a simple mind. As for any example given with no record of supernatural things from a fiction story.

Now, the bible which the human race, yes the human race has as reference. Even if you chose not to reference it, it is there for you to do so. I won't give Darwin's book the time of day, it's useless and can't be true, due to the simple fact of mutation can't happen the way neo-evolutionists say. However, it's there for me to reference if I so chose. At least come up with something real.

As for hoax-busters, considering the human mind can't comprehend God, how can some web site have the answers? They can't. They show what they want. Since that's the case, explain how the bible is almost completely correct with the writings it has so far to date? Luck, happenstance or just coincidence? Whatever hoax-busters has to say, can't explain that. I can prove to whomever would understand that evolution is impossible the way that science potrays it today. So hoax-busters needs dummies to look at their web site so they can see ads in it and make a few dollars off peoples shallow IQ. If you look at the evidence of God, (The Judeo God) it stands the test of reason and logic. It's the only one (God) that does.

POSTED BY: DAV | JUNE 25, 2007 8:38 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Bgone, didnt the Pharisees press Pilate to make quick work of Christs crucifixion on account of the Passover celebration commencing that same evening?

Not every condemned received the 40-1 lashes Jesus took, wich could have attributed to the short execution. Yes many Romans were passionate about showing others the horrors of their crucifixions.

For Christianity to have survived, not only survive but flourish over thousands of years ,weathering each assault upon it speaks to the Hoax theory.

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | JUNE 25, 2007 8:36 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

The Rev. Elliott says you eat junk food, junk ideas come out.

I guess all the intelligent people on this earth eat pate de foie gras, caviar, filet mignon, and drink chardonnay. Truffles anyone?

Rev. Elliott calls himself ignorant.

How apt a self description for an _d_ot!

How sad such stupid writing can make it online!

POSTED BY: IMRAN | JUNE 25, 2007 8:35 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

How is it possible that the Rev. Elliott can endure more than five years of Bush's mendacity, deception, cant, pettifoggery and demagoguery about Iraq, see the ruin, agony, blood, hate and devastation Bush has unleashed, and yet still claim to be "ignorant" about what's going on. Unbelievable. The Rev. Elliott says he puts aside "cynicism and morality" in judging Bush's actions. Maybe he should try legality. Bush invaded Iraq in clear violation of the law, the UN Charter and Article 51. His was and is the kind of inter-state aggression the Charter had been crafted to prevent. His "preventive war" was as transparently illegal as Hitler's invasion of Poland or Saddam's of Kuwait. How can a man of the cloth reject the centuries-old doctrine of "just war" which Bush also violated. Unbelievable that the Post would put its name on such blatant sophistry. What kind of Christian can't recognize the propensity to evil that Bush and Cheney manifest? Let our man of the cloth tell us whom, indeed, would Jesus bomb and kill and lie like a hypocrite about?

POSTED BY: CALIFORNIA CONDOR | JUNE 25, 2007 8:23 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Anonymous, you're getting ahead of me.

Crucifixion ancient Egyptian style was the shoving of a pole through the gut of the crucified. (The upright body plus the pole forms a cross.) It takes about 3 hours to die from that. Hint, hint, hint, 3 hours. Roman style crucifixion was being nailed to the cross. The Romans never let anyone off with only three hours of pain and suffering. Took a week or two to die on their cross.

Amenophis IV, the real historical figure on whom the Gospels are based was crucified Egyptian style, oh, about 3,300 years ago or 1,300 BC[E]. "She" claimed to be the *son of God* Pharaoh. Pharaoh, like all ancient and even modern, (Hirohito) emperors, dictators, kings, what have you WAS the son of God, the previous Pharaoh.

<http://www.hoax-buster.org> page 2 has her life story in synopsis form. It proves beyond a reasonable shadow of a doubt the Bible is a hoax.

POSTED BY: BGONE | JUNE 25, 2007 7:49 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Anonymous, it's "thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt be killed." A person or collection of persons, nation has the natural right of self defence,, even if they are wrong. So the rules of war are simple. Kill them here on earth and kill them again later in the next life, presuming killing them did not teach them the proverbial "lesson not soon forgotten."

The mighty king went to Delphi and inquired of the Oracle, "what will happen if I attack?" The Oracle replied, "A great nation will be defeated." His intended victim nation was a great one. So he attacked and was himself defeated instead. Prophecy requires analysis before being followed is the moral of that historically correct story.

An often violated commandment is number 11, "Thou shalt not believe thy own lies."

POSTED BY: BGONE | JUNE 25, 2007 7:36 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

To ThiSiSTheH8Generation: your post really sums up the crux of the matter. Much of the fervency of the religious is based on the deep-seated desire to have those who believe differently from you be divinely punished. "May God smite my enemies" is as old as religion itself and unfortunately persists today.

POSTED BY: ROBERT | JUNE 25, 2007 7:14 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Bgone,(Davids womb, Davids seed)or what are you saying?

"Having a pole shoved through the gut can make one feel real guilty, say all sorts of things no doubt."
Jesus did say something rather strange-"Father forgive them for they know not what they do."

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | JUNE 25, 2007 6:20 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Christianity and other religions have, and continue to, rationalize their atrocities by using the very tenets of the religion to which they ascribe belief. It's sort of pathetic that people continually fall for the same old stuff. I don't care whether you're Jewish, Christian, Moslem, or

whatever your brand of tea might happen to be. Until you meet your maker, if in fact you do, none of us really has a true clue, we only have belief systems instilled in us in various ways.

So argue on through the night, and try to determine who is right. It makes this whole sordid game all the more interesting. For my money Christian's are the scariest bunch out there, though. They can rationalize anything and give it a pretty name...such as "manifest destiny", or by papal bull(****).

POSTED BY: L | JUNE 25, 2007 6:12 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Rev. Elliott,
Your puny attempt to both be a Christian and play Socrates seems to have led you absolutely nowhere.

POSTED BY: MIKE | JUNE 25, 2007 6:04 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

I SO look for the day, yes when the Lord Jesus comes back and those who GOD SAYS are believers IN CHRIST no longer have to decide whats right or wrong and more importantly deal with those who do.

POSTED BY: THISISTHEH8GENERATION | JUNE 25, 2007 5:31 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Thou shalt not kill. Where is there room for war in this commandment?

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | JUNE 25, 2007 5:26 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Anonymous, you could be on to something real big. "W" said "we are all sinners." He was only talking about Republicans of course.

King David was a woman, the Egyptian queen, Tiye. She is one of the thieves that died *on the cross* with her daughter who was tempted by the serpent, the gold cobra on Pharaoh's hat, in the garden of Eden, made herself like unto God. The daughter is Jesus of course, Amenophis IV, the main event at the crucifixion. The author of the original "sermon on the mount" is Amenophis IV, the only other person in recorded history to *chase the money changers out of the temple of God.* Having a pole shoved through the gut can make one feel real guilty, say all sorts of things no doubt.

<http://www.hoax-buster.org> page 2 "proof" the Bible is a hoax. Hell is the biggest hoax,, or is that calling the sun God?

Take hell away from religion, fundamentalists and Muslims for example and see what's left. Not much in the way of something to faith, get saved from if ya ask me.

Check this out for me. Jesus did come from the "house of David?" Is David's womb close enough for that?

POSTED BY: BGONE | JUNE 25, 2007 5:18 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Dear Dav -

Thanks for the comments.

You need to learn something about evolution. Hell, you need to learn what the word "theory" means when used in a scientific context. Your ignorance on the subject adds nothing to the discussion.

There isn't a single "eyewitness" who wrote a single word about Jesus. No one. None. Nada. Even a cursory look at the most-apologetic of Biblical scholars will teach you that.

You cite Josephus - he wasn't a contemporary of Jesus and the passages where Jesus is mentioned in his writings are 4th-century forgeries. You even laughably call Josephus a pagan. He was an orthodox Jew. Do you believe that an orthodox Jew would call Jesus the "Messiah" when this same orthodox Jew railed against other false messiahs throughout his writings?

Does that answer your question? If not, look here where you'll read all about Josephus and other non-eyewitness accounts of Jesus that strain credulity:

<http://tinyurl.com/2o3olx>

POSTED BY: MR MARK | JUNE 25, 2007 5:06 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Willis Elliot writes: "I'm so ignorant as not even to know whether our preemptive war in Iraq was a good idea—so how would I know whether our staying in, or getting out, would be a good idea?"

So, if it takes 50 years to know whether anything works or does not, it's best to go along with perpetual war and let God sort things out later. This is very Scriptural. Jesus was, of course, a prominent pro-war guy who mocked pacifists and bleeding hearts. The Sermon on the Mount was a veritable call to jihad: do unto others before they do unto you. And remember: throw ye the first stone, that ye may be judged purer than thy neighbor. Yes, take an eye, for an eye, for an eye...

It is amazing how a professed Christian can totally blot out anything about the real tenets of his religion so that he can be an unblinking believer in our Decider in Chief. Ah, we must get along with our our flock, and it's time for a game of tennis.

POSTED BY: JK | JUNE 25, 2007 4:57 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Belief or unbelief in a deity is less problematic for me than the fervency of that belief and how inerrant you believe yourself or your religion to be.

If your faith isn't tempered by the occasional doubt, or if your religion discourages critical thought, then maybe it's time to shop elsewhere for life's answers.

Ask yourself this question and fill in the blanks: "Others who do not share my belief in _____ are _____."

If the last blank contains a word or phrase such as 'evil' or 'destined for hell', then seek help.

POSTED BY: JIM CARLSON | JUNE 25, 2007 4:53 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Bgone asks" Name a politician, king, emperor or dictator honest enough to declare himself immoral."

King David of the Old Testament declared himself as much many times over in the Psalms.

On the contemporary side, -- Pres. Clinton still has the opportunity to do so.

Actually if we really want honesty, all of us could declare some kind of immorality that resides inside us.

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | JUNE 25, 2007 4:28 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

BGONE

You're absolutely right. We all ask the big question "what's it all about?"

Truly the world is amazing no matter what one concludes about its origins. To contemplate it and infinity and endlessness is beyond me. It is all definitely awesome.

But all we have for sure is reality. This reality right here, around us. Everyday reality. I mean it's all we really know, and what we learn from science.

To drag a God into the picture seems simple minded and unnecessary. I can imagine our early ancestors, looking out from their caves, and wondering what it all means? and who is in charge around here?

To think "bigdaddy", was the best they could come up with at the time. And it felt good.

But it's just silly to continue to see the world as the cavemen did, as having a supernatural dimension. The caveman couldn't tell where reality left off and the supernatural began. It must have seemed all the same to him.

But in our reality, the supernatural does not exist. Unless you close your eyes and pretend it does. There would appear to be no good reason for believing the supernatural exists, except it feels good.

POSTED BY: YO-YO | JUNE 25, 2007 4:24 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Rev Elliott.

As one who fails miserably but seeks nonetheless to follow Jesus, I don't see how I can't be a cynic of war and violence, which seem to fly in the face of the ethics and kingdom values that Jesus spoke of and acted out of. One can certainly be cynical and have hope that in time humanity will begin to see the folly in self-righteous murder done in the name of nationalism and religion.

Certainly we can hope that good will come from wars, but all the same we can protest and pray and hope for a better way presented to us by those who followed the teachings of Jesus, such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Gandhi, who used nonviolent tactics to engage in conflict.

POSTED BY: DAVID | JUNE 25, 2007 4:20 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

"Jesus, who didn't stay dead, forbids me to live without hope."

How do you know?

Were you there?

No: you weren't. You're relying on a book of dubious authorship. The gospels were written long after Jesus's execution, and none of the genealogies (among other events) agree.

So your premise that "Jesus, who didn't stay dead, forbids me to live without hope", is based on shaky foundations to begin with. Whereas with my own eyes, I can see plenty of reasons for cynicism.

POSTED BY: [BRENDAN](#) | JUNE 25, 2007 3:55 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

DAV
The "human race" does not have a bible. Christians have a bible. There are other holy books for other "humans" who have different supernatural beliefs.
And there are other books, philosophy for instance, with ideas that have nothing to do with a supernatural world, for humans who prefer reality based reading, and thinking.
I say God is fiction, like Apollo is fiction, and Neptune. This fiction is called mythology.
It's where Sam Harris says, all Gods go to die.
But I also throw in the tooth fairy and Humpty Dumpty, because we are talking Supernatural here, and that means anything goes. Even a Big invisible Teddy Bear in the sky to ride to heaven on, if that makes you feel better.

POSTED BY: [YO-YO](#) | JUNE 25, 2007 3:42 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Mr. Mark, Rev Elliot probably won't answer your question, but I'll address it.
First, Adam and Eve may be a little hard to prove other than evolution is a theory and changing as science proves more of creation than evolution. Evolution is a sham until abiogenesis is proven. Not theory, proven.
However, Jesus was written about by eye witnesses. These men died for that belief, very harshly I may add. All of them without re-canting on what they believe or have written about. They had nothing to gain, other than life after death. No virgins, no monetary gain for the family left behind, just life with God. Simple as it may be. Now, we don't have to invoke the bible, how about Josephus the Roman historian. He wrote about Jesus' following. A Roman pagan not finding any fault with this following. Thousands of people experiencing the same thing with the same person. Claiming to be God in the flesh. If so, then their own emperor would be a phony and not God himself. Therefore, creating a certain problem for Rome. Josephus recorded this, not a saint, not a theological historian but a pagan...
I would like to hear an explanation of that.

POSTED BY: [DAV](#) | JUNE 25, 2007 3:36 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

BGONE,
Prove you are GOD and then we can continue the discussion!

POSTED BY: [PATRICK](#) | JUNE 25, 2007 3:32 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Rev Elliot writes:

"As a Christian, I can't be cynical. Jesus, who didn't stay dead, forbids me to live without hope. Daily I pray and hope the best for the Iraqis and our relations with them. Nor, as a Christian, can I be moralistic. By eating a God-forbidden apricot, Adam and Eve became moralists, authorities on what's right and good and what's wrong and bad."

The fiction is strong with you, Rev Elliot.

Adam & Eve? Jesus? Do you actually believe these were historic personages? Eve ate an apricot? What happened to the pomegranate and the apple? Have they fallen out of favor in Biblical discussions? Does calling the forbidden fruit of knowledge an apricot add artistic verisimilitude to the myth? Does it add an ounce of credibility to the pathetic and laughable idea of original sin?

Man doesn't determine morals, a non-existent supernatural creature does? Yikes!

BTW - I think you may also be confusing cynicism with rationality.

If my children came home spouting such inanities I'd have real reason for concern.

POSTED BY: [MR MARK](#) | JUNE 25, 2007 3:15 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

YO-YO
In the science of mind there comes up a question: What gives man the idea that there is more life after this life? That thought MUST be a natural-normal part of the human psyche. I'll wager you have it too but I can't prove it.

The difference in people called atheists and the others is not belief in more life after this life or even in the possible existence of one or more supernatural beings, gods/Gods. The difference is in belief in hell.

Atheists don't believe in hell. That's the bottom line. When they bury their dead they send them on to the NEXT life. The religious threaten each other with hell. Hell is the heart and soul of terrorism.

So what gave someone the idea there was a place called hell? But of course, he wanted to KILL people and NOT have them WAITING for him in the next world. That's a real NO BRAINER.

Hell comes in many varieties and forms but solves the single problem of what to do with dead enemies. Without hell there is no *God given right* to the universally accepted, "By right of conquest." There is the warning that one will face the dead they have killed in the next world.

It's a laugher!! Al Capone had 235 of the finest people who ever lived waiting for him on the far side of the nebol bridge. Hitler had millions. Will "W" have a few or is Iraq, "just cause" or "by right of conquest?"

POSTED BY: BGONE | JUNE 25, 2007 3:02 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Yo Yo, Now tell me, how would you know that it is fiction? How is it that you would know that God doesn't exist when most of us are still wondering? We (the human race) have a book called the bible. It has eye witness accounts that would stand up in the court system today. You being a liberal should understand that.

No one really knows who wrote the Koran. Considering Mohammed couldn't read or write. Makes one wonder. Not to mention, numerous versions to suit the reader of that area.

So, please tell me on this subject, how and what makes you the authority?

POSTED BY: DAV | JUNE 25, 2007 2:30 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

BGone

There is no God, as there is no tooth fairy.

The supernatural does not exist,except in our imaginations.And it exists there,because it is so comforting,and lets us believe we are never going to die,that we will live forever in Paradise.

No,you don't have to an idiot to believe that.

Just indoctrinated,and incurious.

Belief is wonderful,I'm told. It feels so good.

But that doesn't mean its true.

It is in fact the greatest fiction ever told,and has been told in so many different ways that wars heve been fought over which fiction to accept.

It was natural for our ancient ancestors in their childlike understanding of the world to assume that someONE must be responsible for all this.

But we know better now,just as we know that suicide bombers don't go to Heaven.We KNOW they were deluded,well so were our ancestors,and so are we.

POSTED BY: YO-YO | JUNE 25, 2007 2:11 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Alright Jozevz On, put down the green cigarette. I was talking about the Egyptian slavery of the Jews. Of course you wouldn't know that because you're one of those who pull lines out when needed.

The Koran was not is not and never will be the New Testament.

As for your prayer, too dumb to generate an actual response.

POSTED BY: DAV | JUNE 25, 2007 2:10 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Bgone, please go tell a muslim that his Allah freed the Jews from captivity and see what he has to say. I'd say they, but women are not suppose to dabble in discussions.

Anyhow, you're a non-believer now (that will change one day). If you're going to pick and choose the lines that suit you, we can't have a logical discussion without sarcaism.

About your line of the decision of who does and doesn't live. God is not a pet. He is soverign and chooses at His will. He doesn't have to obey anyone. He is not going to give into your orders or will. That is not a debateable topic.

Come with something else that is debateable and not just something to argue about.

POSTED BY: DAV | JUNE 25, 2007 1:29 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Sorry DAV but Allah IS IT, the *ball of fire* God that Moses made the deal with. You need to have a look at <http://www.hoax-buster.org/sellyoursoul> Muhammad is just another hoaxer like the authors of the Torrah --- Bible all sacred scriptures.

When the big money stops going to the shepherds that lead the flocks to the place run by the being that lives in fire God may well have been discovered. In the mean time, "go to your churches, temples, synagogues and mosques and pray' for we are at war, the process whereby man assumes the power of God, the God given right to decide who shall live and who shall die and the disposition of the souls of the dead.

Jesus said, "sell all your earthly possession and give to the poor." Jesus is without followers.

POSTED BY: BGONE | JUNE 25, 2007 1:12 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Again, it is what it is. Allah is a false God, sorry can't put suicide bombers and Jeremaih in the same sentence. God of the bible exists, Allah, does not. They are not the same God as politically correct dummies want to explain it. God had a son, Allah doesn't. Simple enough for most to understand.

As for any account about Genesis, as soon as you can take rock, dirt and water and make life, creation makes more sense than evolution. A-biogenesis is so close to impossible it's improbable. Simple enough again to understand. I believe that is enough 21st century science, huh?

As for domatic statements, so far to date, I can't find any corruption in the bible. Isreal is a nation, Babylon (Iraq) has fallen twice and Medes (Iran) is seeking Babylon's destruction with the insurgency.

POSTED BY: DAV | JUNE 25, 2007 12:50 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

YO-YO, ANT, there may or may not be a God?

Prove I'm not God and then continue the discussion. Notice that I am watching you. Who else is watching you may or may not be just like God, is or is not.

I wonder if the reverand has noticed <http://www.hoax-buster.org> All wars involve the sending of the enemy to hell. God alone has the power to do that. Maybe the problem is the specification of God?

By the simplest of logic those who make war are Gods for they assume the power to condemn to hell. That logic says God is not a being but rather an office held by beings, men and ocaasionally women. It's the oldest political position, predates prostitution. War is therefore moral because God is moral by definition.

Name a politician, king, emperor or dictator honest enough to declare himself immoral.

POSTED BY: BGONE | JUNE 25, 2007 12:48 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

A little humility goes a long way. Wouldn't it be nice if our President and his friends had a little more?

POSTED BY: JIM HILL | JUNE 25, 2007 12:20 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

"and if our minds eat junk food, junk ideas will come out"

Well put. Religious dogma is junk food. Dav's comment about "divine punishment" is a good example. To suppose that god spoke to us through a character in the Bible and call the war in Iraq divine punishment is no different from justifying suicide bombing because god said in the Koran that I will be rewarded in the afterlife. If we have enough nuts on either side thinking this way, we get the intractable wars that we continue to see. Only when people stop using god, Jesus, Mohammed, the Koran, the Bible, etc. as excuses for their own prejudices will we have any moral leg to stand on.

Morality is not the child of religion; it is certainly not the literal expression of the Bible or any other book written by people. We don't derive our morality from two naked characters in Genesis anymore than we do from Whinnie the Pooh. Get. With. The. 21st. Century. Already.

POSTED BY: KEVIN | JUNE 25, 2007 12:06 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Ant

You say God may be real, but religion is false, etc.

Well, God may also be false, don't you agree?

I mean there's not a scrap of evidence that there's anybody up there, so why do we blithely believe that there is?

Where do you think suicide bombers go when they are dead? Do you assume, like they do, that they go to paradise?

If you do, then you can't blame them for leaving this planet so explosively.

On the other hand, if you think they are just dead, and not in Paradise, then you might agree that they were deluded by their religion.

My own belief is that God is fiction. Can't prove it, and I may be wrong.

It just makes more sense that God is invented, because as Voltaire said, if God wasn't there we would invent one anyhow.

I think we did. And if we don't somehow uninvent him, we are in for a whole lot of trouble from here on in.

POSTED BY: YO-YO | JUNE 25, 2007 11:58 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

The morality of the Iraq issue is simple, it's divine punishment. We (the human race) were told about this by Jeremiah. This is not a religious issue, but the actual word of God. Call it how you see it but it is what it is.

I do want to know what is modern morality? Is it completely open to interpretation as well as the bible?

POSTED BY: DAV | JUNE 25, 2007 10:52 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

God may be real but religion is false always was and always will be. They demand total blind faith, that was something that Jesus did not allow for in his teachings. Verify is what he said do not twist the writings remember how he dealt with the religious leaders of his time.

POSTED BY: ANT | JUNE 25, 2007 10:38 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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